

# WHAT PRIORITY AREAS OF COOPERATION UNDER THE REVISED ENP?

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## Introduction

The EUROMED Survey (afterwards referred to as “Survey”) reveals interesting perspectives in the Euro-Mediterranean relations, showing in particular the need for more effective cooperation and a deeper policy convergence between the North and the South of the Mediterranean. The publication of the Survey is very timely against the background of the recent turmoil in the region and the terrorist threat in the EU. It also follows the presentation of the “Review of the Neighbourhood Policy – a stronger partnership for a stronger neighbourhood”<sup>1</sup> (afterwards referred to as “Review”) by the European Commission and EU’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on 18 November 2015. From a broader perspective, it is also interesting to compare the findings of the Survey and the Review with some of the results of the recent Eurobarometer<sup>2</sup>. After a brief overall assessment of the European Neighbourhood Policy (afterwards ENP), in this article we will analyze first the replies to the questions 19-22 on cooperation, then the replies to question 8 on the prospects for further integration in EU policies to compare the results of the Survey with the main conclusions of the recent Review of ENP.

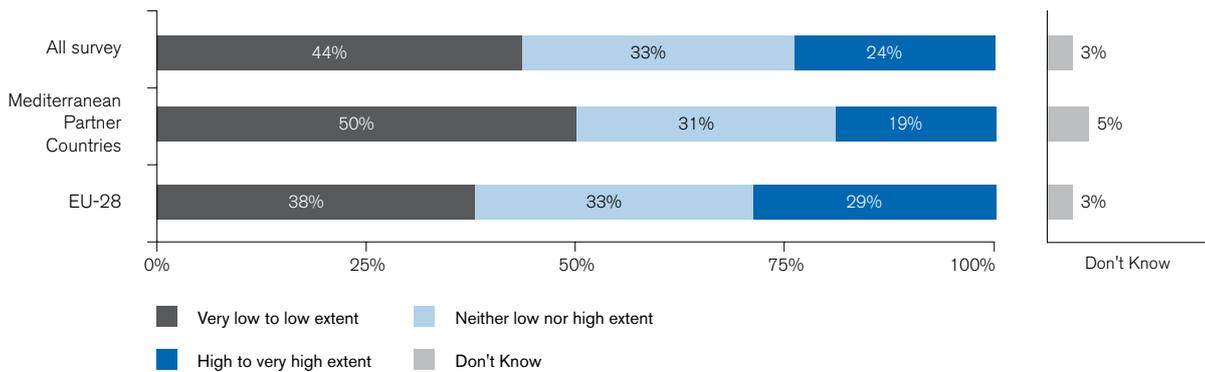
**The Survey reflects a more positive assessment of the ENP in the EU than in the South Mediterranean countries.**

## Overall Assessment of ENP

In general, it could be argued that the Survey reflects a more positive assessment of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in the EU than in the South Mediterranean countries. About half of respondents from the South Mediterranean consider that the EU values are only to a low extent applied in the context of the ENP, whereas only 38% of the respondents from the EU are of this opinion.

1. European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Joint Communication to the European Parliament, The Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of Regions – Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy – (SWD(2015) 500 final – Brussels, 18.11.2015.

2. European Commission – Eurobarometer, Brussels, December 2015.

**Graph 1: To what extent are the EU values applied through the European Neighbourhood Policy?**

Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 6th Euromed Survey/Question 7

Across the board, high priority is attached to various areas of the cooperation between the EU and the South Mediterranean partners in both the EU and in the partner countries. As far as future policy orientation is concerned, respondents from the EU are more optimistic about the prospects for further integration of the ENP with EU policies. Whereas the assessment about EU values and the high priority attached to cooperation, are results that can be expected the result about further integration with some EU policies is rather counterintuitive and will be further analyzed.

Whereas the general assessment of the Survey is rather optimistic, the tone of the Review itself has changed from an optimistic perspective of the integration in the internal market to an overriding preoccupation with stability and the need to face challenges on the borders.

### Survey: Priority Areas of Cooperation

The Survey makes a distinction between priority areas of cooperation (questions 19-22) and the question of the integration of ENP South Mediterranean partners to some EU policies (question 8).

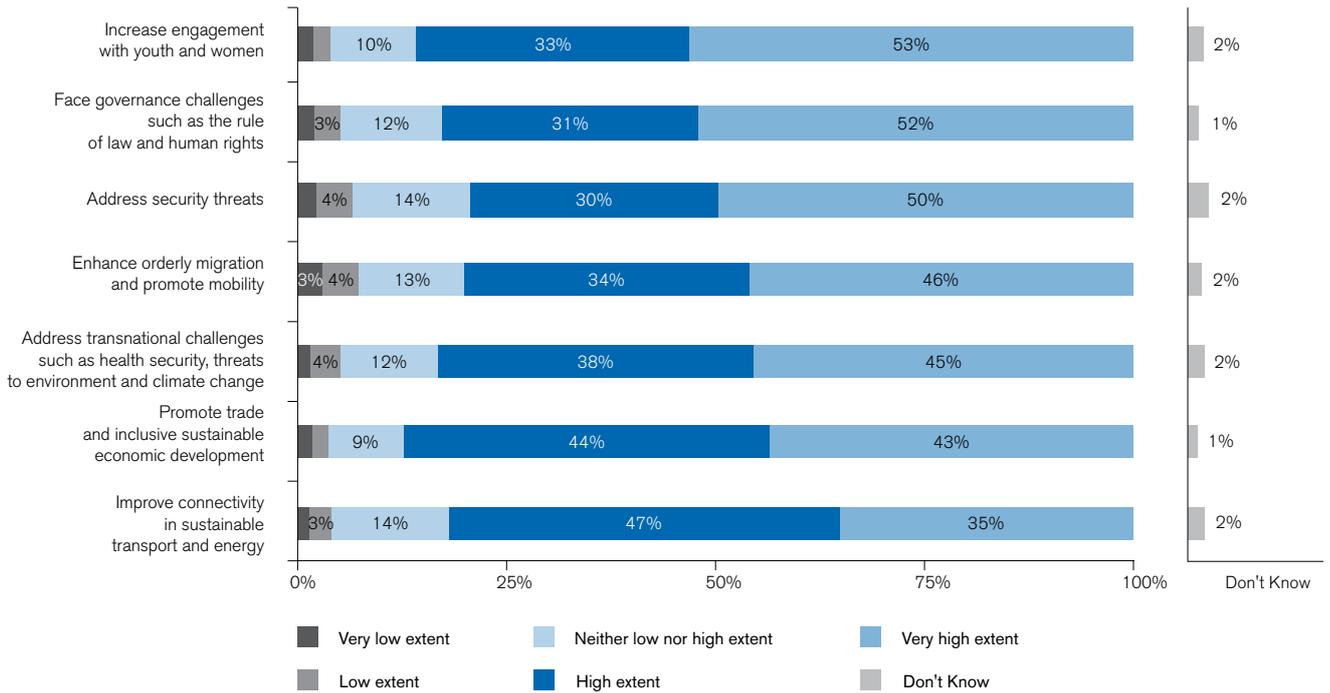
Addressing first the areas of cooperation, it is to be noted that combining the scores of “high” and “very high” priority, there is hardly any distinction in the degree of priority attributed to the various areas of cooperation. In the replies to questions 19-22 respondents rate the areas of cooperation from 80% (“security” and “migration”) to 87% (“trade, sustainable development”).

These hardly differentiated scores show the importance respondents on both sides of the Mediterranean attach to the intensification of cooperation between the EU and the South Mediterranean partners in a broad range of activities. The relatively low scores for security and migration are a bit surprising in the light of the present crisis but can perhaps be explained by the fact that the data are collected some time ago at a moment when the crisis was less acute.

Concentrating on the segment “very high” priority, there is more differentiation. The areas of cooperation “women and youth” and “governance/human rights” are identified by more than 50% of respondents as top priority areas; “transport and energy connectivity” has a clear last place in the ranking with 35%. Also “trade and sustainable development” receives a relatively low score: only 43% consider it a very high priority. These two economic sectors of cooperation receive the largest support in the category “high” priority.

**Hardly differentiated scores on priority areas, show the importance respondents on both sides of the Mediterranean attach to the intensification of cooperation in a broad range of activities.**

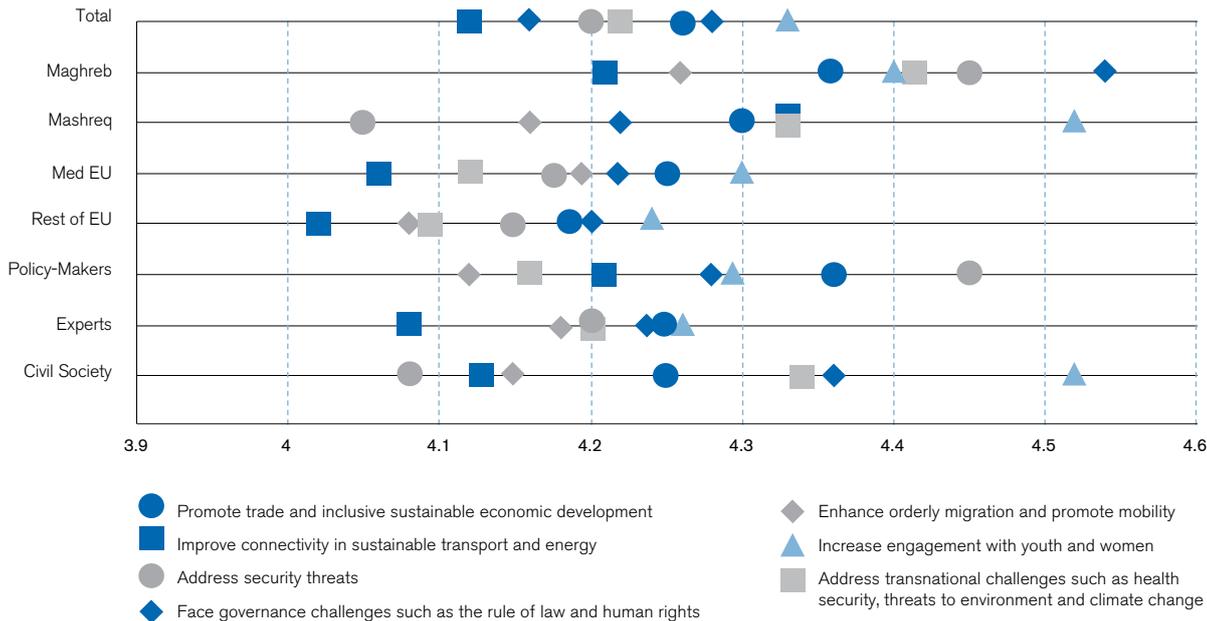
**Graph 2: To what extent do you think the followings areas should be prioritized in the new ENP framework?**



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 6th Euromed Survey/Question 19

It is also interesting to look a bit more closely at the scores of the different groups of respondents. The scores for the different groups of expertise or affiliation are fairly predictable. Respondents with an economic background consider “trade and inclusive and sustainable economic development” the most important field of cooperation; for those with a background in Migration and Justice it is “governance and rule of law”; the respondents from civil society and with a social and cultural background place cooperation with “women and children” at the first place; for policy makers, “security” is the first priority. Remarkable is that most groups give “connectivity in transport and energy” the lowest priority despite the fact that the region lacks interconnected infrastructure. The detailed scores for the country groups (see graph 3) are less intuitive: Respondents from Maghreb consider “governance and human rights” the most important sector of cooperation but for both Mashreq and EU respondents it is “youth and women”. Could this be due to a higher representation of the groups of expertise or affiliation that attach importance to these issues in the respective geographical groups?

**Graph 3: To what extent do you think the following areas should be prioritized in the new ENP framework?**  
Mean (1 – very low – to 5 – very high) by country groups and by respondent's affiliation and respondent's field of expertise



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 6th Euromed Survey/Question 19

**Putting all the elements of analysis together**, the main conclusion is the emphasis on cooperation in the area of “women and youth” and the relatively lower score for “security” and “migration”, perhaps due to the timing of the Survey, before the migration crisis broke out.

### Survey: Prospects for Integration with EU Policies

Putting together the results of the replies to the questions on areas of cooperation (18-22) with the question on prospects of further integration in EU policies (question 8), does give some additional insight in the opinions of the respondents. Indeed, Question 8, which collects open-ended answers about the prospects of further integration with some EU policies, gives a more differentiated picture. There is a clear difference between the policy area that is considered as a priority for policy approximation (economic cooperation with 23%) and the policy area that is considered least important (transport with 2%).

Remarkable is the emphasis that is put on economic development, whether under the category “economic cooperation” or under the categories economic in nature: “agriculture”, “energy”, “transport” and “regional cooperation”. Together, these policy areas are identified as priority policy areas by about 40% of the respondents. Looking more closely at the formulation in the replies, this policy area covers a wide variety of concrete activities, including alignment of the legal framework, procedures for policy definition and implementation, improvement policies for SME development, investment in infrastructure, in rural development etc. There are relatively few references to the distributional aspects of the policies and also environmental policy is only mentioned by 8% of the respondents.

The second policy priority that emerges from this part of the Survey is “migration”. This is quite understandable in the light of the events of the last years following the Arab Spring and especially after the chaos in Libya and the war in Syria. In the Survey, 17% of the respondents

**Perception on migrations is different North and South. Whereas the respondents from the EU use the word “migration” or “immigration”, most of the respondents from the South use the term “mobility”.**

identified this as a priority area for policy alignment with the EU. Reading the replies to the Survey in more detail, it emerges that the perception of the problem of migration is different North and South of the Mediterranean. Whereas the respondents from the EU use the word “migration” or “immigration”, most of the respondents from the South Mediterranean use the term “mobility” rather than migration. This reflects the fairly obvious fact that the preoccupation of citizens of the EU is to control the flow of refugees fleeing the war situation in their countries and to stop the flow of migrants arriving in the EU in search of better economic perspectives. The respondents to the Survey in the South Mediterranean, mostly educated citizens, are in the first place interested in a better access to the EU. This implies visa free travel for short term stays and easier conditions for establishment or residence.

A policy area, that would have come out even more strongly had the Survey been concluded some months later, is the area of “security”. In the Survey this issue is mentioned by 8% of the respondents as a priority area of cooperation. It is a joint preoccupation by respondents from North and South of the Mediterranean.

The issue of Governance and Human Rights is considered by the respondents in the Survey to be of lesser importance as an issue of policy alignment with a relatively low score of 7%. This is to some extent contradictory with the result of question 19 where 83% of the respondents supported the cooperation in the field of Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights. Would this imply that the respondents to the Survey consider that support is needed in those areas but that this does not necessarily imply a full compliance with EU policies and standards?

An interesting result of the Survey is the large majority of respondents that are in favor of a further integration of the ENP in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defense Policy (CSDP). In fact, the neighbourhood is the region where EU has its most influence and ENP is (with Enlargement) the most elaborated (geographical) component of the EU Foreign Policy. The reinforcement of CSDP interventions in the neighbourhood is also a key proposal of the Review that identifies economic development and security as the two elements that can reinforce stability in the region. This is certainly a consideration that will be taken into account in the revision of EU's Security Strategy (expected in June 2016).

### **Main Results of EU's ENP Review – Compared with the Main Results of the Survey**

Narrowing down ENP cooperation to priority areas has always been a difficult exercise. Both the Survey and the Review itself are further evidence of this. Review processes of this magnitude involve many parts of the administration and usually suffer from an accumulation of issues as each department wants to add its own concerns. In order to identify what areas are really considered as overall priorities, attention is focused in this analysis on the summary provided by the Commission,<sup>3</sup> rather than on the complete text.

In EU's Review of the Neighbourhood Policy, “stability” is the key concern, and “economic development” is prioritized and highlighted as key to stabilizing societies. In the ENP Review economic reforms and measures to improve competitiveness are singled out as focal areas. Remarkably, the development of “poor regions” is mentioned as a means for creating a safer environment, but “social development” is not prioritized as such, neither in the responses of the Survey, nor in the ENP Review. The Review does however mention the economic prospects for young people, connected with education and vocational training. Both the Survey and the ENP Review are also rather vague on environmental and sustainable development.

3. European Commission – Press Release – Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP): stronger partnership for a stronger neighbourhood – Brussels, 18 November 2015 and European Commission – Fact Sheet – European Neighbourhood Policy reviewed and explained – Brussels 18 November 2015.

The second policy priority that emerges from both the Survey and the ENP review is “migration”. This is quite understandable in the light of the events of the last years following the Arab Spring and especially after the chaos in Libya and the war in Syria. In the Survey, 17% of the respondents identified this as a priority area for policy alignment with the EU. This attitude is also reflected in the recent Eurobarometer where “migration” emerges by far (60% of respondents) as the most important issue of preoccupation of EU citizens.

The ENP Review indicates that the new ENP will reflect an intensified cooperation on both regular and irregular migration. Although in principle the “mobility partnerships” offered by the EU comprises both aspects, it is clear that for the EU the emphasis lies on stricter border control and cooperation with partner countries to reinforce the measures for retaining refugees and migrants in the region of origin. The score in the Survey reflects a lower level of priority than the importance attached to security in the ENP Review. In the presentation that HRVP Mogherini and Commissioner Hahn gave of the ENP Review, the issue of security has been strongly stressed. In the recent Eurobarometer, the fear for “terrorism” emerges as the second preoccupation of the EU citizens (25% of respondents). In the Review, security in the partner countries is considered the basis of stabilization. The fight against fundamentalism has to be undertaken in the first place in the countries where it has led to terrorism and civil and sectarian war. That is where it has made up till now by far most of the victims. But, as the recent events have shown: terrorism and radicalization threaten also the citizens of the EU. For the EU, in order to combat radicalization, it is important to remove the sources of insecurity, poverty, corruption and poor governance. This of course reinforces the importance of economic development. In the fight against terrorism, the EU will increase policy cooperation in security matters with the partner governments in areas where the EU has a competence.

In the Review of ENP, the promotion of common values is considered a key element in the policy to promote stability and indicates the need to identify more effective ways to promote democracy, human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. In the way the issue is presented in the text of the summary gives the impression that as a priority, Governance and Human Rights takes second place to stability and economic development.

It is interesting to compare the visions that emerge from the Survey and from the Review.

- The Survey reveals only lukewarm enthusiasm from the South Mediterranean partners to integrate further in EU policies. “Economic development” is the overriding priority of the policy alignment. Understandably, “migration” (mobility) is the second priority area as far as integration in EU policies is concerned, less so as an area of cooperation. Security is remarkably low on the list. As far as social development is concerned, only education is mentioned as areas for alignment with EU policies, but “women and youth” are considered an important area of cooperation. Governance and human rights have a remarkably low score as far as alignment on EU policies is concerned, despite a high score as a cooperation priority. There is on some issues a confusing contradiction between priority areas of cooperation and priority areas of policy integration.
- As far as the EU is concerned, the Review stresses “stability” as the key objective, to be realized through (inclusive) economic development and cooperation in the security area. Cooperation on common values and education are mentioned as means for realizing stability. Youth is singled out as an important target group. Common values, democracy, human rights are mentioned as area for cooperation but the issue of governance is not mentioned specifically in the summary.

Both the Survey and the Review reflect a greater emphasis on governance and on further alignment between the ENP and the EU policies. This objective is stronger in the EU than in the partner countries of the South Mediterranean. This may well reflect a degree of despair about the growing turmoil in the South Mediterranean region in the EU and the perception

that it could have some impact in the EU. In order to sort out the problems, adequate policies and better governance inspired by the European example are considered to be the way forward. While accepting that EU can provide guidance in this field, respondents in the South Mediterranean seem not convinced that the EU example is always relevant in all cases.

### Some Concluding Remarks

**“Economic cooperation” emerges as the main area for policy alignment and cooperation, both in the Survey and in the Review.**

“Economic cooperation” emerges as the main area for policy alignment and cooperation, both in the Survey and in the Review. In the Review, economic development is the key to the fight against radicalization and the threat of terrorism. Democracy and human rights are mentioned in both Survey and Review as components of the cooperation, but taking second place to economic development.

In a sense, the Review takes a step back from an overall approach to Neighbourhood Policy. By stressing differentiation and flexibility, the Review offer a wide variety of possible approaches and actions to be combined in a manner taking into account the specific situation of the partner country concerned. It is a more pragmatic and realistic approach that takes into account the diversity of the region but it can be questioned whether one can still call it a Neighbourhood Policy.<sup>4</sup> The same issues, the demise of an overall policy and the reliance on a set of instruments and approaches that can be used custom made to each country has also been mentioned in a recent article by T. Schumacher who calls it the “end of an ambition”.<sup>5</sup>

The two documents are convergent in approach, with a stronger emphasis on economic development in the Survey and a stronger emphasis on stability/security in the Review.

**Little attention is paid, both in the Review and the Survey to:**

**-the problems of poverty and social inequality,**

**-the need to improve the way government and administration function receive adequate attention.**

Two important elements are receiving less attention than they deserve in both the Review and the Survey. In the first place, too little attention is paid to the problems of poverty and social inequality. It is true that in question 19 the priority for cooperation is “inclusive and sustainable development”, but these aspects are not reflected in question 8 that deals with the policy aspects. Economic growth does not automatically bring about better income distribution and economic perspectives for the urban and rural poor. The Arab Spring happened at a moment when growth in countries like Egypt and Tunisia had been fairly high for a decade. The motivation behind the revolt was to some extent political (freedom, democracy, respect), but overwhelmingly the driving force behind the movement was the lack of economic perspectives. The downfall of Muslim Brothers in Egypt can be explained, at least in part, by the fact that they had not been able to implement a significantly more inclusive economic policy. The most vocal part of the population without economic perspectives are the young. Education, vocational training, youth employment schemes etc. are mentioned, but a different, generally more inclusive economic policy is needed to respond to the aspiration of the poor urban and rural masses. In the absence of such inclusiveness economic growth, benefiting the few will only contribute to the further development of radicalism, leading to terrorism as fundamentalist organizations will find an eager response to their messages.

The preoccupation with Governance is evidently underpinning many of the ideas for cooperation, and Governance receives a 83% score in question 19, However, neither in question 8 of the Survey, nor in the summary of the Review, the need to improve the way government and administration function receive adequate attention. The structural social inequality usually goes hand in hand with inadequate governance: the existing of what Acemoglu and Robinson call

4. See also the comments on the “Review” by Rosa Balfour, “Making the most of the European Policy Toolbox” – German Marshall Fund, Blogpost, 18 November 2015.

5. T. Schumacher, Back to the Future: The “new” ENP towards the Southern Neighbourhood and the End of Ambition, College of Europe Policy Brief, #1.16, January 2016.

the “extractive institutions”.<sup>6</sup> It is not enough to modernize administrative practices, improve financial management etc. Modernization, cutting red tape, increasing efficiency etc. can make a valid contribution to better governance, but the whole governmental machinery, and the relations between administration and the political decision making as well as the relations between administration and the business world need to be critically examined and streamlined. Real inclusive social and economic development requires a dismantlement of the existing links between the vested economic and political interest. This is not an easy task as those that have to undertake the reforms often have a vested interest in the continuation of the existing power relations.

An innovative and coherent approach to the ENP in the South Mediterranean does not come across in the Review. The approach that emerges from it is pragmatic, but concentrates on the symptoms of the present crisis rather than on the underlying main factors. A longer term perspective would certainly need a more visionary approach.

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6. Acemoglu D. and J.A. Robinson (2012) *The Origin of Power, Prosperity and Poverty*, London, Profile Books.