



The Future of the European Neighbourhood Policy

EUROMESCO HAS BECOME A BENCHMARK FOR POLICY-ORIENTED RESEARCH ON ISSUES RELATED TO EURO-MEDITERRANEAN COOPERATION, IN PARTICULAR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, SECURITY AND MIGRATION. WITH 123 AFFILIATED THINK TANKS AND INSTITUTIONS AND ABOUT 700 EXPERTS FROM 30 DIFFERENT COUNTRIES, THE NETWORK HAS DEVELOPED IMPACTFUL TOOLS FOR THE BENEFIT OF ITS MEMBERS AND A LARGER COMMUNITY OF STAKEHOLDERS IN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN REGION.

THROUGH A WIDE RANGE OF PUBLICATIONS, SURVEYS, EVENTS, TRAINING ACTIVITIES, AUDIO-VISUAL MATERIALS AND A STRONG FOOTPRINT ON SOCIAL MEDIA, THE NETWORK REACHES THOUSANDS OF EXPERTS, THINK TANKERS, RESEARCHERS, POLICY-MAKERS AND CIVIL SOCIETY AND BUSINESS STAKEHOLDERS EVERY YEAR. WHILE DOING SO, EUROMESCO IS STRONGLY ENGAGED IN STREAMLINING GENUINE JOINT RESEARCH INVOLVING BOTH EUROPEAN AND SOUTHERN MEDITERRANEAN EXPERTS, ENCOURAGING EXCHANGES BETWEEN THEM AND ULTIMATELY PROMOTING EURO-MEDITERRANEAN INTEGRATION. ALL THE ACTIVITIES SHARE AN OVERALL COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND ENSURING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN EXPERTS' COMMUNITY.

EUROMESCO: CONNECTING THE DOTS IS A PROJECT CO-FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) AND THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN (IEMED) THAT IS IMPLEMENTED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE EUROMESCO NETWORK.

AS PART OF THIS PROJECT, THE EUROMESCO EUROMED SURVEY BUILDS ON AN ACCUMULATED 10 YEARS' EXPERIENCE OF THE IEMED'S EUROMED SURVEY AND AIMS TO GENERATE FIRST-HAND DATA AND EVIDENCE ON EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY (ENP) RELATED POLICIES AND PRIORITIES THAT CAN BE OF DIRECT USE FOR POLICY-MAKERS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS, AND CONTRIBUTE TO EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH AND INCLUSIVE POLICY-MAKING. IT ALSO SERVES AS A POWERFUL TOOL TO RAISE AWARENESS AMONG VARIOUS CONSTITUENCIES SUCH AS ACADEMIA, MEDIA, NGOS, COMPANIES, INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS, GOVERNMENTS' REPRESENTATIVES, AND DIPLOMATS FAMILIAR WITH REGIONAL AND NATIONAL ENP SOUTH ISSUES TO MOBILISE ALL SORTS OF EXPERTS, GIVING THEM THE POSSIBILITY TO EXPRESS THEIR ASSESSMENT AND PERCEPTION AND PUT FORWARD RECOMMENDATIONS.



The Future of the European Neighbourhood Policy



The information and views set out in this report are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Union or the European Institute of the Mediterranean. Neither the European Union institution and bodies nor any person acting on their behalf may be held responsible for the use which may be made of the information contained herein.

© European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed)
info@iemed.org | www.iemed.org

EuroMeSCo
euromesco@iemed.org | www.euromesco.org

Legal Deposit: B 10121-2024

Design Maurin.studio
Layout Sintagma. Creacions editorials, SL
Printing Agpograf
May 2024

EUROMESCO EUROMED SURVEY

EDITOR OF THE SURVEY REPORT

Jenny Gilbert. Programme Manager of EuroMeSCo, European Institute of the Mediterranean.

Xavier Aragall. Programme Manager of the Euromed Survey, European Institute of the Mediterranean.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Tasnim Abderrahim. Analyst at the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC). Tunisia.

Rabha Allam. Expert, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS). Egypt.

Maria Giulia Amadio Viceré. Assistant Professor at LUISS University. Italy.

Rachid El Houdaigui. The Policy Center For The New South, Rabat. Morocco.

Michael Köhler. Senior Associate Fellow IEMed. Professor for Europe and the Mediterranean, College of Europe, Bruges. Belgium.

Erzsébet N. Rózsa. Professor and Academic Advisor, Institute of World Economics (IWE). Hungary.

Katarzyna W. Sidło. Director of MENA Department, CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research. Poland.

Maya Sion Tzidkiyahu. Director of Israel – Europe Relations Program, Mitvim Institute. Lecturer at the European Forum, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Israel.

TECHNICAL COORDINATION AND ASSISTANCE

Maria Seco, ODEC

Content

INTRODUCTION Senén Florensa	6
DESCRIPTIVE REPORT Xavier Aragall, Jenny Gilbert, James Stewart	10
20 years of the European Neighbourhood Policy: a general assessment	12
The future of the European Neighbourhood Policy	20
Reviewing constitutive principles of the ENP	30
At the core of the ENP: political dialogue, trade, and mobility	42
QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS	56
Failed? Reformable? What is needed? – What future for the European Neighbourhood Policy in the Mediterranean? Michael Köhler	58
Assessing the European Neighbourhood Policy’s future Maria Giulia Amadio Viceré	72
Differentiation, incentive-based approach and joint ownership – Two decades of ENP’s expectations – Real-politique gap Maya Sion Tzidkiyahu	82
New dynamics to the Euro-Mediterranean relations? Settling an “unnecessary confusion” between the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Erzsébet N. Rózsa	92

Re-orienting priorities: Back to basics to value fundamental rights Rabha Allam	100
The new Euro-Mediterranean context: What direction for the Morocco-European Union partnership? Rachid El Houdaigui	108
The future of EU-Southern Neighbourhood trade relations. The FTAs are dead, long live the (DC)FTAs? Katarzyna W. Sidło	116
Navigating complexities: Challenges in EU's mobility cooperation with the Southern Neighbours Tasnim Abderrahim	124
ANNEXES	134
I METHODOLOGY	136
II LIST OF RESPONDENTS	144
III QUESTIONNAIRE	158

Detailed results of the survey only available online at www.iemed.org

INTRODUCTION

Senén Florensa
Executive President, IEMed

Since its inception 20 years ago, there have been several attempts on behalf of the EU to adjust the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to new circumstances, with the 2011 and 2015 reviews, as well as with the 2021 New Agenda for the Mediterranean. Recent developments affecting the Eastern Neighbourhood (with the creation of the European Political Community and the candidate status to the EU being granted to Ukraine and Moldova) have questioned the relevance and added value of the single umbrella of the ENP. Moreover, traditional flagships and approaches of the ENP such as the DCFTAs have shown their limitations. Last, the phasing out of the European Neighbourhood Instrument, with the introduction of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe, and the difficulties to sequence the political approach (with delayed adoption of Partnership Priorities) with the financial programming have also shown the limitations of the ENP.

The 20th anniversary of the ENP and the start of a new European Commission in 2024 are likely to reinforce the case for revamping the ENP and instil new dynamics to Euro-Mediterranean relations. Anticipating such developments and willing to play its role as a laboratory for ideas, the European Institute of the Mediterranean, in the framework of the project “EuroMeSCo: Connecting the Dots” co-funded by the European Union, launched the Survey “The future of the European Neighbourhood Policy”. The survey polled respondents from the European Union (EU) and Southern Mediterranean countries (SMC), including policy-makers, experts, and civil society representatives, on their perceptions and ideas.

This report analyses the main results from this exercise, conducted in September and October 2023. It provides valuable insights on the understanding of a variety of experts and actors assessing the ENP and its future. It reviews the constitutive principles of the ENP as well as the main elements at the core of the ENP: political dialogue, trade, and mobility.

To shed light and help explain these issues, the report is accompanied by a series of expert articles. **Michael Köhler** focuses on the assessment 20 years of the ENP as a framework for the Euro-Mediterranean relations. **Maria Giulia Amadio** weighs in on the benefits of revising or revamping the ENP. **Maya Sion Tzidkiyahu** analyses the principles of differentiation, incentive-based approach, and joint ownership. **Erzsébet N. Rózsa** looks closer to the articulation between the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the ENP. **Rabha Allam** offers an analysis on re-orienting priorities in line with fundamental rights. **Rachid El Houdaigui** analyses the future of the ENP in the new Euro-Mediterranean context. **Katarzyna W. Sidło** focuses on the future of EU-Southern Neighbourhood trade relations. Finally, **Tasnim Abderrahim** examines the challenges in mobility cooperation between the EU and its Southern neighbours.

These are the survey's main take-aways related to the future of the European Neighbourhood Policy:

- There is a consensus amongst respondents that the ENP has had a limited impact on the main areas of the cooperation agenda with Southern partners. When it comes to identifying the causes of the limited impact, respondents depicted a combination of several elements, but highlighted disagreement on priorities among EU and ENP partners.
- Overall, respondents agree that the ENP needs to be transformed. Most EU respondents thought that it should be revamped, while most Southern Mediterranean countries respondents preferred a further revision in line with those conducted in 2011 and 2015.
- Most respondents do not want to keep the Eastern and Southern regions under the same ENP framework but agreed that the Southern Neighbourhood should take some inspiration from the Eastern Partnership.
- Respondents clearly agree that the overlap between the Euromed regional dimension of the ENP and UfM causes confusion and that mechanisms must be simplified. They do not, however, see the need in replacing the ENP with the UfM as a regional framework.
- Surprisingly, when assessing if Action Plans and Partnership Priorities reflected country needs and challenges, there is a clear trend that differentiates Mashreq and Maghreb countries, with largely positive responses from the former and a differing, more nuanced outlook from the latter, although some countries in the Maghreb have had an enhanced bilateral cooperation and financial assistance.
- DCFTAs are still considered the best paradigm to advance trade relations between the EU and its Southern Mediterranean partners.
- There is no clear answer as to whether the South should continue pushing for the signature of agreements, as has been (unsuccessfully) the case, or define a new approach for mobility cooperation.

Overall, results show the respondents believe that the ENP and its cooperation agenda have not delivered. While the ENP has not managed to effectively impact key areas for Euro-Mediterranean relations, survey results also indicate that there is room to renew these relations through a transformative approach. New cooperation paradigms should particularly focus on socio-economic development as well as improving partnership structures on a more equal basis.

Consulted experts also point to two institutional settings that should be revised in order to facilitate this transformation. On the one hand, the ENP's constitutive principles (differentiation, incentive-based approach, and joint ownership), although ineffectively applied so far, are considered necessary and should be maintained moving forward. On the other hand, the need to simplify and avoid overlapping mechanisms of the EU's initiatives in the region is underlined.

Wrapping up, the Southern dimension of the ENP has lost traction, but it has potential to be effectively equipped and to satisfy new ambitions for a more transactional, geopolitical, and flexible approach of the EU foreign policy in its Southern Neighbourhood.

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT



20 years of the European Neighbourhood Policy: a general assessment

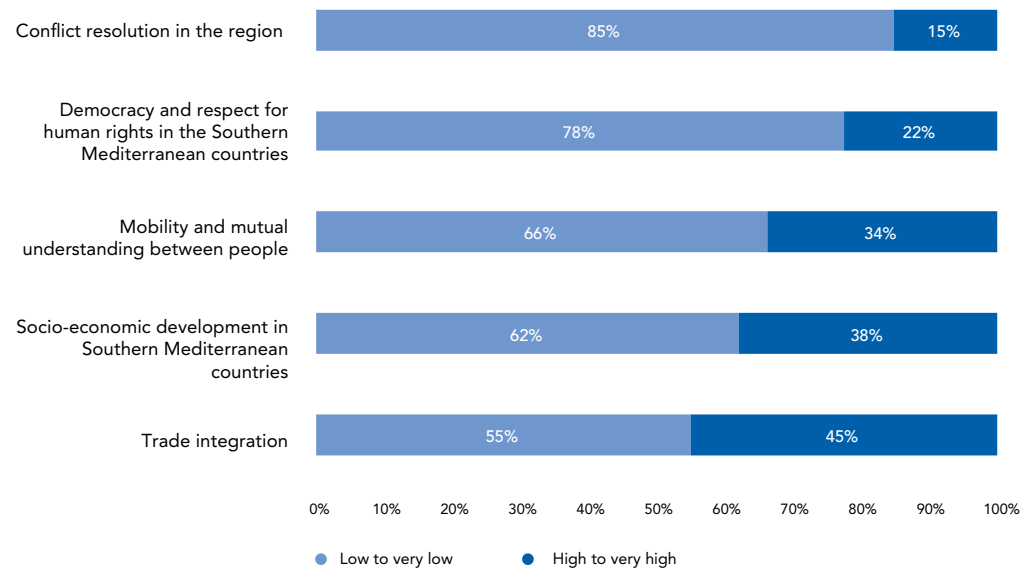
The first block of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey aimed to assess the European Neighbourhood Policy's (ENP) impact.

Main findings:

- There is a consensus amongst respondents that the ENP has had a limited impact on the main areas of the cooperation agenda with Southern partners.
- Respondents clearly agree that "Conflict resolution" and "Democracy and respect for human rights" have been less impacted with low to very low assessments near to 80%.
- Almost a half of all respondents considered that trade integration was positively impacted.
- When it comes to identifying the causes of the limited impact, respondents depicted a combination of several elements, but highlighted disagreement on priorities among EU and ENP partners.
- Among EU respondents, the lack of cohesion between member states and the EU's foreign policy tools was identified as an important element that explains the low impact of the ENP.

The **first question** of the survey invited respondents to evaluate the impact of 20 years of the ENP. It asked participants to assess the extent to which different policy areas have been effectively impacted by the ENP. According to respondents, the ENP had a low impact on all assessed areas (see graph 1). Respondents considered that "Conflict resolution" and "Democracy and respect for human rights" were the least impacted areas with 80% selecting low to very low. A more moderate, yet negative, evaluation was given to "Mobility and mutual understanding" and "Socio-economic development" while "Trade integration" had the least negative result.

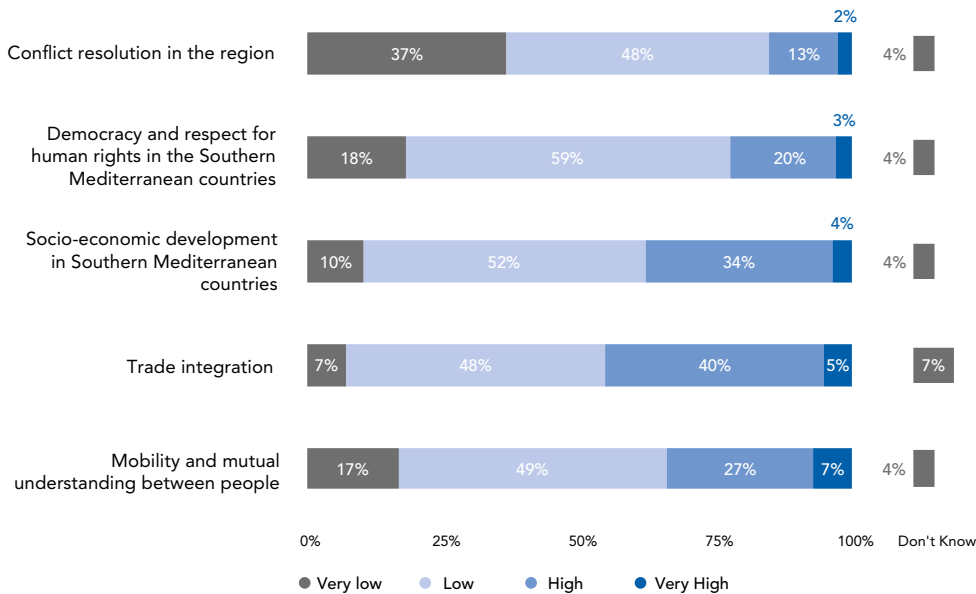
Graph 1: Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Zooming in on these results (graph 2), percentages of 'very low' or 'very high' categories display some nuances. The trend is that 'very low' is much more common than 'very high'. The case of "Conflict resolution" featured a significant amount of very low responses (almost 40%). In comparison with the other choices, "Trade integration" had the smallest percentage of 'very low' answers. Focusing on positive evaluations, percentages of 'very high' impact were well under 10%.

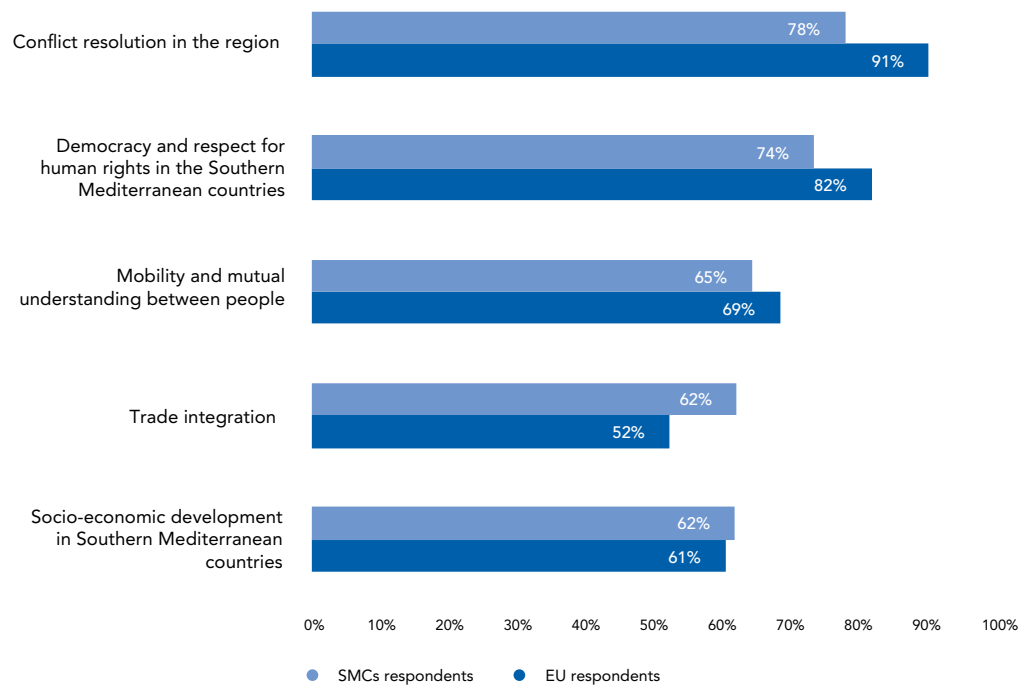
Graph 2: Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

When the data is disaggregated between EU and Southern Mediterranean countries (SMCs) respondents some trends emerge (see graph 2bis). Those from the EU were more critical of the effectiveness of the ENP's impact on conflict resolution, democracy and human rights and mobility and mutual understanding in the region, when compared with those from the south. When it came to trade integration, the tables turned. SMCs respondents saw the ENPs impact on trade integration in a more positive light, with a margin of 10%.

Graph 2bis: Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In their comments, respondents highlighted some elements that could help explain the ineffective impact of the ENP:

The objective of a common area of shared prosperity and good neighbourliness has totally failed. Partly because it was ill-designed from the beginning (replication of the enlargement policy and process but without enlargement, which was particularly ill-suited for the neighbourhood south).

— French respondent

While the ENP is an opportunity to strengthen Euro-Mediterranean relations at all levels, its security-driven edge only reproduces a rebound effect of more displacement of vulnerable populations. A more comprehensive approach that addresses the recent geopolitical turmoil in the Sahel and North Africa is of paramount importance. The EU should revisit its 'equal partnership' schemes and terms with the neighbouring countries.

— Moroccan respondent

Even though I think it brought the neighbourhood closer to Europe, it did not bring Europe to the neighbourhood.

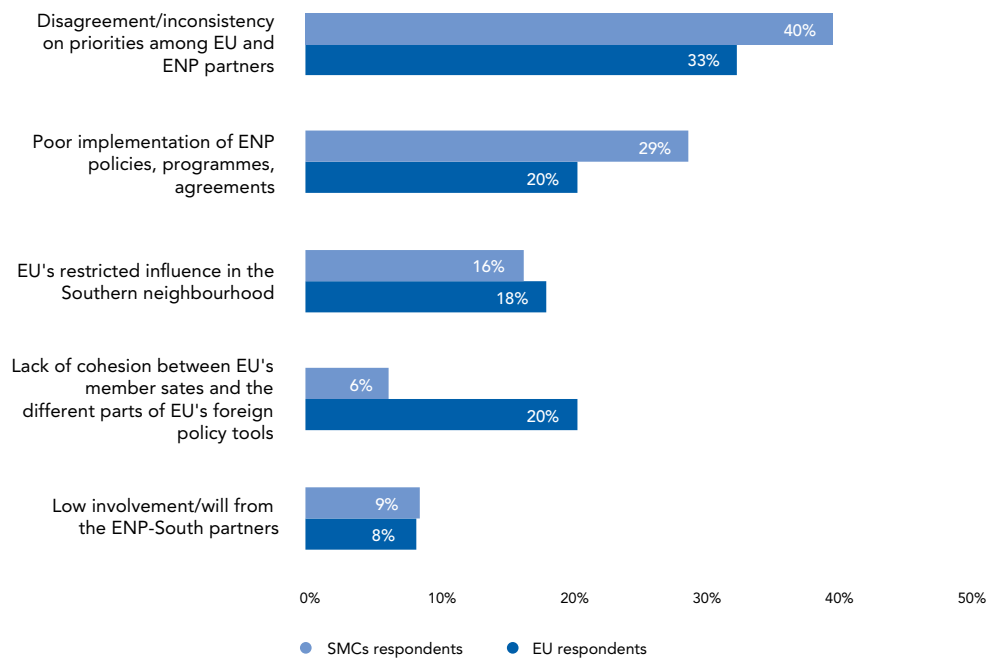
— Austrian respondent

As for the impact of neighbourhood policies on the movement of people, I considered it very high, particularly between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Regardless of the kind of movement or its legal names, the EU has been and is still pursuing a selective policy of migration, which creates new migration paths that are more dangerous and inappropriate for human rights.

— Algerian respondent

Question 1b was an open-ended question which allowed respondents to elaborate on the limitations of the ENP which were addressed in question 1 (graph 1). Categories developed from the answers highlighted two broad themes: disagreement on priorities among EU and ENP partners and poor implementation of ENP policies, programmes and/or agreements (graph 3). Interestingly, for EU respondents, the lack of cohesion between member states and the EU's foreign policy tools were also important elements that explain the low impact of the ENP.

Graph 3: Q.1b In general terms or in relation to the specific areas mentioned above, why do you think the impact has been limited? (categories developed from open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Below are some open-ended responses which elaborate on the key issues:

The ENP was essentially a generic European response to the EU's own post-enlargement challenges. In that sense, it did not provide a realistic long-term vision and is today a bit outdated. The ENP needs to include the post-revolution new generation while taking into consideration tech developments and economic needs. Moreover, the new approach needs to distinguish between the neighbouring regions of the EU as the interests of the eastern flank are becoming very different (rightly so) from those of the southern flank.

— Algerian respondent

The EU neither had the capabilities nor the political will and unity to pursue some of the ENP objectives whilst, at the same time, political regimes of target countries, engaged in consolidating their non-democratic rule, have been rather obstructive.

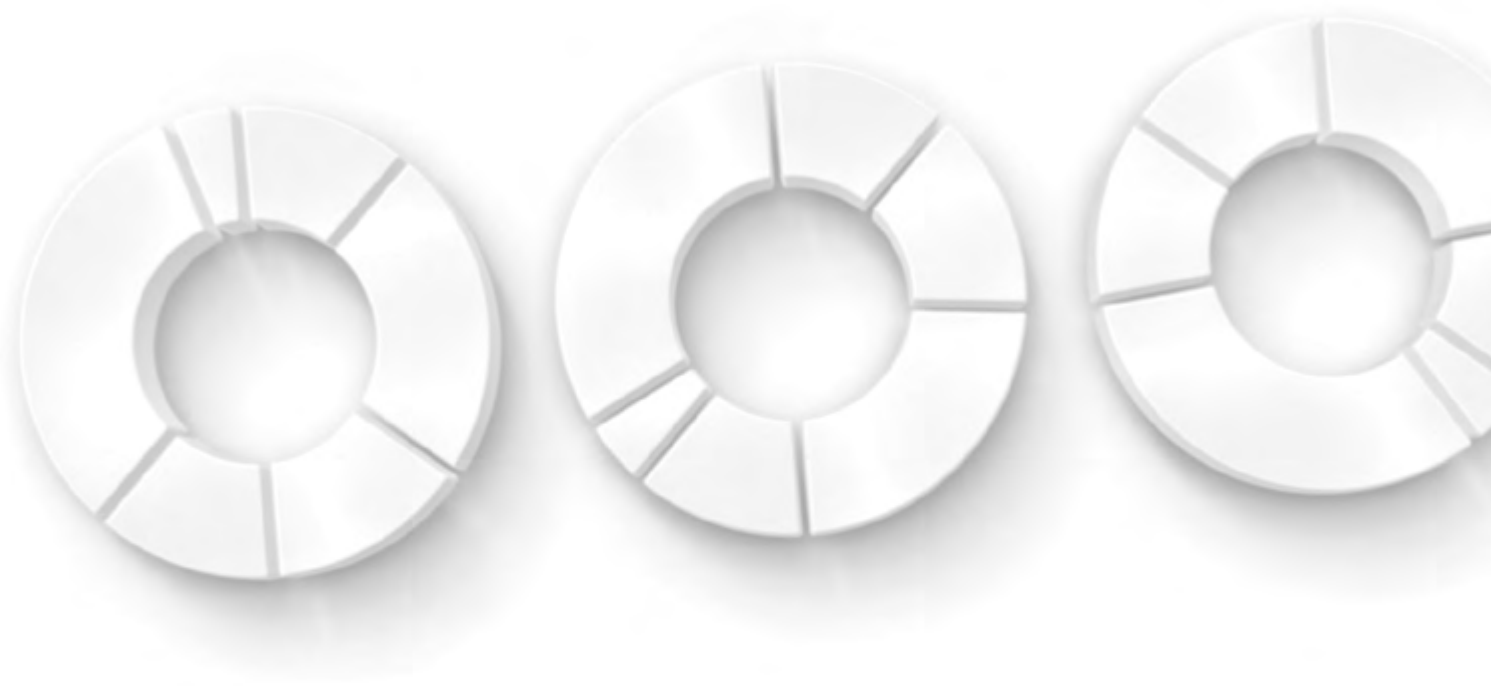
— German respondent

I think that influence, especially regarding human rights and conflicts, is sometimes weak. There are no real pressure tools to influence governments to spread the principles of human rights and democracy and raise the level of awareness among citizens regarding issues related to citizenship, rights and duties.

— Egyptian respondent

There is a fundamental divergence of interests at three levels that makes it difficult for the ENP to have a significant and sustained impact on the areas above. First, interests diverge within EU member states. Second, they also diverge between the EU and ENP partners. Third, they diverge within ENP partner countries, both within elites and most notably between elites and the local population.

— Italian respondent



The future of the European Neighbourhood Policy

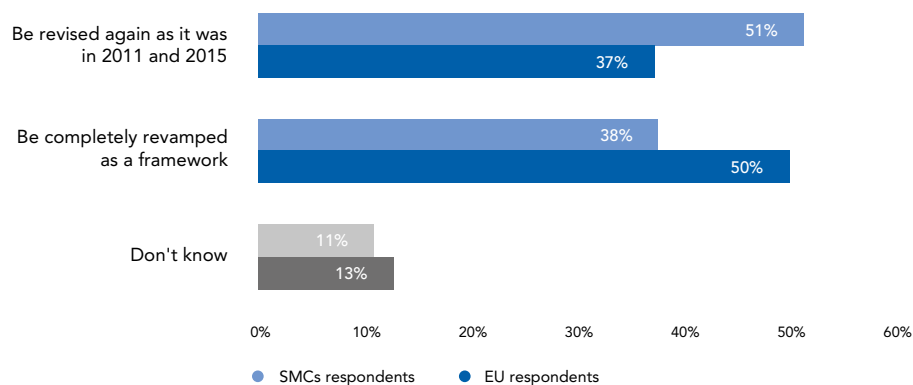
In the second block, respondents had to address two issues related to the future of the ENP. Firstly, what should be done to relaunch and strengthen the strategic partnership between the EU and the Southern Mediterranean countries (SMCs) (question 2). Secondly, if the design of the ENP should encompass both the Eastern and Southern dimension (question 3).

Main findings:

- Overall, respondents agree that the ENP needs to be transformed.
- Most EU respondents thought that it should be revamped, while most Southern Mediterranean countries (SMCs) respondents preferred a further revision in line with those conducted in 2011 and 2015.
- Socio-economic development and improving partnership structures should be the priority paradigms when revising or revamping the ENP.
- Managing migration and mobility, supporting democratisation and adaptation to climate change should also be central in a revised or revamped ENP.
- Most respondents do not want to keep the Eastern and Southern regions under the same ENP framework, but agreed that the Southern neighbourhood should take some inspiration from the Eastern Partnership.

In line with the findings deriving from question 1, the results of **question 2** demonstrated that respondents supported the idea of a major reform of the ENP, either in the form of a review or a complete overhaul (with an even split of opinion between these two options). The edifice of the ENP was revised and altered in 2011 and 2015, in response to changes in the region. A complete revamp of the ENP, a reconstruction of the framework, would require a reevaluation of its modus operandi but has not yet proved necessary. When asked whether the ENP should be revised or revamped each position received 44%. Interestingly, percentages changed when comparing results of EU and SMCs respondents. The former preferred revamping the ENP, while the latter were in favour of revising the ENP (graph 4).

Graph 4: Q.2 Since its inception in 2004, the ENP has been reviewed several times. The 2011, 2015 reviews, 2021 New Agenda for the Mediterranean. The ENP should:



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Comments of those respondents that preferred a revision of the ENP pointed to the need to renovate it by considering new needs and players in the region:

Given the climate and migration issues, the strategic partnership must be strengthened, in addition to the sub-Saharan European strategy and put at the same level as the Eastern Partnership.

— French respondent

The new era and the changes in actors that the region is facing needs to be addressed. The major players in the region, such as Saudi Arabia, UAE, Egypt, Iran and Turkey have adopted a different approach based on a post-petroleum economy. This has shifted the focus to a more open-borders approach, which increases the level of challenges while at the same time providing more benefits.

— Lebanese respondent

The renovation of the ENP has become a necessity due to new circumstances in the Mediterranean region. It is therefore useless to replace it with another instrument, which in the absence of will, would have the same fate as the ENP. The ENP, following the latest revisions, already includes the fundamental tools for a better result. They still need to be implemented effectively.

— Moroccan respondent

There has not been a co-ordinated effort by the EU or the EU members in their policy vis-a-vis the Southern and Eastern Mediterranean. They have been better at undermining various political systems, such as those in Libya, Yemen, Syria, etc., than helping them to stabilise, let alone democratise.

— Turkish respondent

Respondents in favour of a complete revamp underlined the importance of the new balance of power and the need to change strategies in the region:

Due to the latest developments in the East, the ENP has ceased to exist. We should have a specific policy for the South, focusing on relations beyond what EU calls its neighbourhood and enhancing relations with other countries as well. It should recognise the importance of these countries for EU security and prosperity but through a real partnership. The ENP must not compromise, as has shamefully been the case over the last few years, on EU values, human rights and democratic principles. We should also develop relations with different segments of societies. We must look beyond national governments, on which we place too much focus but which have, in many cases, a contested legitimacy (based too often on repression).

— French respondent

With the challenges and changes the world is witnessing, and what we have concluded from previous experiences, it is preferable to develop a completely new framework that lives up to the aspirations of the peoples of both banks.

— Algerian respondent

We should be conscious of the possibility to bring in change from the outside and the limitations of the tools we have/want to use. We must build consensus/alignment between member states as there should only be one European neighbourhood policy and not one by the EU institutions and another 27 MS policies. Europe is only strong if it speaks with one voice that has clear criteria (in terms of values and interests) for engagement. EU institutions and MS must be flexible to be able to implement necessary changes.

— Austrian respondent

The evolution of the ENP over the years, from a focus on democratisation to stabilisation and then to the proposal of a New Agenda for the Mediterranean, suggests that a comprehensive overhaul of the framework may be necessary to adapt to changing regional dynamics, challenges, and priorities. Revamping the ENP could involve redefining its goals, strategies, and instruments to better address the complex and evolving needs of the European Union and its Southern neighbourhood partners.

— Egyptian respondent

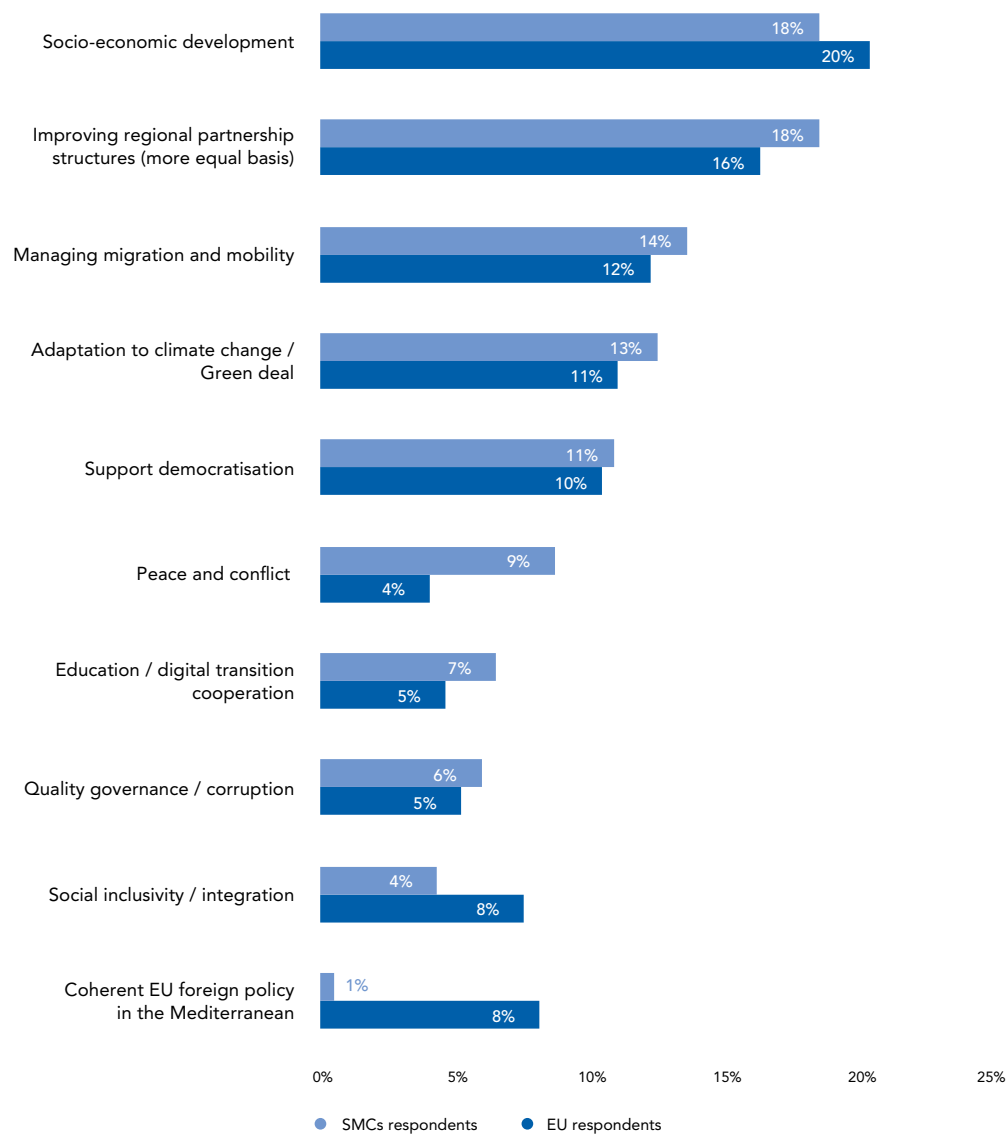
The triangle of factors: climate change, migration flows and diligence in output capabilities should be addressed.

— Greek respondent

As a continuation of question 2, participants were invited to identify, in an open-ended manner, what should be the focus of a revised or revamped ENP. The categories developed from these open-ended answers indicated that socio-economic development (19.4%) was the number one priority, shortly followed by improving regional partnership structures (17.4%). Managing migration and mobility (12.9%), adaptation to climate change (11.8%) and supporting democratisation (10.7%), were also of noticeable importance.

Breaking down the responses by geographical origin highlights a similar pattern of results but with some variations (graph 5). SMCs respondents were twice as likely (8.7%) to be concerned about peace and conflict as their EU counterparts (4.1%). On the other hand, EU respondents were notably interested (8.1%) in building a coherent EU foreign policy in the Mediterranean, whereas southern respondents displayed little to no interest in the issue (0.5%).

Graph 5: Q.2a What should be the new paradigm or the main focus of a revised or revamped ENP? (categories developed from open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

The focus needs to be geostrategic and geopolitical and clearly defined in terms of its necessity in the face of challenges from China, Russia, Turkey and others. The EU needs to have a clear and realistic focus, and try its best to meet benchmarks which have been defined and established with the Southern Med partners.

— Greek respondent

It should include an intertwined political and socio-economic development. It must consolidate the socio-economic advancement that was achieved by the partnership as well as enlarging political engagement among wider circles and sectors on both shores. This could be done through the following: 1) Creating spaces for Diaspora groups to help introduce EU normative power (if any!) in the Southern countries through partnerships with civil society organisations working together on both shores. 2) Creating spaces to encourage youth to take part in the design of the partnership's priorities according to their aspirations, views and ambitions. 3) Creating more platforms to give voices to the most vulnerable groups, in order to balance real political priorities with normative power priorities.

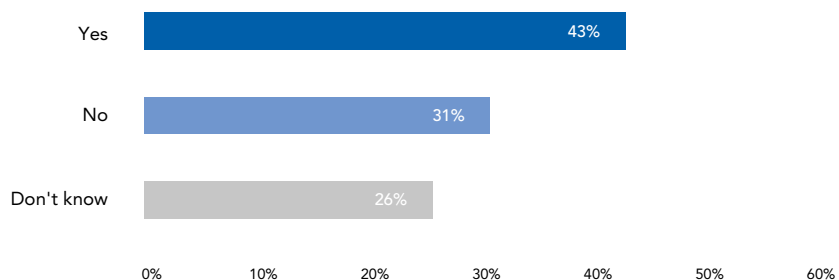
— Egyptian respondent

The whole concept of the “Neighbourhood” should be scrapped as, when it comes to the South, it does not make sense. Tools for development cooperation already exist at the European Commission level. A major investment to step up the EU's diplomatic and humanitarian action should instead be made as a basis to launch cooperation / support initiatives in the domains of energy, mobility, digital, health and disaster recovery.

— Italian respondent

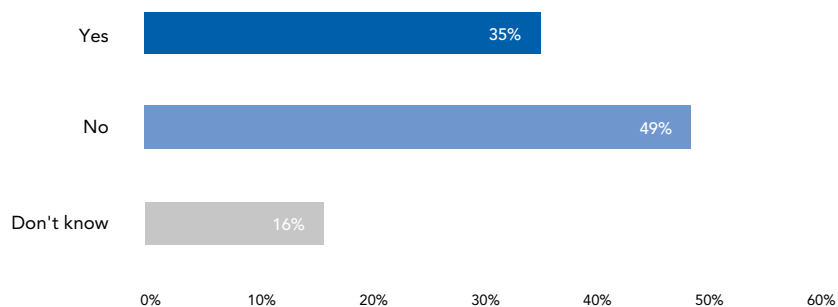
Question 3 focused on the geographical scope of the ENP and had two separate elements. In question 3a respondents were asked if the Southern neighbourhood should get some inspiration from the Eastern Partnership, while in question 3b respondents were asked about the need to keep the two regions (East and South) under the same ENP framework. Respondents, both EU and SMCs, agreed that the Southern neighbourhood should take inspiration from the Eastern Partnership (graph 6). The results also stated that the two regions, East and South, should be divided into separate frameworks (graph 7). Interestingly, in both questions, a third of respondents considered the contrary, and there was an important percentage of don't know answers, particularly on question 6 (taking inspiration from the Eastern partnership).

Graph 6: Q.3a Do you think the Southern Neighbourhood Policy should get some inspiration from the Eastern Partnership?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Graph 7: Q.3b From both an EU and a Southern Neighbourhood perspective, do you see any merit in keeping the two regions under the same ENP framework?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In their comments, those who believed that the Southern neighbourhood should take inspiration from the East, further elaborated their ideas:

Given the challenges, it seems desirable to ensure a financial upgrade equivalent to the Eastern Partnership. At the same time, it is important to develop an approach less focused on the legal and regulatory framework (taking into account the political and institutional context) and more focused on a project logic and structuring initiatives.

— French respondent

Even though Southern neighbourhood countries hold no viable prospect of obtaining candidate status – thus severely limiting EU leverage – the Eastern example could still provide guidance in terms of deeper economic cooperation and the development of the TEN-T network to foster intra-regional connectivity and bridge barriers for trade.

— Italian respondent

The success of the Southern Neighbourhood Policy will depend on its ability to adapt and respond to the specific needs and circumstances of the countries in the Southern neighbourhood. Learning from the experiences and lessons of the Eastern Partnership can be valuable, but a one-size-fits-all approach should be avoided. Flexibility and adaptability should remain core principles of the ENP.

— Lebanese respondent

Countries from the Eastern Neighbourhood (EN) have the opportunity of becoming EU members states which seemed to be a great motivation for citizens and civic activists. This led to positive political changes and the strengthening of democratisation processes. While it is difficult to expect the creation a similar perspective for the Southern Neighbourhood (SN), this could serve as inspiration for initiating a special mechanism for the SN. This could encourage states to improve their transparency, citizens' influence on political decisions and embark on the path of democratisation.

— Polish respondent

It is worth looking across sectors to find what kind of inspiration the Eastern Neighbourhood can provide. In any case, relations with the countries of the Eastern Neighbourhood are prioritised by many EU member states for a variety of reasons. I think the most important factors are, as the Russian invasion of Ukraine underlined, geopolitics and the sense of a “Europeanness” of the countries in Eastern Europe. These factors could even open the door to future accession. Something unimaginable in the case of North African states.

— Greek respondent

Those who argued, on the other hand, that the Southern neighbourhood does not need inspiration from the Eastern neighbourhood expanded on their reasons why:

Given the geopolitical, socio-economic, and every-changing migratory flows in the Southern Mediterranean region, the EU needs a tailor-made approach for the Southern neighbourhood policy. The EU should take full stock of the needs and the nature of collaboration with southern neighbours. The EU should reconsider the scale of 'shared responsibility' with southern neighbours, as well as making clear the gains its southern neighbours could make in its 'mutually beneficial' partnerships.

— Moroccan respondent

The Southern neighbourhood could always take inspiration on how to progress more quickly, despite its lack of resources (just compare Morocco and Ukraine before the war), but it has not demonstrated an appetite for many years. It is simply not ready to assume EU values and principles in real-life commitments, therefore, any inspiration can only create additional sets of disappointments.

— Polish respondent

My feeling is that the EU is less and less concerned with the Southern neighbourhood. Maybe because it is also helpless in the face of corruption, dictatorship, and deeply rooted issues. That is why I say again: the economy should be the primary area of focus. Improve people's lives, improve economies, so that things can change.

— Lebanese respondent

Reviewing constitutive principles of the ENP

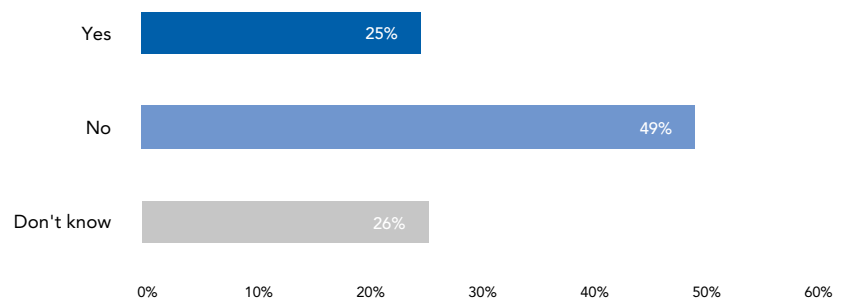
The third block of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey aimed to assess the application of constitutive principles of the ENP: differentiation, “incentive-based approach” (more for more) and joint-ownership. It also sought to collect respondents’ views on how the relationship between the ENP and the UfM, as regional mechanisms, should be developed.

Main findings:

- There is a consistent consensus amongst respondents: they believe that the constitutive principles of the ENP have not been effectively applied.
- At the same time, a large majority of respondents consider that these principles are still valid and should remain in any future revision of the ENP.
- Respondents clearly agree that the overlap between the regional dimension of the ENP and UfM causes confusion and that mechanisms must be simplified. They do not, however, see the need in replacing the ENP with the UfM as a regional framework.

Question 4 was designed to capture opinion on the application and utility of the differentiation principle. Under the differentiation principle, the EU wanted to recognise the different aspirations of partner countries in their relations with the EU, offering them tailor-made partnerships. Results displayed a consistent agreement among respondents, namely that the differentiation principle has not been effectively applied (graph 8). 'Don't know' even outranked 'Yes' responses.

Graph 8: Q.4a Do you think the EU has applied this principle of differentiation effectively?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In their comments respondents expanded on their views, vis-à-vis the (in)effectiveness of the differentiation principle:

Yes, differentiation has been applied effectively, even though I would add that the 'tailor-made partnerships' are highly imbalanced, as the EU is both the model and the tailor. As a result, differentiation only matters insofar as partner countries want to deepen their relations with the EU but are content that is done in a way that is overwhelmingly shaped by the EU.

— Italian respondent

The EU has made significant efforts to apply the principle of differentiation effectively within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). This approach acknowledges that partner countries have different levels of ambition, interests, and capacities when it comes to their relations with the EU. These are some reasons why the EU's application of differentiation can be considered effective.

— Moroccan respondent

The tailor-made partnership arrangements are offered and shaped according to the “wish list” or “demands list” put forward by the higher echelons of the state in the individual countries. Countrywide consultation of the public opinion (be it a survey, be it a referendum) is almost never practiced. Therefore, the EU apparently offers tailor-made partnerships to some extent, but not effectively or satisfactorily due to being drawn up without full diversity, inclusion, and equity.

— Turkey respondent

ENP differentiation recognises the aspirations of different countries, but this does not necessarily open collaboration. For example, with agricultural trade exchanges and agreements, conditions (e.g. social and human rights) in production systems are not at an acceptable level for the EU.

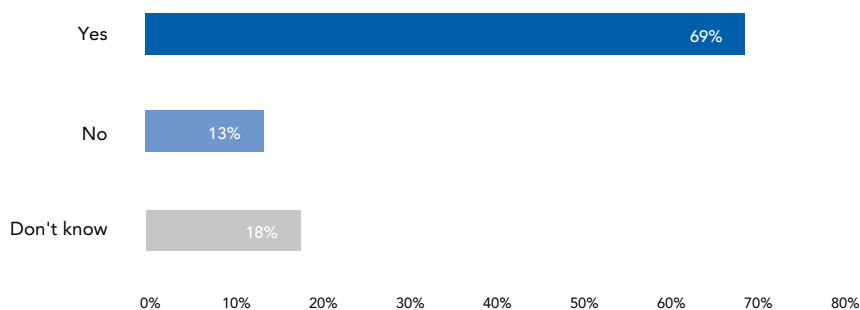
— Spanish respondent

The EU may face budgetary and resource constraints, which may limit its ability to provide adequate support to all partner countries. It is, however, also worth noting that some partner countries have benefited from effective differentiation, with tailor-made partnerships that met their specific needs.

— Moroccan respondent

The results of **question 4b** showed, however, that the belief in an ineffective application does not imply a refusal of the differentiation principle. 70% of participants considered that differentiation still serves a purpose (graph 9) in recognising the different aspirations of partner countries in their relations with the EU.

Graph 9: Q.4b Do you think differentiation still serves a purpose?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In their comments, respondents explained their arguments on the differentiation principle:

This principle allows the EU to tailor its engagement strategies to better address the unique needs and aspirations of each country. However, it is crucial that differentiation is applied consistently and transparently, with a firm commitment to upholding the EU's core values of democracy, human rights, and rule of law.

— Lebanese respondent

It provides flexibility, acknowledges political realities, and can help foster cooperation based on the specific needs and aspirations of each neighbour. The EU must, however, continually assess and adapt its approach to ensure that differentiation contributes effectively to the overarching goals of the ENP and the EU's relations with its neighbours.

— Moroccan respondent

Differentiation in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) can still serve a purpose, but its effectiveness depends on various factors, including evolving geopolitical dynamics, the specific goals of the EU, and the willingness of partner countries to engage with the EU on their own terms.

— Jordanian respondent

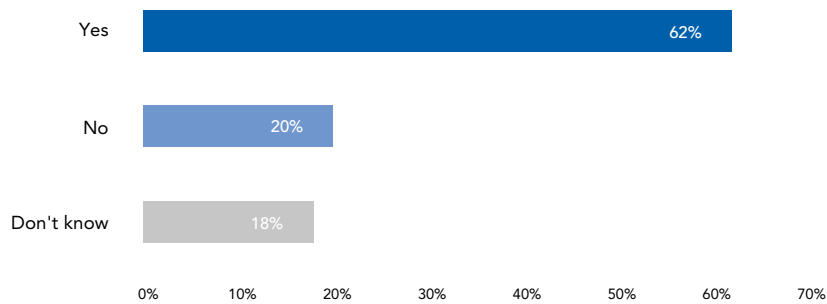
Question 5 was focused on another ENP principle, the “incentive-based approach” (more for more), under which the EU wanted to develop stronger partnerships with those neighbours that progressed in political and economic reform. As with the differentiation principle, a pattern emerges: its application has not been effective (graph 10), but there is a belief that it should remain as a valid principle when revising or revamping the ENP (graph 11).

Graph 10: Q.5a Do you think that the application of the “incentive-based approach” (More for more) has indeed fostered political and economic reform in Southern Mediterranean countries?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Graph 11: Q.5b Should this principle remain an underlying principle of a revised policy of the EU towards its Southern Mediterranean neighbourhood?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In the open comments respondents further elaborated as to why the incentive-based approach has been unsuccessful:

The approach has faced challenges because there is a perception that conditionality is a mechanism for interfering in domestic affairs. Its impact can also be limited by external factors such as regional conflicts and economic crises. Therefore, while it has yielded some positive results, the “More for more” approach alone may not be sufficient to drive comprehensive and sustained reforms in the Southern Mediterranean region.

— Lebanese respondent

It failed because the incentives are not measurable and accountable. The incentives are reliant on elites rather than a broader set of stakeholders in each country.

— Cyprus respondent

We do not see any notable change for us in civil society: exchanges, their financing and development programmes are done essentially and almost exclusively with governments; exchanges have been directed at governments, while ignoring civil society. These closed off exchanges have excluded civil society from cooperation and financing opportunities with the EU.

— Algerian respondent

The EU repeats patterns of the past without being aware of the paradigm shift and the penetration of new actors that do not require conditionality and can match and/or surpass its offer. Maybe the incentive-based approach was outdated.

— Spanish respondent

From the very beginning, conditionality has been problematic as it has not been implemented in a coherent way and it has created unmet expectations. At the same time, it has been very difficult for those countries that were taking their first steps towards reform. This, however, does not mean that conditionality should be scrapped.

— Italian respondent

Open comments for the incentive-based approach outlined several arguments for keeping it in the ENP:

The EU should always try to remain open to closer relations with those countries that are truly interested in forging such relations.

— Irish respondent

Its effectiveness depends on balanced implementation, transparency, and strong monitoring mechanisms to ensure that the incentives genuinely lead to meaningful reforms. A revised policy should maintain this principle while addressing the shortcomings and challenges of its application, emphasising a balanced approach that combines incentives with constructive engagement and dialogue to foster sustainable change in the region.

— Lebanese respondent

I believe that there are some principles, such as democracy and human rights, that the EU should follow and push for, as much as possible, in third countries. Thus, conditionality could be useful in this sense. The EU will, however, have to compete with other financial assistants that will be more flexible in this regard. The EU, therefore, may need to recalibrate and be prepared to offer more for less conditions, if it wants to compete in this arena.

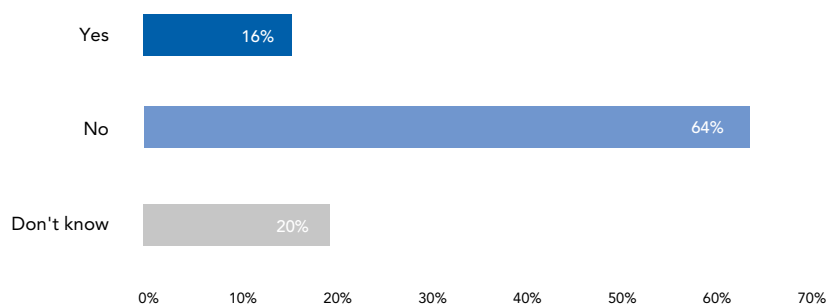
— Belgian respondent

It is an effective behavioural modification tool that can yield constructive structural changes, theoretically speaking. But we should improve our protocols/procedures for applying it, lifting it, and ensuring cohesion behind it before we use it again, otherwise all it does is make Europe look weak and dictatorial.

— Libyan respondent

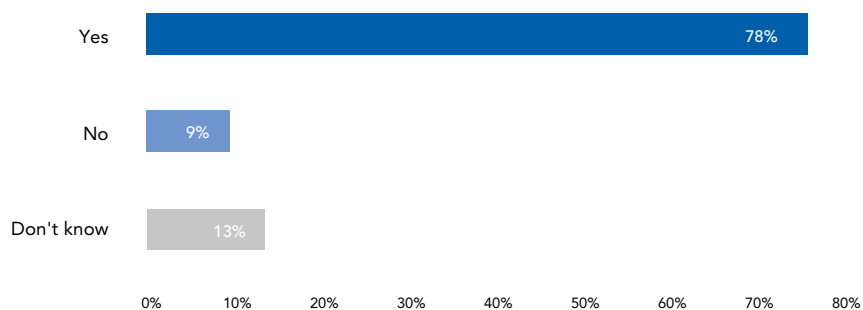
Question 6 assessed the joint-ownership principle which, based on the awareness of shared values and common interests, aims to be unimposing in terms of the priorities and conditions of ENP partners. When asked whether they felt the ENP is based on a relationship of co-ownership with the Southern Mediterranean countries (SMCs) a substantial majority of respondents (almost 70%) said 'no' (graph 12). As with the former questions on the ENP principles, this result is not a refusal of joint-ownership: respondents considered that it should be present in EU-SMCs relations. Indeed, a vast majority (80% of respondents) think that this principle should continue guiding the EU's efforts in redefining its approach vis-à-vis Southern Mediterranean neighbours (graph 13). It was, however, deemed ineffective.

Graph 12: Q.6a Do you think EU Southern Mediterranean countries feel they co-own the ENP?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Graph 13: Q.6b Do you think the principle of joint ownership should continue guiding the EU's efforts in redefining its approach vis a vis its Southern Mediterranean neighbours?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In their open comments, respondents clarified why SMCs perceive that co-ownership has not been successfully applied by the ENP:

I think some southern countries suffer from weak institutions or organisational capacity and lack sustainable policies combined with clear visions and strategies, so they feel and act like reacting or interacting rather than sharing or co-owning. It needs some kind of assistance, follow-up and encouragement, if not guidance, regarding administrative and organisational aspects. This would lead to effective organised and well-prepared policies and priorities on both sides.

— Egyptian respondent

There is a feeling across the southern flank that the EU acts in a paternalistic way with its partners. The ENP's application needs revision in a way that allows southern countries to speak for themselves and engage more productively in designing Euro-Med cooperation.

— Algerian respondent

I'm not familiar enough with examples where joint ownership has led to concrete results. Institutionally, I heard positive remarks about it. As the EU is such a cumbersome institution, I think it will be rare – but most useful – for a southern country to see how joint ownership translates into action.

— Israeli respondent

When given space to provide open answers on the continuation of joint-ownership, respondents highlighted its value for accommodating diverse perspectives, objectives and expectations.

It is the only way for the approach to have a chance to succeed. That said, the EU must be honest in that it has its own goals on which it is not willing to negotiate. Unfulfilled (and misguided) expectations are one of the main sources of discontent with the ENP in the SMCs.

— Polish respondent

If truly acted upon, it can reduce sentiments of eurocentrism/post-colonialism. It may stimulate more strategic thinking among partner countries.

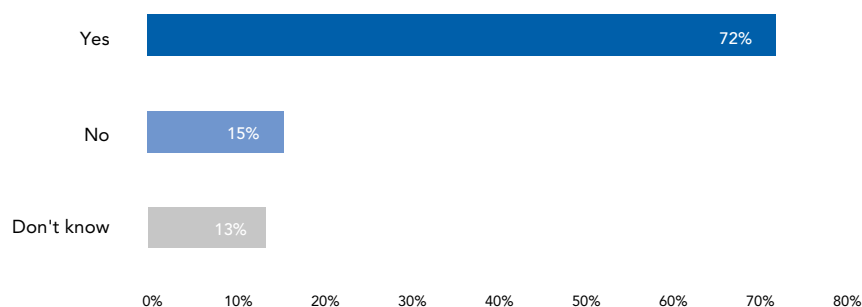
— Israeli respondent

The perception of a common Euro-Mediterranean destiny is essential to the renewal of the Mediterranean basin, but given the severely degraded local situations, we are starting from scratch.

— French respondent

Closing this block, **question 7a** was designed to identify if the EU should seek to simplify mechanisms to avoid the confusion caused by the overlap between the regional dimension of the ENP and the UfM. Respondents clearly agree (72%) on the need to simplify these mechanisms (graph 14).

Graph 14: Q.7a The overlap between the regional dimension of the ENP and the UfM introduces unnecessary confusion, and the EU should seek to simplify its mechanisms.



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

By simplifying mechanisms, the EU can avoid unnecessary redundancy and allocate resources more effectively to achieve its objectives in the region. Simplification also allows for a more focused and impactful approach. It enables the EU to concentrate its efforts on key priorities and areas where it can make a real difference, rather than spreading resources thinly across multiple platforms.

— Lebanese respondent

When reading EU documents, it is not clear who are the main actors of Euro-Med cooperation and through which mechanisms cooperation should take place.

— Italian respondent

The rise of the ENP as the main instrument for EU foreign relations, with its Southern neighbours, has entailed a shift of emphasis from region-building to bilateralism. While some Mediterranean countries thrived outside the constrictions of the regional framework, the shift left the Europeans without a clear vision for the area.

— Algerian respondent

The Union for the Mediterranean is political, institutional, and diplomatic. The specific tools of the ENP, however, are pragmatic and practical. They fund concrete actions that contribute to reducing inequalities. They propose solutions to common challenges and improve the quality of the lives of Mediterranean citizens in small positive ways: help with training, employment and starting businesses.

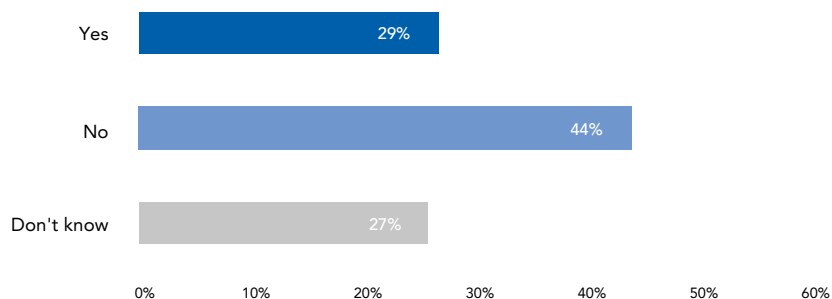
— French respondent

People are already confused as to the relationship between the EU and member states. Having multiple overlapping forums just exaggerates that confusion, and it pushes a regression towards bilateral relationship building in place of the multilateral forums that such bodies intend to build.

— Libyan respondent

When asked, in **question 7b**, if the UfM should replace the ENP as a regional framework, near a half of respondents (44%) considered that this was not necessary. Interestingly, 27% of the answers indicated uncertainty. Almost the same percentage of those that wanted the ENP to be removed as a regional framework (see graph 15).

Graph 15: Q.7b The EU should get rid of the ENP as a regional framework and further invests in the UfM as a regional mechanism.



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In the open comments, respondents offered a variety of opinions about regional framework structures, be it the UfM or the ENP.

The decision to eliminate the ENP as a regional framework and further invest in the UfM as a regional mechanism is a policy choice that requires careful consideration and negotiation among all stakeholders involved.

— Moroccan respondent

The EU should consider investing further in both the UfM as a regional mechanism while also keeping the ENP as a separate framework. Consolidating efforts within the UfM could lead to a more coherent and streamlined approach to addressing the complex challenges and opportunities in the Mediterranean region. This move would signify the EU's commitment to a more unified and effective engagement strategy in its Southern Mediterranean neighbourhood.

— Lebanese respondent

Rather organise a clear sharing of roles with the means of a policy specific to an OECD function of the UfM; otherwise make the UfM the instrument of the European Commission for the regional ENP which would see it appropriate the countries of the South.

— French respondent

The UfM has been using more tangible tools to approach the Mediterranean partnership. It is less theoretical and more responsive to the developments on the ground. It is, therefore, equipped with the best tools to generate creative solutions and plan for co-owned policies. From these incremental steps, macro-level strategies should be designed; through a bottom-up approach not a top-down approach.

— Egyptian respondent

At the core of the ENP: political dialogue, trade and mobility

The fourth block of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey aimed to assess elements such as political dialogue, trade and mobility, which have been at the core of the ENP during the past 20 years. It delved in questions on policy revision and restructuring.

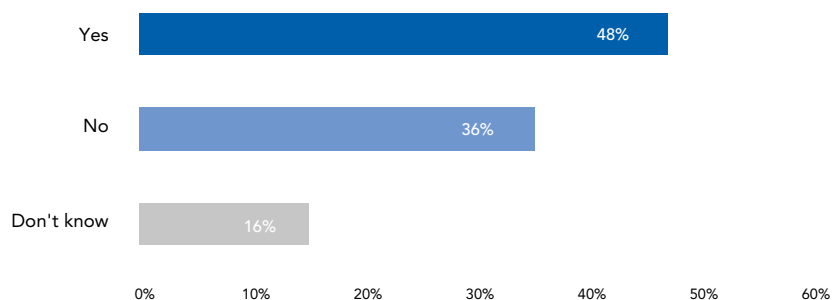
Main findings:

- Almost half of the SMCs respondents answered favourably when asked if the Action Plans and Partnership Priorities reflected their country's needs and challenges.
- When assessing if Action Plans and Partnership Priorities reflected country needs and challenges there is a clear trend that differentiates Mashreq and Maghreb countries. Largely positive responses from the former and a differing, more nuanced outlook from the latter.
- At the regional level, 41% of overall respondents considered that needs and challenges were not reflected in the Partnership Priorities. There was a breakdown of consensus here where EU respondents maintained a negative perception at the regional level, while Southern respondents were more positive.
- Most respondents were in favour of maintaining a regular calendar for political dialogue between the EU and its partners, under the banner of the ENP. Strong support was also given to introducing more flexibility into the scheduling of these meetings.
- 36% of those polled considered that the change introduced in 2015, regarding progress reports, was unfortunate, and that the EU should keep issuing reports regarding "progress" made by its partners. 26% indicated that they didn't know.

- DCFTAs are still considered the best paradigm to advance trade relations between the EU and its Southern Mediterranean partners.
- There is no clear answer as to whether the South should continue pushing for signing agreements, as has been (unsuccessfully) the case, or define a new approach for mobility cooperation.

Question 8 aimed to investigate whether the ENP was focusing on the real needs, challenges and priorities of countries involved. Forming the background of this question were bilateral negotiations, especially financial assistance, that focused on partner action plans (until 2015) and partner priorities (since 2015). The first question only asked Southern Mediterranean partners (SMP) to respond and wanted to know about the specific impact on the respondent's country. Almost half of the respondents (graph 16) believed that the Action Plans and Partnership Priorities reflected their country's needs and challenges.

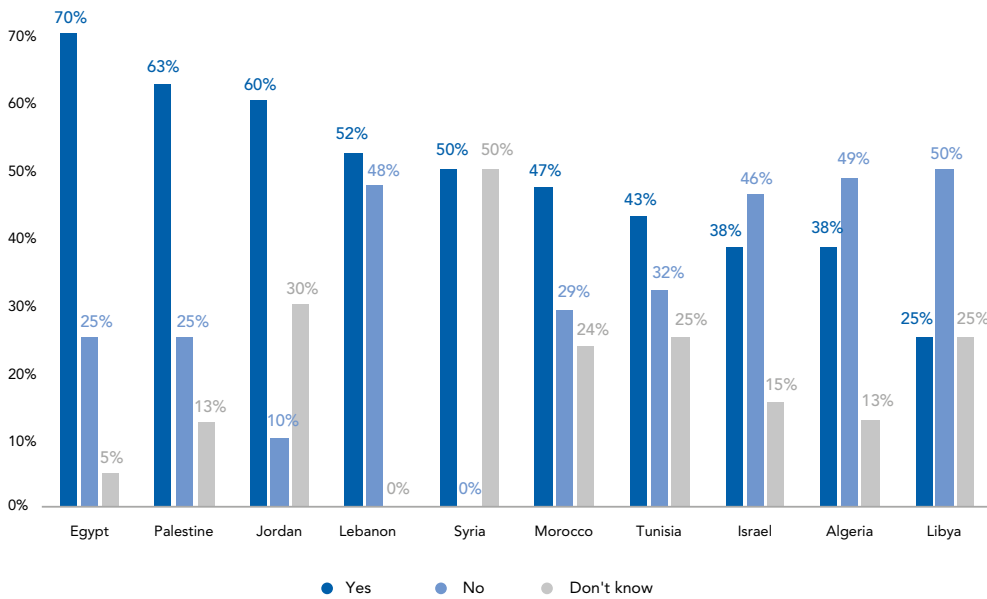
Graph 16: Q.8a Do you think the Priorities for Action/Partnership Priorities identified in these documents reflect the real needs, challenges, and priorities of your country? (only SMP respondents)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

When analysing the results by country there is a clear trend that differentiates the Mashreq and Maghreb. 'Yes' answers were above 50% in Egypt, Palestine, Jordan and Lebanon (graph 17) while percentages were below 50% in Maghreb countries and Israel. In certain cases, such as Algeria and Libya, as well as in Israel, respondents believed that the real needs and challenges of their countries were not prioritised in the ENP Partnership Priorities (or equivalent Action Plans).

Graph 17: Q.8a Do you think the Priorities for Action/Partnership Priorities identified in these documents reflect the real needs, challenges, and priorities of your country? (only SMP respondents)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Many of the comments offered different areas for improvement that the ENP could prioritise:

The entire vision of the southern flank's priorities needs to be re-assessed. The protest movements, COVID-19 crisis and ongoing geopolitical shifts must be taken into consideration.

— Algerian respondent

In Morocco the priorities only partly reflect the real needs and challenges. Possibly, there is a problem in impact evaluation. I'm not sure if the impact of the sponsored projects has been evaluated as rigorously and as strictly as it should have been.

— Moroccan respondent

It surprises me that these are the "real" needs in these countries. This may be what the EU thinks is real. How is it that none of these countries need food security, respect for sovereignty or independence? The EU should clarify that these are the priorities of its ruling partners; people have different needs.

— Tunisian respondent

All of these are important, but going forward, international trade should be a priority. It should be addressed from different perspectives, as international trade can pose opportunities to all the relevant stakeholders but at the same time it comes with its own set of challenges.

— Lebanese respondent

While they may not always perfectly capture every aspect of the Palestinian context, these documents are designed to provide a framework for targeted and effective EU support that aligns with Palestine's development aspirations. Ongoing dialogue and flexibility are key to ensuring that these priorities remain relevant and responsive to changing circumstances.

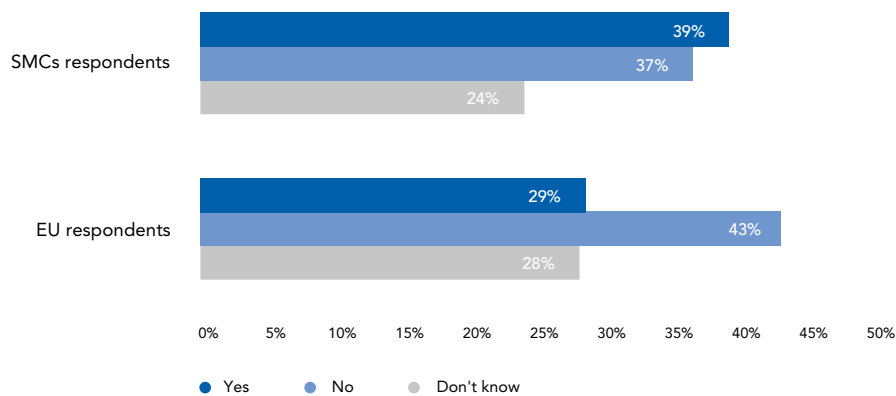
— Palestinian respondent

Effort should be more carefully directed towards specific and important sectors, whilst also being increased. It needs to focus on youth, poverty, job creation, food and water security, education, mobility and exchanging experiences and best practices in different sectors.

— Egyptian respondent

Question 8b proposed the same question but opened it up to all respondents and asked if, at the regional level, Partnership Priorities reflected the real needs, challenges and priorities of the countries involved. 41% of respondents considered that their needs and challenges were not reflected in the Partnership Priorities, while 32% considered that they were reflected. 28% did not have a clear idea and chose the 'Don't know' option. Breaking down the results by geographical area, graph 18 offers us a different picture. EU respondents were markedly negative in their views, while those from the SMCs were marginally more positive than negative.

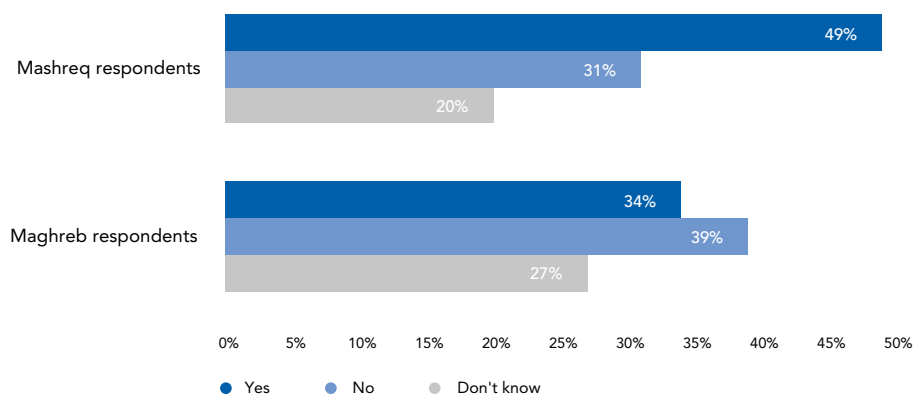
Graph 18: Q.8b At a regional level, do you think the Partnership Priorities reflect the real needs, challenges, and priorities of the countries involved?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Interestingly, the positive results of SMCs respondents were due to Mashreq answers as 49% considered that Partnership Priorities reflect their real needs and challenges, while 31% considered that they do not. Maghreb respondents, on the contrary, highlighted that for them, there is no correspondence between priorities and their real needs and challenges (39%). Only 34% of those polled believed that there has been relevant prioritisation.

Graph 19: Q.8b At a regional level, do you think the Partnership Priorities reflect the real needs, challenges, and priorities of the countries involved?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

These are some open comments on how Partnership Priorities reflect real needs and challenges at the regional level:

The Partnership Priorities are much better focused on the priorities of the two sides (EU and partner countries). Despite this, the tendency to a dispersion of efforts is a constant challenge.

— Irish respondent

The big issues are migration and refugees. In terms of politics, it is sometimes deplorable to see how far the EU is from doing what needs to be done.

— Lebanese respondent

If the EU decided to take a real stand on human rights in authoritarian countries it would not be able to sign Partnership Priority documents with their governments. I don't see this happening, because the partners have the EU over a barrel on the migration issue. So, the Partnership Priorities are good for governments, less so for societies. The question is the extent to which the EU can live with this.

— German respondent

Other comments on Partnership Priorities described some elements that, according to respondents, should be present at the regional level:

Europe needs to define its own interests in order to explain priorities to its partners. The EU may need to address why other models (Russian or Chinese) are working within the region.

— Spanish respondent

Priorities should be developed in direct consultation with civil society, grassroots groups, NGOs and later with governments.

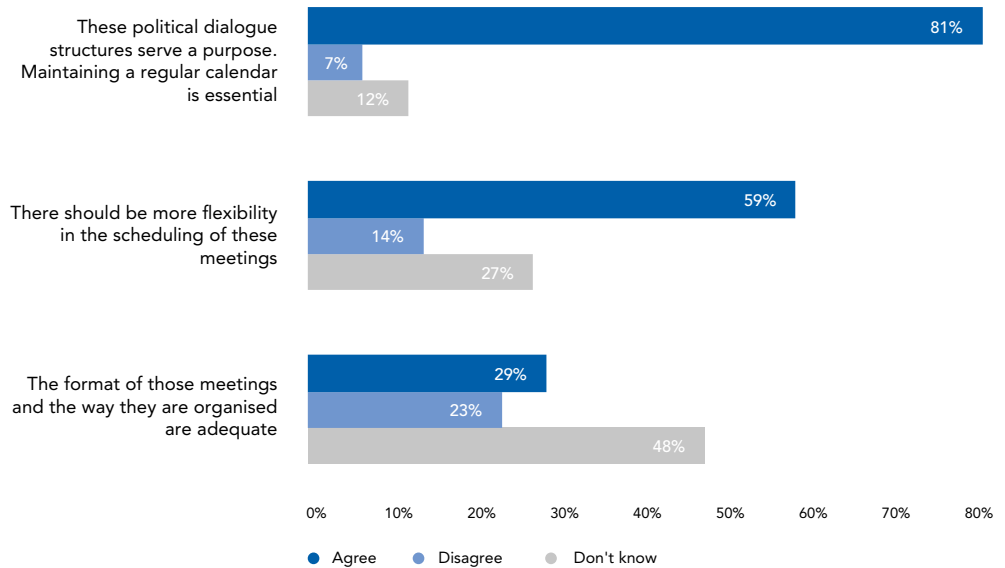
— Palestinian respondent

Security support is insufficient (Morocco is the first African border of the European Union), hence there is a need for better collaboration (return migration, legal migration, human rights, support for the diaspora, etc.).

— Moroccan respondent

Questions 9 and 10 were focused on two specific tools related to the functioning of the ENP. The first, in **question 9**, was focused on the articulation of the political and policy dialogue of the EU with its partners under the ENP. Respondents clearly agree on maintaining present dialogue structures and its calendar (81% of the answers), although strong support was also given to increasing flexibility when scheduling these meetings (59%). When asked to evaluate if the format of the meetings and their organisation are adequate, 48% of respondents answered, 'Don't know'. While almost one third believed they were adequate, 23% did not (graph 20).

Graph 20: Q.9 Do you agree/disagree with these statements?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

More qualitative opinions were outlined in the opened commentaries:

The meetings are highly bureaucratic in nature. Making them more operational is a constant challenge, reflecting the weight of the bureaucracies that confront each other in these meetings.

— Irish respondent

On the one hand regular meetings at official and ministerial level can help to maintain a good momentum, or at least force officials and politicians to keep their finger on the proverbial pulse and measure the progress of relations. Yet routine meetings may not stimulate new ideas and initiatives. Perhaps the EU should differentiate between routine official level meetings and special ministerial level meetings to initiate new initiatives. It may give politicians a stimulus to initiate steps towards the EU.

— Israeli respondent

Although the calendar should be maintained, the EU is not sufficiently perceived as a political player because it has no teeth and competes against its own member states. Thus, these meetings look more like consultations.

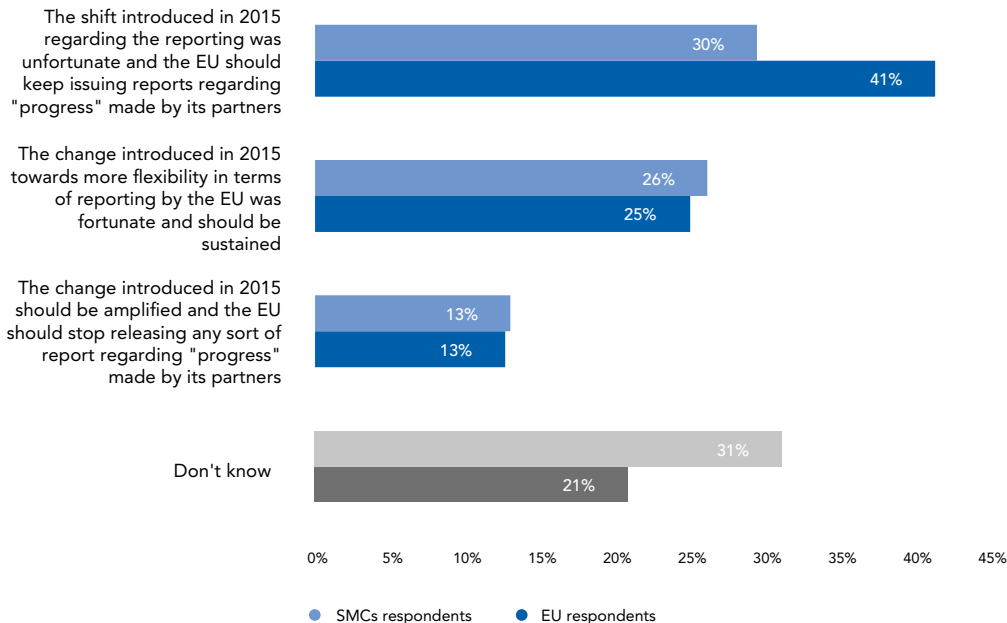
— Lebanese respondent

Diversity in participation should be available at all meetings. Where possible, the meetings should be accessible (e.g., as a webcast) to members of the public and civil society organisations in all the respective countries.

— Turkish respondent

Question 10 focused on the practice of reporting the progress of agreed policies between the EU and its ENP partners. In 2015 the reporting framework changed from a model of a set of regular progress reports on all countries, towards a less prescriptive style of assessment. 36% believed indeed it was unfortunate and thought that the EU should keep issuing reports regarding "progress" made by its partners. On the other hand, 24% thought it was a good change. EU respondents were more critical of the new reporting framework (graph 21).

Graph 21: Q.10 When the ENP was crafted in 2004, it was established that the European Commission would "report periodically on progress accomplished" towards agreed priorities. With the 2015 review of the ENP, this systematic model of annual progress reports changed. Since then, there is no standardized practice of reporting. Do you think that (select only one option):



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In the open comments some respondents elaborated on their answers:

It is necessary to have evaluation tools but in reality, they are only interesting if they are accompanied by a real political analysis and proposals for action by EU countries to promote a climate of confidence.

— French respondent

It is important to have some kind of regular evaluation, such a document can be used to build upon. It does not need to be done annually, it could be, for example, every two years. Clarity should be key in the document: the way it is written, who participated in it, what are its purposes, and how it can be useful and applied. These, among other questions, should be clarified.

— Egyptian respondent

It is essential to provide more transparency and accountability in EU policy. The EU should go back to the process of regular reporting (maybe not annually, but bi-annually).

— Polish respondent

If the ENP aims to promote not only a partnership but a co-ownership of the programme, EU reporting should follow different MS approaches and even regional aggregations, becoming even more flexible.

— Italian respondent

Regular reporting is good, as are standards for that reporting. It's treated by many low-level embassy staff/diplomats as a pain but it forces a regular review of policy and impact, and keeps these standards at the forefront of the minds of implementing officers, which is useful.

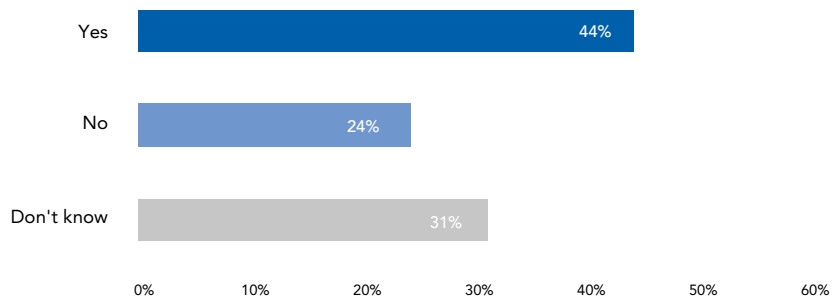
— Libyan respondent

This question conflates two issues: regular reporting, which in my view should be maintained also with respect to transparency towards EU citizens; and reporting framed in terms of "progress", which examines partner countries in terms of how they meet expectations and priorities overwhelmingly shaped by the EU. In my view, regular reporting should happen, but it should focus on more general developments, rather than becoming an exercise on how virtuous or otherwise ENP partner countries are.

— Italian respondent

In **question 11**, participants of the survey were asked about the deep comprehensive free trade areas (DCFTAs), since trade integration has been a key objective of ENP. DCFTAs, essentially free-trade zones with access to the EU Single Market, have been implemented by the EU in the Eastern Neighbourhood since 2014, but the signature of similar agreements has not been possible with its Southern neighbours. When asked if DCFTAs are still the best paradigm to advance better trade relations between the EU and its Southern Mediterranean partners, 44% of respondents stated that they are (graph 22). A notable 31% chose 'Don't know' while a quarter were unconvinced by the DCFTAs.

Graph 22: Q.11 Do you think DCFTAs are still the best paradigm to advance better trade relations between the EU and its Southern Mediterranean partners?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In the open-ended comments respondents identified some alternative options:

Comprehensive free trade agreements are considered a form of integration in the global economy and one of the modern means of cooperation between countries. They create blocs that can coexist and cope with global economic changes.

— Algerian respondent

DCFTA was tailored to specific countries (Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) which are distinct to Southern Mediterranean countries. The general principle may perhaps hold but adaptation will be needed.

— Spanish respondent

DCFTAs applicability to the Southern Mediterranean region may require careful consideration. The EU should assess the unique circumstances and challenges of its Southern neighbours and adapt its approach accordingly. Customised agreements, development-oriented strategies, and inclusivity in the negotiation process could offer alternative paths to foster better trade relations and support economic growth and stability in the region.

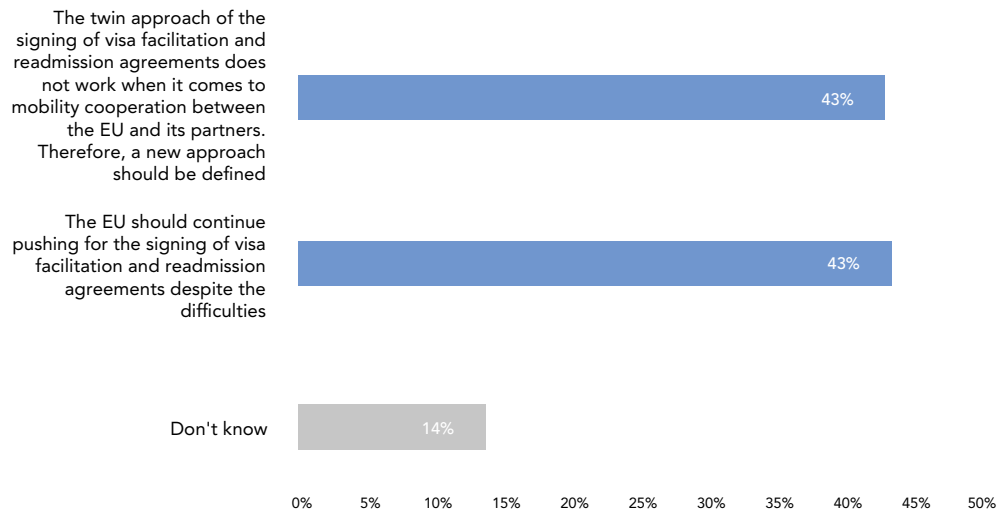
— Lebanese respondent

I would prefer to say 'probably' but this depends on how the EU approaches this issue. The DCFTA negotiations have run into a wall because the EU remains committed to limiting access in sectors where the partners have comparative advantages. This is a political decision and there are reasons for it. But as long as this is the case the DCFTA will not go ahead.

— German respondent

Question 12 was focused on mobility. The EU has concluded visa liberalisation and signed visa facilitation and readmission agreements with almost all its Eastern neighbours, but contrary to the Eastern Partnership, visa liberalisation is not on the agenda with any Southern neighbours and the twin track approach visa facilitation/readmission agreements has not prospered either. The survey addressed two options related to visa facilitation and readmission. Respondents did not show a clear preference towards either alternative. The same percentage was given to "Continue pushing for signing agreements" (43%) as for "Defining a new approach to mobility cooperation" (graph 23).

Graph 23: Q.12 Given this situation, do you think that (select only one option):



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In the open comments the challenges of finding a balanced policy on readmissions and visa facilitation were highlighted by respondents:

What is striking is that the European Union does not hide its intentions in trying to persuade the countries concerned to accept its policy directions in the field of combating illegal immigration. It is also open about its political orientation in the field of facilitating visas. The two policies are selective.

— Algerian respondent

The question of readmission requires far more leverage than what can be achieved with visa facilitation. The range of measures to elicit real cooperation on readmission should be expanded to include “sanctions” as well as “rewards”. At the same time the insistence on the readmission of 3rd country nationals is unfair on the transit countries and should be dealt with differently.

— Irish respondent

The EU approach is seen by many Southern countries as a method to solve its migration problem without due regard to the concerns of Southern countries. A new approach must be just and balanced.

— Egyptian respondent

A new approach could focus more on education and training linked to visa facilitation in order to tackle irregular migration flows. After a positive result in that direction, readmission agreements could be tackled.

— Italian respondent

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS



Failed? Reformable? What is needed? – What future for the European Neighbourhood Policy in the Mediterranean?

Michael A. Köhler

Senior Associate Fellow IEMed. Professor for Europe and the Mediterranean, College of Europe, Bruges.

On 1 May 2004 ten new member states completed their accession to the European Union, enlarging the Union from 15 to 25 members, with two more countries – Romania and Bulgaria – still waiting on the sidelines to be admitted to the Union only three years later, in 2007. Already almost two years earlier, the EU's first High Representative on Foreign and Security Policy Javier Solana and his colleague in the Commission, external relations Commissioner Chris Patten, in their joint "Wider Europe" letter of 7 August 2002 had sketched out a new policy framework for the enlarged Union's future relations with its immediate neighbours (Tocci, 2004). This was further refined in 2003 and 2004 on the basis of proposal made in two Commission Communications, to become known as the "European Neighbourhood Policy" (ENP) (Commission 2003 and 2004).

While initially focusing on establishing a partnership with European countries outside the enlarged European Union located east of Poland and the Baltic Republics, which would share a border with the Union following its 2004 enlargement, the ENP concept was soon extended to include also EU's neighbours both in the South-East – in the Southern Caucasus – following the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia and in the South, i.e. the EU's Mediterranean partners. They were already linked to the European Union through a series of Association Agreements concluded in the five to ten years before and in particular through the Barcelona Process that since 27/28 November 1995 had become the setting for a Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

The inclusion of Southern Mediterranean countries into the emerging European Neighbourhood Policy did not only reflect the interests of Southern EU member states but also responded to Commission President Romano Prodi's initiative to

The ENP concept included EU neighbours both in the South-East – in the Southern Caucasus – and in the South, i.e. the EU's Mediterranean partners.

The inclusion of Southern Mediterranean countries into the emerging ENP did not only reflect the interests of Southern EU member states but also responded to Commission President Romano Prodi's initiative to establish a 'ring of [EU] friends'.

The launching of the ENP was not only triggered by the massive 2004 enlargement of the Union to the East and to a lesser extent also to the South. It was also a reaction to two new game-changing factors: the stalemate in the Middle East Peace Process and the echoes of the 9/11 terror attacks.

establish a 'ring of [EU] friends', not the least from the South, that would share everything with the Union except its institutions (Prodi, 2002).

From the outset, the new approach was met with considerable questions in the Mediterranean region, such as: What would be the relationship between the new policy and its governance architecture on the one hand and the – partnership-driven – structure of the Barcelona Process with its strong regional focus that the EU-15 and their 13 Mediterranean neighbours had formed not even nine years earlier? Would it be appropriate, and was there enough in common, to deal with the Southern and the Eastern Neighbourhood together under one common European Neighbourhood umbrella? If enlargement policy was bound to prepare the way to EU accession, what would be the final objective of cooperation under the European Neighbourhood Policy? Was the new policy approach too euro-centric and inspired by the proven EU method of pre-accession partnership to be adapted to the complex and diverging realities and perspectives of the countries involved? Was the geographic scope of the emerging ENP appropriate rather than simple and – for the European Union – conveniently based on tradition instead of geopolitical realities (Assessing 2017, Lannon, 2012)?

Undeniably, the launching of the ENP was in itself not only triggered by the massive enlargement of the Union to the East and, with Malta and Cyprus joining the EU and Türkiye starting accession negotiations in 2005, to a lesser extent also to the South. It was also a reaction to two new game-changing factors that very much distinguished the Euro-Mediterranean environment of 2004 from the one of the Barcelona Foreign Ministers Conference of 1995: (1) the stalemate in the Middle East Peace Process since the return to power of the Likud in Israel and in particular the second Palestinian Intifadha (2000-2005), and (2) the echoes of the 9/11 terror attacks in New York and Washington, including the Iraq war, that introduced a new focus on security aspects into the cooperation with the MENA region and contributed further to the region's fragmentation.

Clearly, in particular for the ENP's Southern dimension the policy's EU enlargement policy heritage proved to be challenging from the start. This does not only relate to the benchmarking methodology, according to which the EU was assessed on an annual basis development and reform progress in the partner countries – as if they were supposed to advance on a mutually agreed EU-integration track – but also to the strict bilateralism of the initial ENP that had very largely renounced any major regional or subregional cooperation ambition and put on the back burner the admittedly complex regional dimension of the Barcelona Process co-decision architecture.

Successive reforms of the ENP endeavoured to address the founding flaws and adjust the ENP's priorities and policy toolbox in order to equip it realistically and therefore better to deal with the challenges in the region and with partner interests – in 2007/8 phasing out some pre-accession elements and launching a new framework for regional cooperation with the Union for Mediterranean, in 2011 reacting to the Arab Spring, and in 2015 taking into account the need to provide for stabilisation given the crises both in the East and the South, growing fragmentation and a differentiation of realities, interests and needs in both sub-regions and the emergence

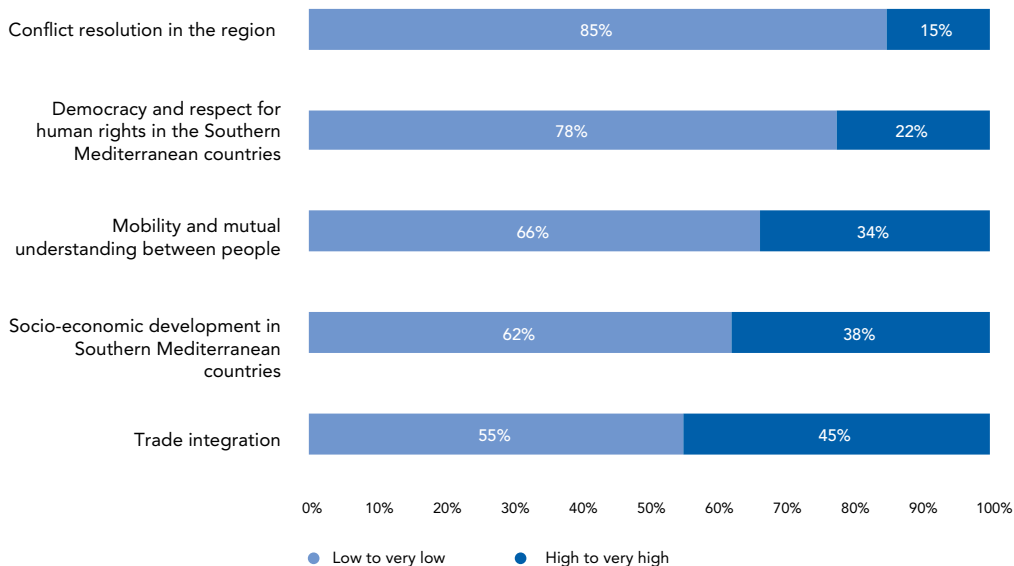
of massive migration flows to Europe from and through the Mediterranean region. In particular, the 2015 reform is noteworthy in this context, not only because of its extent and ambition, but even more so since it was based, for the first time ever, on a four-month long public consultation of ENP stakeholders, including partner countries and regional organisations (European Commission, 2015).

Against the background of this long track record of European Neighbourhood Policy reform and adjustment, the general assessment provided by a rather diverse and heterogenous group of 445 experts consulted in the EuroMeSCo IEMed Survey of the ENP's Southern dimension coming from a vast majority of countries that form part of the policy – regardless of the whether they share a Mediterranean coast or not – offers a rather sobering picture of the policy's effectiveness 20 years into the process:

- Policy impact is considered generally low to very low:

In none of the five key areas (conflict resolution; democracy and human rights promotion; mobility and mutual understanding of people; socio-economic development; trade integration) a majority of experts participating in the survey observes a positive balance of ENP action.

Graph 1: Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



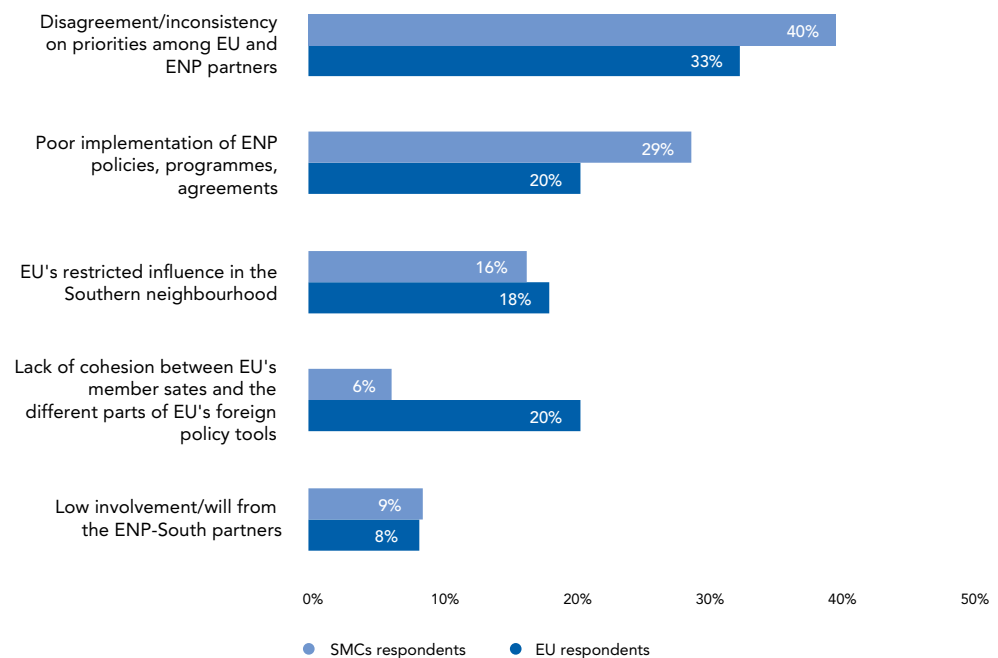
Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Two features are striking in this regard: Firstly, while respondents’ damning assessments of low-level effectiveness of ENP in conflict resolution (85%) and mobility and mutual understanding (66%) can hardly surprise, the policy scores also low in areas where undoubtedly major efforts have been undertaken, such as democracy and human rights (78%) – not only but in particular after 2011 – and both socio-economic development (62%) or trade integration (55%). Secondly, there is no stark difference in the views of either EU- or Southern Neighbourhood-based respondents. EU-based observers tend to be slightly more critical of the policy impact on conflict resolution and democracy/human rights, and slightly more positive on trade integration than experts from the South, but these are nuances that do not change the general impression.

- Disagreement and inconsistency on priorities among EU and ENP partners is seen as the main source of the ENP’s insufficient effectiveness:

Again, correspondents from both the South (40%) and the North (33%) seem largely to agree on this finding. The second most common reason for the perceived lack of ENP effectiveness quoted is a perception of poor implementation of ENP policies, programmes, and agreements (29% Southern and 20% Northern respondents).

Graph 2: Q.1b In general terms or in relation to the specific areas mentioned above, why do you think the impact has been limited? (categories developed from open-ended answers)



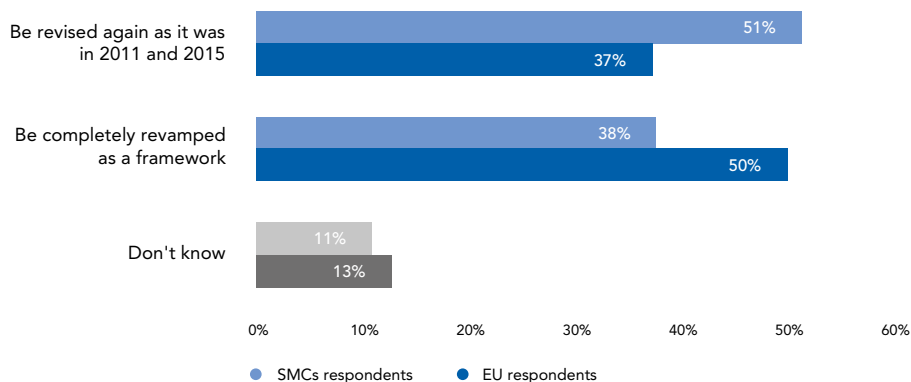
Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

If we do not want to explain this observation exclusively by assuming a lack of professional capacity on the side of implementing partners, poor implementation has probably to be understood as a function of the first and most prominent reason identified: If ENP partners do not fully agree on priorities and do not ensure their consistency, it is hardly astounding that the implementation of policies, programmes, and agreements will leave something to be desired. Open comments proved by respondents hardly ever refer to technical deficiencies in programme implementation. Moreover, there is also hardly any difference between comments from countries where the EU has applied budget support programmes conditioned on reform progress (such as Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan or Egypt) and those where it has not. Rather than that, respondents repeatedly refer to problems such as differences in policy priorities and interest, a too euro-centric and narrowly EU interest-based approach in the ENP, or even a perception of a neo-colonial attitude, policy inconsistency, and a lack of cohesion between EU and EU member states' policies (observed more by EU experts than those from the South: 20.5% to 6.3%) (see graph 2), as well as an insufficient commitment and a lack of political will on the EU side: in short, a lack of common interest paired with a too imposing and badly communicated EU approach, and a degree of hypocrisy on all sides when referring to common priorities and shared values.

- Consequently, experts demand a new deal:

The verdict is overwhelming: 88% of experts consulted want to see a radical change in the approach, with comparable numbers among them recommending either another revision of the ENP or, more radically, a complete revamp (44% each). While EU-based experts in their majority wish to see a total revamp (50%), Southern Neighbourhood analyst would mainly prefer to see a new policy revision (51%).

Graph 3: Q.2 Since its inception in 2004, the ENP has been reviewed several times. The 2011, 2015 reviews, 2021 New Agenda for the Mediterranean. The ENP should:



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

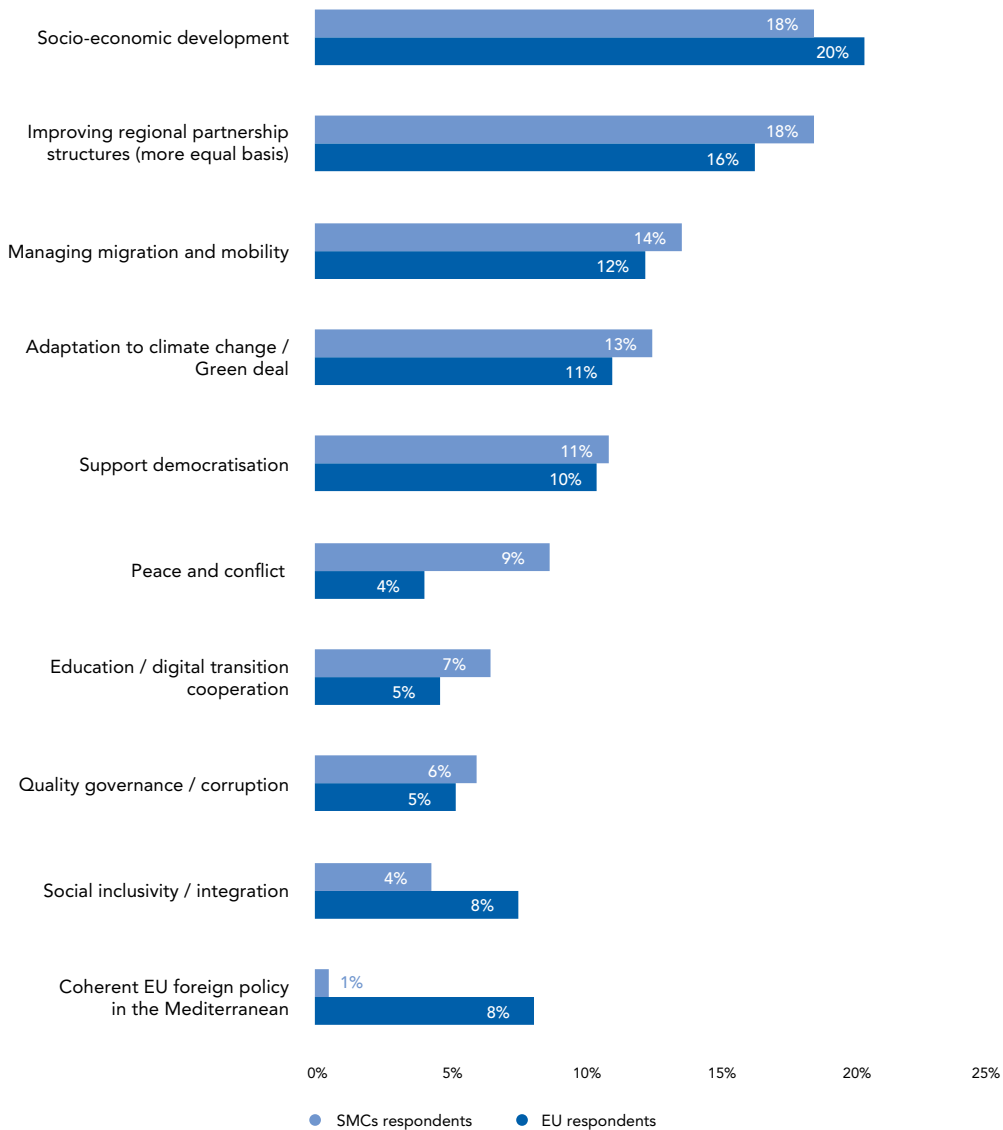
Arguments advanced in favour of a radical policy overhaul are invariably references to new geo-political realities, a definite split between the East and the South since the Russian aggression against Ukraine that would make a common ENP policy look out of phase, the need to give higher priority to the South, develop common ground and identify shared interest, including on conflict resolution and new challenges such as climate change adaptation and mitigation.

- **Soft security policies should be at the heart of the new approach:**

While crisis, conflict, and new geopolitical realities are seen as areas where the existing ENP has fallen particularly short of expectations, analysts participating in the survey in their vast majority (around 70%) and with little distinction between experts from the South or the North identify five pillars on which the hoped-for new partnership should be built: 1) socio-economic development (19.4%), 2) improving regional partnership structures (17.4%), 3) managing migration and mobility (12.9%), 4) adaptation to climate change (11.8%), and 5) support to democratisation (10.7%).

Interestingly, peace and stability with 6.5%, and governance and fight against corruption with 5.6% score rather low on the priority list. One may wonder if this is based on a low assessment of needs or if it rather expresses an expression of a lack of trust in the probability of serious improvements and the ability of even a re-vamped ENP to help in these fields. Whatever it may be, Southern observers expect more peace and conflict engagement from the policy than Northern (8.7% against 4.1%). Northern analysts, however, seem much more concerned with social inclusivity (7.6% to 4.3%) and furthering EU foreign policy coherence than their Southern colleagues (8.1% to 0.5%).

Graph 4: Q.2a What should be the new paradigm or the main focus of a revised or revamped ENP? (categories developed from open-ended answers)



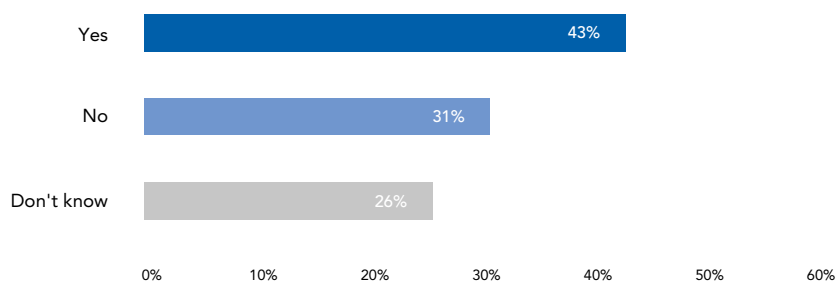
Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

- Establish a new policy framework for partnership with the South, while taking inspiration from elements in the European Union's Partnership with the East:

Respondents – strikingly in the EU even more than in the Southern Neighbourhood (51% vs. 47%) – are clearly in favour of splitting up the traditional ENP geography that unites the East and the South under one common umbrella (with 49% in favour of a split, 35% against and 16% undecided). They are pointing repeatedly to the growing differentiation between the two sub-regions and the game-changing nature of dynamics in the East, where the ENP approach is increasingly being overshadowed by a concrete EU accession perspective notably for Ukraine and Moldova, and in a more conditioned way for Georgia.

However, the proposed split is not radical: A relative majority of experts from the North and the South alike are of the view that a Southern Neighbourhood Policy should nevertheless take some inspiration from the Eastern Partnership: 43% in favour, with 31% against and 26% undecided. Votes in favour seem to be based on the view that in a variety of areas from economic and trade integration/DCFTAs to governance reform, mobility, and Erasmus scholarships the ENP has proven more effective in the East than in the South, not the least due to a – perceived – higher level of policy commitment by the European Union, and the will to establish a partnership between equals and to make available significantly more abundant resources.

Graph 5: Q.3a Do you think the Southern Neighbourhood Policy should get some inspiration from the Eastern Partnership?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In sum, experts both in the North and the South assess the European Neighbourhood Policy, as we know it, as little effective in the South over the past 20 years, since based on wrong assumptions and wrongly construed. They recommend replacing it with a new and specific EU policy approach to the South that should deal with socio-economic, climate, and democracy challenges, drawing strength from the EU's soft power competencies and its experience in the Eastern Neighbourhood but being distinct from it, and being based on true partnership, realistic assessments, and understanding of the complexities of the South, a considerably higher level of engagement and a commensurate allocation of political energy and financial resources.

How is this to be assessed?

The message included in the votes and comments of a considerably numerous and diverse community of specialist respondents from more than 20 countries – 445 persons – is downright unequivocal, as impressions converge in many regards even if written comments reveal a large diversity of perspectives often influenced by national points of view and mostly generalist positions. This is significant, as it can be assumed that the understanding of what the European Neighbourhood Policy *is* and *who its actors are* could vary quite a lot from one respondent to the other – e.g. whether the term ENP would be considered to refer only to the action of EU institutions in the neighbourhood region or also the one of EU member states, or if EU humanitarian engagement in Gaza and Syria or migration or trade policy initiatives in the Mediterranean form part of the ENP or are to be considered distinct EU policies that are only playing out in the same geographical area. Despite this, the level of convergence of views and recommendations of experts consulted is strikingly high.

However, it would not be obvious to construct a new policy approach that would promise higher effectiveness and more tangible results only based on these findings. Further thought must be given to several paradoxes and open questions that result from analysing the results of the survey, such as the following:

Which region and which form of regional partnership?

While recommending a new approach to the region, experts in their written comments make virtually no reference to a need for regional cooperation, or partnership, and to format where it best could take place. Neither the Union for the Mediterranean nor the Anna Lindh Foundation are mentioned, addressed, or assessed in any noteworthy way, nor at least criticised, recommended to be reformed or perhaps replaced by new successor bodies. Their action, mandates and potential do not seem to be considered overly relevant in the context of the survey. It should be asked: How could they be empowered to provide more stimulus and co-ownership to the partnership's regional dimension? Or do they need to be replaced?

Similarly, the geography of the desired new policy approach is not being defined in any sizeable detail. This element, however, would merit further reflection: If ge-

Respondents recommend replacing the ENP by a new and specific EU policy approach to the South that should deal with socio-economic, climate, and democracy challenges, drawing strength from the EU's soft power competencies and its experience in the Eastern Neighbourhood.

While recommending a new approach to the region, experts make virtually no reference to a need for regional cooperation, or partnership, and to the format where it best could take place.

opolitical realities in the Mediterranean have changed, as most of the respondents hold, should any new EU to the region approach not constitute a MENA partnership, including the Gulf countries and Iraq, rather than simply continuing with the present EU-Southern neighbourhood geography? Is the geography of the European Neighbourhood Policy still the appropriate one in order to ensure policy effectiveness and equal partnership?

How to better understand the South and construe a more credible partnership among equals?

Respondents do not reflect on the ongoing trend of fragmentation of country realities and interests in the South itself that makes it ever more complex to come up with a common policy framework for the region.

Experts – not only from the South – see the present ENP still as too euro-centric and imbalanced, and despite the 2015 reform, which endeavoured to phase out much of the previous pre-accession style methodology by introducing a more differentiating, pragmatic, and mutual interest/mutual accountability-based approach. However, experts provide only little insight into what it would take for the EU to better listen and understand the South and adapt the policy better to its needs. Which mechanisms and practices would it take to overcome this problem?

They also do not reflect on the ongoing trend of fragmentation of country realities and interests in the South itself that makes it ever more complex to come up with a common policy framework for the region, in whatever way it is geographically defined. Has this fragmentation reached a point where it makes only little sense to still assume that there is a joint “Southern Neighbourhood” rather than just a geography of individual countries with very distinct realities, interest and needs? In other words, what justifies a regional approach today, and if it is maintained, how to structure it and make it a basis for a credible partnership of equals?

In this context, it should also be further elucidated what Southern neighbour countries’ interest is in the ENP. If they confirm their interest, as they did in the 2015 ENP public consultation exercise, what would be their suggestions to make the partnership at the same time more functional, co-owned, and better balanced?

This is not only a question of balance and fair partnership. If, as many respondents noted, higher levels and a clearer focus on EU political and financial commitment would be required to make the policy more effective, the question has to be addressed what Southern partners themselves bring to the process to make it more attractive and relevant and therefore justify such higher level of EU engagement? Not a somewhat ailing process is what is needed but a partnership that is a conduit to solutions in the joint neighbourhood. In partnership, as in tango, it takes more than just one partner to make it happen...

Who should be the partners and how to take into account their interests?

Respondents generally refer to the “Southern Mediterranean” in a rather generic way. This leaves open the question to which extent the EU should focus its policy on intergovernmental cooperation – only or at least mainly – based on mutual interest and in a transactional way, and whether or how far the EU policy should also seek a dialogue and interaction with civil society and other non-state actors, as it was tried not only but in particular between 2011 and 2019. This question is of particular relevance if one considers the tremendous size and speed of change in societies in the region, not the least due to the demographic dynamics and the huge percentage of youth in Southern Mediterranean societies but also to the impact of modern media, communication technology and the emergence of Artificial Intelligence options. Both trends will not fail to leave their deep mark on governance systems and public opinion alike in the region. How must a partnership approach be construed that takes into account factors in the reality of societal change in the region?

Size and speed of change in societies in the region (demographic dynamics, impact of modern medias) is of key relevance when thinking about whether or how far the EU policy should also seek a dialogue and interaction with civil society and other non-state actors.

How can the new policy become relevant in a crisis- and conflict-stricken region?

The Mediterranean and Middle East region is, or many of its countries are, marred by crisis and conflict. Little speaks for the view that this could change any time soon, on the contrary. As was discussed above, however, respondents gave particularly low scores to the ENP on conflict resolution (85%). In the EU itself the debate on how to make Europe more resilient against crisis, how to boost European armament and defence, and ultimately whether to set up a European army or build a stronger European security identity is in full swing. The majority of participants in the survey still recommend soft security and human development topics as the priorities of a new policy approach for the region. While they may have a point, the question must be discussed if a revamped ENP for the South, or any other form of new policy partnership, could really be imagined without a much stronger crisis management competence that would possibly even include credible hard security elements.

Coming up with credible solutions in this regard is all but simple but it can be assumed that the war between Israel and the Hamas following the 7 October 2023 attack against Israel will further accentuate the question.

The European Neighbourhood Policy in the South needs new momentum, effectiveness, and better balance. May ENP effectiveness presently fall short of expectations, dropping it altogether in favour of pragmatic bilateralism is not an option to be recommended. There is hardly any credible alternative to some form of a specific Euro-Mediterranean or Euro-MENA Partnership. You cannot ignore geography, neither is it wise to ignore history. A short-term, day-to-day transactional policy approach may produce partial successes, but it will fail to build solid partnerships, address long-term structural problems, and enable partners in the South and the North of our common Mediterranean Sea to exploit politically, economically, and socially the potential of their common neighbourhood. Mere transactionalism can, in the long run, not replace partnership.

The critical assessment of the ENP should be heard as a call for a new and more effective partnership that must be comprehensive, inclusive and differentiated, and as much as possible in every partner's interest.

Therefore, the critical assessment of the European Neighbourhood Policy in the South expressed by the 445 respondents from inside and outside the Mediterranean region must not be understood as a justification for giving up the policy. It should be heard as a call for a new and more effective partnership that must be comprehensive, inclusive and differentiated, and as much as possible in every partner's interest. What at first sight looks like a squaring of the circle, can perhaps nevertheless succeed if it is approached with honesty, dialogue, the will for understanding, and a sense of commitment.

References

KOSTANYAN, H. (ED.) (2017). Assessing European Neighbourhood Policy Perspectives from the literature. *CEPS, Brussels, Rowman and Littlefield International, London*. https://cdn.ceps.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/ENP_LiteratureReviewWithCovers.pdf

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2003). Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours. COM (2003) 104 final.

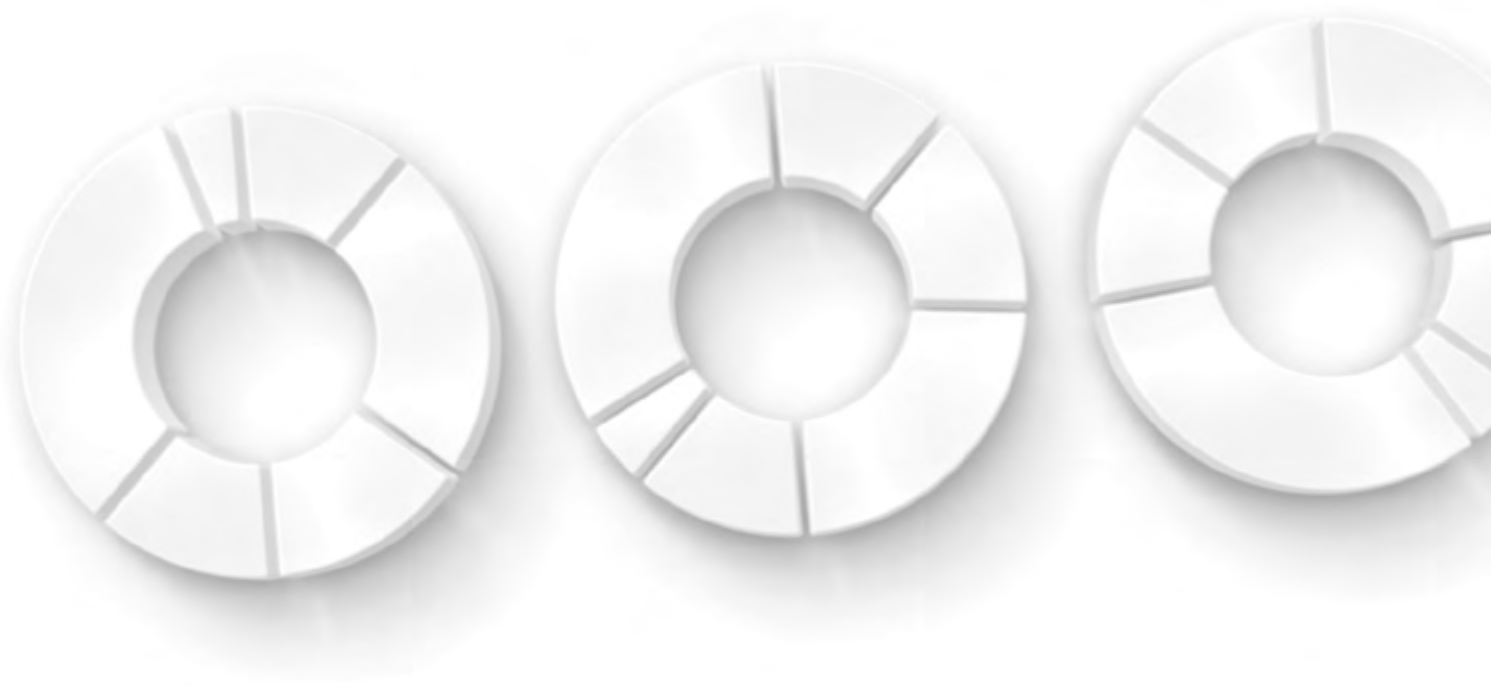
EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2004). Communication from the Commission to the Council European, Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper. COM (2004) 373 final.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2015). Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Available at: https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/review-european-neighbourhood-policy-enp_en

LANNON, E. (ED.) (2012). The European neighbourhood policy's challenges/ Les défis de la politique européenne de voisinage. *College of Europe Studies, Volume 14*. PIE Peter Lang, Brussels.

PRODI, R. (2002). Europe and the Mediterranean: time for action. <https://ec.europa.eu/dorie/fileDownload.do?docId=255969&cardId=255969>

TOCCI, N. (2004). The European Neighbourhood Policy – responding to the EU's post-Enlargement Challenges? *Istituto Affari Internazionali*. <https://www.iai.it/sites/default/files/iai0424.pdf>



Assessing the European Neighbourhood Policy's future

Maria Giulia Amadio Viceré
Assistant Professor at LUISS University

In 2004, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) became the policy framework setting the scene for EU interactions with its neighbours. The launch of this policy framework occurred in a context of relative stability and peace in Europe's neighbourhood, at a time when the EU was redrawing its borders through the 2004 big bang enlargement. Nonetheless, the ENP was doomed to face a range of conflicts, crises and even wars. No other policy framework in the EU encountered so many challenges across time and spread across various policy sectors. Twenty years on, the EuroMeSCo Survey reveals a widespread disillusionment regarding the effectiveness of the ENP impact on the areas of priority for EU interactions with the Southern Neighbourhood. A disillusionment that is coupled with the perceived need to change the current ENP, either through another revision of it or through its complete renovation as a policy framework. How did we get here? And what could we do to relaunch the ENP?

The launch of the ENP occurred in a context of relative stability and peace in Europe's neighbourhood, at a time when the EU was redrawing its borders through the 2004 big bang enlargement.

Ineffective Impact

The results of the EuroMeSCo Survey indicate that the ENP impact has been extremely limited across a range of relevant policy areas for EU interactions with the Southern Neighbourhood. The survey respondents perceive such impact to be largely ineffective concerning conflict resolution in the Southern Mediterranean region, democracy and respect for human rights in the Southern Mediterranean countries, and mobility and mutual understanding between people. While the ENP's impact appears to be slightly more effective on the socio-economic development in Southern Mediterranean countries, trade integration seems to have benefitted the most from the ENP. If one considers that these policy areas largely correspond to the main objectives of the EU and the ENP stated in the EU treaties, these negative responses signal a relevant failure of the EU in dealing with its neighbours, at least in terms of public perception. Indeed, the ENP does not seem to have been able to support the EU's ambitions to "establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation" (TEU, Art. 8). At the same time, it does not seem to have

The ENP does not seem to have been able to support the EU ambitions. At the same time, it does not seem to have provided the EU with the necessary apparatus for promoting its values and interest.

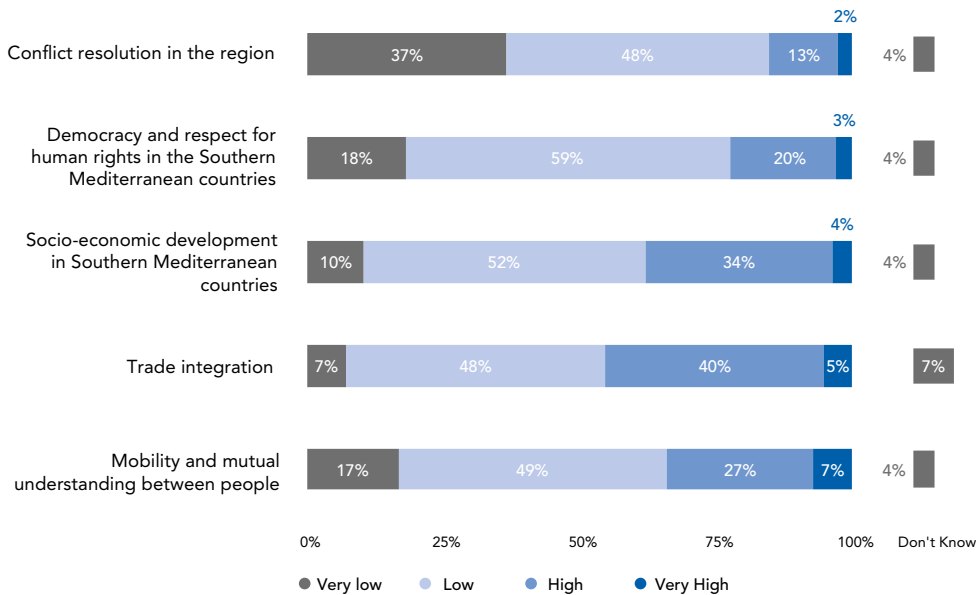
provided the EU with the necessary apparatus for promoting its values and interest, as per TEU, Art. 3.5.

At first sight, these results do not come as a surprise. While multiple crises occurring in the Southern Neighbourhood have marred these policy areas over the past years, the EU has been often unable to provide effective responses to them. Nonetheless, a closer look at the variation in percentages across policy sectors reveals an interesting pattern: the respondents' perception of the ENP's effectiveness on a given policy area seems to be positively correlated with the European integration of that policy area. In essence, the more a policy area features the involvement of EU institutions in member states' related policies, the more respondents have perceived the ENP to have had an effective impact on that policy area.

Significantly, EU activities rooted in the common foreign and security policy area, which functions according to an intergovernmental logic and does not envisage a discretionary role for EU institutions, scored the lowest percentages. Indeed, a vast majority of respondents considered the effectiveness of the ENP's implications on democracy and the respect for human rights, as well as on conflict resolution to have been between low and very low (77% and 85%, respectively). EU activities rooted in highly integrated policy areas, conversely, scored the highest percentages. In particular, the policy area with the highest percentage of positive responses is trade, with 45% of respondents believing that the effectiveness of the ENP's impact has been between high and very high. Socio-economic development is the policy area with the second-highest percentage of positive responses (38%). The ENP's impact on mobility and mutual understanding between people, which is largely rooted in EU migration policy, is considered slightly less effective (34%). It is true that the difference between this area and the area of socio-economic development is not very significant. It is relevant to note, however, that EU migration policy presents more intergovernmental features than EU development policy. Interestingly, this interpretation is in line with the most recent studies on the European integration of member states' foreign policies within the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, as well as with studies on EU activities in global governance (Amadio Viceré & Hofmann, 2023; Amadio Viceré & Venneri, 2023). At the same time, these results resonate with pundits and scholars calling for a restructuring of the EU institutional construction. Especially, with those calling for a restructuring geared towards a deeper and thorough integration of member states policies across sectors (Fabbrini et al., 2023; Lehne, 2022).

When assessing ENP effectiveness, EU activities rooted in the common foreign and security policy area, scored the lowest percentages, while EU activities rooted in highly integrated policy areas scored the highest percentages.

Graph 1: Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

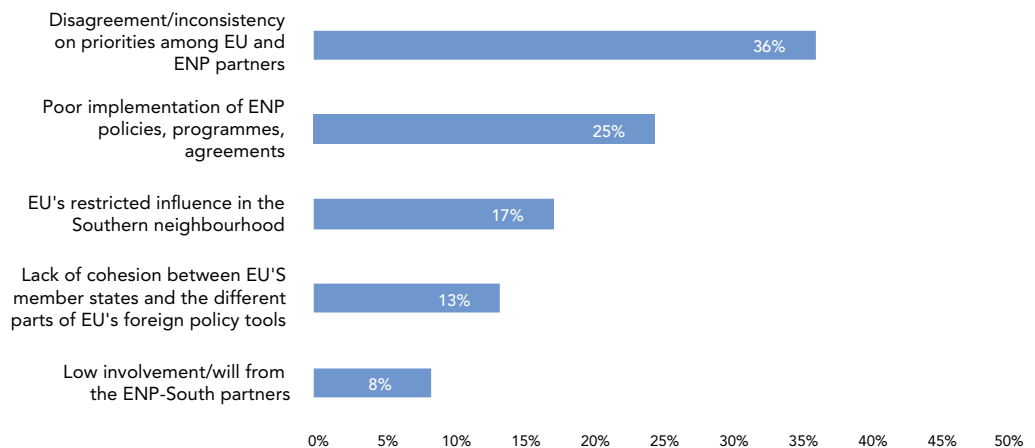
Still, integration dynamics – or the lack thereof – may not be sufficient to explain the ENP's limited impact on these policy areas. In fact, the EuroMeSCo Survey indicates that respondents consider disagreement and inconsistencies on priorities among EU and ENP partners as the main cause of the ENP's limited impact (see graph 2). True, the ENP has been scarred by such criticism ever since its first launch. Yet its persistence calls for the need of a conscious reflection process on the EU side. A reflection process that, according to some, should start from a decentering of EU foreign policy through a post-colonial understanding of its practices (Fisher-Onar & Nicolaïdis, 2013) and a greater effort towards the inclusion of the ethical and practical requests of EU partners (Wolff et al., 2022). Indeed, rather than being considered an ethical, normative power, the EU has been increasingly accused of organised hypocrisy in its approach to the Southern Neighbourhood over the past years (Cusumano, 2019; Longo, Panebianco, & Cannata, 2023).

Another cause of the ENP's limited impact, identified as particularly relevant by the survey's respondents, is the poor implementation of its policies, programs and agreements. This result may derive from external institutional dynamics. Some have argued in this regard, that an EU limited influence may be ascribed to the ENP reproduction of hierarchies between EU member states and ENP partners. Insofar as

The proliferation of EU institutional actors has often determined a dispersion of control, and hence limited the effectiveness of the ENP.

the ENP will remain a tool for political and economic integration, they claim, the EU will be largely unable to achieve democratic & economic reforms in its neighboring countries (Aarstad & Bremberg, 2017; Amadio Viceré & Fabbrini, 2017). Nonetheless, institutional dynamics internal to the EU may have hindered EU coherence and capability as well. The institutional architecture structuring the functioning of the ENP has been affected by rivalries among EU institutions, especially the European Commission and the European External Action Service. Additionally, the proliferation of EU institutional actors has often determined a dispersion of control, and hence limited the effectiveness of the ENP.

Graph 2: Q.1b In general terms or in relation to the specific areas mentioned above, why do you think the impact has been limited? (categories developed from open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

The ENP has generally relied mostly on regulatory political and economic instruments rather than on security related tools.

The survey respondents also ascribed the limited ENP's effectiveness to EU's restricted influence in the Southern Neighbourhood. While the Southern Mediterranean region has been at the center of the EU pursuit of its strategic autonomy, the 2021 New Agenda for the Mediterranean reiterated the region's strategic relevance for the EU (European Commission, 2019, 2021). Certainly, despite increasing competition from China, the United Arab Emirates and the United States, the EU is still the most influent trade partner of Southern Mediterranean countries (Amadio Viceré & Venneri, 2023). Yet, as the EU's absence from negotiations between Israel and Hamas over the past months shows, its influence is considerably limited in the region's security.

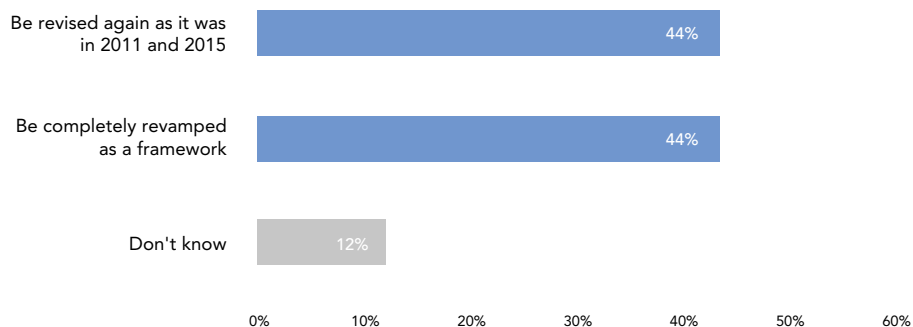
This pattern does not come as a surprise either. Indeed, the ENP has generally relied mostly on regulatory political and economic instruments rather than on security-

related tools. The overall lack of cohesion between EU member states and the different parts of the EU foreign policy tool is also identified as a cause behind the ENP limited impact. As discussed above, in fact, the preeminence of EU member states in certain policy sectors, coupled with the contested nature of EU geographical, political, and economic boundaries, has often led to decisions and policies reflecting the lowest common denominator consensus among member states (Hoffmann & Niemann, 2018). Lastly, only a limited number of respondents identified the low involvement/will on the side of the ENP-South partners as a cause behind the ENP's ineffectiveness. Such a result indicates that, despite the criticisms it faces, the EU is still perceived as a welcome partner by Southern Neighbourhood countries.

Need for a Change

Is the ENP in need of a change? The EuroMeSCo Survey shows that there is widespread agreement about the need to change the ENP. While 44% of the respondents believe that the framework regulating EU interactions with its neighbors should be revised again as it was in 2011 and 2015, another 44% believes that it should be completely revamped as a framework.

Graph 3: Q.2 Since its inception in 2004, the ENP has been reviewed several times. The 2011, 2015 reviews, 2021 New Agenda for the Mediterranean. The ENP should:



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

In principle, revising the current ENP could be a first step towards tempering its limited impact on the effectiveness of EU engagement with the Southern Neighbourhood. Nevertheless, a simple revision is unlikely to be groundbreaking. Since its inception, the ENP underwent two major revisions, in 2011 and in 2015. Rather than addressing EU structural shortcomings, however, these revisions embodied EU rhetorical impulses and pragmatic – at times cynical – setbacks. The 2011 review was a response to events in the Arab world and was mainly geared towards sup-

Rather than addressing EU structural shortcomings, 2011 and 2015 ENP revisions, embodied EU rhetorical impulses and pragmatic setbacks.

porting democratisation processes to change the EU pace after decades of implicit acquiescence to authoritarian regimes in the Southern Neighbourhood. With the 2015 review, against the backdrop of conflicts in the region and the “refugee crisis”, stabilisation once again became the main paradigm of the ENP. A securitising trend like this still taints EU’s approach to the region. The recent EU migration policy in Tunisia is an important example. While the EU de facto externalised the management of migration to Tunisia, its strategy failed from the very beginning with only minor decreases of migrants’ arrivals in Europe. Even worse, as the EU did not introduce meaningful accountability mechanisms for migration management by Tunisia, it led to widespread human rights’ violations (International Refugees, 2024).

More recently, as the Covid-19 was still raging, the 2021 New Agenda for the Mediterranean, proposed in the framework of the ENP, sought to relaunch and strengthen the strategic partnership between the EU and its Southern Neighbourhood partners.

An Economic and Investment Plan for the Southern Neighbours attached to the Agenda was to sustain the region’s long-term socio-economic recovery (European Commission, 2021). This notwithstanding, the Southern neighbourhood continued to face structural obstacles towards inclusive growth and competitive markets, which significantly impeded the region’s recovery from the pandemic-induced economic crisis, (OECD, 2021). Attributing these countries’ structural problems to the EU would not do justice to its engagement with the Southern Mediterranean region. Yet while capable of harmonising rules and boosting trade flows, the ENP’s overall reliance on the political use of economic interdependence has proven insufficient to address state fragility, poor governance structure, and the spread of corruption in the countries’ security sector (Amadio Viceré & Bonomi, 2021).

Conversely, revamping the ENP completely as a policy framework would address its shortcomings more effectively. A first step in this direction, as indicated by many of the survey respondents, could be employing a more geographically tailored approach to the Southern neighbourhood. The 2022 outbreak of the Russian war in Ukraine has provided the opportunity to do so. The war triggered a systemic change in the ENP by setting the basis for the accession of three ENP-East countries into the EU, namely Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia. Albeit the ENP will still cover part of the Caucasus, such a change reflects a pattern that was already present in the past. Eastern European countries had been willing to access the EU ever since the demise of the Soviet Union. While their participation in the ENP was often perceived as an intermediate step towards becoming EU members, with the aspiration of escaping Russia’s imperialism, these countries have been generally keener than ENP-South countries to adapt to EU requests. Southern Neighbourhood countries, on the contrary, have often perceived the EU as a continuation of European countries’ colonial aspirations. This considered, the EU’s renewed approach should also be more compartmentalised, to consider specific countries’ aspirations and needs while striking a balance between them and EU priorities in the region.

The EU renewed approach should be more compartmentalised. Consider specific countries’ aspirations and needs while striking a balance between them and EU priorities in the region.

As a second step, the EU should go beyond the mere use of economic interdependence to achieve its political results. On the one hand, it should devise a strategy focused on its neighbours’ economic growth and make investments in its social and

human resources to foster these countries' societal resilience. Consistently engaging Southern Mediterranean countries in EU climate strategy, for instance, could catalyse structural changes in the region while fostering inclusive economic growth and good governance (Tocci et al., 2023). On the other hand, it should monitor more consistently these countries' use of its support, including when they manage migratory flows on its behalf. Finally, the EU should embed more consistently its common foreign and security policy tools into a revamped framework. As the US 2024 elections are looming over the US engagement in the Southern Mediterranean and the duration of the Israeli-Hamas war remains uncertain, this will be a crucial challenge for the EU. True, given the intergovernmental functioning of such tools and member states' divisions on security-related issues, achieving such a consistency may be very hard. Yet, as the EU response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine through the Instrument for Peace and Facility taught us, EU institutions could devise arrangements that may bridge the gap between EU security aspirations and its capabilities without excessively hindering member states' willingness to keep a tight control over EU foreign policy processes.

The EU should embed more consistently its common foreign and security policy tools into a revamped framework. As the US 2024 elections are looming over the US engagement in the Southern Mediterranean and the duration of the Israeli-Hamas war remains uncertain, this will be a crucial challenge for the EU.

References

AARSTAD, A.K., BREMBERG, N. (2017). The Study of the European Neighbourhood Policy through the Lenses of Critical Approaches. In *The Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy*, Routledge.

AMADIO VICERÉ, M.G., BONOMI, M. (2021). The EU's Search for "Effective" Strategic Autonomy in the Neighbourhood. Rome: Istituto Affari Internazionali. <https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/eus-search-effective-strategic-autonomy-neighbourhood> (April 6, 2022).

AMADIO VICERÉ, M.G., FABBRINI, S. (2017). Assessing the High Representative's Role in Egypt during the Arab Spring. *The International Spectator* 52(3): 64–82. doi: 10.1080/03932729.2017.1330021.

AMADIO VICERÉ, M.G., HOFMANN, S.C. (2023). Global Governance by the EU. Florence, IT: Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/75700>.

AMADIO VICERÉ, M.G., VENNERI, G. (2023). The EU's Engagement with the Southern Mediterranean: Integrating the European Neighbourhood Policy. Forthcoming. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan UK.

CUSUMANO, E. (2019). Migrant Rescue as Organized Hypocrisy: EU Maritime Missions Offshore Libya between Humanitarianism and Border Control. *Cooperation and Conflict* 54(1): 3–24. doi:10.1177/0010836718780175.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2019). European Commission's Priorities for 2019-2024 (Political Guidelines). https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world_en.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2021). Renewed Partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood. A New Agenda for the Mediterranean. https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf.

FABBRINI, S., CAPATI, A., HEGEDUS, D., ZGAGA, T. (2023). A Federal Union for Dealing with the Russian War - EU3D. EU3D. Policy Brief. <https://www.eu3d.uio.no/publications/eu3d-policy-briefs/eu3d-policy-brief-3-april-2023.html> (April 7, 2024).

FISHER-ONAR, N., NIKOLAÏDIS, K. (2013). The Decentring Agenda: Europe as a Post-Colonial Power. *Cooperation and Conflict* 48(2): 283–303.

HOFFMANN, N., NIEMANN, A. (2018). EU Actorness and the European Neighbourhood Policy. In *The Routledge Handbook on the European Neighbourhood Policy*, Routledge.

INTERNATIONAL REFUGEES (2024). European and Tunisian Migration Policies: A Recipe for Failure and Suffering. IAI Istituto Affari Internazionali. <https://www.iai.it/it/pubblicazioni/european-and-tunisian-migration-policies-recipe-failure-and-suffering> (April 7, 2024).

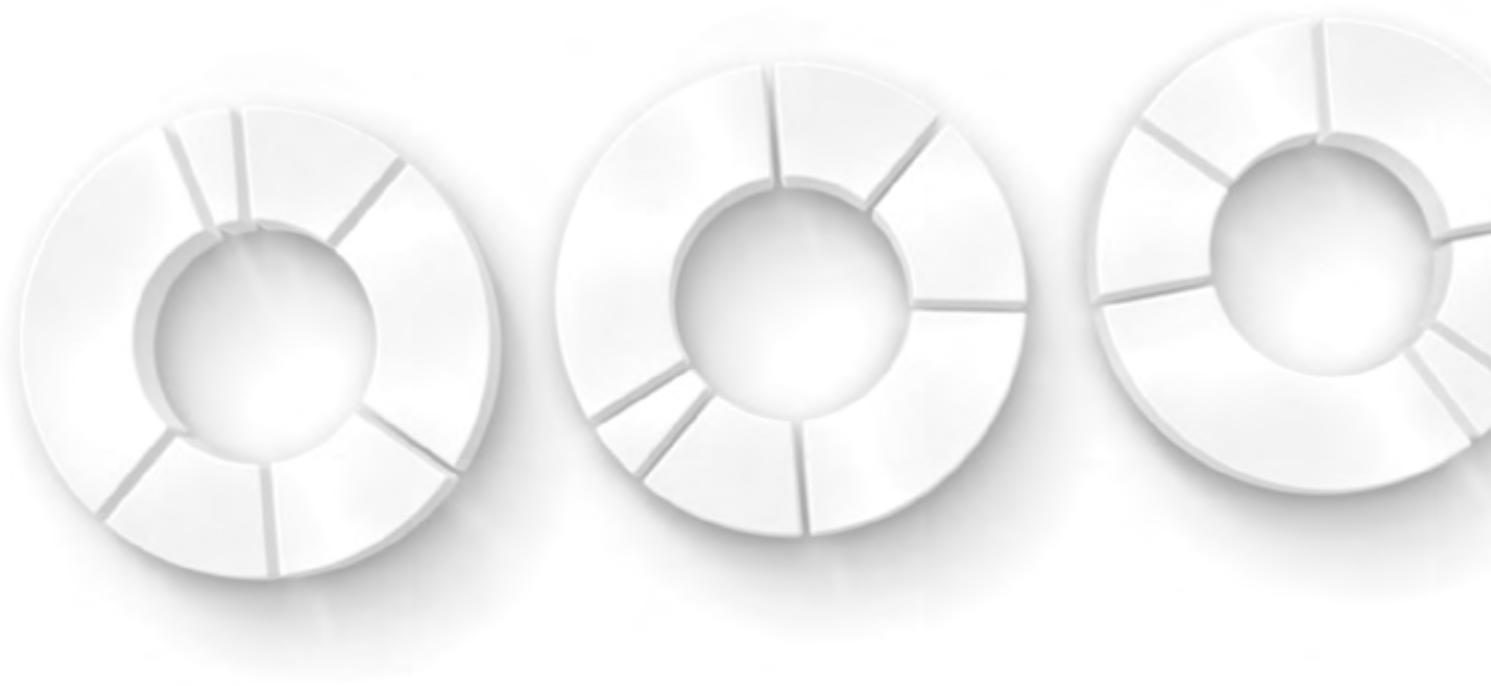
LEHNE, S. (2022). Making EU Foreign Policy Fit for a Geopolitical World. Carnegie Europe. <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/04/14/making-eu-foreign-policy-fit-for-geopolitical-world-pub-86886> (April 7, 2024).

LONGO, F., PANEBIANCO, S., CANNATA, G. (2023). Mind the Gap! Organized Hypocrisy in EU Cooperation with Southern Neighbor Countries on International Protection. *Italian Political Science Review / Rivista Italiana di Scienza Politica* 53(3): 367–83. doi:10.1017/ipo.2023.9.

OECD (2021). Middle East and North Africa Investment Policy Perspectives. Paris, France: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). <https://doi.org/10.1787/6d84ee94-en>.

TOCCI, N., BIANCHI, M., BURGUETE, V., EYL-MAZZEGA, M.A., GIULI, M., GLACHANT, J.M., RAIMONDI, P.P ET AL. (2023). For a New Euro-Med Green Deal. Rome, Italy: Istituto Affari Internazionali. Text. <https://www.iai.it/it/pubblicazioni/new-euro-med-green-deal> (April 8, 2024).

WOLFF, S. GAZSI, D., HUBER, D., FISHER-ONAR, N. (2022). How to Reflexively Decentre EU Foreign Policy: Dissonance and Contrapuntal Reconstruction in Migration, Religious and Neighbourhood Governance. *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 60(6): 1611–28. doi:10.1111/jcms.13335.



Differentiation, incentive-based approach and joint ownership – Two decades of ENP's expectations – Real-politique gap

Dr. Maya Sion Tzidkiyahu

Director of Israel – Europe Relations Program, Mitvim Institute.

Lecturer at the European Forum, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Three decades have passed since Christopher Hill wrote about the gap between expectations and capabilities that the European Union's (EU) Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) created since its inception (Hill, 1993). The start of ENP caused similar gaps. The President of the European Commission, Romano Prodi's 2003 promise to ENP countries of "everything but institutions" created unrealistic expectations to the extent it was described as "the original sin" (Blockmans, 2017). As promise and deed were apart, the ENP gap was titled as that between conception and performance (Koenig, 2016). EuroMeSCo's Euromed Survey shows this gap still very much exists. However, it also shows that the principles on which ENP was based are held worthy on both sides of the Mediterranean.

On the eve of a new European Commission, set to enter by the end of the year, yet another review of ENP awaits. Expectations regarding the South are not high while challenges are. The EU is known for its cumbersome and usually slow pace of change, which is especially felt in intergovernmental consensus-based CFSP. As a club of 27 member states with diverging views and interests, the EU usually fails to do a re-start: to erase an unsuccessful policy and start over a new page. When it announces a reform, it ends up with a quilt of many old and some new principles and tools (Cardwell, 2012).

Yet what is most needed in ENP is less a reform of principles and more their realisation. To narrow the conception – performance gap the emphasis needs to be on the output legitimacy, meaning the performance side, though ENP can also benefit from increasing input legitimacy by not only conducting more roundtables with Southern Mediterranean countries (SMCs) policy-makers, experts, and civil society

Survey results show that the gap between conception and performance still very much exists. However, they also show that the principles on which ENP was based are held worthy on both sides of the Mediterranean.

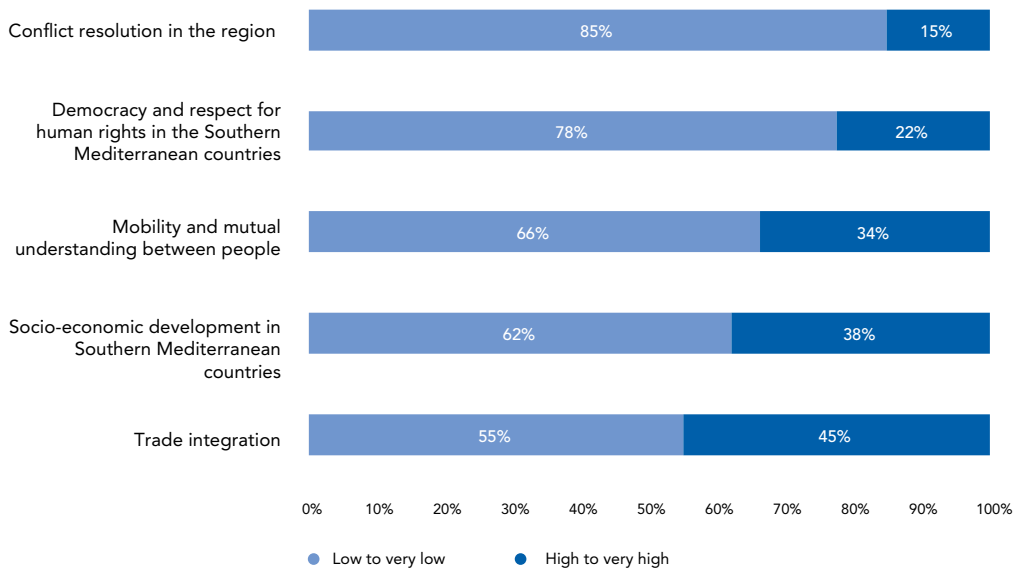
When examined in retrospect, after two decades, one can observe some progress in implementing a few of the principles it was founded upon, such as differentiation which was given new tools.

organisations (CSOs) but also by letting them comment on the initial drafts of the revised ENP.

ENP was criticised as institutionally weak, lacking meaningful funding, and too soft to coerce political change (Blockmans, 2017). It has been lacking the EU's political willingness to act upon its conditionality mechanism according to its core values (Kostanyan, 2017). Yet, when examined in retrospect, after two decades, one can observe some progress in implementing a few of the principles it was founded upon, such as differentiation which was given new tools (see below). And so, ENP should turn to be less of a one-size "cookie cutter", as one survey respondent described it. On joint ownership, some progress was made, but criticism is still very high. One respondent called it a "smoke screen" to impose EU priorities. What is most lacking is the political will to apply conditionality according to the incentive-based approach, which is still a far cry from the EU's declaratory statements.

Those are not the only values the EU is insufficiently promoting. Conflict resolution, democracy and respect for human rights, mobility/ migration, and socio-economic development are all challenging areas the ENP is supposed to tackle. These challenges are especially high regarding the Southern neighbourhood (EIU Democracy Index, 2024; UN 2023). This is recognised by the respondents to Euromed Survey, who most found the EU's effective impact on these four areas to be either 'low' or 'very low': 85% regarding conflict resolution, 78% regarding democracy and respect for human rights, 66% on mobility/ migration and 62% on socio-economic development (Q.1). The low-performance rates are considerable. Two decades after the initiation of the ENP, these are grim results.

Graph 1: Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

The principles of differentiation, defined as the ability to have a tailor-made framework of cooperation between the SMCs and the EU was a novelty of the ENP. It stood in contrast to the Barcelona Process, which tended to progress at the pace of the Southern low, sometimes lowest, denominator (Pace, 2004), and therefore had no reference to an individual incentive-based approach (“more for more”). Joint ownership was introduced by the European Commission to the ENP to enable “the EU and third countries to define cooperation objectives through mutual consent and ‘give added weight to the agreed priorities for action’” (Zardo, 2022).

Following three ENP re-evaluations and reforms (in 2011, 2015, 2021) these three principles demonstrate the gap between the high expectations and quite a disappointing reality. 49% of all respondents do not think the EU applied the principle of differentiation effectively. Only 25% think it did (Q.4a). 56% do not think the application of the incentive-based approach led to more political and economic reforms in the SMCs. Only 27% think it did (Q.5a). 64% do not think SMCs feel they co-own ENP, while a mere 15% think they do. Yet in some SMCs percentages are a bit higher on joint ownership. In Egypt a third of the respondents do think co-ownership was employed, among the Palestinians surveyed 37% think so, and in Jordan, this percentage rises to 40%. The question begs – was it something the EU did better, and if so, can it be replicated in the Maghreb, or were the Mashreq expectations more

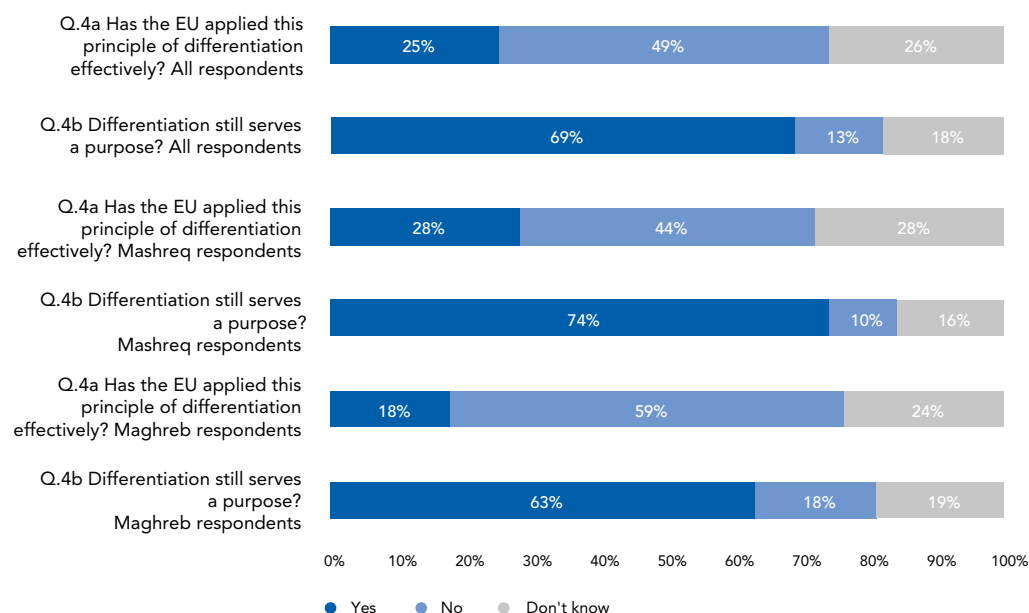
Following three ENP re-evaluations and reforms (in 2011, 2015, 2021) the three principles (differentiation, more for more, joint ownership) demonstrate the gap between the high expectations and quite a disappointing reality.

Survey results show however, wide agreement these principles are relevant and should be kept and implemented.

modest to begin with? The EU should learn from them what it did that increased their sense of joint ownership and examine if it would work with other SMCs too.

There is, however, wide agreement these principles are relevant and should be kept and implemented. While only 25% of the respondents think the EU applied differentiation effectively (Q.4a) 69% think differentiation still serves its purpose and wish the EU offer SMCs tailor-made partnership (Q.4b). In retrospect of two decades, one can see more differentiation, especially in the move from the first round of the general all-encompassing 'Action Plans' (AP), to the second more advanced round of APs, and when APs were replaced with short-list individual 'Partnership Priorities' in 2015 and the EU added different kinds of tailor-made partnership agreements, e.g., on mobility and migration (Andrade, 2020), on climate change, energy and green transformation, or strategic/ privileged partnership. Again, overall, the answers of the Mashreq countries are slightly more positive than the Maghreb: 28% versus 18% respectively. However, there are mixed results inside these groups: 35% of the respondents in Egypt found differentiation was applied effectively, 33% in Lebanon, 31% in Israel, yet only 10% in Jordan. 29% in Morocco, compared to only 10% in Tunisia. This does not correlate to the different tools the EU used with each SMC.

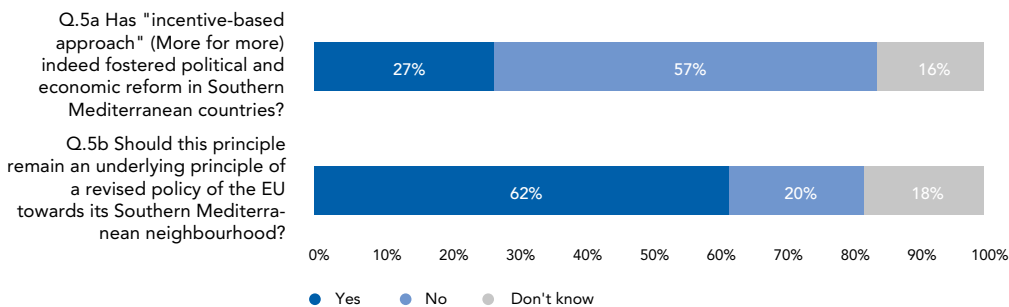
Graph 2: Q.4 One of the most distinctive principles of the ENP is differentiation, under which the EU recognizes the different aspirations of partner countries in their relations with the EU and offers them tailor made partnerships accordingly.



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

The same twist can be seen regarding the “incentive-based approach”, introduced to ENP in 2011: 57% think it did not foster political or economic reform in the SMCs (only 27% think it did, Q.5a), yet 62% think it should remain an underlying principle of a revised ENP (Q.5b). Whether it reflects the path-dependency of EU and SMCs participants or principled views, it is for the next European Commission to strive to advance its achievement.

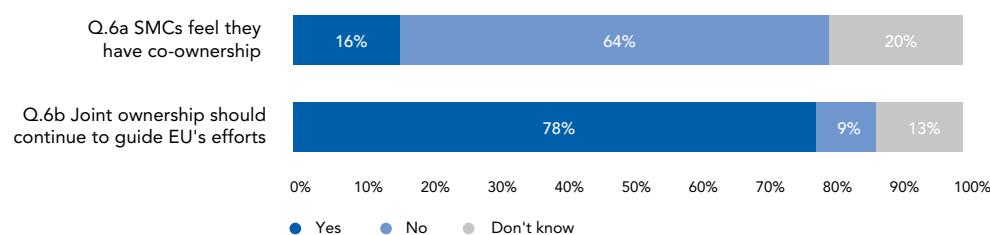
Graph 3: Q.5 Since the inception of the ENP, the EU has strived to make some modalities of its financial assistance conditional, with the objective to provide “an additional incentive to pursue political and economic reform”.



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

On joint ownership, the gap is even wider: 64% of the respondents do not think SMCs feel co-ownership over ENP (Q.6a). Yet 78% of the survey respondents think the principle of joint ownership should continue to guide the EU’s efforts in redefining its approach to SMCs (Q.6b). Input legitimacy has been enhanced in the last few years by consultations and roundtables with SMCs. These efforts begin to be reflected in the answers given by CSOs, which are the highest, but still very poor (23%). Experts’ answers reflected the lowest level of input legitimacy (10%).

Graph 4: Q.6 Since the inception of the ENP, the EU regularly reiterated that it “does not seek to impose priorities” on its partners, and the principle of joint ownership has featured indeed consistently in EU strategic documents related to the ENP. Q.6a Do you think EU Southern Mediterranean countries feel they co-own the ENP? Q.6b Do you think the principle of joint ownership should continue guiding the EU’s efforts in redefining its approach vis a vis its Southern Mediterranean neighbours?



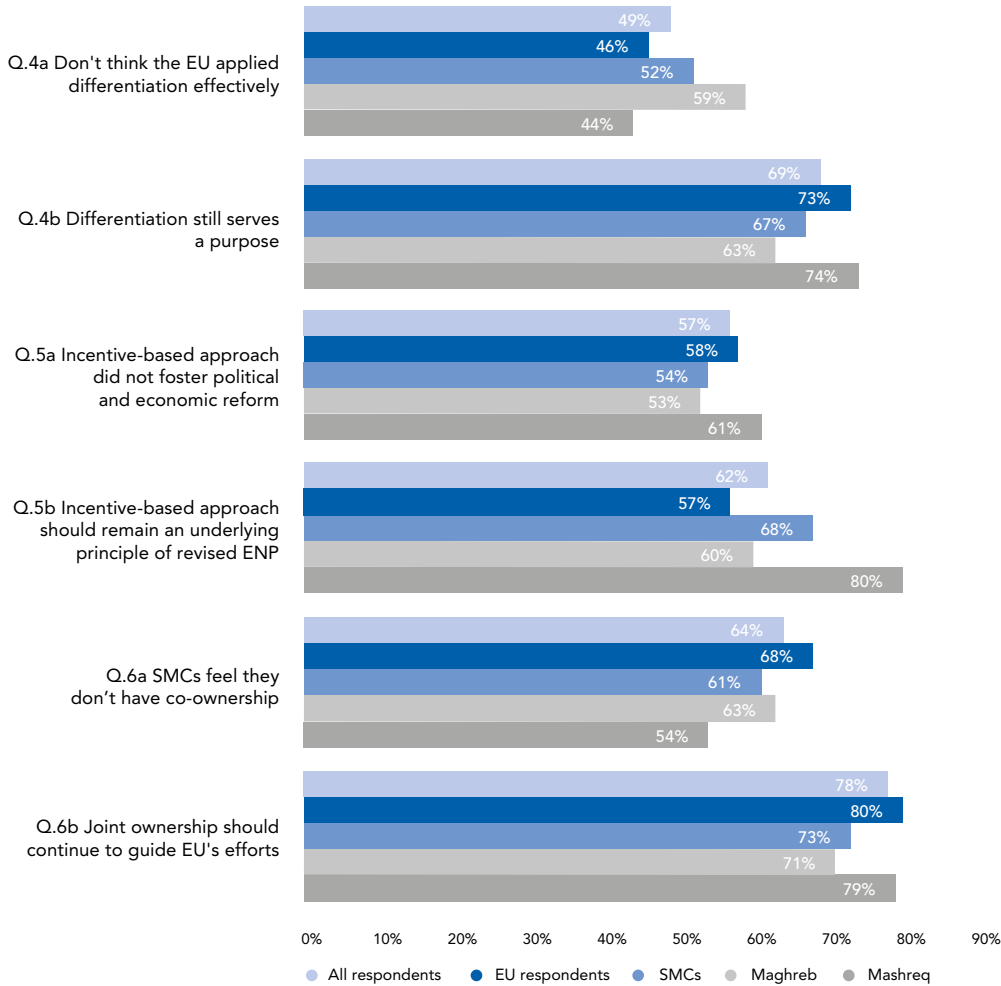
Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

ENP principles themselves still enjoy strong support on both sides of the Mediterranean. The challenge, therefore, is for both sides to improve its implementation and work on ENP deliverables according to them, not to replace them.

The gap between expectations and performance (real or perceived) is sobering. Disappointment comes both from the respondents in the SMCs and the EU. Yet, as mentioned, the principles themselves still enjoy strong support on both sides of the Mediterranean. The challenge, therefore, is for both sides to improve the implementation of these principles and work on ENP deliverables according to them, not to replace them.

Along the quite similar negative evaluation results are coming both from the EU and SMCs, there are some differences between the two sides of the Mediterranean. EU respondents wish to preserve the principles of differentiation and joint ownership slightly more than their SMCs counterparts: 73% in the EU and 67% in SMCs regarding differentiation (Q.4b), and 80% by EU respondents in comparison to 73% by SMCs regarding joint ownership (Q.6b). On the inclusive-based approach 68% of the SMC wish to preserve it, in comparison to only 57% of the EU (Q.5b). Oddly, it seems the respondents in SMCs (policy-makers, experts, and civil society organisations) believe a bit more in the effectiveness of the EU’s conditionality – if implemented properly – than the ones in the EU. This is quite unexpected, taking into consideration the criticism prevalent in these countries over the EU as post-colonialist. Among SMCs, on all three principles, the Mashreq countries wanted these principles to be applied more than the Maghreb. Further research is needed to explain this slight but consistent difference (see graph 5 below).

Graph 5: Reviewing some of the constitutive principles of the ENP.



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Triangular or quadruple groupings on an ad-hoc basis is also a way to create more dynamism when implementing differentiation and joint ownership, as well as to advance cross-border cooperation across the Mediterranean.

Both wars (Russia against Ukraine and in Gaza between Israel and Hamas) have far-reaching regional implications and internal domestic ones. More emphasis on conflict resolution is needed.

Today the ENP does no longer reflect the original rationale. Perhaps a return to solely focus on the Southern neighbourhood is needed.

As differentiation and especially joint ownership are elusive, it would be beneficial if an independent research institute would develop an index to measure such principles based on joint and separate declarations, conduct of political dialogue, negotiations, content of agreements, partnerships and other forms of cooperation and their realisation on the ground, using this survey, interviews and focus groups methodology. Another form of measurement could be how far is an SMC from reaching the ENP goals (like OCED measurement regarding SDGs).

Mini-lateralism (Kibrik, 2024) is another way forward. Forming triangular or quadruple groupings on an ad-hoc basis is also a way to create more dynamism when implementing differentiation and joint ownership, as well as to advance cross-border cooperation across the Mediterranean. The EU-Morocco-Israel cooperation is an example, though it needs further development. Perhaps through an emphasis on cross-border cooperation, ENP can create more value both to the EU and among SMCs.

As mentioned, another round of ENP re-evaluation is expected upon the entry of a new European Commission in 2024. It comes at a time when the old “ring of friends”, declared in the 2003 European Security Strategy, which turned in its 2016 European Global Strategy into a “ring of fire”, has turned into a real security danger to the EU since 2022 due to the war of Russia against Ukraine. The neighbourhood security was further destabilised in 2023 by the Gaza war between Israel and Hamas. Both wars have far-reaching regional implications and internal domestic ones. More emphasis on conflict resolution is needed.

Russia’s attack on Ukraine was also done from the territory of Belarus, an ENP country. This war caused the Eastern Partnership to split up the countries upon which the EU suspends relations and inflicts sanctions, as with Belarus, and to countries that became either fast-track EU accession countries, as Ukraine and Moldova, to Georgia to which the EU granted candidate country status. The ENP, which in 2002 was set as an alternative to EU membership, as a policy tool to foster good neighbourly relations with the new neighbours to the east following the 2004-07 enlargement, has split in 2022 to EU candidates, which are future club partners (much more than friends), and foe & sanctioned. It no longer reflects the original rationale. Perhaps a return to solely focus on the Southern neighbourhood is needed.

To conclude, despite the considerable progress CFSP has made, Hill expectation – capabilities gap and Koenig ENP conception – performance gap arguments still hold, and perhaps even more so, as the foreign and security challenges of the 2020s are far greater than those of the 1990s. The principles on which ENP was based: differentiation, incentive-based approach, and joint ownership receive very low markings both in the EU and SMCs, but they are also held worthy on both sides of the Mediterranean. What is most needed in ENP is less a reform of principles and more their realisation. To narrow the conception–performance gap, the emphasis needs to be especially on the output legitimacy (the performance side), but it would be useful and reinforcing to also increase input legitimacy. It is for both sides to improve the implementation of these principles and work on ENP deliverables according to them, not to replace them. Both the EU and SMCs should work jointly to narrow the gap between expectations and conceived realisation and realize more the promise of ENP differentiation and joint ownership and work on ENP deliverables.

References

ANDRADE, P.G. (2020). EU cooperation on migration with partner countries within the New Pact: new instruments for a new paradigm? *EU Immigration and Asylum Law and Policy*.

<https://eumigrationlawblog.eu/eu-cooperation-on-migration-with-partner-countries-within-the-new-pact-new-instruments-for-a-new-paradigm/>

BLOCKMANS, S. (2017). The Obsolescence of the European Neighbourhood Policy, *CEPS Paperback*, October.

CARDWELL, P.J. (2012). Euromed, European Neighbourhood Policy and the Union for the Mediterranean: Overlapping Policy Frames in the EU's Governance of the Mediterranean, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 49(2), 219-41.

DIEZ, T. (2013). Normative power as hegemony, *Cooperation and conflict*, 48(2), 194-210.

EIU ECONOMIST INTELLIGENCE UNIT (2024). Democracy Index 2023: Age of Conflict.

HILL, C. (1993). The Capability-Expectations Gap, or Conceptualizing Europe's International Role, *Journal of Common Market Studies*, 31, pp. 305-328.

KOENIG, N. (2016). Taking the ENP beyond the conception-performance gap. *Jacques Delors Institut Policy Paper* 160: 22.

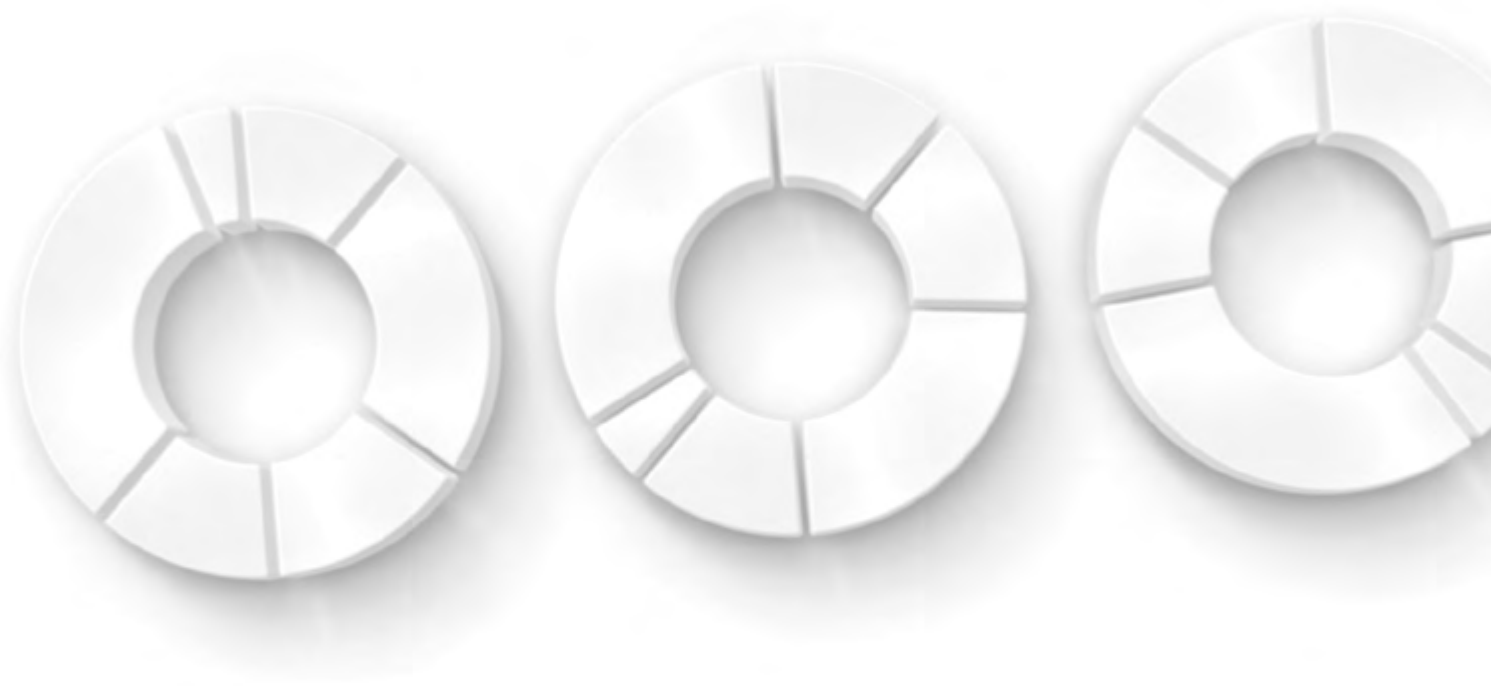
KOSTANYAN, H. (2017). Assessing European Neighbourhood Policy, *Rowman & Littlefield International*.

KIBRIK, R. (2024). Exploring the Potential of Minilateralism for the Europe-Mediterranean Partnership, *Euromesco Paper* No. 65.

PACE, M. (2004). The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership and the Common Mediterranean Strategy? European Union Policy from a Discursive Perspective, *Geopolitics* 9.2 (2004): 292-309.

UN REGIONAL INFORMATION CENTER FOR WESTERN EUROPE (2023). Migration to the EU: facts, not perceptions, 14 December.
<https://unric.org/en/migration-to-the-eu-facts-not-perceptions/>

ZARDO, F. (2020). Joint Ownership in Euro-Mediterranean Relations: Power and Negotiation, *Palgrave Macmillan*.



New dynamics to the Euro-Mediterranean relations? Settling an “unnecessary confusion” between the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

Erzsébet N. Rózsa

Professor and Academic Advisor, Institute of World Economics, IWE, Hungary.

Ever since the idea of the “interrelation between ... security in Europe and security in the Mediterranean area” (Helsinki Final Act, 1975, pp. 36-37) and the necessity to cooperate between the two emerged, the understanding that “strengthening of security and the intensification of co-operation in Europe would stimulate positive processes in the Mediterranean region” (Helsinki Final Act, 1975, pp. 36-37) became the basis of the further development of the Euro-Mediterranean space on the one hand, and the idea that the projection of European values could add to this mutual security, on the other.

Almost fifty years later and following three efforts to institutionalise the relationship through the (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership – 1995, European Neighbourhood Policy – 2004 and Union for the Mediterranean – 2008) the rationale – security and cooperation – has gained increasing support yet, there have been questions around the methods of implementing these.

In the Euro-Mediterranean space, the rationale – security and cooperation – developed in the last decades, has become increasingly supported, yet, the modalities have come to raise questions regarding the implementation.

The present paper aims to review to identify the main issues regarding the ENP and the UfM based on the results of the survey conducted by the European Institute of the Mediterranean in 2023 on “The future of the European Neighbourhood Policy”, which aimed to collect perceptions and draw conclusions regarding the achievements (or failures) of the Euro-Med frameworks. Q.7 sought opinions and experience with regards to ‘structure’ related issues in the frameworks, especially the ENP and the UfM.

Different eras, different priorities

The relationship between the EU and the countries in its Southern neighbourhood has been reflected in three different institutionalised partnerships, each reflecting a different era and a different phase of European interests and understanding relations.

The relationship between the European Union and the countries in its Southern neighbourhood has been reflected in three different institutionalised partnerships, each representing a different era and a different phase of European interests and understanding relations. The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership, based on the Cold War model of the Helsinki Process, led to the OSCE and organised the different aspects into three baskets (political-security / economic-financial / social-cultural), its comprehensive approach was at the forefront. From the EMP to the ENP, Europe was not just establishing the European Union, but also went on extending it. Thus, the principles of the organisation and extension were in focus. While the European Neighbourhood Policy was still formally arranged according to the three baskets (as the bilateral agreements show), its priorities – following the regime changes in Central Europe and the newly independent states accessing the European Union – were the “shared values, the promotion of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and social cohesion” (European Neighbourhood Policy, 2004). But while the Euro-Med Partnership’s ‘target’ partners were the countries on the Southern/Eastern shores of the Mediterranean, the European Neighbourhood Policy wanted to attract into partnership a much wider set of countries, that are historically, socially and culturally largely different. The Union for the Mediterranean finally came to complement the EMP with a mutually beneficial fourth pillar, where the six main projects strengthened the regional approach.

Structure - the regional dimension

Framing the Euro-Mediterranean as one region was a rational choice, partly based on the consequences of historical contacts, yet, ever since the delineation, it put forward challenges: namely, the region as such was too big, smaller sub-regions having different characteristics and interests, or countries geographically located far away from the shores of the Mediterranean had not been directly impacted, etc. Yet, with the European integration process going forward, by the tenth anniversary of the EMP, the concept of the Euro-Mediterranean region became accepted and implemented.

While in the North, the development of the European Union as a unified actor made the implementation of the concept of the Euro-Med region relatively easy, in the South, the regional dimension and the ‘South-to-South’ relations had to be supported and promoted (as foreseen in the EMP documents). While there have been some

sub-regional cooperation frameworks in the South, most notably the Arab Maghreb Union, it is the projects proposed in the fourth pillar of the UfM that seem to improve such relations (e. g. the trans-Maghreb highway, etc.). The same idea seems to recur in the “cooperative regional orders” of the Global Strategy. (Global Strategy, 2016, p. 10, 32)

Yet, the Southern/Eastern shore countries have no ‘regional’ perception of themselves, despite the cultural-historical-emotional bonds among the Arab states, from which definition Israel and Turkey are excluded, and which is intricately broken down into different, even shifting pieces along political, security and economic fault lines.

Consequently, although it may seem like it, this Euro-Med relationship is not between two regions, but it is within one greater region (the Euro-Med), where the EU is one big entity and the rest are there ‘individually’. (Although there are institutionalised dialogues between the EU and the African Union, or the EU and the Arab Maghreb Union, these are much less developed in substance.)

A further remark on regionalism reveals that, despite the efforts to adjust to the realities¹ the European Union’s regional approach, this has no (or very limited) consideration of changing regionalities, i.e. that regions that had been defined for decades may break down and/or new regions may emerge based on local developments. The fact that the Maghreb (an integral part of the Mediterranean region) is increasingly turning attention away from the Mediterranean towards the Sahel due to security concerns (state failures, migration, terrorism, etc.), (N. Rózsa & Marsai, 2022) or that the Levant has started to develop increasingly stronger relations with the Persian Gulf (before the current war in Gaza) seems to support this observation. While the Red Sea in itself is not directly on the Mediterranean, via the Suez Canal it is connected, thus the evolving crisis there may also prove the above remark on the importance of the flexibility of regional delineations. Although there have also been new regional strategies issued by the European Union, such as the EU’s Sahel Strategy, and the institutionalised ‘EU-to-a-region dialogues’, in which two that belong to the Euro-Med space (EU-AU, EU-AMU) are also included, it seems that the EU still relies on the so-far accustomed regional terminology – making the issue even more complicated.

Another element related to the definitions of regions is the European Union’s neighbourhood itself: the ENP covers two, widely different regions, the Eastern and the Southern neighbourhoods (the ENP South is ‘hostage’ to the ENP East, and vice versa): in the East, partners are – at least in principle – potential members of the EU, while in the South they are excluded from this potential opportunity (a criticism raised from the South ever since the EMP was launched). Nevertheless, since the two neighbourhoods are both related to the European Union, recent political developments in both pose a serious challenge for the EU, over and above the distribution of the allocation of ENPI funds: namely, what are the consequences of

The present Euro-Med relationship is not between two regions as it may seem, but it is within one greater region (the Euro-Med), in which there is one big entity, the EU and the others are there ‘individually’.

The ENP covers two, widely different regions, the Eastern and the Southern neighbourhoods. Can the political-security situation in one neighbourhood block the EU’s action or ability to move forward in the other?

1. The two reviews of the ENP in 2011 and 2015, and the New Agenda for the Mediterranean are the best indicators.

the Russia-Ukraine war in and for the ENP South, and vice versa, what are the consequences of the war in Gaza for the ENP East? Can the political-security situation in one neighbourhood block the EU's action or ability to move forward in the other?

Structure - bilateral and/or regional

As some respondents in the survey noted, the "rise of the ENP as the main instrument for EU foreign relations with its Southern neighbours has entailed a shift of emphasis from region-building to bilateralism ... This may also indicate that the emphasis turned slowly but relentlessly away from the multilateral framework of the EMP and towards bilateral relations with the Southern neighbours as framed in the ENP". This may also imply that the regional elements within the European Neighbourhood Policy (ministerial meetings, regional programs) have not been convincing and seem to overlap with the regional programs and institutions of the EMP/UfM.

The EMP from the beginning was managing relationships both on a bilateral and on a regional level, while the ENP was started on the basis of bilateral relationships. The UfM became a kind of an extended version of the EMP, by adding the fourth pillar of the six great projects of mutual interest.

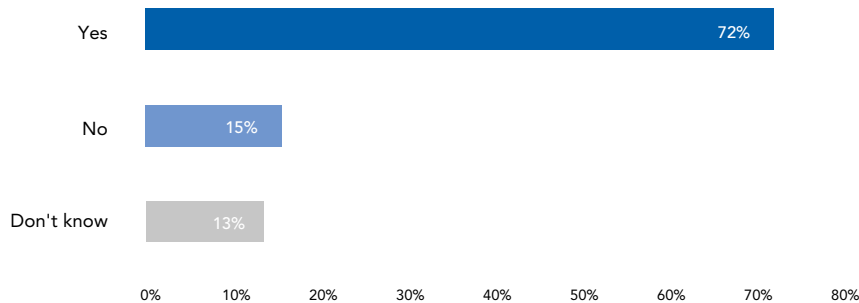
From the beginning, the EMP, was managing relationships both on a bilateral and a regional level, with regional institutions and programs, while the ENP was started on the basis of bilateral relationships. Although it was suggested that the bilateral/regional EMP would be included in the ENP Southern dimension, this seemed problematic from the very beginning, yet, it gave the impetus to further develop the Eastern dimension of the ENP (Eastern Partnership). The UfM became a kind of an extended version of the EMP, by adding the fourth pillar of the six great projects of mutual interest, signalling from the EU's side not only that the previously often mentioned criticism of a 'European dictate' was meant to change, but also adding to the regional understanding of the framework.

The fact that there is a difference in the partners of the ENP and the UfM, and also that the ENP covers two, widely different regions, the Eastern and the Southern neighbourhoods also further complicate the issue of bilateral vs regional relations, and is another reason why the overlaps and differences should be clarified. (All the riparian/littoral states of the Mediterranean are partners in the UfM, including the former Yugoslav non-EU members, except for Serbia, but the ENP South is still lacking such states as Türkiye and the former Yugoslav non-EU members.)

Substance – a distribution of labour?

According to the survey results, 72% of the respondents think that the overlap between the regional dimension of the ENP and the UfM introduces unnecessary confusion, and the EU should seek to simplify its mechanisms (but the opinions vary from the unification of the two to a clear distribution of labour between the two). (graph1)

Graph 1: Q.7a The overlap between the regional dimension of the ENP and the UfM introduces unnecessary confusion, and the EU should seek to simplify its mechanisms.



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

While some respondents even stated that the “UfM is dealing with the third and the fourth pillars only” (an opinion shared by several others), the UfM website seems to support this idea, when apart from the annual ministers of foreign affairs meetings practically no political and security related issues are on the agenda – and even these are usually discussed in the context of the third/fourth pillar issues’ context. (Annual Report 2022)

This distribution of labour goes further especially in these pillars as well, but to a certain (limited) extent in the ENP, too, when these institutionalised partnerships are struggling with the EU’s wish and desire to have an impact, not only on the state actors, but also on the societies, stakeholders and businesses, etc. There are several programs in which civilians are involved (e.g. the Erasmus program, etc.), yet, where the discrepancy between ‘state actors’ vs. ‘non-state actors’ is most evident is the Anna Lindh Foundation. The discrepancy was already manifested at the very beginning, when state-actors decided that non-state actors should build up a network and cooperate. Although by now it has been simplified to states providing finances for non-state actors’ projects, the mechanism of how to cooperate between state and non-state is not always easy.

ENP and UfM as institutionalised partnerships are struggling with the EU’s wish and desire to have an impact not only on the state actors, but also on the societies, stakeholders and businesses, etc.

It has to be noted, however, that it is not necessarily anyone’s fault: An examination of the state administrations – both within the EU, and in the South – would most probably show differences as to how and in which departments the different sections of both the ENP and the UfM are handled. In Hungary, for example, the ENP belongs to the Department of Common Foreign and Security Policy in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), which coordinates with the Department of the Middle East and North Africa on the ENP South, and with the Department of Eastern Europe on the ENP East. The financial tool of the ENP, the ENPI belongs to the competence of the Deputy State Secretary in charge of regional and cross-border developments. The UfM belongs to the Department of the Middle East and North Africa, which

is the direct contact point of the UfM Secretariat, and which forwards the relevant issues and information (economy, energy, cultural, etc.) to the relevant ministries to develop a common understanding. The Anna Lindh Foundation, because of its specific portfolio, belongs to the competence of the Ministry of Culture and Innovation, yet, Hungary's official, state-related representation at the ALF meetings – based on practical considerations – is usually performed by the MFAT.

Conclusion

The European Union has established institutionalised partnerships, not only with regional organisations, but with its two direct neighbourhoods, the East and the South. Due to the specific circumstances of times and places, the regionalisation, and the concept of looking at the South as one wide region, the Euro-Mediterranean started earlier. Based on the complex understanding of security towards and soon after the Cold War, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership in 1995, later complemented to include six big projects, thus becoming the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008, has maintained the set of bilateral relations besides the overarching regional framework. The European Neighbourhood Policy, having its main focus on both the East and the South, and with the idea to spread European principles, mostly remained on the bilateral track.

Despite of the efforts by the European Union to maintain and even improve the regional dimension in its relations to the South, due to several reasons – as the Euromed Survey 2023 proves – this has not been successful. The above remarks aimed at pointing out the main structural and substantial issues to be addressed.

Bibliography

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2003). Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours.

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2015). Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).

https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/review-european-neighbourhood-policy-enp_en

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE (2016). Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy., p. 10, 32.

https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/eugs_review_web_0.pdf

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE (2021). Renewed Partnership with the Southern neighbourhood. New Agenda for the Mediterranean.

https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE (2021). European Neighbourhood Policy.

https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/european-neighbourhood-policy_en

HUNGARIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND TRADE (2015). Organizational and operational regulations of the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

<https://2015-2019.kormany.hu/download/a/64/91000/A%20K%C3%BCIgazdas%C3%A1gi%20%C3%A9s%20K%C3%BCI%C3%BCgyminiszt%C3%A9rium%20SZMSZ-e.pdf>

N. RÓZSA, E. MARSAL, V. (2022). From a Fragmented Cooperation to an Integrated Approach – The Emergence of the Maghreb and Sahel Region and its Consequences for the European Union. *EuroMeSCo Paper No. 53*.

<https://www.euromesco.net/publication/from-a-fragmented-cooperation-to-an-integrated-approach-the-emergence-of-the-maghreb-and-sahel-region-and-its-consequences-for-the-european-union/>

OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (2011). Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy – Southern Dimension.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52011IP0154>

ORGANISATION FOR SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE (2015). Questions relating to Security and Co-operation in the Mediterranean, Helsinki Final Act, pp. 36-37.

<https://www.osce.org/files/f/documents/5/c/39501.pdf>

UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (1995). Barcelona declaration 1995.
<https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Declaracion-de-Barcelona-1995.pdf>

UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (2008). Joint Declaration of the Paris Summit for the Mediterranean.
https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/ufm_paris_declaration1.pdf

UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (2022). Annual Report 2022.
https://ufmsecretariat.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Annual-Report-2022_DIGITAL.pdf

Re-orienting priorities: Back to basics to value fundamental rights

Rabha Allam

Expert, Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS)

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) has been designed and launched in 2004 in order to extend the opportunities for stability, security and prosperity to the European neighbouring countries, both in the South and the East. Furthermore, as an alternative to the enlargement policy that was previously applied to specific countries on their EU's admission path, the ENP was expected to achieve much with fewer resources among a wider group of countries (Frappi, 2017). In this regard, evaluating the effectiveness of the ENP has always been a difficult task, especially in changing circumstances. Despite its revision several times in 2011, 2015, and 2021 to better target the priorities of cooperation between the EU and its Southern partners, the effectiveness of the ENP remains widely questionable.

Perceived Low Impact

Based on the figures of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey in 2023, the majority of respondents coming from both official and independent northern and Southern Mediterranean entities think the effectiveness of the ENP is low in several areas of action. Conflict resolution comes on the top of these areas as 85% of the respondents view the ENP's impact in the region as either 'low' or 'very low'. It is quite reasonable to receive such results given the ongoing war claiming thousands of civilian lives in Gaza and the incapacity of all actors, especially the EU, to propose and enforce suitable plans for a ceasefire. When first launched in Barcelona in 1995, the cooperation across the Mediterranean was born in a context of optimism for peace and prosperity for the whole region. Therefore, assessing the effectiveness of the EU's main instrument of this cooperation in the middle of a devastating war on the Southern shore would not help but questioning its *raison d'être*. Additionally, the EU, along with its partners, has been incapable of solving many extended conflicts in the South, be it in Syria or Libya, rather merely suggesting tools for conflict containment to stop its proliferation.

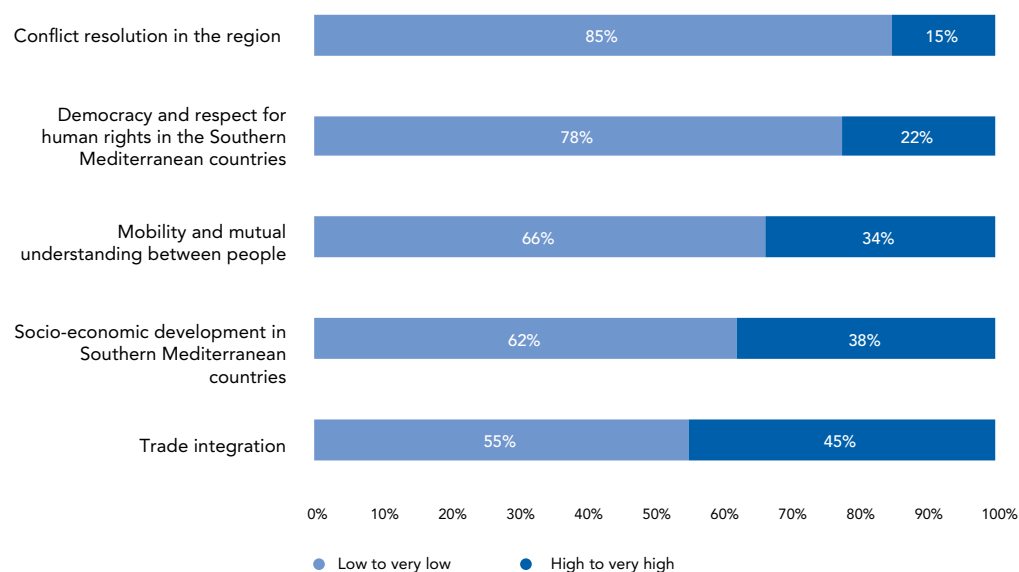
The ENP's low impact on the Southern neighbourhood was also perceived in the field of democracy and human rights promotion with a percentage of 78%, mobility

Assessing the effectiveness of the EU's main instrument of this cooperation in the middle of a devastating war on the Southern shore would not help but questioning its *raison d'être*.

Traditionally, there was a common conviction that a pragmatic trade-off should take place in the Euro-Mediterranean relations. However, survey results challenge this conviction.

and mutual understanding with 66%, socio-economic development with 62%, and trade integration with the EU with 55%. Traditionally, there was a common conviction that a pragmatic trade-off should take place in the Euro-Mediterranean relations; to enhance stability and economic advantages, the political pillar consisting of democracy promotion should be left behind. However, the survey results challenge this conviction by showing that neither stability nor democracy promotion were among the biggest successes of the ENP Southern cooperation as perceived by the respondents. On the contrary, maintaining stability via resolving conflicts and promoting democracy seems to be more intertwined than traditionally expected; whereas less dissatisfaction with the impact of ENP was perceived in the economic field especially in trade integration and socio-economic development. Hence, the pragmatic technical cooperation on the economic level has to some extent paid off in connecting both shores through trade and developmental projects.

Graph 1: Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?

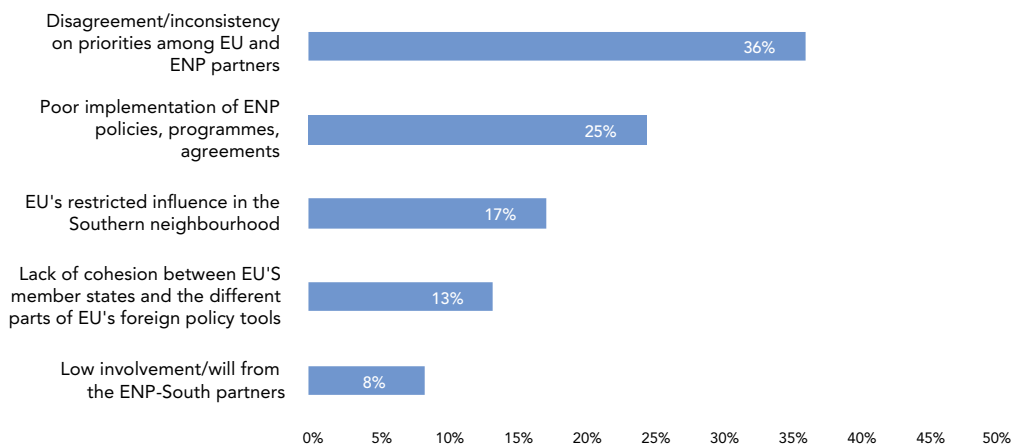


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Some would see the main obstacle impeding an effective ENP in the disagreement over identifying priorities of cooperation between the EU and the Southern partners (almost 36.2% of the respondents). The first explanation to that figure could be the Southern governments' consistent rejection of any dictation regarding their internal governance when it comes to human rights and democratic process. However, the

disagreements might also emanate from the emphasize put by the EU on the irregular migration problem opposed to the developmental dimension that the Southern partners are more interested in.

Graph 2: Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Meanwhile, almost 25% perceive the obstacle in the poor implementation of the ENP programs that prevent them from generating the expected success. Frequently, the implementation of the EU programs requires a rigid and sophisticated level of institutionalisation that might not be common to the Southern partners whether for the governmental or the non-governmental entities. This fact usually requires longer processes of adaptation and coordination that might be time-consuming, reducing thus the expected benefits of the cooperation. Nevertheless, another segment of the respondents sees the obstacles lying in the weak influence of the EU in the Southern neighbourhood, the low involvement of the Southern partners in the ENP's process, and the lack of consistency and cohesion between the ENP and other parts of the EU's foreign policy tools, with a percentage of 17.3%, 8.5%, and 13.5% respectively. These last three factors could be grouped to understand the dynamic of competition that the EU's role might face in the region when compared to other actors such as the USA, Russia, or China. Understandably, a national policy is by definition much easier to formulate and implement than a collective policy of a union of states. Therefore, the different policy tools applied by these competitors might seem more consistent and harmonised with their foreign policy, which naturally generates strong influence and engagement from the Southern countries.

The EU's role might face a dynamic of competition in the region. Compared to a collective policy of a union of states, USA, Russia or China can easily formulate and implement policy tools consistent and harmonised with their foreign policy.

The EU's Diminishing Credibility in the South

Apart from the strict figures introduced by the survey, there is a real crisis of credibility facing the EU's role in the Southern neighbourhood regarding adopting different stances toward similar issues (Venturi & Vallianatou, 2022). The different reactions coming from Brussels and other European capitals regarding the war in Gaza have greatly harmed the EU's image, especially when compared to previous reactions to the Ukraine war. The President of the European Commission Von der Leyen highlighting Israel's right of self-defense without equally urging it to respect the international law, has given the impression that the EU's foreign policy is subject to personal views, rather than institutionalised decisions. Likewise, the ad-hoc decision to suspend the European humanitarian aid to Gaza during the first week of war was widely received in the Arab Southern countries as a biased position automatically backing Israel in its collective punishment against Gaza (Wax & Barigazzi, 2023). Hence, the following decisions of increasing the EU's aid to the Palestinians have gone unnoticed and the effect of the first reactions has remained longer (Lynch, 2023).

Traditionally, the EU was seen as a neutral mediator and a reliable guarantor to the peace process in the Middle East. However, recently the American and the European stances are grouped to be judged as western partial positions backing Israel and turning a blind eye to the tremendously huge amount of civilian casualties in Gaza.

These mixed messages coming from the EU added to the popularity of anti-colonial arguments introduced previously to criticise the ENP in the South. All colonial explanations were given to justify the different stances that the EU has shown to the wars in Ukraine and in Gaza (Gray, 2023). Traditionally, the EU was seen as a neutral mediator and a reliable guarantor to the peace process in the Middle East. However, recently the American and the European stances are grouped to be judged as Western partial positions backing Israel and turning a blind eye to the tremendously huge amount of civilian casualties in Gaza. The Western media are seen completely biased when adopting the Israeli narrative of the war and almost entirely excluding the Palestinian narrative (Shehata, 2023). The fundamental rights of humans are not valued equally but according to their nationality and skin colour (Jones, 2023). Double standards, media bias and colonialism were frequently used to describe the position of western governments with little differentiation among them.

Meanwhile, the stances of Spain, Ireland, Portugal, and Belgium insisting on maintaining humanitarian aid to the Palestinians were received as individual positions, not representing the whole European bloc. Nonetheless, these positions are much more loyal to the traditional stance of the EU in previous episodes of the Middle East conflict and should not be regarded as an exception (Kassam, 2024).

In an open letter, a group of Arab intellectuals called upon Western intellectuals to show their real adherence to the universal values of freedom, justice, human dignity and human rights by announcing their solidarity with the Palestinian cause. The letter addressed by a group of writers, researchers, artists and poets, emphasised a huge gap between the rhetoric of the Western culture and the actual positions of Western intellectuals, let alone Western governments (Ourouba22, 2023). Others have questioned the degree of inclusiveness of Western democracy, usually set as an example to follow, if the media was biased and the views of peace movements calling for a ceasefire are not taken into consideration when deciding on national or European foreign policy.

Consequently, the repercussions of this continuing war in Gaza have not only harmed the EU's legitimacy as a normative power, but also questioned it as a credible partner if compared to other actors. For instance, Russia and China were perceived in the Southern neighbourhood as less biased towards the Palestine/Israel conflict and for sure less demanding in terms of democracy promotion. And in a context of accelerated animosity towards the West, both countries appear as perfect partners to the region to substitute the Northern neighbours, especially in trade ties and developmental projects.

Additionally, the continuing war in the neighbourhood does not serve by any means the main purpose of ENP in terms of extending peace and prosperity in the Southern neighbourhood. On the contrary, the continuous bloodshed in Gaza accentuates the appeal of the use of violence both regionally and domestically. On one hand, the non-state actors involved in the conflict are getting more and more popular in the eyes of the public, since no other mechanism of justice for Palestine is in action. On the other hand, Iran as the main backer of these non-state actors is seen as the sole regional power capable of supporting the Palestinians militarily, when other channels of support are blocked. Furthermore, the continuous bloodshed constitutes an ideal argument for grievances to be easily misused by violent extremist groups to recruit youth for attacking whether the local governments or the western interests in the region. Apart from the organised attacks directly planned and supported by violent extremist groups, lone wolves' attacks are very likely to occur both in the Southern and the Northern Mediterranean countries.

The repercussions of this continuing war in Gaza have not only harmed the EU's legitimacy as a normative power, but also questioned it as a credible partner if compared to other actors.

Conclusion: Ways out of the Polarisation

Crises could be an ideal moment to introduce alternatives and opportunities. The Covid-19 crisis was an opportunity to realise that the concept of shorter and nearer supply chains could bring the Northern and Southern Mediterranean closer to enhanced trade partnerships. The Ukraine war was an occasion for the EU to look for better energy deals on the Southern shores of the Mediterranean. Following the same rationale, the war in Gaza should be seen as an opportunity for the EU to emphasize its normative power and to help enforce justice, and freedom and restore the respect of human and fundamental rights.

A basic needs approach should be put forward in the current situation to reinitiate the diminishing credibility of the EU. A strong political leverage should lead the rationale of the ENP to ensure that extremely disproportionate violence is not tolerated in this space if we are to think of the best mechanisms and tools for long-term cooperation and interdependency. The different components of the ENP were usually seen as working in parallel, not in a hierarchal pattern of progress. However, this devastating war in Gaza should act as a locomotive to advance the importance of the political component as a prerequisite to ensure the ability of other components to advance.

A strong political leverage should lead the rationale of the ENP to ensure that extreme disproportionate violence is not tolerated in this space.

Therefore, when reorienting the priorities of the ENP, one cannot think of better solutions for climate change and decarbonisation without thinking first of restoring

When reorienting the priorities of the ENP, one cannot think of better solutions for climate change and decarbonisation without thinking first of restoring the value of the human life.

the value of human life. Protecting civilians, preventing their forced displacement, and guaranteeing their safe access to human assistance should come on top of all priorities. Humanitarian organisations should be preserved and spared from politicisation or polarisation; their funding should not be used as a bargaining card in collective punishment, their resources should be augmented rather than decreased (Ebeid, 2024).

In such a serious context of polarisation and militarisation in the Southern neighbourhood, the last thing the region needs is a biased EU which takes sides. On the contrary, the best option for the EU is to regain its role as a fair mediator credibly willing to use its leverage to stop war and encourage peace. A balanced position of the EU will help pave the way to create suitable circumstances leading to a detailed plan for a ceasefire, constant and safe access to humanitarian assistance to Gaza and a comprehensive scheme linking these steps to the two states final solution. Other partial solutions would not help anymore in containing the conflict; rather it would create consecutive and wider episodes of confrontations and would likely empower the extremists on each side to lead ahead.

References

EBEID, H. (2024). UNRWA The End of the human exception. (in Arabic) Al-Ahram, 7 February 2024.

<https://gate.ahram.org.eg/daily/NewsQ/931336.aspx>

FRAPPI, C. (2017). European Neighbourhood Policy and the South Caucasus challenge, in Meliha B., Altunsik and Oktay F. Tanrisever (ed), *The South Caucasus – Security, Energy and Europeanization*, Routledge.

<https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315717821>

GRAY, A. (2023). EU faces growing Muslim animosity over Gaza war stance-Borell, Reuters, 21 November.

<https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/eu-faces-growing-muslim-animosity-over-gaza-war-stance-borrell-2023-11-21/>

JONES, M.G. (2023). Double standards undermine EU legitimacy in the Global South- Human rights watch chief. Euronews, 26 October.

<https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2023/10/26/double-standards-undermine-eu-legitimacy-in-global-south-human-rights-watch-chief>

KASSAM, A. (2024). Ireland and Spain among EU nations striking a different note on Gaza War. The Guardian, 13 February.

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2024/feb/13/ireland-and-spain-among-eu-nations-striking-a-different-note-on-gaza-war>

LYNCH, S. (2023). EU triples funding to Gaza after a week of mixed messages on Israel crisis. Politico, 15 October.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/eu-triple-funding-humanitarian-aid-gaza-israel-hamas-conflict-crisis/>

SHEHATA, D. (2023). How did the Western Media and Public Opinion see the War in Gaza? (in Arabic) ACPSS, 23 October.

<https://acpss.ahram.org.eg/News/21033.aspx>

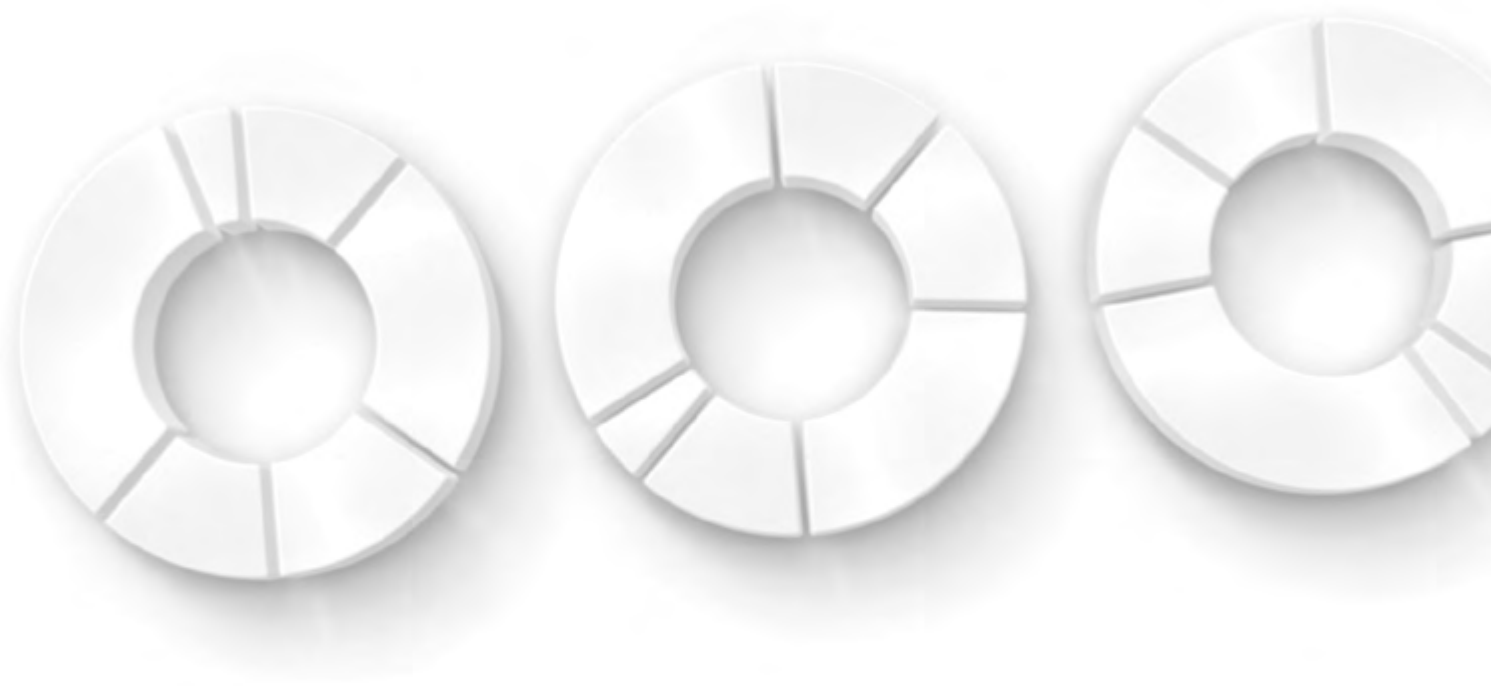
V.A. (2023). Arab Intellectuals to Western Intellectuals: Do not be dragged to falsify the Struggle of the Palestinian People. In Orouba22, 24 October 2023, short link: t.ly/X4Ljm

VENTURI, E., VALLIANATOU, A.I. (2022). Ukraine Exposes Europe's double Standards for Refugees. Chatham House, 30 March 2022.

<https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/03/ukraine-exposes-europes-double-standards-refugees>

WAX, E., BARIGAZZI, J. (2023). Von der Leyen accused of unacceptable bias towards Israel. Politico, 14 October.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/von-der-leyen-visit-israel-gaza-hamas-conflict-bias/>



The new Euro-Mediterranean context: What direction for the Morocco-European Union partnership?

Pr. Rachid El Houdaigui
The Policy Center For The New South (Rabat)

Introduction

In 2004 the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) became the policy framework setting the scene for EU interactions with its neighbours. The launch of this policy framework occurred in a context of relative stability and peace in Europe's neighbourhood, at a time when the EU was redrawing its borders through the 2004 big bang enlargement. Nonetheless, the ENP was doomed to face a panoply of conflicts, crises, and even wars. No other policy framework in the EU encountered so many challenges across time and policy sectors. Twenty years on, the EuroMeSCo Survey reveals a widespread disillusionment about the effectiveness of the ENP impact on priority areas for EU interactions with the Southern Neighbourhood. A disillusionment that couples with the perceived need to change the current ENP, either through another revision of it or through its complete renovation as a policy framework. How did we get here? And what could we do to relaunch the ENP?

The Mediterranean dynamic is unfolding in the shadow of a major geopolitical and geo-economic shock, following the combined effects of the Covid-19 health crisis, the Russia-Ukraine war, and Sino-American rivalry. One of the visible consequences is a shift in the paradigms that have so far framed international relations and, by extension, the Euro-Mediterranean parameters. Liberal globalisation and its corollary interdependence increasingly come up against the rise of neo-protectionist and interventionist practices. The global political economy seems to be reconceptualised around vague and imprecise notions such as sovereignty and economic security, energy autonomy and strategic autonomy.

The Mediterranean dynamic is unfolding in the shadow of a major geopolitical and geo-economic shock, following the combined effects of the Covid-19 health crisis, the Russia-Ukraine war and Sino-American rivalry.

This article aims to draw up a portrait of the new dynamics that we believe are relevant to the Euro-Mediterranean debate in general, and to the modernisation of the Morocco-EU partnership in particular: 1) the neo-protectionist trend in EU trade policy; 2) multi-scale threats and risks in the Mediterranean; 3) an ongoing change in the geopolitical status quo; 4) New Moroccan ambitions.

The neo-protectionist trend in EU trade policy

Liberal globalisation is struggling to withstand the geopolitical and geo-economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the growing rivalries between the USA and China, and probably between the West-Global South. Neo-protectionism, interventionism, and normative and/or judicial extraterritoriality are today the hallmarks of a new area in which the maintenance of open markets is being altered by issues considered more important, such as economic security, energy autonomy, supply chain resilience, or technological supremacy.

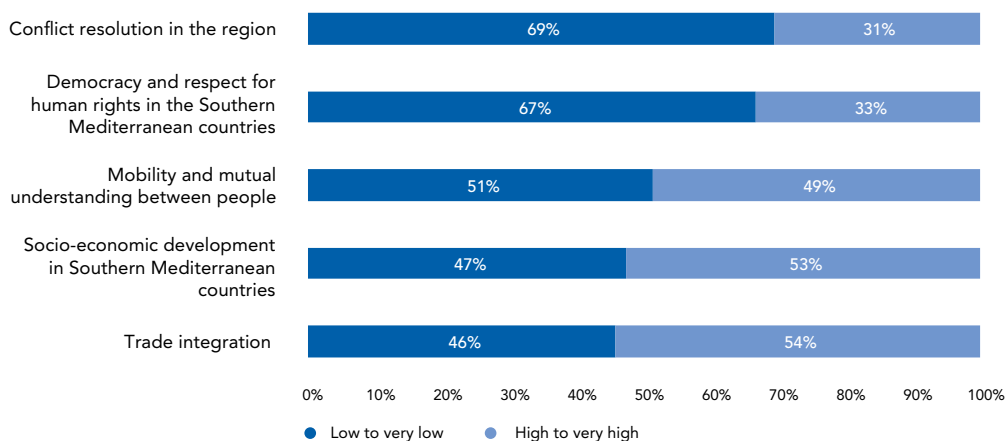
The EU has become a force that issues standards and jurisdictional rulings, some of which risk harming the interests of third countries.

In this context, the EU, concerned about its economic dependence on China and the United States trade policy (Inflation Reduction Act¹), is adopting a package of measures from 2022 onwards that will have no impact on its Mediterranean partners: the carbon tax; the anti-deforestation law; rules to combat foreign subsidies, the anti-coercion instrument; the Green Pact industrial plan; the directive on the duty of care of companies to operate fairly and sustainably throughout their value chain. These measures reveal a long-underestimated factor: the weight of law and legal standards in European trade policy. The EU has become a force that issues standards and jurisdictional rulings, some of which risk harming the interests of third countries.

Three major trends emerge from this new situation:

- The shift in the EU's degree of openness is leading to a new strategy for multilateral negotiations, bilateral trade agreements, and unilateral trade measures. This means that future negotiations will need a new economic-political consensus while bilateral (1+1) and/or regional (1+12) economic interdependence remains the final objective sought by the partners. As such, the EuroMeSCo Survey sends an important signal, namely that 54% of Moroccans appreciate the contribution of the ENP to economic integration (see graph 1).

Graph 1: Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas? (Moroccan respondents)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

- Indeed, the eventual resumption of negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) between Morocco and the EU, suspended in 2014, must take into account three challenges: 1) the inclusion of new European regulatory measures; 2) Morocco's new economic priorities and orientations; 3) the weight of European judicial extraterritoriality. These factors are all the more important as they impact all the agreements previously signed by the two parties. Firstly, the carbon tax, foreign subsidies, anti-coercion, the green pact, and corporate social responsibility throughout their value chain would require a colossal effort to converge standards, with no reluctance on Morocco's part. Secondly, the future agreement needs to be adapted to changes within the national economy, so that its impact on the national productive fabric and the socio-economic sector is guaranteed. Finally, the European court rulings on the territoriality of agricultural and fishing agreements concerning the Sahara provinces raise fundamental questions about the future of the Morocco-European relations model².
- Furthermore, agreements with the EU are increasingly global. They cover not only economic aid but also political issues such as migration. After signing similar agreements with Tunisia, Mauritania, and Egypt, the EU must negotiate another agreement with Morocco. While some see this trend as giving partners considerable leverage, given the high expectations of Europeans in particular, others believe that expanded negotiations would expose partners to brutal conditionality. Their negotiating capacity is reduced by the link between financial payments under the agreement of compliance

Agreements with the EU are increasingly global. They cover not only economic aid, but also political issues such as migration.

with commitments in the field of migration control. In fact, it is less the usefulness of this type of agreement that poses problems than the risk of partner countries substituting certain commercial interests for financial aid.

Multi-scale threats and risks in the Mediterranean

Threat perception and localisation have always been oriented towards the Southern shore, perceived as the sole source of instability. However, the new geopolitical and security situation undermines this certainty, as the nature and geography of the threat have changed.

The biggest accommodation effort is that of redefining relations between the two shores based on the new grammar of the threat in the Mediterranean. Threat perception and localisation have always been oriented towards the Southern shore, perceived as the sole source of instability. However, the new geopolitical and security situation undermines this certainty, as the nature and geography of the threat have changed. Today, we can legitimately speak of a multi-scale threat.

The war in Ukraine and the struggle for influence between Russia and the Western states have arisen at a time when the global geopolitical situation is very tense due to the weight of Sino-American rivalry. The Mediterranean is suffering the consequences of this struggle for influence, both in terms of posture and functionality. During the Cold War, it was referred to as NATO's "Southern flank" for its strategic role in the Alliance's anti-Soviet defense system, just as it was a pillar of the Soviet defense system. Today, after several years of strategic vacuum, all the signs confirm the Mediterranean's return to the status of a theatre of NATO-Russia power relations and security levelling. The new situation paves the way for the comeback of sea power and the maritimisation of power relations in the region, making the situation even more unpredictable.

The Southern shore does not yet have a collective security governance system capable of guaranteeing a united and comprehensive response to the new asymmetrical "crisis inducing" factors. Political instability in Libya and the Sahel continues to encourage the mobility of these networks and the emergence of certain "destatised" zones, particularly in the Sahel. These networks flourish in a corridor of vulnerability stretching from the Mediterranean to the Atlantic.

The stability of the Mediterranean is therefore no longer exclusively linked to considerations inherent to this area but has also become dependent on the stability of other peripheral regions in Africa (Sahelo-Saharan strip, Atlantic seaboard). Moreover, the terrorist threat is no longer confined to the South. The series of attacks that have hit a number of European countries has revealed the continental reach of radical Salafists. The rise of these European networks poses a threat to both Europe and North Africa, given the ease with which they can move between the two shores, particularly in a North-South direction.

Illegal migratory flows have returned to their usual pace following the end of the Covid-19 health crisis. Galloping demographics combined with climate change (drought) and a persistently fragile economic situation are having an impact on the day-to-day lives of populations, and fostering the conditions for migratory flows, particularly towards the Mediterranean and beyond. This situation is causing security stress in North Africa and Europe, especially as clandestine migration is far from

being a transitory phenomenon that can be eradicated by strictly punctual means. Thus, when Europe signs migration agreements with its partners, it ultimately treats only the symptoms. What's more, the brain drain encouraged by selective European policies is depriving the countries of the Southern shore, Morocco in particular, of the vital forces needed to support its economic development.

One of the lessons learned from the current situation is the need for a new political paradigm that will take into account these new endogenous and exogenous dynamics. It is a Moroccan and Southern Mediterranean conviction as the results of the survey reveal. Indeed, 69% of Moroccans are aware that conflicts and rivalries in the Mediterranean area exceed the capacities of regional cooperation mechanisms (see graph 1).

The geopolitical status quo in the Mediterranean is changing

Global tensions are accelerating the redistribution of geopolitical and geo-economic maps. Since 1990, the regulation of the Mediterranean, through cooperation and the control of violence, has been and remains Western. However, the tectonics of geopolitical plates has brought powers to the surface of the Mediterranean that are challenging European and American pre-eminence in the region:

- Russia's return to the Eastern Mediterranean and China's rise of power in the region as a whole is creating a new dynamic that is fraught with both constraints and opportunities for the countries on the Southern shore of the Mediterranean.
- Turkey's positioning as a key player and regulator on the Mediterranean stage.
- Developments in the Libyan situation have shown how the stagnation of the crisis and the incoherence of the European powers have opened the way to many players who are now part of the solution (Russia, Gulf states, etc.). Its strategic dimension (NATO military intervention) and implications exceed the capacities of the Arab League, the Arab Maghreb Union, and continental institutions (African Union, EU). Since then, the country and the region have been caught up in a contradictory power game.
- Security and stability in the Euro-Mediterranean region remain intimately linked to the outcome of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Admittedly, the centrality of this issue is not new, but the war in Gaza augurs a change in the representation of this conflict. From now on, perceptions of the conflict are no longer purely political; they are based on identity, centered on religious convictions, and exploited by extremists of all sides. Today, international mobilisation is more necessary than ever to establish international legality in the Middle East, by guaranteeing the right of the Palestinian people to a viable state.

Global tensions are accelerating the redistribution of geopolitical and geo-economic maps. The tectonics of geopolitical plates has brought powers to the surface of the Mediterranean that are challenging European and American pre-eminence in the region.

- The acceleration of events since 2021 in the Maghreb and the Strait of Gibraltar has completely overturned the status quo that prevailed in the region. American recognition of the Moroccan Sahara, the resumption of relations with Israel, and Morocco's desire for strategic autonomy have all contributed to a geopolitical recomposition favourable to Morocco and Spain.

Furthermore, it is necessary to add a European trend observed since the Arab Spring (2011), that of replacing democratic priority with political stability in relations with the Southern shore. This shift, which takes into account the fear of seeing certain countries slide into instability, explains, in part, the doubt expressed by 67% of Moroccans concerning the impact of the ENP on democratic consolidation and respect for human rights in North Africa and the Middle East (see graph 1).

Morocco's new geopolitical and geo-economic ambitions

Like any process, Morocco-European relations are a series of phases and stages, with achievements, inconsistencies, and limitations that call for joint reflection on effective responses to improve the partnership. For Morocco, relations with Europe are a fundamental asset that must be consolidated for a new, deeper, and broader partnership³. The Moroccan position could be inspired by several major issues. The fundamental challenge for Morocco's foreign policy is to find the best balance between, on the one hand, managing interactions with the West, held by the weight of history and geography, and on the other, adhering to a South-South community of geo-economic interests. Morocco's objective is to build and/or consolidate its own links between the North-South pattern and the Latin America-Africa-ASIA cooperation axis.

A number of new players, including China, India, Brazil, the Gulf States and Turkey, offer attractive new prospects. Morocco has thus entered an era of choice, which should not be interpreted as a structural reversal of its orientations.

In this sense, the United States and Europe, while strategic partners are no longer the only ones to exert an influence on Morocco's strategic orientations. The war in Ukraine and the Sino-American rivalry reveal three lines of conduct: 1) self-assertion and sovereignty, which translates into autonomous decision-making in foreign policy; 2) the consolidation of historic gains with the USA and the EU, the relevance of the economic partnership with China, and the shift towards sub-Saharan Africa, in search of new economic, political, and diplomatic frontiers⁴. Global strategic competition is therefore seen as highly favourable, as the involvement of emerging powers is multiplying and diversifying international partnerships. Some new players, including China, India, Brazil, the Gulf States, and Turkey, offer attractive new prospects. Morocco has thus entered an era of choice, which should not be interpreted as a structural reversal of its orientations.

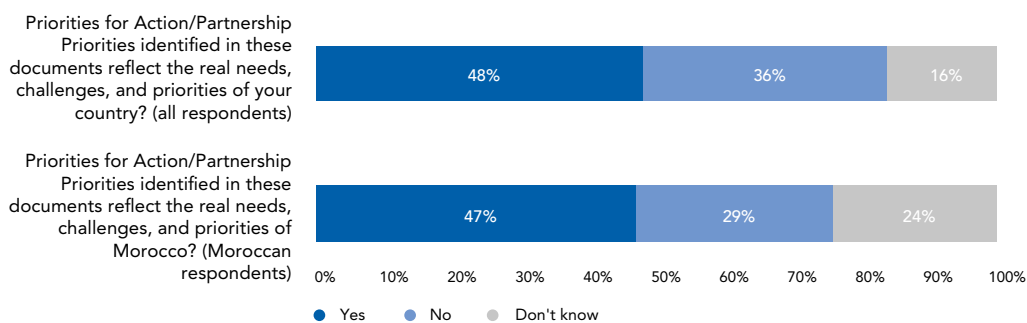
The challenges are both economic (economic prosperity of the country, Global Value Chain [GVC]) and geo-economic (efficient African economic and financial hub). The first calls for the mobilisation of the State to focus this part of the partnership with the EU on the country's main industrial ecosystems: phosphates-fertilizers, automotive, agri-food, and aeronautics. The integration of these ecosystems into the GVCs has been stepped up, enabling the Moroccan economy to become one of the few in the MENA region with a rate of participation in the GVCs similar to – or even higher

than – emerging countries such as Russia, India, or Turkey⁵. In this context, the re-launch of the partnership must be done based on the ENP economic achievements. In fact, 53% of Moroccans positively appreciate the effects of these instruments of socio-economic development in the South (see graph 1).

The geo-economic dimension, meanwhile, has a regional value, since Morocco needs geo-economic depth, particularly in North-West Africa, as an alternative to the Maghreb blockage. The Morocco-Nigeria gas pipeline project, the Atlantic Initiative for the Sahel⁶, and the opportunities offered by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) confirm this orientation. The State's ambition is to create the right conditions for a stable geo-economic North-South and South-South positioning, with the Strait of Gibraltar, port and air infrastructures, and the depths of West Africa as junction and connection points. However, the question of Morocco's ability to mobilise the necessary economic resources and political support remains. While the commitment of the Gulf partners seems to be a given, that of Europe, on the other hand, remains to be negotiated, particularly with a view to modernising the Morocco-EU partnership.

It goes without saying that the partnership with the EU needs both new ideas and political commitments for better implementation of action plans. Some institutional constraints arose in the realisation of various plans, which were nonetheless developed based on the principle of ownership around Moroccan priorities. (Graph 2).

Graph 2: Q.8a Do you think the Priorities for Action/Partnership Priorities identified in these documents reflect the real needs, challenges, and priorities of Morocco? (Moroccan respondents)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Conclusion

Morocco-European relations need a new model of partnership, rebalancing expectations on both sides, promoting dynamic, inclusive, and productive growth that reduces Moroccan vulnerabilities and consolidates economic interdependence.

The strategic changes underway are opening up new prospects fraught with uncertainties and opportunities for Morocco-European relations and for the Mediterranean as a whole. The diplomatic agenda looks set to be a busy one. The process of adaptation is not without its inconveniences, but it is made necessary by national and multilateral strategic shifts. The stakes of present and future choices call for joint reflection on the convergences and complementarities that the Mediterranean needs to overcome current challenges. Morocco-European relations need a new model of partnership, rebalancing expectations on both sides, promoting dynamic, inclusive, and productive growth that reduces Moroccan vulnerabilities and consolidates economic interdependence.

Notes

1. J. Arnal, E. Feás, A. González-Agote, M. Otero Iglesias, J. Tamames, F. Steinberg. El modelo económico europeo ante el retorno de la geopolítica: diagnóstico y propuestas de reforma. Informe 33 | Marzo 2024, Real Instituto Elcano.
2. Scott, J., The External Influence of the Court of Justice of the European Union, in: Arie Reich, and Hans-W. Micklitz (Eds.), *The Impact of the European Court of Justice on Neighbouring Countries*. Oxford University Press, 2020, 16–37.
3. Hamza Mjahed. Rebooting the Morocco-European Union Partnership, research thesis, HEC – Paris, Mohammed VI Polytechnic.
4. Rachid El Houdaigui, Atlantic Africa: United States, Europe, China, Russia...Influences with Variable Geometry. A View from the South, Report on *Great Power Competition in the Atlantic*, Atlantic center, Ministry of National Defence, Portugal, November 2023.
5. Morocco's foreign trade profile, <https://www.tresor.economie.gouv.fr/Pays/MA/profil-du-commerce-exterieur-du-maroc>(consulted on the 20th of March 2024).
6. Launched in November 2023 by King Mohammed VI, this initiative aims to promote access of the Sahel States to the Atlantic Ocean, through Moroccan ports.

The future of EU-Southern Neighbourhood trade relations. The FTAs are dead, long live the (DC)FTAs?

Katarzyna W. Sidło

Director of MENA Department, CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research.

EU-SN trade exchange

Trade relations are an important part of European Union's (EU) relationship with countries in its Southern Neighbourhood (SN), currently governed by trade chapters of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements signed between 1995 and 2002 (henceforth: FTAs). The relationship is far from straightforward, though, and partner countries have been raising a number of issues and concerns regarding their effectiveness and efficiency over the years (CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research et al., 2021). A crucial complain regards the extent to which the relationship is asymmetric: while the EU is the main trading partner for eight out of ten countries in its Southern Neighbourhood (all but Jordan and Palestine), the exchange of goods with the SN accounts for only 4.8% of EU's trade (as of 2022) (European Commission, 2022). As the FTAs were signed two and, in some cases, three decades ago, they are "old generation" deals: their scope is limited, and provisions are outdated, despite additional protocols being signed with some of the partner countries over time. At the same time, implementation of the provisions that are in place is limited. Finally, many privileges stemming from the AAs have eroded over time, as the EU has been signing more modern and comprehensive trade deals with other countries (CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research et al., 2021). Overall, both the partner countries and the EU are unsatisfied with the current state of the mutual trade relationship and with the rules that govern it, and the debate on how the situation can be improved has been ongoing for over a decade now.

Over the years the EU's partner countries have been raising a number of issues and concerns regarding FTAs' effectiveness and efficiency.

As a solution, (DCFTAs), aimed to integrate the economies of the partner countries into the EU market.

A solution suggested by the EU was the signing of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs), something offered to countries in the Eastern Partnership countries as well. The general idea behind the DCFTAs is to integrate the economies of the partner countries into the EU market as “deeply and comprehensively” as possible for a non-EU member state. As already mentioned above, the FTAs currently in place are seriously limited in their scope and exclude areas such as investment, trade in services, public procurement, intellectual property rights, competition, or sustainable development. DCFTAs would cover all these areas, harmonising trade-related rules and regulations of the SN countries with relevant EU legislation and international standards (CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research et al., 2021).

Just as the democratisation dreams of the populations across the Southern Mediterranean have not materialised, not much progress has been made on the DCFTA negotiations process either.

A green light to commence negotiations on the DCFTAs with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, and Tunisia was given by the Council of the EU to the European back in 2011, following the onset of the Arab Uprisings (European Commission, 2011). However, just as the democratisation dreams of the populations across the Southern Mediterranean have not materialised, not much progress has been made on the DCFTA negotiations process either.

Years in the making

Negotiations with Morocco and Tunisia, ongoing since 2013 and 2015 respectively, have been stalled. The former suspended the process in 2014, following the first round of negotiations, in order to conduct its own evaluation of the potential impacts of the DCFTA. Nearly ten years later, negotiations are yet to be officially resumed, despite completion of the said evaluation, as well as the 2019 joint EU-Morocco declaration for the 14th meeting of the Association Council mentioning the relaunch of the negotiation process (a step enabled by adjusting EU-Morocco agricultural and fisheries agreements in order to satisfy a ruling of the Court of Justice of the European Union regarding their applicability to territories of the Western Sahara) (Council of the EU, 2019).

In case of Tunisia, four full rounds of negotiations took place between April 2016 and May 2019 (Sidło & Cohen-Hadria, 2022). The Strategic Priorities for EU-Tunisia partnership currently in place stress that “[b]oth sides remain fully committed to the process of negotiations towards a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA)” (EU-Tunisia Association Council, 2018). While a “concrete action plan for 2018” was supposed to be made in order to accelerate the negotiation process to finalise it “as soon as possible” (EU-Tunisia Association Council, 2018), the process is at a standstill.

As for Egypt and Jordan, negotiations have not even commenced yet. Tellingly, while Partnership Priorities for both countries for the previous programming period contained references to DCFTAs (EU-Egypt Association Council, 2017), the 2021-2027 priorities for Egypt and 2022-2027 priorities for Jordan do not (EU-Egypt Association Council, 2022; EU-Jordan Association Council, 2022).

Why the delay? Main criticism towards the DCFTAs

The protracted nature of the (pre)negotiation process is closely related to the level of controversy surrounding the DCFTAs themselves and the resulting lack of appetite towards their implementation in partner countries, both among the civil society and the private sector, as well as authorities (CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research et al., 2021; Institut Arabe des Chefs d'entreprises [IACE], 2017; Sidło et al., 2021). As noted by some of the respondents to this year's EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey, DCFTAs have become highly politicised, with entire social movements and campaigns held against them (for instance, a powerful Tunisian General Labour Union UGTT led a "National Coordination of the fight against DCFTA") (Magnan, 2019).

The protracted nature of the (pre)negotiation process is closely related to the level of controversy surrounding the DCFTAs themselves and the resulting lack of appetite towards their implementation.

What is their main criticism towards the DCFTA?

In most general terms, and as indeed pointed out by Euromed Survey respondents from both the EU and SN, the DCFTAs are denounced for reflecting priorities of Brussels and not those of the partner countries, not being flexible enough, and not taking into consideration specificities of individual partner countries.

Fears pertain to the economic impact of the DCFTA on the already troubled economies of the countries in the SN, most importantly the cost of legal approximation, the risk of bankruptcy of local SMEs unable to compete with EU-based businesses, and resulting disturbances in the job market. Particular concerns are voiced by NGOs, CSOs and unions regarding potential adverse impacts on the agricultural sector in partner countries: the difficulty and costliness of adjusting to EU food and safety (SPS) regulations, the inability to compete with EU-based farmers (who enjoy subsidies from Brussels), and further increase of dependence of food imports (Magnan, 2019; Aouadi, 2020; Kaiser, 2019; CCFD-Terre Solidaire, 2019).

DCFTAs are denounced for reflecting priorities of Brussels and not those of the partner countries, not being flexible enough, and not taking into consideration specificities of individual partner countries.

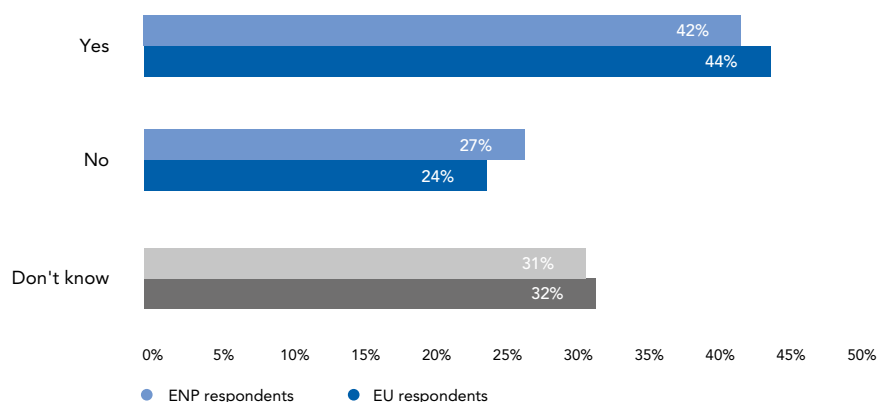
The requirement to harmonise local regulations and standards with relevant EU legislation is raising concerns, not just due to its cost and complexity, but also because it is seen by some as a threat to national security. Countries in the SN, unlike those in the EaP, are not motivated by the prospect of EU membership and as such, a process of legal approximation, if additionally monitored and evaluated by the EC, is viewed by some as handing over too much control to a foreign power (Van der Loo, 2021).

Finally, as noted by respondents to the EuroMed Survey, limiting the DCFTA to the free movement of goods and services but not of people is not in the interest of the partner countries. Indeed, granting temporary freedom of movement for business purposes is of key importance for both Moroccan and Tunisian governments, who moreover wish to tie DCFTA negotiations with talks on Visa Facilitation Agreement – something that Brussels is unwilling to consent to (Sidło & Cohen-Hadria, 2022).

Are the DCFTAs still the best paradigm for improving EU-SN trade relations? With all the above-listed criticism in mind, the question that arises is whether the DCFTAs are still the best paradigm to advance better trade relations between the EU and its Southern Mediterranean partners? The plurality (44%) of those who contributed to

this year's EuroMed Survey believe that the answer is yes, with respondents from the SN countries only slightly less enthusiastic about the DCFTA (by 2 p.p.) than those from the EU.

Graph 1: Q.11 Do you think DCFTAs are still the best paradigm to advance better trade relations between the EU and its Southern Mediterranean partners?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th EuroMed Survey

An undisputable advantage of the negotiations process is giving partner countries a push for reforms. It is generally accepted even by those most critical of the DCFTAs that economies of partner countries in the SN are in dire need of a reform, and agreements could provide a framework – and EU support – to do just that (see. eg. Aoudi, 2020).

A significant effort would need to be made to include civil society, NGOs, and private sector in the partner countries into the negotiation process and convince them to remain open-minded.

There are a number of caveats to take into account, however (as indeed noted by a number of respondents to the EuroMed Survey). Most importantly, both sides would need to be fully dedicated to the negotiation process and willing to make real concessions. Additionally, significant effort would need to be made to include civil society, NGOs, and the private sector in the partner countries in the negotiation process and convince them to remain open-minded; this was not always the case in the past, even though views diverge here between EU, local authorities and local stakeholders. In case of Morocco, the question of inclusion of Western Sahara into the DCFTA would have to be addressed as well.

Realistically, in the foreseeable future, the chances of signing a DCFTA with Morocco and Tunisia are slim, and with Egypt and Jordan (or other countries in the SN for that matter) – practically non-existent. As such, other formats of reshaping the trade and investment relationship between these countries and the EU are being considered (Sidło & Cohen-Hadria, 2022).

Alternative routes

One alternative option of reviving the existing trade relationship between the EU and its partner countries in the SN is modernisation of the existing FTAs, as suggested by the EU's Trade Policy Review – An Open, Sustainable and Assertive Trade Policy (European Commission, 2021) and a joint statement published during the 11th Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Trade Ministers Conference that took place in November 2020 (although it is unclear to what extent this idea was supported by SN members of the UfM (Sidło & Cohen-Hadria, 2022)). However, while decidedly less ambitious than signing a DCFTA, modernising the existing FTAs might also prove too challenging as all the “least problematic” sectors such as industrial goods have already been liberalised and it is the challenging parts that remain to be agreed on (Van der Loo, 2021; Sidło & Cohen-Hadria, 2022).

Should that be the case, a “revival” of the FTAs might be considered – an objective (albeit admittedly not very clearly set one) more in line with the 2021-2027 priorities for Egypt and 2022-2027 priorities for Jordan which mention working closely to “strengthen[en] the existing trade and investment relationship” in place of referencing DCFTA as Partnership Priorities for previous periods did¹.

The alternative of modernising the existing FTAs might also prove too challenging as all the “least problematic” sectors such as industrial goods have already been liberalised and it is the challenging parts that remain to be agreed.

Way ahead

With no easy solution in sight and no real hope for signing the DCFTAs soon, it might be worth for the EU and the partner countries in the SN to take another route floated more recently – one of signing stand-alone investment agreements. One of the most often voiced criticisms towards the FTA by the partner countries has been insufficient investment coming from the EU (even if, as already mentioned, FTAs do not cover investment issues; (CASE – Center for Social and Economic Research et al., 2021)). The EU, in turn, has even, since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic been voicing a need to relocate at least part of its production closer to its borders, or of the so-called nearshoring/friend-shoring (Sidło et al., 2021).

Working out an investment deal satisfactory to both sides will not, admittedly, be an easy process, especially given the political situation in the SN. Among a number of obstacles to increasing EU's FDI in the SN, improving business climate in the partner countries will be the most challenging one to overcome, requiring a lot of political will. With enough dedication and sufficient support on part of the EU (both financial and technical), progress is achievable – or at least more attainable than a fully-fledged DCFTA.

With no easy solution in sight and no real hope for signing of the DCFTAs soon, it might be worth for the EU and the partner countries in the SN to take another route floated more recently – one of signing stand-alone investment agreements.

1. Indeed, after the present text was completed, EU and Egypt elevated their relationship to strategic and comprehensive partnership, agreeing to “fully implement and unleash the full potential of the Free Trade Area of the Association Agreement” and “explore various forms for the modernisation and review of the Association Agreement on the issue of trade and investment relations to better adapt them to today's challenges.” https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/news/joint-declaration-strategic-and-comprehensive-partnership-between-arab-republic-egypt-and-european-2024-03-17_en

References

AOUDI, S. (2020). Les Relations Commerciales Tuniso-Européennes : Evaluation de l'accord d'association de 1996 et Étude d'impacts du projet d'Accord de Libre-Échange Complet et Approfondi (ALECA).

<https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/bueros/tunesien/16426.pdf>

CASE – CENTER FOR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH, ECORYS, & FEMISE (2021). Ex-post evaluation of the impact of trade chapters of the Euro-Mediterranean Association Agreements with six partners.

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/fab9bddd-9106-11eb-b85c-01aa75ed71a1>

CCFD-TERRE SOLIDAIRE (2019). Accord de Libre-Échange Aleca : 9 Risques Identifiés par la Société Civile Tunisienne.

<https://ccfd-terresolidaire.org/accord-de-libre-echange-aleca-9-risques-identifies-par-la-societe-civile-tunisienne/>

COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION (2019, June 27). Joint declaration by the European Union and Morocco for the fourteenth meeting of the Association Council.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/06/27/joint-declaration-by-the-european-union-and-the-kingdom-of-morocco-for-the-fourteenth-meeting-of-the-association-council/>

EU-EGYPT ASSOCIATION COUNCIL (2017). EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities 2017-2020.

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23942/eu-egypt.pdf>

EU-EGYPT ASSOCIATION COUNCIL (2022). Annex to Recommendation of the EU-Egypt Association Council on the EU-Egypt Partnership Priorities 2021-2027.

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-2803-2022-ADD-1/en/pdf>

EU-JORDAN ASSOCIATION COUNCIL (2022). Annex to Decision of the EU-Jordan Association Council on the EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities 2021-2027.

<https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-3304-2022-ADD-1/en/pdf>

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2011, December 14). EU agrees to start trade negotiations with Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_11_1545

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2021) Trade Policy Review - An Open, Sustainable and Assertive Trade Policy.

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52021DC0066>

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2022). EU Trade Statistics.

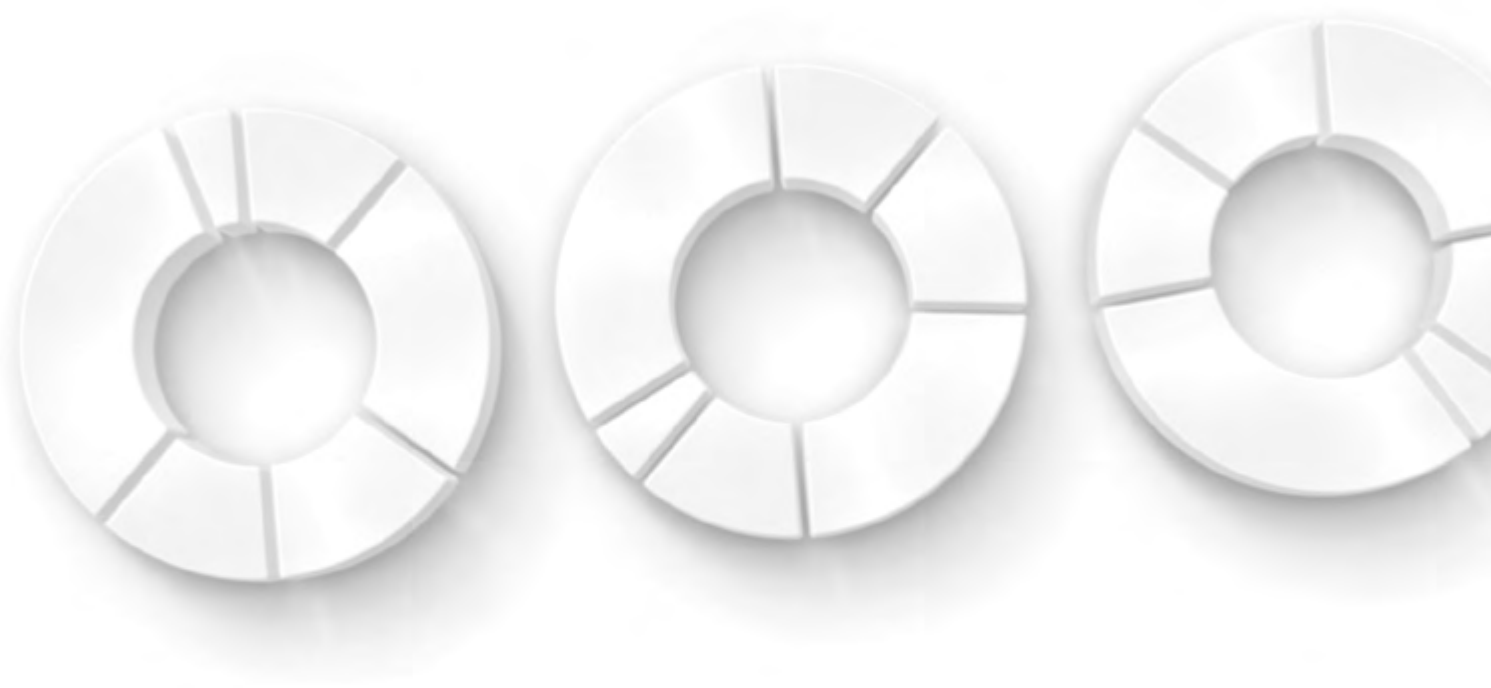
https://policy.trade.ec.europa.eu/analysis-and-assessment/statistics_en#letter-i

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (n/d). EU-Tunisia.

https://neighbourhood-enlargement.ec.europa.eu/european-neighbourhood-policy/countries-region/tunisia_en

EU-TUNISIA ASSOCIATION COUNCIL (2018). Decision no 1/2018 of the EU-Tunisia Association Council of 9 November 2018 adopting the EU-Tunisia strategic priorities for the period 2018-2020 [2018/1792].

<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22018D1792&-from=FR>



Navigating complexities: Challenges in EU's mobility cooperation with the Southern Neighbours

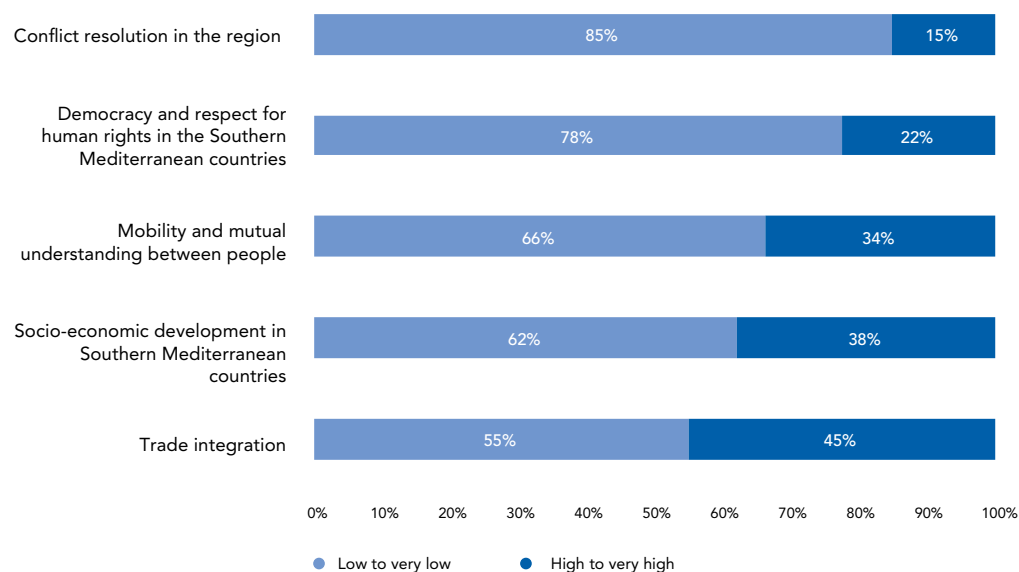
Tasnim Abderrahim

Analyst at the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) guides the European Union's interactions with its Southern and Eastern neighbouring countries. Migration and mobility are central themes within the ENP. The February 2021 joint communication on the renewed partnership with the Southern neighbourhood, within the framework of the ENP, underscores the importance of effectively supporting and leveraging the benefits of legal migration and mobility within both EU and member states' competencies (European Commission, 2021). However, despite the intentions outlined in the ENP, the Euromed Survey results indicate that there is a perception among respondents that its impact on legal mobility and mutual understanding between people has been limited. A majority of respondents (66%) view this impact as either low or very low, with only a minority (34%) considering it high or very high. This perception underscores the challenges inherent in fostering cooperation on mobility issues between Northern and Southern Mediterranean neighbours.

The renewed partnership with the Southern neighbourhood, within the framework of the ENP, underscores the importance of effectively supporting and leveraging the benefits of legal migration and mobility.

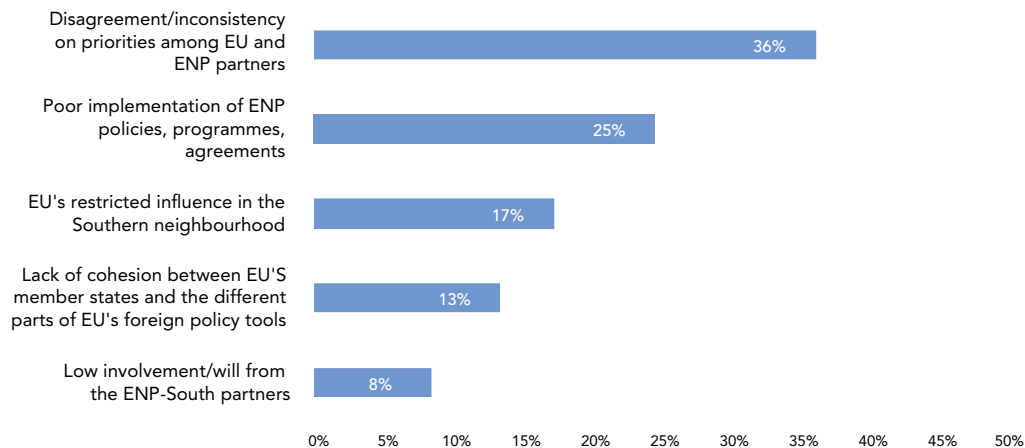
Graph 1: Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Mobility cooperation involves a complex array of interconnected issues such as security, economics, and diplomacy. Balancing these diverse factors while accommodating the varied needs and interests of stakeholders poses inherent challenges. One major challenge highlighted in the Euromed Survey results is the presence of disagreements on priorities among these partners, with over 36% of respondents citing it as the top reason for the perceived low impact of the ENP. Additionally, issues such as poor implementation of policies, programs, and agreements, as well as the EU's limited influence in the Southern neighbourhood, have limited the impact of the ENP, according to the survey respondents.

Graph 2: Q.1b In general terms or in relation to the specific areas mentioned above, why do you think the impact has been limited? (categories developed from open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

The complexities of cooperation on mobility are particularly pronounced in discussions surrounding visa facilitation. Notably, the EU has successfully concluded visa liberalisation agreements with three Eastern neighbours and signed visa facilitation and readmission agreements with nearly all its Eastern counterparts. In contrast, visa liberalisation remains absent from discussions with Southern neighbours. While negotiations commenced on dual agreements for visa facilitation and readmission with a few Southern partners, no such agreements have been formalised. These negotiations that unfolded have underscored the presence of divergent agendas and priorities on both sides of the Mediterranean, highlighting challenges in reaching mutual agreements on mobility-related issues.

Surge in irregular migration undermines dialogue on legal mobility channels

Arguably, the European Union has an interest in enhancing legal mobility channels. This is in part driven by challenges facing European labour markets due to aging populations and declining working-age populations, which has indeed put pressure on member states to address labour shortages and fill vacancies (Rasche, 2023). However, several dynamics within the EU complicate the development of a unified response to this challenge. One major obstacle is the reluctance of member states to relinquish control over labour migration to the European level (Ibid). This reluctance stems from concerns about sovereignty, national identity, and the potential impact of increased migration on domestic politics. Furthermore, substantial resources and

While the EU has successfully concluded visa liberalisation agreements with three Eastern neighbours and signed visa facilitation and readmission agreements with nearly all its Eastern counterparts, visa liberalisation remains absent from discussions with Southern neighbours.

The EU has an interest in enhancing legal mobility channels. This is in part driven by challenges facing European labour markets. However, several dynamics within the EU complicate the development of a unified response to this challenge.

energy at the EU level have predominantly been focused on reducing irregular arrivals, rather than enhancing legal mobility. The issue of irregular migration continues to dominate the debate on migration to the EU, both domestically and externally.

The impact of migration on intra-European dynamics became particularly pronounced during the peak of the migratory crisis of 2015. During this time, many member states reinstated border controls and engaged in pushing migrants back at borders to other EU countries. This challenged the EU's unified space principle. Subsequently, the surge in anti-migrant sentiments fuelled the rise of far-right parties, often at the expense of pro-EU factions. This shift highlights how migration has evolved into a decisive factor in electoral outcomes across Europe. Since 2017, anti-immigration parties have gained increased popularity in several member states, including the Netherlands, Italy, Austria, and Germany. Looking ahead, migration is expected to continue dominating the political landscape in 2024, shaping policy debates and electoral campaigns across member states and at the EU level (Dubois & Hall, 2023).

Despite a decline in migrant flows between 2018 and 2019, arrivals in Italy surged again since 2020 through North Africa, reaching a peak of 157,652 arrivals in Italy in 2023. During this year, Tunisia emerged as a primary departure point towards Italy, with 97,306 individuals, predominantly from Western African countries, arriving in Europe via this route (UNHCR, 2023). This influx has once again thrust migration to the forefront of EU-Tunisia relations, prompting the EU to negotiate a highly criticised agreement with the Tunisian government aimed at enhancing cooperation on migration management.

Amidst declining solidarity within the EU, addressing irregular migration is increasingly framed as a strategic response to counter the rise of anti-EU sentiments.

These shifting migratory dynamics within the Euro-Mediterranean space have direct implications for the mobility discourse. Amidst declining solidarity within the EU, addressing irregular migration is increasingly framed as a strategic response to counter the rise of anti-EU sentiments. The perception of migration as a threat to national security and sovereignty has led to a heightened focus on the securitisation of migration issues, leading to a prioritisation of measures related to migrant return and border control over other facets of mobility collaboration.

One notable area where this impact is evident is in the EU's visa policy. Given the prevalent circumstances, the EU appears hesitant to make concessions on visa facilitation. This hesitance is partly rooted in the enduring instability and deteriorating socio-economic conditions in the Southern vicinity, which offer limited incentives for the EU to reconsider its stance on visa facilitation. The prospects for a promising discussion on enhancing mobility through visa facilitation look dim, with visa application processes in Southern Mediterranean countries appearing to be increasingly challenging. This complexity is fuelled in part by EU apprehensions regarding visa-related risks. As migration pressures escalate in the region, concerns about exploiting short-term Schengen visas for overstaying in the EU have become prominent. Additionally, there are growing worries surrounding the use of fraudulent visas and the provision of fake documents in Schengen visa applications, leading to what appears to be a tighter stance on assessing visa applications.

The long-stalled negotiations on the joint readmission-visa facilitation agreements

In the realm of cooperation on migration management, the EU pursues stronger collaboration from its Southern neighbours on various fronts, including border control, the readmission of their nationals staying irregularly in the EU, and the return of third-country nationals (TCNs) who transit through their territories to reach Europe. To achieve this, the EU aims to employ a balanced approach of incentives and pressure. One pivotal policy tool mobilised by the EU in this endeavour is the joint readmission-visa facilitation policy, which incentivises partner countries to cooperate on readmission by offering increased and easier mobility channels for certain groups. Although the readmission and visa facilitation agreements are negotiated separately, they are often linked with a partner's cooperation on readmission being rewarded with relaxed visa requirements. Consequently, visas are not only utilised as a means of controlling mobility but also serve as an incentive for third countries to collaborate on other aspects of migration management.

Negotiations for joint agreements were initiated with Morocco and Tunisia after the conclusion of Mobility Partnerships in 2013 and 2014, respectively¹. However, talks with both countries have encountered unexpected challenges, both political and practical, leading to stalled progress. Limited headway in the negotiations can be attributed to various factors. Talks with Tunisia, which began in October 2016, initially appeared promising, with EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs, and Citizenship Dimitris Avramopoulos stating that "Tunisia could be the first country to benefit from an ambitious visa facilitation agreement" (European Commission, 2016). However, after four rounds of negotiations, progress halted. The negotiations with Morocco faced a setback due to tensions in EU-Morocco relations. In 2016, the political dialogue between the two sides was suspended following a ruling by the EU Court of Justice against the agriculture and fishery agreement signed in 2012. By 2017, it was evident that discussions with both countries had not advanced as anticipated.

Several disagreements have emerged during the negotiations. One contentious aspect is the return of third-country nationals (TCNs), which the North African countries opposed for domestic and external considerations. In the realm of visas, there are disparities between the EU's visa incentives and North African countries' expectations. The proposed EU visa incentives were seen as insufficient, leaving out less privileged groups who face limited opportunities for temporary travel. Thus, questions arose about the added value of an EU-wide visa facilitation agreement compared to existing bilateral agreements, spurring uncertainty about its actual impact (Abderrahim, 2019).

One pivotal policy tool mobilised by the EU in the cooperation on migration management, is the joint readmission-visa facilitation policy, which incentivises partner countries to cooperate on readmission by offering increased and easier mobility channels for certain groups.

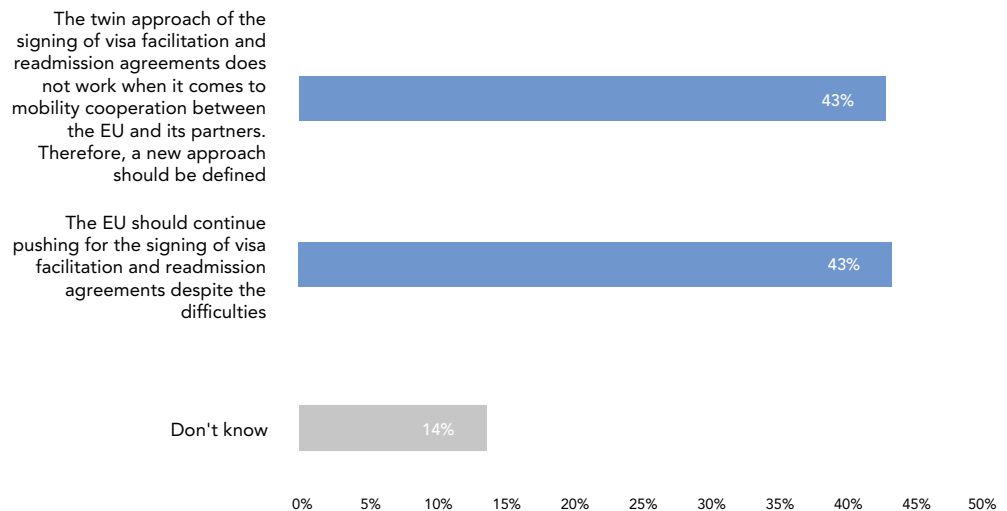
1. Negotiations on a readmission agreement with Morocco began in the 2000s but yielded no concrete results. The signing of the Mobility Partnership (MP) between both parties in 2013 aimed to provide a framework for discussing the readmission agreement alongside an agreement on visa facilitation.

As migration continues to be a complex and sensitive issue, finding common ground and reaching mutually beneficial agreements remains challenging.

Despite the limited progress, the negotiations have not been officially suspended. However, there are considerable doubts about the fate of these agreements. Overcoming differences presents a daunting task, especially considering the evolving migration landscape in both Europe and North Africa, which has heightened the politicisation of migration. As migration continues to be a complex and sensitive issue, finding common ground and reaching mutually beneficial agreements remains challenging.

The limited effectiveness of the negotiations on these agreements may have had an impact on how this policy tool is perceived in the Mediterranean region, as evidenced by the results of the Euromed Survey. The data reveals a split opinion in this regard. While 43% of respondents support continuing efforts to sign visa facilitation and readmission agreements despite the challenges, an equal proportion believes that a new approach is needed due to the perceived ineffectiveness of the current twin approach.

Graph 3: Q.12 Given this situation, do you think that (select only one option):



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Survey results reflect a complex and nuanced situation, concerning visa facilitation and establishing readmission agreements, suggesting that there is no consensus on the most effective path forward.

This split opinion reflects a complex and nuanced situation, suggesting that there is no consensus on the most effective path forward. It underscores the challenges faced in mobility cooperation between the EU and its neighbours and highlights the divergent perspectives among stakeholders. Support for continuing the discussions likely arises from the perceived potential benefits of these agreements. The visa facilitation is seen as an essential step toward promoting mobility, people-to-people contacts, and economic ties between the EU and its neighbours. However, the lim-

itations and shortcomings involved in the process indicate the need to reassess the content and process of the talks or explore alternative approaches.

Growing barriers to obtaining visas undermine mobility

The topic of visas is undeniably intricate and contentious, especially between the EU and its partner countries, as there exists a disparity in interests and perspectives in this domain. Southern Mediterranean countries advocate for simplified visa procedures and broader mobility opportunities, whereas the EU shows reluctance in expanding avenues for third-country nationals. The increasing utilisation of visas as instruments for border control and migration management is leading to the emergence of new hurdles to accessing visas, effectively undermining the prospects of improved mobility facilitation.

In recent years, complaints from Southern Mediterranean countries have surged due to a perceived increase in barriers to obtaining Schengen visas. The application process for a Schengen visa is commonly criticised as burdensome, stressful, and costly (Zardo & Abderrahim, 2018). The surge in denied visa applications corroborates the sentiment of intensifying hardships in acquiring visas. For instance, Tunisian applicants saw their rejection rates for Schengen visas climb from 18.2% in 2018 to 30.3% in 2022. This trend has fuelled uncertainty among applicants concerning the requirements and criteria for attaining visas. Previously, obstacles in obtaining visas predominantly affected individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds, but now these challenges extend to individuals from more privileged categories who increasingly grapple with the process.

In recent years, complaints from Southern Mediterranean countries have surged due to a perceived increase in barriers to obtaining Schengen visas.

Stricter visa regulations are tightly linked to an increase in the risk of irregular migration from the region. With the upsurge of irregular departures from North African states, it appears that many visa seekers are increasingly viewed as potential irregular migrants. This perception is underpinned by EU concerns about visa abuse and overstaying, prompting heightened scrutiny and what many in the Southern Mediterranean consider as unfair rejections. Interestingly, the issue of visa facilitation in Southern Mediterranean countries intertwines with concerns about dignity and equity. While EU citizens enjoy unrestricted entry into North African countries, questions persist regarding the fairness of treatment towards applicants from the Southern Mediterranean region.

Another related factor behind the increase in difficulties in obtaining visas is the instrumentalisation of visas as a foreign policy tool to propel governments in the region to cooperate more effectively on readmission. In the context of its bilateral relations with Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, France has utilised visas as a negative incentive by implementing significant reductions in the numbers of visas available to nationals of these countries in September 2021. This strategy aimed to bolster France's leverage in cooperation on migrant return initiatives. By restricting visa access, France seeks to exert pressure on these countries to enhance cooperation in managing and facilitating the return of migrants from French territory. This approach underscored the growing interconnectedness between migration and visa policies.

Hardening conditions for granting visas have added substantial ambiguity over the requirement and the process. This sense of ambiguity has eroded trust in official channels of communication regarding the visa application process.

Overall, hardening conditions for granting visas have added substantial ambiguity over the requirement and the process. The mobility of students, scholars, and artists, who used to have easier access to visas, was curtailed, in contradiction to the ENP goals of encouraging exchange and mutual comprehension between peoples. This sense of ambiguity has eroded trust in official channels of communication regarding the visa application process. Consequently, many applicants are seeking alternative sources of information to gain clarity on the process and enhance their chances of obtaining a Schengen visa. One significant avenue is social media, where forums dedicated to sharing experiences and tips have proliferated. Additionally, applicants are turning to informal intermediaries who offer services including providing guidance on the application process, assistance with booking appointments, and helping with document completion.

However, the growing role of these actors in the process not only further complicates it but also increases the financial cost of applying for a Schengen visa. Moreover, these new dynamics heighten the risk of fraud for applicants. This is because some intermediaries engage in illicit practices, such as providing falsified documents, at times without the applicants' knowledge. Thus, the emergence of these new actors introduces additional complexities and risks for both applicants and the EU.

Conclusion

The relationship between the European Union and the Southern Mediterranean countries regarding migration and mobility is indeed complex and often fraught with tensions. Negotiations on agreements regarding readmission and visa facilitation have progressed slowly, exposing the challenges in reaching mutually beneficial agreements in this area.

The growing instrumentalisation of visas as a foreign policy tool adds another layer of complexity to discussions on visa facilitation. As the EU and its member states seek concessions from countries like Morocco and Tunisia on readmission, visas are increasingly used as leverage to influence their positions. However, this approach risks exacerbating existing tensions and perceptions of unequal treatment in migration policing in the southern Mediterranean. Nonetheless, the reality is that dynamics on both sides of the Mediterranean are likely to exacerbate these tensions.

Addressing the inherent challenges to enhance the effectiveness of ENP initiatives related to migration and mobility will require a genuine desire to address structural issues that hinder progress and concessions on both sides. Despite the difficulties, proposed reforms at the EU level, such as the digitalisation of visa application procedures in the Schengen zone, can offer some potential solutions in the long-term. While this reform is aimed at enhancing the security of the EU by mitigating security risks related to document fraud, it also offers the opportunity to address some of the difficulties faced by visa applicants from Southern Mediterranean countries by streamlining the visa application process and cutting down some costs involved in the process.

Despite the difficulties, proposed reforms at the EU level, such as the digitalisation of visa application procedures in the Schengen zone, can offer some potential solutions in the long-term.

Bibliography

ABDERRAHIM, T. (2019). A Tale of Two Agreements: EU Migration Cooperation with Morocco and Tunisia. *IEMedPapers*, n°41. *EuroMeSCo series*.
<https://www.iemed.org/publication/a-tale-of-two-agreements-eu-migration-cooperation-with-morocco-and-tunisia/>

DUBOIS, L. & HALL, B. (2023, December 20). How migration is pushing Europe to the right. *Financial Times*.
<https://www.ft.com/content/aad0afd4-57cf-4d34-ae42-7397354600de>

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2016, October 12). The EU and Tunisia start negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission.
https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_16_3394

EUROPEAN COMMISSION (2021, February 9). Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions on the Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood: A new Agenda for the Mediterranean.
https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/joint_communication_renewed_partnership_southern_neighbourhood.pdf

RASCHE, L. (2023, May 10). The EU's race for talent Common challenge, no shared response. *Hertie School Jacques Delors Centre*.
<https://www.delorscentre.eu/en/publications/race-for-talent>

UNHCR (2023). Italy Weekly Snapshot (25 dec - 31 dec 2023).
<https://data.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/105834>

ZARDO, F., & ABDERRAHIM, T. (2018). Migration and Mobility: The Challenge of Thinking Outside the Crisis Box. In: E. Cohen-Hadria (Ed), *The EU-Tunisia Privileged Partnership – what next? EuroMeSCo Joint Policy Study*
https://www.euromesco.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/EuroMeSCo-Joint-Policy-Study_EU-TunisiaPartnership.pdf



ANNEXES

I METHODOLOGY

II LIST OF RESPONDENTS

III QUESTIONNAIRE

SET OF RESULTS

(only available online at www.iemed.org)

I METHODOLOGY

METHODOLOGY

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was divided in four thematic blocks including 12 questions which cover a range of issues of strategic importance. The first block had a set of questions on the general assessment of the ENP, followed by a set of questions on the future of the ENP. A third set of questions was focused on reviewing some of the constitutive principles of the ENP, and finally a fourth set of questions is devoted to assessing the main elements at the core of the ENP: political dialogue, trade, and mobility.

The questionnaire combined open-ended questions and multiple-choice questions with predefined answers offering respondents the possibility to choose and rank among several options or the possibility to grade on a 'very low' to 'very high' scale. For those questions, an optional space was provided to expand on the answer. This open part was considered of great importance for a Survey of this kind as it contributes to improving the interpretation of its overall results and provides additional valuable insights.

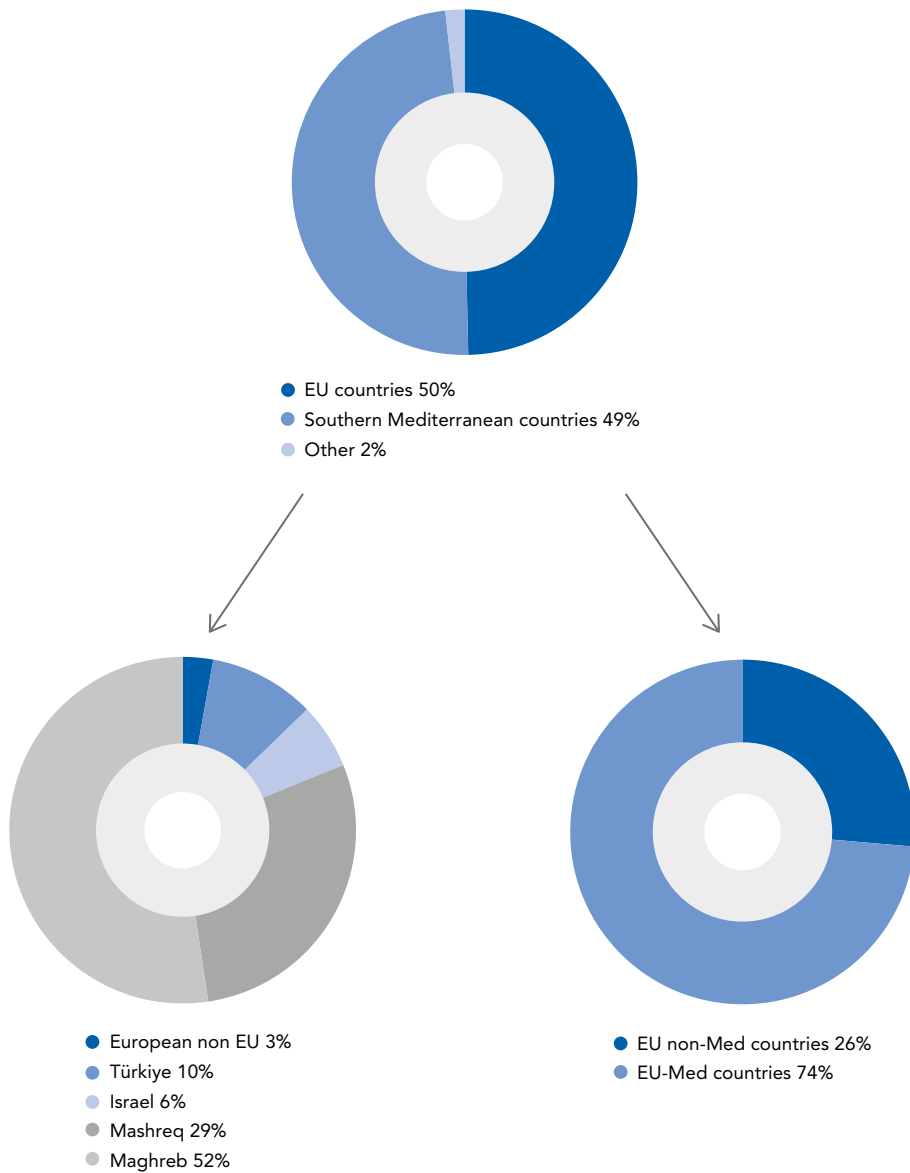
Survey Sample

To conduct the Survey, a universe of 4,000 experts, actors and policy-makers from the EU and Southern neighbourhood countries was selected. They received an invitation to participate. As in previous years, geographical distribution, institutional affiliation, field of knowledge and gender balance were the reference criteria for selecting the universe.

For this survey a second participation modality was introduced: a public campaign on the consultation inviting to participate through an open link. This modality responded to the specific nature of this edition and the need to be as inclusive as possible. 31% of all respondents accessed the survey through this open link modality.

Concerning the distribution by geographical origin, 50% came from the European Union and 48% from Southern neighbourhood countries.

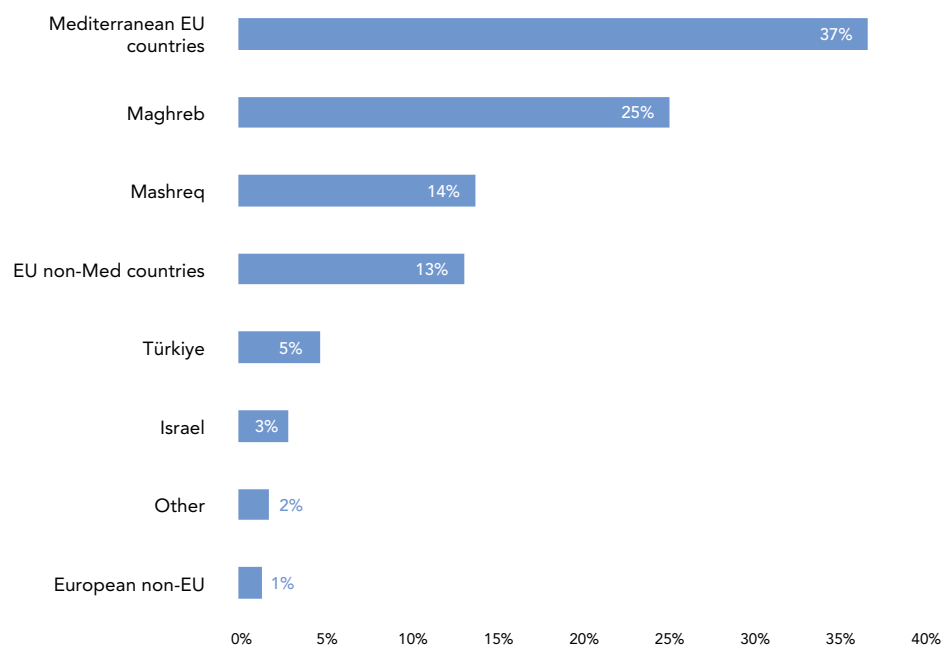
Breakdown of respondents by geographical origin



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

The Mediterranean EU countries¹ and the Maghreb countries² were sub-regional groupings with an important number of responses. The remaining Mashreq³ countries and EU countries came in third and fourth position.

Breakdown of respondents by region



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Reaching a representative distribution by country continued to be a difficult task. Some countries were over-represented and others under-represented. In order to avoid bias in the results, we weighted them according to the distribution of the target by the countries in the sample. With this weighting we avoided the over-representation of Spain, France, Italy, Morocco and Tunisia largely determining the results of respondents overall.

1. Spain, France, Italy, Portugal, Malta, Cyprus, Greece, Croatia and Slovenia. The first three alone account for nearly 78% of responses from this region.

2. Maghreb countries include Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Libya. The first three alone account for 92% of responses from this region.

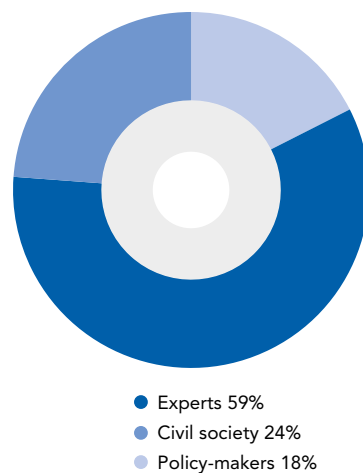
3. Mashreq countries include Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria.

Profile of respondents

In the first block of questions, in addition to providing their country of origin, respondents were asked to indicate their gender and the type of institution to which they belonged⁴.

As shown in the graph below, the majority of respondents to the questionnaire are "experts", an aggregated category that includes respondents from think tanks, media and, above all, academia. Altogether, these groups account for 59% of the total number of responses. The other categories are "civil society" (encompassing companies and NGOs) account for 24% and "policy-makers" (including responses from European or international institutions and governments) 18% of the total number of responses.

Breakdown of respondents by type of institution

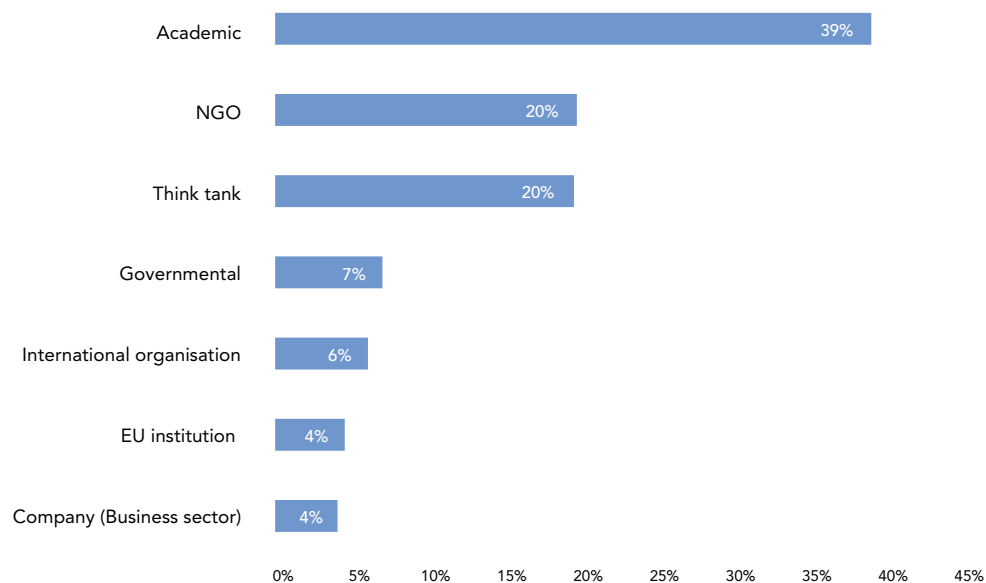


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

4. Governmental, EU institution, international organisation, think tank, academic, media, NGO, company (business sector).

When looking specifically at the individual groups, “academia” emerges as the most represented institution (39% of total responses), followed by NGOs (20%) and think tanks (20%). Altogether, these groups account for 80% of the total responses.

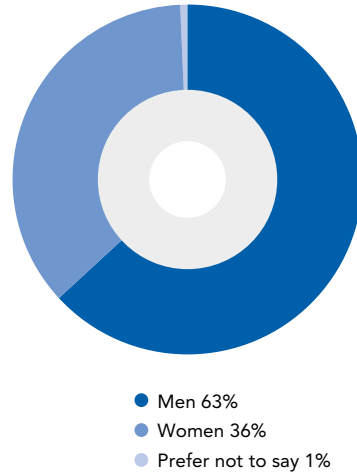
Breakdown of respondents by type of institution



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

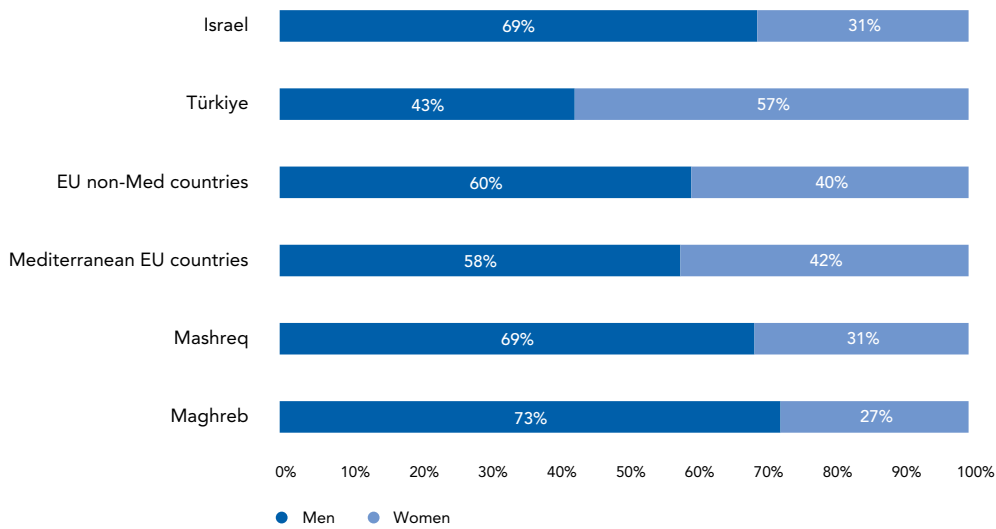
Finally, to complete the description of the sample on which this Survey is based, it is important to note that 37% of respondents were women. When analysing the North/South dimension, the aggregated proportion of women amounts to 37% for southern neighbourhood countries, while it increases to 48% for EU countries. By regional groups, the Mashreq, Israel and Maghreb are below the overall gender ratio.

Breakdown of respondents by gender

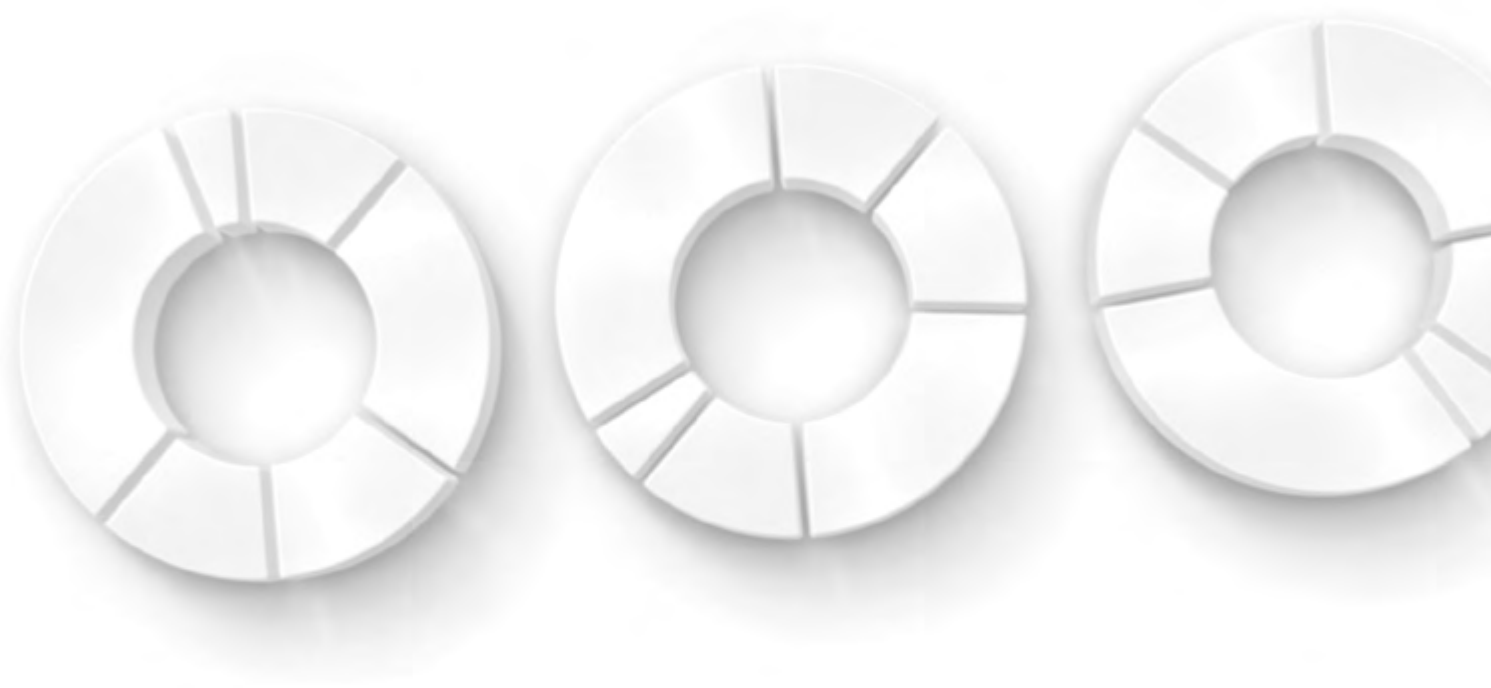


Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey

Breakdown of respondents by gender



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14th Euromed Survey



II LIST OF RESPONDENTS

LIST OF RESPONDENTS

Respondents had the option of not appearing on the final list of participants. 79 out of the 445 that answered chose not to be included; therefore, this list has a total of 366 names.

ABDALLAH, CHARLES. EU Delegation to Lebanon. Lebanon

ABD-ELKHALEK, KAREEM. Egypt

ABDOU, DOAA SALMAN. October University for Modern Sciences and Arts. Egypt

ABER, NAIMA. Algeria

ABOULLOUZ, ABDELHAKIM. Ibn Zohr University. Morocco

ABREU, ODILIA. Portugal

ABU JAISH, MONGED. Palestinian American Research Center. Palestine

ABUISMAIEL, AHMED. Palestine

ADAR, SINEM. SWP - German Institute for International and Security Affairs. Türkiye

ADAIR, PHILIPPE. France

AFZA, DRISS. ASTATIS Luxembourg. France

AHDOUSH, YOUSRI. Palestine

AIT ALI, HASSAN. Université Hassan II Casablanca. Morocco

AÏT HAMADOUCHE, LOUISA. Faculté des Sciences Politiques et de l'Information. Algeria

AIT MANSOUR, HASSAN. Morocco

AIT-CHAALAL, AMINE. Belgium

AKACHA, KAMILA KHEIRA. Institut National d'Études de Stratégie Globale (INESG). Algeria

AKROUT, KAMEL. Institute for Prospective and Advanced Strategic and Security Studies (IPASSS). Tunisia

AL SHARIF, OSAMA. Jordan Times, Al-Monitor, Middle East Institute. Jordan

ALBERTI, FABIO. UN PONTE PER / MEDLINK. Italy

ALBERTÍ, POL. Spain

ALBI, NORMAN. Spain

ALEMAM, SANA. Jordan

ALESSANDRINI, SERGIO. University of Modena and Reggio Emilia. Italy

ALGORA WEBER, MARIA DOLORES. Spain

ALI ABBAS, ABDELJALIL. Algeria

ALPAN, BASAK. Middle East Technical University. Türkiye

ALSHGAIRAT, HUSSEIN. Dar Aleghwan For Research & Studies. Jordan

ALTUNISIK, MELIHA. Middle East Technical University. Türkiye

AL ZIZI, MARYAM. Morocco

AMATO, GIANCARLO. Italy

AMBRÓSIO, VITOR. Estoril Higher Institute for Tourism and Hotel Studies. Portugal

ANOUAR, QORIA. International Republican Institute (IRI). Morocco

ANTONIO, ELOY. Portugal

AOUHAB, BARAKA. Morocco

APPRIOUAL, ANTOINE. France

ARAGALL, XAVIER. Spain

ARENA, MARTA. EHESS Paris. Italy

ASSOCIATION SARP. Algeria

ASSOCIATION AFDESS. Morocco

ATANASIO, ANABELA. Portugal

ATHAMNEH, DIANA. Jordan

ATTAR, SAMAR. Syria

ATTINA, FULVIO. Jean Monnet Euro-Med Centre, Università di Catania. Italy

AVGERINO KOLONIAS, SOFIA. Université Technique Nationale d'Athènes. Greece

AVGOUSTI, ANDREAS. Cyprus

BAATI, MOUNIR. Tunisia

BACARIA, JORDI. CIDOB. Spain

BADR, AYA. Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC). The Egyptian Cabinet. Egypt

BAGCI, HÜSEYİN. Turkish Foreign Policy Institute (FPI). Türkiye

BAHMED, MOHCEN. Algeria

BAHOUT, JOSEPH. Issam Fares Institute (IFI). Lebanon

BAKLOUTI, MOHAMED SAIED. Tunisia

BALATSOUKA, FOTENI. University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki). Greece

BARRAS TEJUDO, RAQUEL. Spain

BARREÑADA BAJO, ISAÍAS. Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Spain

BASS, ABOU. Mauritania

BELGACEM, ANIS. Mash'hed Association. Tunisia

BENBRAHIM, ABDESSLAM. Réseau Euromed des ONG Maroc. Morocco

BEN KHALIFA, BRAHIM. Institut National d'Études de Stratégie Globale (INESG). Algeria

BENCINI, JACOPO. Italy

BENHAMRA, HAMID. Ministry of Finances, Algeria. Algeria

BEN TAHER CHOKRI, MOKADEM. Tunisia

BERNDTSSON, RONNY. Lund University. Sweden

BESSEDIK, MADANI. Université de Tlemcen. Algeria

BESSERAY, FATIMA ZOHRA. Algeria

BIFANI, ALAIN. Lebanese Citizen Foundation. Lebanon

BILAL, SAN. Belgium

BLINDA, MOHAMMED. VOSPro. Morocco

BOQVIST, MARIANNE. Sweden

BOUBEKEUR, AMEL. Algeria

BOUFEKROUNE, AHCENE. Fédération Algérienne des Personnes Handicapées (FAPH).
Algeria

BOUKHORSSA, FATIHA NESRINE. Algeria

BOUKHRISS, MERYEM. Morocco

BOURAOUI, SOUKEINA. CAWTAR. Tunisia

BOURDET, YVES. Department of Economics. France

BOUREKBA, MOUSSA. CIDOB. France

BOUZERDA, ALI. Centre Marocain des Études et Recherches en Sciences Sociales (CERSS).
Morocco

BOY ROURA, MERCÈ. Spain

ÇAKIR, BUSE. Türkiye

CALIGIURI, ANDREA. Italy

CALLEYA, STEPHEN. Mediterranean Academy of Diplomatic Studies (MEDAC). Malta

CAMBERLIN, MARIE. Belgium

CAN, OZGE. Centre for Mediterranean Studies - Yasar University. Türkiye

CAR, RONALD. Italy

CARUSO, IMMACOLATA. Italy

CASANOVAS, XAVIER. Spain

CHAABAN, HASSAN. Ministry of Public Works & Transport. Lebanon

CHAIB, BOUNOUA. Université de Tlemcen. Algeria

CHALFAOUAT, ABDERRAHIM. Morocco

CHANTZI, GEORGIA. Greece

CHERIF, YOUSSEF. Tunisia

CHIRIATTI, ALESSIA. Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI). Italy

CHMIEL, OSKAR. Poland

CIESLIK, ANDRZEJ. Warsaw University. Poland

COLOMBO, SILVIA MARIA. Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI). Italy

COMO, ODOARDO. European Commission. Italy

COŞKUN, BERFIN. Türkiye

COUSTILLIERE, JEAN-FRANÇOIS. Association Euromed-IHEDN. France

CSICSMANN, LÁSZLÓ. Institute for International Studies. Hungary

DAANA, ADLI. International Palestinian Youth League. Palestine

DAGA, GIULIA. Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI). Italy

DAGUZAN, JEAN-FRANÇOIS. Fondation pour la Recherche Stratégique (FRS). France

DAHLGREN, SUSANNE. University of Helsinki. Sweden

DANDASHLY, ASSEM. Lebanon

DANIEL, REMI. Israel

DE FREIGE, MAYA. Fondation Liban Cinéma. Lebanon

DE ZWAAN, JAAP. Trans-European Policy Studies Association (TEPSA). The Netherlands

DEMMEHUBER, THOMAS. FAU Erlangen-Nürnberg. Germany

DENTICE, GIUSEPPE. Italy

DEQUIUEC, JAOUAD. Expert - Consultant en Migration. Morocco

DI BENEDETTA, CARLO. Community of Mediterranean Universities (CMU). Italy

DIAFAT, ABDERRAHMANE. Université Ferhat Abbas Sétif 1. Algeria

DINGU-KYRKLUND, ELENA. Stockholm University. Sweden

DRISS, AHMED. Centre Études Méditerranéennes Internationales (CEMI). Tunisia

DUGOT, PHILIPPE. France

EHDADAN, MOHAMED ALI JAMAL. Libya

EL ABBASSI, IDRIS. Université Mohammed V. Morocco

EL BIKRY, MOHAMMED. Agency of Social Development. Morocco

EL FAKY, AHMED. Egypt

EL KHAYAT, GHITA. Médecin Psychiatre Psychanalyste Anthropologue. Morocco

EL MALTI, ABDEL RAZZAK. Lebanese General Security. Lebanon

EL MANOUCHI, MAJDI. Tunisia

EL SHAARAWY, EMAD. Egypt

ELCADI, LATIFA. Morocco

ELGHARBI, SALIMA. Algeria

ELNAGDY, HASSAN. Egypt

ELSAYED, EZZAT SAAD. Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs. Egypt

ELSAYED, MAHMMOUD DALAL. Egypt

ELWAKEEL, RANA. College of Europe. Egypt

ELYA, CARINE. Quality for Development. Lebanon

ENTRENA ROVERS, ALEXANDRA. European Parliament. Spain

EPASTO, SIMONA. Italy

ERRIFAIY, AMINA. Morocco

EZZEDDINE, NANCY. Clingendael - Netherlands Institute for International Relations.
Lebanon

F. LANGER, PAUL. Istanbul Policy Center (IPC). Germany

FAHMI, MOHAMED. Centre International de Cooperation Sud Nord. Morocco

FAKHRY ANWAR, NOURA. Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS).
Egypt

FARAJALLA, NADIM. Lebanon

FARES, RACHID. Centre d'Études et de Recherches en Sciences Sociales (CERSS). Morocco

FERDAOUSSI, NABIL. Morocco

FERNANDES, SOFIA. Portugal

FERNÁNDEZ ARRIBAS, JAVIER. Atalayar. Spain

FERNÁNDEZ MOLINA, IRENE. University of Exeter. Spain

FERRAGINA, ANNA. University of Salerno. Italy

FERRANTE, ANGELO. Italy

FETA, BLENDAR. Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP). Albania

FLEURET, GUY. Union for the Mediterranean. France

FOUCHIER, ESTHER. France

FRIDAY, FRANNY. Canada

FURNESS, MARK. German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE). Germany

G. HAUSTEIN, VANESSA. France

GAD, ABD-ALLA. National Authority for Remote Sensing and Space Sciences (NARSS). Egypt

GALAI, AHMED. Institut Arabe des Droits de l'Homme. Tunisia

GALANIS, ELIAS. Greece

GAMAL EL DIN, KARIM. Studio Masr. Egypt

GARCÍA GARCÍA, ELENA. Spain

GEDIKLI, ARDAHAN ÖZKAN. Türkiye

GHANEM, DALIA. European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). France

GHEBOULI, ZINE. Algeria

GHOMARI, TAIBI. Université de Ain Temouchent. Algeria

GIANNARELLI, PAOLO. Università Internazionale dell'arte. Italy

GOREN, NIMROD. The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies (Mitvim). Israel

GRAMMATIKOPOULOU, ANGELIKI. Ministry of Interior of Greece. Greece

GRIGORIADIS, IOANNIS. Greece

GRUARIN, VALENTINA. Italy

GUEDDAH, RADHIA. Algeria

GUIRMANI OUESLATI, MOUFIDA. Tunisian Active Network for Social Accountability. Tunisia

GUIZANI, MOUNA. CEMI. Tunisia

GURI FERNANDEZ, DIEGO. Spain

HADIBI, ZAHIR. Algeria

HAILU SENBETA, ABEY. Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies. Luxembourg

HAMDI, KAMEL. Algeria

HAMMAMI, AMEL. Tunisia

HANELT, CHRISTIAN. Bertelsmann Stiftung. Germany

HASSEN, MAJDI. Institut arabe des chefs d'entreprise. Tunisia

HEKKENS, MARCO. Strategic Maritime Security Adviser for Dutch Shipping Group (West-Africa Area). The Netherlands

HERMAN, LIOR. Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Israel

HERNANDO DE LARRAMENDI, MIGUEL. Facultad de Humanidades de Toledo (Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha). Spain

IAKOVOU, CHRISTOS. Cyprus Research Centre. Cyprus

IELITE, INETE. Women's NGOs Cooperation Network. Latvia

ISSA, ABULGASEM. Authority of Scientific Researches & Technology. Libya

IVAN-CUCU, CONSTANTIN VIRGIL. EuroMed Justice. Romania

JAIDI, LARABI. Université Mohammed V. Morocco

JENDOUBI, KAMEL. Comité pour le Respect des Libertés et des Droits de l'Homme en Tunisie. Tunisia

KACEM, ABDELAZIZ. Association des études internationales (AEI). Tunisia

KALAUICIOGLU, ERSIN. Istanbul Policy Center (IPC). Türkiye

KALEGASI, BAHADIR. Tusiad. Türkiye

KARDAS, SABAN. Centre for Middle Eastern and Strategic Studies (ORSAM). Türkiye

KAWAKIBI, SALAM. CAREP Paris. Syria

KAYA, AYHAN. Bilgi University. Türkiye

KERKENI, EZZEDINE. Association des Études Internationales. Tunisia

KESHLAF, ABDALLA. Libya

KHACHANI, MOHAMED. Université Mohammed V. Morocco

KHALAF, ABDULHADI. Sweden

KHANFIR, MONDHER. Tunisia

KHECHA, ABDEJMADJID. Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Algeria

KHOURY, EDLIEN. Jordan

KIBRIK, ROEE. The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies (Mitvim). Israel

KITTI, CLEOPATRA. Cyprus

KÖHLER, MICHAEL. Germany

KREMENJAS-DANICIC, ADRIANA. Croatia

KUBIK, KAROLINA. Poland

KUŞ, RECAI. Türkiye

KUSHTA, ALEDA. Albania

KUTTAB, DAOUD. Jordan

KYNSILEHTO, ANITTA. Tampere Peace Research Institute. Finland

LABAN, ALEXANDRA. France

LAFARGA, ALEJANDRO. Spain

LAGAE, MARCO. Belgium

LAHLOU, MEHDI. INSEA - Université Mohamed V. Morocco

LAHOUARI, ADDI. Université de Lyon, IEP. Algeria

LAMONICA, ALESSANDRO GIOVANNI. Italy

LANDABURU, ENEKO. Jacques Delors Institute. Spain

LANQUAR, ROBERT. Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE). France

LARBI, LARBI. Algeria

LASAUCA, XAVIER. Spain

LAUZARA, FRANCISCO. Spain

LAVOUX, THIERRY. Plan Bleu. France

LAZEREG, MESSAOUD. Centre de Recherche en Economie Appliquée pour le Développement. Algeria

LEKOVIC, IVAN. Mission of Montenegro to the EU. Montenegro

LEMONAKIS, DIMITRIS. Piraeus Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Greece

LIMANI, BERAT. North Macedonia

LOVEC, MARKO. Slovenia

LOZANO, CARLOS. Spain

LUBANOV, CARMIT. Israel

LUCKE, BERND. Universitat Hamburg. Germany

MAHMUTAJ, ERMELINDA. Albania

MAKNI, IKRAM. Tunisia

MANSOUR, SANDRINE. Cercle des Chercheurs sur le Moyen-Orient. France

MARIANI, MARIA ANTONIETTA. Strane straniere. Italy

MARSAI, VIKTOR. Hungary

MARTINEZ, RAMIRO. REMOB. Spain

MARZOUGUI, YASSINE. CUASDD. Tunisia

MAURY, RENÉ GEORGES. Università L'Orientale di Napoli. France

MECKY, MARIAM. Egypt

- MEDINA, MIGUEL.** Spain
- MEGERISI, TAREK.** European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR). Libya
- MEINARDUS, RONALD.** Germany
- MENNA, KHALED.** Centre de Recherche en Économie Appliquée pour le Développement (CREAD). Algeria
- MESSAOUDI, ALAIN.** Université de Valenciennes et du Hainaut Cambrésis. France
- MHIRI SELLAMI, HEDIA.** Institut Supérieur de Gestion de Tunis. Tunisia
- MIQUEL, SERGE.** France
- MERROUNI, MOHAMMED.** Morocco
- MOKRANI, ALI.** Director Cooperation with EU and European Institutions. Algeria
- MORAN, JAMES.** United Kingdom
- MOTZKIN, GABRIEL.** Provisionally: Max Planck Institute for the History of Science, Berlin. Israel
- MOUNA, KHALID.** Morocco
- MOZÉ GLAVAN, HELGA.** Foundation for Partnership and Civil Society Development. Croatia
- NABIL, SAHLI.** Algeria
- NACROUR, ANIS.** France
- NAGEH, HOSNI ALI.** The Egyptian Association for Youth and Community Development. Egypt
- NAMMOUR, JIHAD.** Peace Initiatives. Lebanon
- NASSAR, SAMIR.** Lebanon
- NATHANSON, ROBY.** The Macro Center for Political Economics. Israel
- NATORSKI, MICHAL.** Maastricht University/UNU-MERIT. Poland
- NAWAHDA, AMIN.** Palestine
- NOUIBI, ACHRAF.** Morocco
- OLSEN, KIM.** Denmark
- ONONO, PATRICK.** Uganda
- ORLANDO, CARLOS.** Association of Organizations of Mediterranean Businesswomen. Spain
- O'ROURKE, JOHN.** European External Action Service (EEAS). Ireland
- OSTERMEIER, MARTIN.** International Labour Organization (ILO). Germany
- OTTAWAY, MARINA.** Woodroe Wilson International Center for Scholars. Italy
- ÖZGÖKÇELER, CANSU NISA.** Türkiye

ÖZGÖKER, CELIL UGUR. Cyprus

ÖZKAN, YILMAZ. Center for Mediterranean Studies, Ankara. Türkiye

OZTURK, UMIT. Türkiye

PACE, GIUSEPPE. Italy

PACE, RODERICK. Institute for European Studies, University of Malta. Malta

PANEBIANCO, STEFANIA. University of Catania. Italy

PATREGNANI, ANNIKA. Italy

PECORA, GIULIO. Italy

PEJIC, DIJANA. Genesis Project. Bosnia and Herzegovina

PERSAUD, ALBERT. United Kingdom

PIÑERA, JORGE. Spain

PLAVŠA-MATIĆ, CVJETANA. National Foundation for Civil Society Development. Croatia

PLEGUEZUELO, MANUEL. Spain

PRESS-BARNATHAN, GALIA. The Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations. Israel

QUAGLIAROTTI, DESIREE. Institute for Studies on the Mediterranean (ISMed). Italy

RAUŽAN, PAULA. Local Democracy Agency Sisak. Croatia

REY, MARIE-ESTELLE. France

RITAB, FATIMA ZAHRA. Morocco

RIVERA ESCARTIN, ADRIA. Spain

RIVLIN, PAUL. Israel

RIZZI, ALBERTO. Italy

ROCCU, ROBERTO. Department of European & International Studies, Kings College. Italy

RODRIGUEZ CLEMENTE, RAFAEL. Spanish Council for Scientific Research (CSIC). Spain

ROMANS I TORRENT, ARIADNA. Spain

ROSABRUNETTO, ISABELLE. Ministère d'Etat. Monaco

ROSSANO, MARILENA. Italy

ROSTEKOVÁ, MÁRIA. University of Matej Bel. Slovakia

RÓZSA, ERZSÉBET NAGYNE. Institute for World Economics. Center for Economic and Regional Studies. Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Hungary

RUISI, FRANCESCA. Italy

RUMAYED, OUSAMA. Directorate General of Antiquities & Museums. Syria

SAAD, RAOUF. Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA). Egypt

SAADI, MUSTAPHA. Association les amis de l'environnement. Algeria

SABRI, NIDAL. Birzeit University. Palestine

SADDIKI, SAID. Morocco

SAEZ, FRANCISCO. Spain

SALEM, ANIS. ECFA. Egypt

SANADIKI, SAID. UNDP. Lebanon

SANTAROSSA, LUCA. Federparchi – Europarc. Italy

SCALISI, MARCELLO. Italy

SCHIAVI, FRANCESCO SALESIO. Italy

SCHINEANU, DAGMAR. Italy

SCHMID, DOROTHEE. Institut Français des Relations Internationales (IFRI). France

SCHUMACHER, TOBIAS. Germany

SEIMENIS, IOANNIS. Dept of Mediterranean Studies, University of the Aegean, Rhodes. Greece

SELMADJI, SAAD. Association de volontariat Touiza Calama. Algeria

SELO SABIC, SENADA. Institute for Development and International Relations (IRMO). Croatia

SÉRTO-RADICS, ISTVAN. Local Government. Hungary

SIBAI, ABBAS. Lebanon

SIDIROPOULOS, ZAFEIRIS. Greece

SIDŁO, KATARZYNA. Center for Social and Economic Research (CASE). Poland

SIMAN, BERNARD. Belgium

SION TZIDKIYAHU, MAYA. The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies (Mitvim). Israel

SOLH, ABDUL NASSER. Institut d'Études Islamo-Chrétiennes. Lebanon

SOSTERO, GIULIA. The European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA). Italy

SPÄTH, JOHANNES. Germany

STEMBERGER, ANTON. Austria

STEWART, TIMO. Finnish Institute for International Affairs (FIIA). Finland

STRANGIS, DAVIDE. Conférence des Régions Périphériques Maritimes d'Europe. Italy

SULEIMAN, HUSSEIN MOHAMMED. Al-Ahram Centre for Political and Strategic Studies (ACPSS). Egypt

SWEISS, JOUMANA. France

SZIGETVÁRI, TAMAS. Institute of World Economics RCERS HAS. Hungary

TABBOUCHE, MOHAMED. Association pour la Promotion des Énergies Renouvelables et du Développement Durable Bariq21, Skikda. Algeria

TAL, ABRAHAM. A.TAL Satellite Imagery. Israel

TALBOT, VALERIA. Italy

TARRIUS, ALAIN. Université Toulouse 2 JJ. France

TASHJIAN, YEGHIA. Issam Fares Institute (IFI). Lebanon

TAŞKIN YEŞİLOVA, DILVIN. Türkiye

TKÁČOVÁ, NATÁLIA. Slovakia

TORRES, MIGUEL. Cultural manager. Portugal

TOUNSI, JALEL. Ipasss. Tunisia

TRIANAPHYLLOU, DIMITRIOS. Kadir Has University, Istanbul. Greece

TRIVIÑO SALAZAR, JUAN CARLOS. Spain

TÜR, ÖZLEM. Center for European Studies, Middle East Technical University (CES-METU). Türkiye

VARELA ORTEGA, CONSUELO. Universidad Politécnica de Madrid. Spain

VARELLA, EVANGELIA. Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. Greece

VARVELLI, ARTURO. Italy

VELASCO, MARCO. Spain

VELICHKOV, KAMEN SPASSOV. Bulgaria

WALEGREN, STEN. The Gate. Sweden

WIHTOL DE WENDEN, CATHERINE. CNRS (CERI). France

WILLIAM KAMIHANDA, MESIET. Groupement d'Études et Recherches sur la Méditerranée (GERM). Morocco

WINDOLPH, KLAUS. Proterra Project Cooperation. Germany

YAHYA, LATIFA. Tunisia

ZAAROUR, MONIR. International Federation of Journalists (IFJ). Palestine

ZAGAGLIA, BARBARA. Università Politecnica delle Marche. Italy

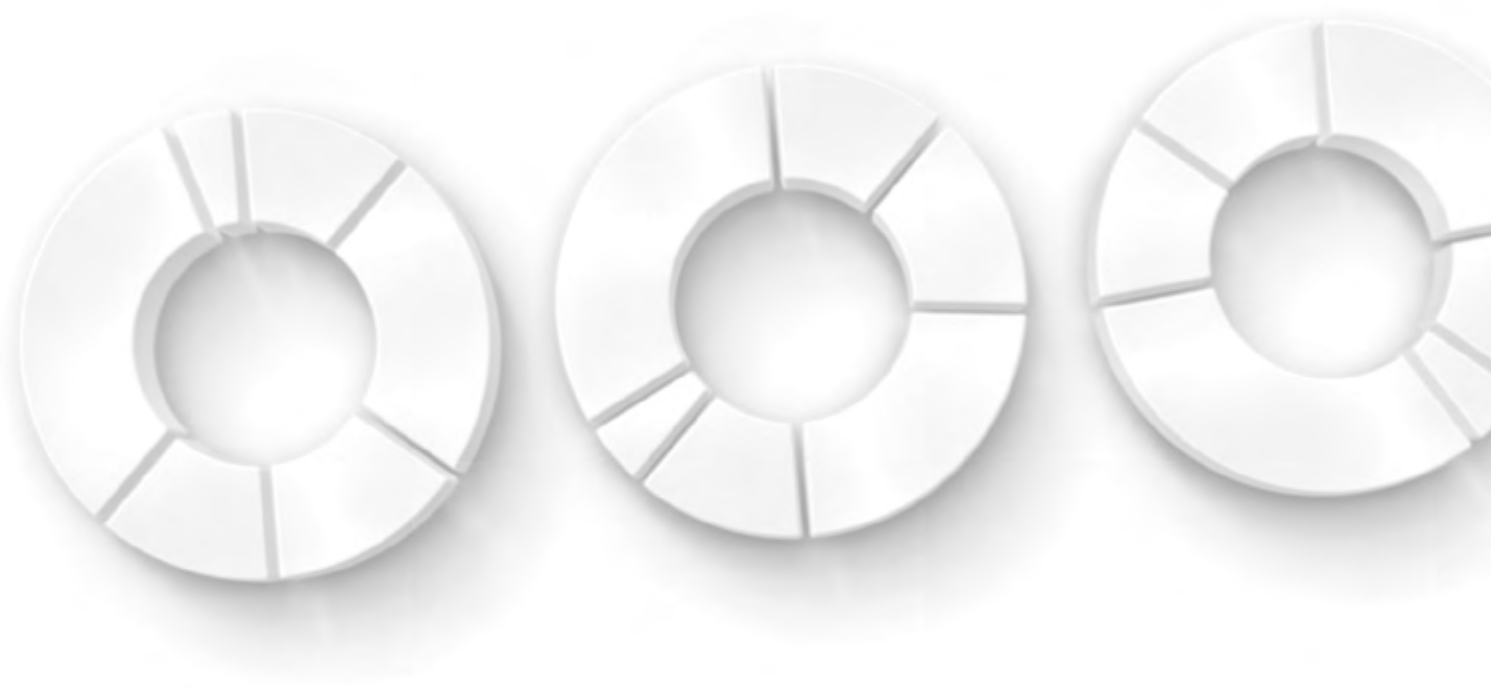
ZAHIRINEJAD, MAHNAZ. Iran

ZAPATA-BARRERO, RICARD. Spain

ZOUAIN, GEORGES. GAIA-heritage. Lebanon

ZUPANCIC, MAGDA. Slovenia

ZUREIQAT, HALA. Roya TV. Jordan



III QUESTIONNAIRE

1. 20 YEARS OF THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY: A GENERAL ASSESSMENT

Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations.

Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?

	Very low	Low	High	Very high	Don't know
1. Conflict resolution in the region					
2. Democracy and respect for human rights in the Southern Mediterranean countries					
3. Socio-economic development in Southern Mediterranean countries					
4. Trade integration					
5. Mobility and mutual understanding between people					

Other impact / comments:	

If Q.1 = Very low + Low: go to Q.1b

Q.1b In general terms or in relation to the specific areas mentioned above, why do you think the impact has been limited?

Q.2 Since its inception in 2004, the ENP has been reviewed several times. The 2011 review was a response to events in the Arab world and was mainly geared towards supporting democratization processes. With the 2015 review, and against the backdrop of conflicts in the region and the “refugee crisis”, stabilization became the main paradigm of the ENP. More recently, the 2021 New Agenda for the Mediterranean, proposed, in the framework of the ENP, to relaunch and strengthen the strategic partnership between the European Union and its Southern Neighbourhood partners.

Should the ENP:

1. Be completely revamped as a framework	
2. Be revised again as it was in 2004 and 2015	
3. Don't know	

Comments:	
-----------	--

Q.2a What should be the new paradigm or the main focus of a revised or revamped ENP and why?

Q.3a The ENP was designed as a policy framework covering both the Eastern neighbourhood and the Southern Mediterranean neighbourhood of the EU. Despite an effort to continue handling the two tracks under the same umbrella (e.g., the 2011 and the 2015 reviews covered both the Eastern and the Southern Neighbourhood), the Eastern Partnership and the Southern Neighbourhood Policy followed different paths and developed unevenly¹.

In this context, do you think the Southern Neighbourhood Policy should get some inspiration from the Eastern Partnership?

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

How?	

Q.3b From both an EU and a Southern Neighbourhood perspective, do you see any merit in keeping the two regions under the same ENP framework?

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

Why?	
I have no particular views on this matter	

1.

Agreement/Status	Southern Neighbourhood	Eastern Neighbourhood
Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements	0: No DCFTAs have been signed with SMCs.	3: Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.
Visa Liberalization Agreements	1: Israel.	3: Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. Armenia and Azerbaijan have signed visa simplification agreements.
Candidate Country Status		2: Moldova, Ukraine. Georgia is recognized as a potential candidate country.

2. REVIEWING SOME OF THE CONSTITUTIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE ENP

Q.4 One of the most distinctive principles of the ENP is differentiation, under which the EU recognizes the different aspirations of partner countries in their relations with the EU and offers them tailor made partnerships accordingly.

Q.4a Do you think the EU has applied this principle of differentiation effectively?

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

Why?	

Q.4b Do you think differentiation still serves a purpose?

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

Why?	

Q.5 Since the inception of the ENP, the EU has strived to make some modalities of its financial assistance conditional, with the objective to provide “an additional incentive to pursue political and economic reform”.

Q.5a Do you think that the application of the “incentive-based approach” (More for more) has indeed fostered political and economic reform in Southern Mediterranean countries?

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

Why?	

Q.5b Should this principle remain an underlying principle of a revised policy of the EU towards its Southern Mediterranean neighbourhood?

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

Why?	

Q.6 Since the inception of the ENP, the EU regularly reiterated that it “does not seek to impose priorities” on its partners, and the principle of joint ownership has featured indeed consistently in EU strategic documents related to the ENP.

Q.6a Do you think EU Southern Mediterranean countries feel they co-own the ENP?

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

Why?	

Q.6b Do you think the principle of joint ownership should continue guiding the EU's efforts in redefining its approach vis a vis its Southern Mediterranean neighbours?

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

Why?	

Q.7 In addition to the bilateral track of the ENP, the EU sponsors a regional track, distinct from the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM)². Politically, it materializes in Ministerial meetings in the ENP format introduced with the 2021 New Agenda for the Mediterranean³. Financially, it materializes in dedicated regional programming that adds to the bilateral programming. Do you agree with the following statements?

Q.7a The overlap between the regional dimension of the ENP and the UfM introduces unnecessary confusion, and the EU should seek to simplify its mechanisms.

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

Why?	

Q.7b The EU should get rid of the ENP as a regional framework and further invests in the UfM as a regional mechanism.

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

How this should be done?	

2. Some members of the UfM are not part of the ENP, due to their specific status in relation to the enlargement process or due to their geographic location: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Türkiye.

3. "A significantly strengthened political dialogue will contribute to building a shared understanding with Southern Neighbourhood partners. In this regard, we propose regular meetings at the level of foreign and sectoral ministers as well as senior officials, whereas meetings of Heads of State and Government could be convened when necessary". *Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood. A new Agenda for the Mediterranean* JOIN(2021) 2 final; p. 21.

3. AT THE CORE OF THE ENP: POLITICAL DIALOGUE, TRADE, AND MOBILITY

Q.8 Materializing this commitment to joint ownership, the EU has negotiated bilaterally with its partners Action Plans (until 2015) and Partnership Priorities (since 2015) to steer bilateral cooperation and especially financial assistance.

Algeria⁴, Egypt⁵, Israel⁶, Jordan⁷, Lebanon⁸, Lybia⁹, Morocco¹⁰, Palestine¹¹, Syria¹², Tunisia¹³

4. **Algeria:** The EU and Algeria have not yet adopted Partnership Priorities for 2021-2027. Hence, work is continuing on the basis of those adopted at the Association Council of March 2017: 1) **political dialogue**, governance, the rule of law and the promotion of fundamental rights; 2) **cooperation**, socio-economic development, including trade and access to the European single market; energy; 3) the **environment** and sustainable development; strategic and security dialogue; 4) the human dimension, including cultural and inter-religious dialogue, **migration** and **mobility**.

5. **Egypt:** The 9th EU-Egypt Association Council in 2022, confirmed that the two parties had an effective and multifaceted partnership by adopting new Partnership Priorities to guide the relationship until 2027. These are: 1) **Sustainable Modern Economy** and Social Development; 2) Partners in **Foreign Policy**; 3) Enhancing **stability**; 4) Principles of **cooperation**.

6. **Israel:** The EU-Israel action plan was agreed in 2005. In January 2022, the Council extended the validity of the Action Plan for further three years. The priorities enumerated in the 2005 ENP action plan: 1) **political dialogue** and co-operation; 2) **trade and economic** dialogue; 3) **migration**, organized crime and police and judicial co-operation; 4) **transport, energy and science** and technology; 5) **environmental** action.

7. **Jordan:** An ENP action plan was adopted in 2012 and new EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities were agreed in June 2022 to guide the relationship until 2027. These priorities are: 1) Strengthening **cooperation** on regional **stability, security** and counter-terrorism; 2) Promoting **sustainable economic stability**; 3) Strengthening **good governance**, rule of law, democratic reform, and respect for human rights.

8. **Lebanon:** Relations are based on the EU-Lebanon association agreement, in force since 2006, the 2016 EU-Lebanon Partnership Priorities and the EU-Lebanon Compact, addressing the impact of the Syrian crisis on Lebanon. The Partnership Priorities agreed in 2016 are: 1) **Security** and Countering Terrorism; 2) **Governance** and rule of law; 3) Fostering **growth** and job opportunities; 4) **Migration and mobility**; 5) Mechanisms for **dialogue** and mutual coordination.

9. **Libya:** It does not have an association agreement or any other contractual agreement with the EU, but the country is eligible for funding under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and other financial instruments.

10. **Morocco:** An association agreement is in force since 2000 and a new ENP action plan adopted in 2013. The country was granted ENP 'advanced status' in 2008. The Partnership Priorities include: 1) **Convergence of values**; 2) **Economic** convergence and **social cohesion**; 3) Higher **education, training**, sustainable employment, scientific research, innovation and technological transfers, and mobility for students and researchers; 4) **Political consultation** and of enhanced cooperation on **security**.

11. **Palestine:** The legal basis for the EU's relations with Palestine is the Interim Association Agreement on Trade and Cooperation, concluded in 1997. The EU and the Palestine have signed an ENP action plan, which entered into force in 2013, and whose priorities were: 1) Comprehensive **political dialogue**; 2) Liberalization of **trade**; 3) Development of **economic and social relations**; 4) **Social and economic development**; 5) **Regional** cooperation, peaceful **coexistence**, and economic and **political stability**; 6) **Cooperation**.

12. **Syria:** The EU suspended all its bilateral cooperation with the Government of Syria in May 2011.

13. **Tunisia:** The legal basis of the bilateral relationship is the association agreement, which has been in force since 1998. In 2023, the EU and Tunisia agreed to a new comprehensive partnership package, which prioritized: 1) Strengthening **economic and trade ties**; 2) A sustainable and competitive **energy partnership**; 3) **Migration**; 4) **People-to-people contacts**.

Q.8a Do you think the Priorities for Action/Partnership Priorities identified in these documents reflect the real needs, challenges, and priorities of your country? (only for South respondents)

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

Why?	

Q.8b At a regional level, do you think the Partnership Priorities reflect the real needs, challenges, and priorities of the countries involved? (all respondents)

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

How this should be done?	

Other comments on Partnership Priorities:	

Q.9 Under the ENP, the political and policy dialogue of the EU with its partners is articulated around a web of meetings at different levels (including association councils at Ministerial level¹⁴) that are supposed to be held at regular intervals.

Do you agree/disagree with these statements?

	Disagree	Agree	Don't know
1. These political dialogue structures serve a purpose. Maintaining a regular calendar is essential.			
2. There should be more flexibility in the scheduling of these meetings.			
3. The format of those meetings and the way they are organised are adequate.			
Comments:			

14.

EU – Egypt: 9th Egypt – EU Association Council, 19 June 2022.

EU – Israel: 12th Israel – EU Association Council, 3 October 2022.

EU – Jordan: 14th Jordan – EU Association Council, 2 June 2022.

EU – Tunisia: 15th Tunisia – EU Association Council, 17 May 2019

EU – Morocco: 14th Morocco – EU Association Council, 27 June 2019.

EU – Lebanon: 8th Lebanon – EU Association Council, 18 July 2017.

EU – Algeria: 12th Algeria – EU Association Council, 7 December 2020.

Q.10 When the ENP was crafted in 2004, it was established that the European Commission would “report periodically on progress accomplished” towards agreed priorities. With the 2015 review of the ENP, this systematic model of annual progress reports changed¹⁵. Since then, there is no standardized practice of reporting¹⁶.

Do you think that (select only one option):

1. The change introduced in 2015 towards more flexibility in terms of reporting by the EU was fortunate and should be sustained.	
2. The change introduced in 2015 should be amplified and the EU should stop releasing any sort of report regarding “progress” made by its partners.	
3. The shift introduced in 2015 regarding the reporting was unfortunate and the EU should keep issuing reports regarding “progress” made by its partners.	
4. Don't know	

Why?	

Q.11 Since its inception, trade integration has been a key objective of the ENP. The EU has been implementing DCFTAs, essentially free-trade zones with access to the EU Single Market, with countries in the Eastern Neighbourhood since 2014. The signature of similar agreements has not been possible with its Southern neighbours.

Do you think DCFTAs are still the best paradigm to advance better trade relations between the EU and its Southern Mediterranean partners?

1. Yes	
2. No	
3. Don't know	

Why?	
What should be the priority in terms of trade cooperation between the EU and its partners?	

15. “There will no longer be a single set of progress reports on all countries simultaneously. Instead, the EU will seek to develop a new style of assessment, focusing specifically on meeting the goals agreed with partners. These reports will be timed to provide the basis for a political exchange of views in the relevant high-level meetings with partner countries, such as Association/Cooperation Councils. For those partners who prefer to focus on a more limited number of strategic priorities, the reporting framework will be adjusted to reflect the new focus. In addition to the country-specific reporting, regular reports will track developments in the neighbourhood. These reports will contain the elements required under the Regulation on the European Neighbourhood Instrument, including information on fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, gender equality and human rights issues”. *Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy* JOIN(2015) 50 final: p. 4.

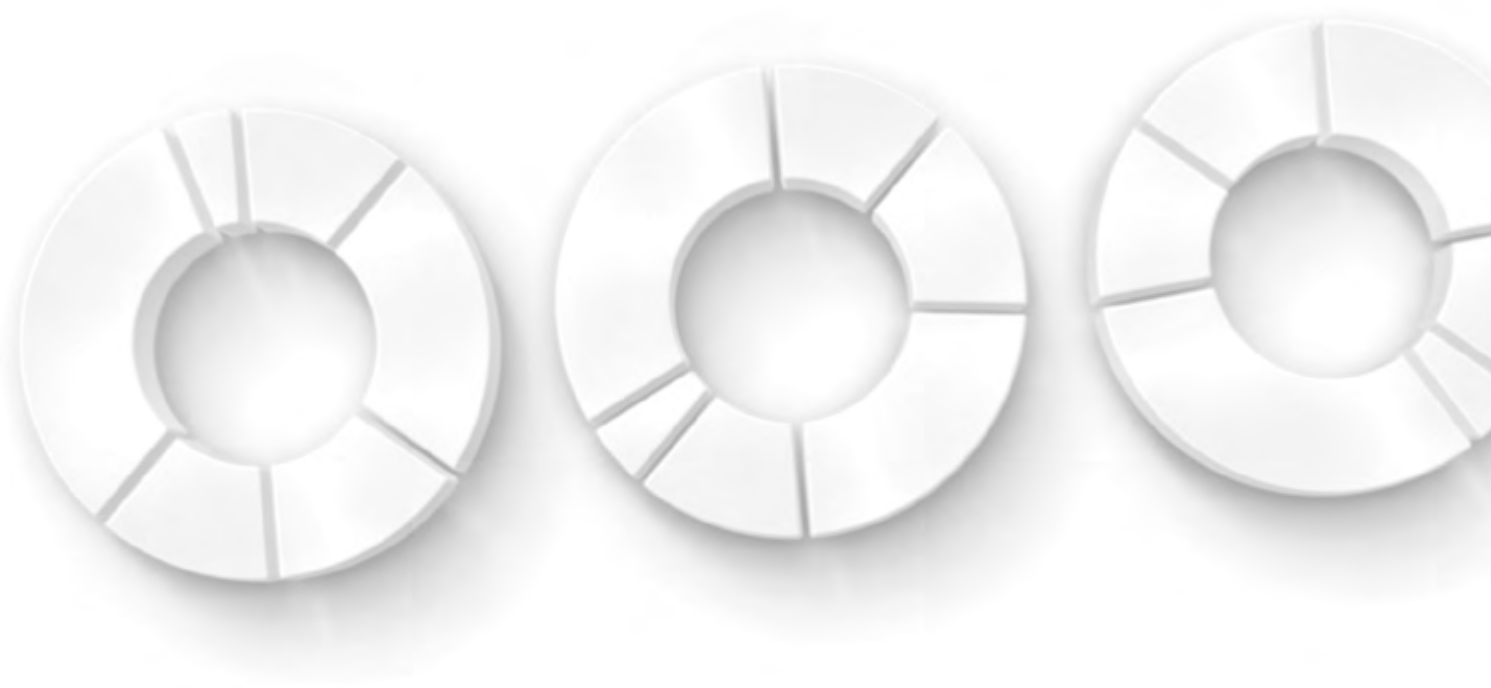
16. In some cases, the EU has published a report on bilateral relations in the framework of the revised neighbourhood policy ahead of an association council (see EU-Tunisia Association Council 2019). In others, the EU released a report in the form of an EU position for the association council (see Jordan 2022). With other countries such as Morocco (see EU-Morocco Association Council) and Egypt (see EU-Egypt Association Council), reports cannot be found.

Q.12 Mobility is one of the main realms of the ENP. The EU has concluded visa liberalisation agreements with three Eastern neighbours. It signed visa facilitation and readmission agreements with almost all its Eastern neighbours. Visa liberalisation is not on the agenda with any Southern neighbour. No visa facilitation and readmission agreement has been signed.

Given this situation, do you think that (select only one option):

1. The EU should continue pushing for the signing of visa facilitation and readmission agreements despite the difficulties.	
2. The twin approach of the signing of visa facilitation and readmission agreements does not work when it comes to mobility cooperation between the EU and its partners. Therefore, a new approach should be defined. "progress" made by its partners.	
3. Don't know.	

Comments:	



THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN (IEMED), FOUNDED IN 1989, IS A THINK AND DO TANK SPECIALISED IN EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS. IT PROVIDES POLICY-ORIENTED AND EVIDENCE-BASED RESEARCH UNDERPINNED BY A GENUINE EUROMED MULTIDIMENSIONAL AND INCLUSIVE APPROACH.

THE AIM OF THE IEMED, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN PARTNERSHIP (EMP), THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY (ENP) AND THE UNION FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (UFM), IS TO STIMULATE REFLECTION AND ACTION THAT CONTRIBUTE TO MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING, EXCHANGE AND COOPERATION BETWEEN THE DIFFERENT MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRIES, SOCIETIES AND CULTURES, AND TO PROMOTE THE PROGRESSIVE CONSTRUCTION OF A SPACE OF PEACE AND STABILITY, SHARED PROSPERITY AND DIALOGUE BETWEEN CULTURES AND CIVILISATIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN.

THE IEMED IS A CONSORTIUM COMPRISING THE CATALAN GOVERNMENT, THE SPANISH MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, EUROPEAN UNION AND COOPERATION, THE EUROPEAN UNION AND BARCELONA CITY COUNCIL. IT ALSO INCORPORATES CIVIL SOCIETY THROUGH ITS BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND ITS ADVISORY COUNCIL.

EUROPEAN INSTITUTE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN (IEMED)

Consortium formed by:

Generalitat de Catalunya
Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, Unión Europea y Cooperación
Ajuntament de Barcelona

Board of Trustees-Business Council:

Corporate Sponsors

Banc Sabadell
CaixaBank
Iberia
Port de Barcelona
Port de Tarragona

Partner Institutions

Cambra Oficial de Comerç, Indústria i Navegació de Barcelona
ESADE
Foment Nacional del Treball
IESE Business School
PIMEC
Societat Econòmica Barcelona d'Amics del País

EUROMESCO EUROMED SURVEY 14

THE FUTURE OF THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY

INTRODUCTION

DESCRIPTIVE REPORT

QUALITATIVE REPORT

FAILED? REFORMABLE? WHAT IS NEEDED? – WHAT FUTURE FOR THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN?
Michael Köhler

ASSESSING THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY'S FUTURE
Maria Giulia Amadio Viceré

DIFFERENTIATION, INCENTIVE-BASED APPROACH AND JOINT OWNERSHIP – TWO DECADES OF ENP'S EXPECTATIONS –
REAL-POLITIQUE GAP
Maya Sion Tzidkiyahu

NEW DYNAMICS TO THE EURO-MEDITERRANEAN RELATIONS? SETTLING AN "UNNECESSARY CONFUSION" BETWEEN THE UNION
FOR THE MEDITERRANEAN (UFM) AND THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY (ENP)
Erzsébet N. Rózsa

RE-ORIENTING PRIORITIES: BACK TO BASICS TO VALUE FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS
Rabha Allam

THE NEW EURO-MEDITERRANEAN CONTEXT: WHAT DIRECTION FOR THE MOROCCO-EUROPEAN UNION PARTNERSHIP?
Rachid El Houdaigui

THE FUTURE OF EU-SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURHOOD TRADE RELATIONS. THE FTAS ARE DEAD, LONG LIVE THE (DC)FTAS?
Katarzyna W. Sidło

NAVIGATING COMPLEXITIES: CHALLENGES IN EU'S MOBILITY COOPERATION WITH THE SOUTHERN NEIGHBOURS
Tasnim Abderrahim

ANNEXES