

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 20<sup>th</sup> 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 Amado** 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.