

WHAT ROLE FOR THE ENP IN ADDRESSING SECURITY THREATS?

NICK WESTCOTT

Managing Director for Middle East and North Africa, European External Action Service, Brussels

The EU cannot solve the many challenges of the region alone, and there are limits to its leverage, but the new ENP will play its part in helping to create the conditions for positive development.

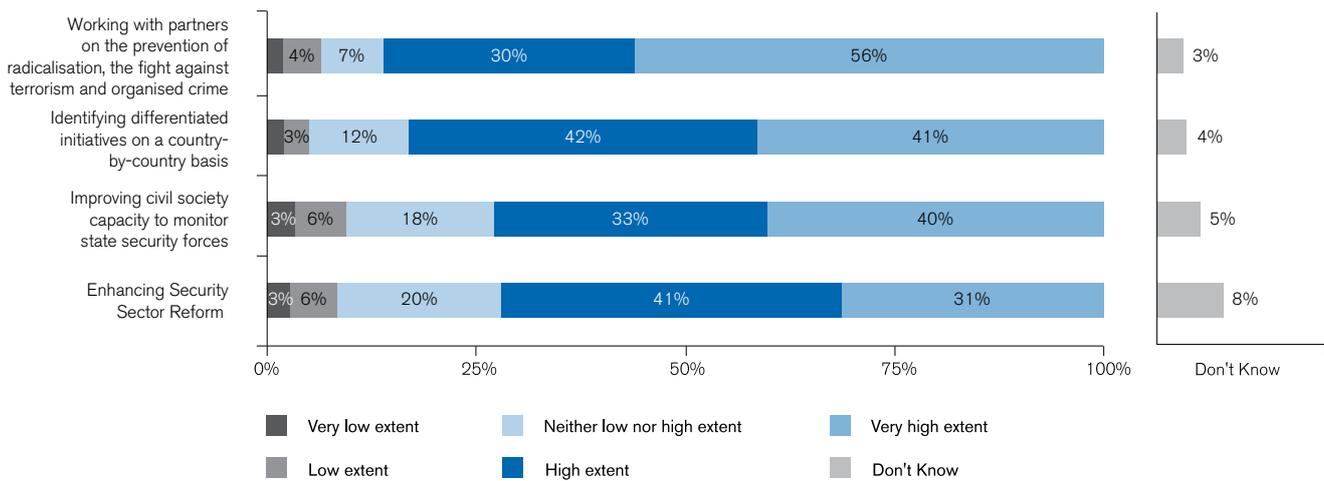
During the public consultation on the review of the ENP, a large number of stakeholders including many partner countries strongly expressed the view that the EU should increase its engagement with partners in the security sector.

The neighbourhood has changed radically over the past 12 years, since the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004. The events of recent years have demonstrated the need for a new approach, which is the subject of a Joint Communication presented by High Representative/Vice-President Federica Mogherini and Commissioner Johannes Hahn on 18 November 2015 and of conclusions adopted by the Council on 14 December.

More than ever after the 13 November terrorist attacks in Paris, but also recent attacks in Lebanon and Tunisia, intensified security cooperation with our neighbours is needed. Armed conflict and rising extremism have left their marks across North Africa and the Middle East. Safe and legal mobility and tackling irregular migration, human trafficking and smuggling are also priorities, as conflict and tensions have resulted in major refugee flows.

The EU cannot solve the many challenges of the region alone, and there are limits to its leverage, but the new ENP will play its part in helping to create the conditions for positive development. For the next three to five years, stabilisation will be at the heart of the EU's actions in its neighbourhood. The EU will offer ways to strengthen the resilience of its partners in the face of external pressures and their ability to make their own sovereign choices. In doing so, particular attention will be paid to supporting reforms in the security sector: there will be a new focus on stepping up work with our partners on security sector reform, conflict prevention, counter-terrorism and anti-radicalisation policies.

During the public consultation on the review of the ENP, a large number of stakeholders including many partner countries strongly expressed the view that the EU should increase its engagement with partners in the security sector. As in other areas, the revised ENP will offer a tailor-made approach to cooperating on security-related matters, and will actively ensure that its overall engagement is conflict-sensitive, and fully compliant with international law, including international human rights law.

Graph 1: To what extent should ENP actions/policies to address security threats focus on?

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

The ENP is not about to become a crisis management tool – it will continue to engage with partners in a mid- to long-term perspective. As the causes of instability often lie outside the security domain alone, the EU will seek to comprehensively address sources of instability across sectors. Poverty, inequality, a perceived sense of injustice, corruption, weak economic and social development and lack of opportunity – particularly for young people – are at the roots of instability, increasing vulnerability to radicalisation. The new ENP will make a determined effort to support economies and improve prospects for the local population. The policy should help make partner countries places where people want to build their future, and help tackle uncontrolled movement of people.

The ENP is not about to become a crisis management tool – it will continue to engage with partners in a mid- to long-term perspective.

In addition to a new focus on economic resilience and growth, the reviewed ENP will expand other essential strands of cooperation with partners: the EU will work more on security, with more partners. Security sector reform needs to be fully included in the EU's outreach to partner countries' authorities. Law enforcement, the judiciary, and the military represent the backbone of a state's resilience. Interested partner countries should be supported in their reform of the civilian and military security. Such cooperation may include strategic and policy advice, institution and capacity-building activities, dialogues with civil society, and support for community security programmes.

The reviewed ENP will expand other essential strands of cooperation. Security sector reform needs to be fully included in the EU's outreach to partner countries' authorities.

As the threat of terrorism and radicalisation is affecting both Europe and its neighbours, the EU will step up work with partners on counter-terrorism, including preventing radicalisation and countering violent extremism. Criminal justice responses and suppressing the financing of terrorism will become priorities. Involving civil society, especially youth organisations, in preventing radicalisation will be crucial. Tackling broader issues such as ineffective justice, gender inequality, hate speech, youth unemployment, and illiteracy will all also be part of a wider de-radicalisation effort. Cross-cultural dialogue, such as that promoted by the Anna Lindh Foundation, will be key.

Organised crime and corruption also threaten stability in the wider region. The EU will increase support to partner countries in their fight against serious and organised international crime, including in the fight against migrant smuggling and trafficking of human beings. The EU will also explore the possibility of involving partner countries in existing financial investigation networks. Furthermore, the EU will prioritise work with partner countries on countering the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons. Further support will be available on integrated

and balanced national drug policies. With Interpol, the need should be examined to build further law enforcement capacity in neighbouring countries and work on facilitating information exchanges with EU Member States and Europol. With Eurojust, the EU will promote a stronger engagement and cooperation in order to ease judicial cooperation on all serious crime investigations.

Structures set up under the EU's security and defence architecture can be a forum for an exchange of best practice, for cooperation on common objectives, and for capacity building.

In addition, structures set up under the EU's security and defence architecture can be a forum for an exchange of best practice, for cooperation on common objectives, and for capacity building. Thus, a new impetus will be given to cooperation on matters related to the Common Security and Defence Policy. This includes the promotion of the participation of partner countries in EU missions and operations, EU Battlegroups, and their association to relevant programmes and agencies such as the European Defence Agency and the European Security and Defence College. The EU will also seek to establish security and defence dialogues with partner countries and facilitate the participation of officials and officers from partner countries in courses at relevant defence colleges.

Civil protection also plays an important role in building resilience. The EU will offer close partnerships in civil protection, building up partners' early warning, prevention and preparedness capacity. Stronger emphasis will be put on health security aspects by strengthening capacities to respond effectively to health threats such as communicable diseases. Access to imagery provided by the EU Satellite Centre could also be considered in light of crisis response needs. In order to put these proposals into practice, flexibility in programming and the coherent use of the ENP and other financial instruments will be crucial. Therefore, close coordination will be ensured between the security work done under the European Neighbourhood Instrument with wider activities related to the EU's foreign and security policy, with the work of EU Member States bilaterally and with relevant international organisations.

All these initiatives should be based on a thorough analysis of instability factors, including an assessment of the role and interests of third parties, to inform the EU's engagement and support. The EU will develop a differentiated approach to partners based on this analysis and adapted to mutually agreed goals, commitment to reform and universal values, and EU interests.

Nick Westcott has been the Managing Director for Middle East and North Africa in the European External Action Service, based in Brussels, since September 2015. He was previously Managing Director for Africa in the EEAS from 2011-2015. He served as British High Commissioner to Ghana and Ambassador to the Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Togo and Niger from January 2008 to January 2011. He had previous postings as Deputy High Commissioner in Dar es Salaam, as Minister-Counsellor at the Embassy in Washington, and at the UK's Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels. As Head of the FCO's Economic Relations Department, he organised the G8 Summit in Birmingham in 1998. He was the FCO's Chief Information Officer from 2002 to 2007, responsible for the FCO's global IT network and £100m annual IT budget.