

## Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy

***Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, today sets out new proposals to strengthen and further develop the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)<sup>1</sup>. The first 18 months of implementation of the ENP have shown good results. The new Communication sets out to increase the impact of the policy, by proposing ways that the EU can help partners who are willing to reform to do this faster and better, and provide incentives to convince those who are still hesitant. The new proposals are accompanied by progress reports on the Neighbourhood partners whose ENP Action Plans began to be implemented in 2005<sup>2</sup>. The Communication will feed into work during the incoming German Presidency in the first half of 2007.***

Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner said: *“This new Communication offers attractive incentives to our Neighbourhood partners. It will bring the Neighbourhood Policy into sharper focus, concentrating on key areas of mutual interest like people to people contacts, deepening trade relations, stronger co-operation on energy, migration and visa issues as well as financial support. An important contribution will be a new Neighbourhood Investment Fund. The Neighbourhood Policy has made a positive start, but the EU can do much more. We must rise to the challenge of promoting peace, stability and economic prosperity of our neighbours. There is no better way of doing this than by supporting their political and economic reforms.”*

From 2007-13 the budget foreseen for the countries of the ENP is €12 billion, 32% more in real terms than in the last budget period. To maximise the impact and leverage of this EU funding the Commission will propose the creation of:

- A Neighbourhood Investment Fund, to which Member States will also be invited to contribute, which would be used to leverage additional lending from the European Investment Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and other development banks. The contribution from the Community Budget would be €700 million. It is estimated that this fund could encourage lending of several times the amount of grant funding. If Member States were to match the EC contribution, the Fund could generate a considerable amount of concessional lending.
- €300 million will also be set aside for a Governance Facility, to provide additional support on top of normal country allocations to acknowledge and support the work of partner countries who have made most progress in implementing their Action Plans.

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<sup>1</sup> The EU's policy towards its neighbours: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.

<sup>2</sup> Ukraine, Moldova, Israel, Jordan, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Morocco.

Today's Communication also proposes:

- A clear perspective for all ENP partners, eastern as well as southern, of deep economic and trade integration with the EU, going beyond free trade in goods and services to address non-tariff barriers achieving comprehensive regulatory convergence.
- Substantially improved visa procedures for certain types of visitors.
- Ad hoc or regular ministerial and expert level meetings with ENP partners on subjects like energy, transport, the environment and public health. This multilateral approach can usefully complement the bilateral work on which the ENP is based.
- Strengthened political co-operation, more systematic association of ENP partners with EU initiatives (foreign policy declarations, positions in international fora as well as participation in key programmes and EU agencies).
- A more active role for the EU in conflict-settlement efforts in the region.
- A strengthened regional approach in the east based on existing Black Sea co-operation.

### State of play of ENP Action Plans

ENP partner countries	Entry into force of contractual relations with EC	ENP Country Report	ENP Action Plan	Adoption by EU	Adoption by partner country
Algeria	AA – Sept 2005	--	--	--	--
Armenia	PCA – 1999	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	13.11.2006	14.11.2006
Azerbaijan	PCA – 1999	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	13.11.2006	14.11.2006
Belarus	--	--	--	--	--
Egypt	AA – Jun 2004	March 2005	Largely agreed autumn 2006	--	--
Georgia	PCA – 1999	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	13.11.2006	14.11.2006
Israel	AA - Jun 2000	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	11.04.2005
Jordan	AA - May 2002	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	11.01.2005 02.06.2005
Lebanon	AA - April 2006	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	17.10.2006	Pending
Libya	--	--	--	--	--
Moldova	PCA - Jul 1998	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	22.02.2005
Morocco	AA - Mar 2000	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	27.07.2005
Palestinian Authority	Interim AA - Jul 1997	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	04.05.2005
Syria	--	--	--	--	--
Tunisia	AA – Mar 1998	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	04.07.2005
Ukraine	PCA – Mar 1998	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	21.02.2005

\* AA: Association Agreement

\*\* PCA: Partnership and Cooperation Agreement

For more information on the European Neighbourhood Policy, including the full communication and the country progress reports

[http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/index_en.htm)

See also today's Memo: [MEMO/06/460](#): European Neighbourhood Policy – State of Play.