

# Terms of Reference of the policy evaluation of the Dutch contribution to the European Neighbourhood Policy

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**Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB)**  
*Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands*

<https://english.iob-evaluatie.nl>

## Table of contents

<i>List of abbreviations and acronyms</i>	<i>iii</i>
<b>1 Rationale</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Objectives of the policy evaluation	2
1.3 Financial weight	2
<b>2 The European Neighbourhood Policy</b>	<b>3</b>
2.1 Background and objectives	3
2.2 Positive conditionality and partnership	4
2.3 Instruments	4
2.4 Multilateral cooperation	6
2.5 Institutional set-up and dynamics	6
2.6 The situation in the European neighbourhood	7
2.7 Challenges for the ENP	8
2.8 The 2011 and 2015 reviews of the ENP	10
<b>3 Dutch policy with regard to the European Neighbourhood Policy</b>	<b>12</b>
3.1 Dutch policy positions	12
3.2 The Dutch position in the European arena of interests	15
3.3 Dutch policy actors	15
<b>4 Research framework</b>	<b>17</b>
4.1 Aim of the study	17
4.2 Research questions	17
4.3 Approach	18
4.4 Methodology	21
4.5 Scope and limitations	24
4.6 Planning and output	25
4.7 Organisation of the study	26
<b>Annexes</b>	
Annex 1 EN(P)I spending per country	27
Annex 2 List of evaluation and audit reports	29

## List of abbreviations and acronyms

AA	Association Agreement
AZ	Ministry of General Affairs
BPZ	Political Affairs Section (BZ)
BZ	Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands
CBC	Cross Border Cooperation
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
COEST	Working Party on Eastern Europe and Central Asia
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DAM	Northern Africa and Middle East Department (BZ)
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement
DGBEB	Directorate General for Foreign Economic Relations (BZ)
DGES	Directorate General for European Affairs (BZ)
DGIS	Directorate General for International Cooperation (BZ)
DG NEAR	Directorate General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement negotiations (EU)
DGPZ	Directorate General for Political Affairs (BZ)
DEU	Europe Department (BZ)
DEVCO	Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (EU)
DIE	European Integration Department (BZ)
DIE-EX	External Affairs Division of the European Integration Department (BZ)
EaP	Eastern Partnership
EaPIC	Eastern Partnership and Cooperation programme
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIB	European Investment Bank
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument
EU	European Union
EUR	Euro
FEZ	Financial and Economic Department (BZ)
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
HoMs	Heads of Mission (meetings)
HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for foreign and security policy/Vice-President of the Commission
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IGG	Inclusive Green Growth Department (BZ)
IOB	Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (BZ)
IRF	Inspectorate of the Budget (Ministry of Finance of the Netherlands)
IMH	International Trade Policy and Economic Governance Department (BZ)
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LGBT	Lesbians, gays, bisexuals and transgenders
MaMa	Mashreq/Mahreb Working Party
MATRA	Societal transformation programme
MEDA	Mesures d'accompagnement (financières et techniques à la réforme des structures

	économiques et sociales dans le cadre du partenariat euro-méditerranéen)
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NIF	Neighbourhood Investment Facility
NUFFIC	Netherlands Universities Foundation for International Cooperation
OCW	Ministry of Education Culture and Science
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
RPE	Order on periodic evaluation
RVO	Netherlands Enterprise Agency
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PSC	Political and Security Committee
SIGMA	Support for Improvement in Governance and Management
SPRING	Support to Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth programme
SVOP	Special Representative for EU-Russia relations and the EaP (BZ)
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
ToR	Terms of Reference
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UN	United Nations
VenJ	Ministry of Security and Justice
VLAP	Visa Liberalisation and Action Plan
WB	World Bank
WTO	World Trade Organisation

# 1 Rationale

## 1.1 Background

A policy evaluation<sup>1</sup> of the Dutch contribution to the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is included in the evaluation programme of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BZ) 2011-2019. This policy evaluation is to be undertaken by the Policy and Operations Evaluation Department (IOB) of the ministry and to be published in 2017.

The *Order on periodic evaluation* (RPE)<sup>2</sup> states that each policy objective is to be evaluated once every four to seven years. This policy evaluation covers policy objectives 2.5 and 3.2 of the ministry's annual budget:

- Objective 2.5: 'Promoting transition in priority area's'
- Objective 3.2: 'An effective, efficient and coherent conduct of the [European] Union *vis-à-vis* third countries and regions, including developing countries'

The focus of this evaluation is on policy objective 3.2. The Dutch contribution to the foreign policy of the European Union (EU) has not been the subject of a policy evaluation before, except for the European Development Fund (EDF) (see text box 1).<sup>3</sup> IOB has evaluated the societal transformation (MATRA) programme implemented in the Eastern and Southern European Neighbourhood countries, thereby covering all expenditures under policy objective 2.5. The results of these evaluations will be incorporated in this policy evaluation, combined with additional insights (see Chapter 4 of this Terms of Reference (ToR)).<sup>4</sup>

### Text box 1 Policy objective 3.2 of the BZ budget

In the past years there have been some shifts in the make-up of the ministry's budget resulting in a slight mismatch between policy objectives and budgets.

The second policy objective under Article 3 ('European cooperation') of the BZ budget reads: 'An effective, efficient and coherent conduct of the Union *vis-à-vis* third countries and regions, including developing countries'. Prior to the BZ budget of 2012, separate objectives for the Union's policy towards *third* countries and regions (objective 3.2) and for the Union's policy towards *developing* countries and regions (policy objective 3.3) were subsumed under this article. At the time, the budget for policy objective 3.2 concerned the budget for the Dutch MATRA (societal transformation) programme. The budget for policy objective 3.3 concerned the Dutch contribution to the European Development Fund (EDF). In 2012, these objectives were merged. From then on, the only budget for policy objective 3.2 was the contribution to the EDF. The budget for the MATRA programme has been shifted to policy objective 2.5 of the BZ budget ('Promoting transition in priority areas').

Interestingly, although the policy input with regard to the EU's foreign policy, including the European Neighbourhood Policy, falls under policy objective 3.2, the Dutch financial contribution to the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) falls under policy objective 3.1 ('A democratic, effective and transparent

<sup>1</sup> Policy evaluation here is the English translation for the Dutch instrument '*beleidsdoorlichting*', which is sometimes translated as 'policy review'. In order to avoid confusion with the reviews (revisions) of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2011 and 2015, the concept of policy evaluation is applied here.

<sup>2</sup> Ministerie van Financiën, *Regeling Periodiek Evaluatieonderzoek*, Staatscourant 27142, 25 september 2014.

<sup>3</sup> IOB, *The Netherlands and the European Development Fund - Principles and Practices: Evaluation of Dutch involvement in EU development cooperation (1998-2012)*, IOB Evaluation 375; The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> The evaluation reports can be downloaded from the IOB website: [www.iob-evaluatie.nl](http://www.iob-evaluatie.nl).

European Union, that provides freedom, justice, security, prosperity and sustainable growth to its citizens'), since this is part of the national contribution of the Netherlands to the EU's budget.

IOB has chosen to delimit the study to the EU's policy towards the neighbouring regions, since studying the EU's foreign policy at large would not be feasible. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) covers an important part of the EU's foreign policy. First, the ENP in and of itself encompasses a wide range of EU policy areas (either directly or indirectly), such as the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), external trade, development cooperation, migration and energy security. It thus represents almost the full scope of the EU's foreign policy. Second, the ENP faces many challenges and dilemma's – both related to its substance and its institutional setup – that are typical for the EU's foreign policy. And third, developments in the neighbouring regions over the past years have made the EU's neighbourhood the main foreign policy concern for the Union (and for the Netherlands) and it is likely to remain so in the foreseeable future. Getting the neighbourhood policy right is therefore fundamental to the EU's chances to protect its interests and promote its values, perhaps the ultimate test of the EU's ability to develop a truly comprehensive external policy. This is crucial for the Union's future as an international actor.

## 1.2 Objectives of the policy evaluation

This policy evaluation has two objectives: 1) to account for the Dutch contribution to the framing, implementation and results of the ENP, and 2) to learn from past experience with a view to contributing to a more effective, efficient and coherent ENP by the Netherlands.

The policy evaluation covers the period January 2011 – June 2016, a period that comprises the two reviews (revisions) of the ENP (in May 2011 and November 2015, see Chapter 2). The fact that the ENP has recently been reviewed and that the EU has adopted a new Global Strategy in June 2016 illustrates that the EU is searching for ways to increase its coherence and effectiveness in the conduct of its foreign policy, especially with regard to the neighbouring regions. When formulating lessons for the future, the policy evaluation will take into account relevant policy developments in 2016. The study aims to provide relevant insights that may be considered during the mid-term review of the European Neighbourhood Instrument late 2017.

## 1.3 Financial weight

The EU's expenditures in the framework of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) were about EUR 10 billion<sup>5</sup> in the 2007-2013 period. To give a – rough – idea of the Dutch contribution to this budget; about 5 percent of the EU's budget can be attributed to the Netherlands. This would mean the Dutch contribution to the ENP has been roughly EUR 71 million per year for the 2007-2013 period. For the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2014-2020) the committed budget is EUR 15.4 billion, 5 percent of this would mean an annual Dutch contribution of EUR 110 million.

The Dutch expenditures via the bilateral MATRA programme in the Eastern and Southern neighbours were about EUR 16 million per year (of which 10 million in the Southern countries and 6 million in the Eastern countries). There were other bilateral expenditures through other programmes. These will be analysed during the policy evaluation.

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<sup>5</sup> This includes EUR 733 million to Russia, which is not an ENP country.

## 2 The European Neighbourhood Policy

### 2.1 Background and objectives

The European Neighbourhood Policy is a policy framework guiding the relations between the EU and 16 neighbouring countries in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus and the Southern Mediterranean. The ENP's origins lie in the challenge posed by the 2004 eastward enlargement of the Union of how to deal with the next ring of European neighbours. Rather than being strategically designed, it evolved from the policy discussions in the early 2000's.

The idea behind the ENP was driven by two factors. On the one hand, the belief that the EU needs to offer an alternative to enlargement policy as the EU has only limited capacity to absorb new members<sup>6</sup> and, on the other hand, the conviction that it is vital to create an area of peace and prosperity in its backyard.<sup>7</sup>

In 2002, at the request of the General Affairs and External Relations Council, then High Representative for the CFSP Javier Solana and external relations Commissioner Chris Patten delivered a joint letter on 'Wider Europe' setting out a few key issues the EU needed to consider, such as the geographical scope of the policy, how to ensure that there is no ambiguity on (the absence of) further enlargement, the EU's interests and objectives, the relation with enlargement policy and the method and instruments. They also provided tentative answers.<sup>8</sup>

According to the Commission's 2003 Communication on 'Wider Europe' the goal of what later came to be known as the ENP was twofold:

- 1) preventing that the EU's new borders would lead to the creation of new dividing lines within Europe and,
- 2) fostering an area of stability, peace and prosperity so that the spill-over effects of instability in the form of illegal trafficking, organized crime, terrorism, pollution etc. would not lead to instability in the EU.<sup>9</sup>

In its early conception, the Wider Europe policy was focused on the Eastern European countries of Belarus, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The Southern EU member states pushed for the inclusion of the countries of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership programme ('Barcelona process'). Only after the 'Rose revolution' in Georgia in November 2003, countries in the South Caucasus were included as well. The Russian Federation preferred a so-called Strategic Partnership due to its dissatisfaction with the ENP's asymmetrical nature and methodology (in particular its strict conditionality principle and the comprehensive geographical scope). As a result, the ENP comprises six countries in the East: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine, and ten in the South: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, the Palestinian Territories, Syria and Tunisia.

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<sup>6</sup> The ENP thus excludes the so-called pre-accession countries in the Western Balkans and Turkey.

<sup>7</sup> Kristof Kleenman, *The European Neighbourhood Policy – A Reality Check*; Working Paper No. 16, European Research Centre for Anti-Corruption and State-Building, 2010, p. 5.

<sup>8</sup> Bart van Vooren & Ramses Wessel, *EU External Relations Law: Text, Cases and Materials*, Cambridge: Cambridge University press. 540.

<sup>9</sup> Commission of the European Communities, *Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Brussels, 11.3.2003, COM(2003) 104 def.

The ENP's substance, core principles and institutional set-up have evolved over time in response to political developments in the neighbouring countries, shifts in political views in the member states and the EU's broader political and institutional development. The ENP was 'reviewed' (revised in fact) in 2011, in response to the Arab revolutions, and in 2015, in response to disappointing policy outcomes and the crisis in Ukraine.

## 2.2 Positive conditionality and partnership

The ENP is driven by the concept of positive conditionality and ownership. The idea is that in exchange for economic integration with the EU, increased mobility (visa facilitation or liberalisation) and financial and technical assistance provided by the EU, the ENP countries carry out reforms that the EU considers desirable. In doing so, they approach European values and standards. Thus, the intensity of the relationship depends on the extent to which values are shared, including aspects such as human rights and democracy, good governance, market economy principles and sustainable development.

The relations with most partner countries are shaped via detailed agreements, the so-called association agreements (AA's). With some countries, there are less far-reaching partnership and cooperation agreements (PCA's). Apart from arrangements on political cooperation and dialogue, the AA's facilitate trade liberalization.<sup>10</sup>

In order to monitor the progress of the individual countries on the measures agreed upon in the AA's and PCA's, action plans have been drawn up.<sup>11</sup> Until the 2015 review of the ENP, the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) drafted annual reports in which the progress of the individual countries on the themes of the AA's and PCA's was assessed. These reports then formed the basis of the EU policy towards these countries. Each action plan had a country-specific reform agenda which entailed priorities for the next 3-5 years, the capacities and limitations of each partner and the EU's interests. All neighbouring countries, with the exception of Belarus, Libya and Syria, have signed such action plans.

## 2.3 Instruments

The core instruments of the EU to shape its relations with ENP partner countries can be summed up as the 'three Ms': Money, Mobility and Market.

### Financial and technical support

The European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) was operational from January 2007 to January 2014 and was then replaced by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). Under this new instrument some of the principles for allocation of funds were adjusted, the type of sub-programmes largely remained the same.

The budget ceiling of the EN(P)I is set by the EU's multiannual financial framework for a seven year period. In the 2007-2013 period the ENPI budget was about EUR 13.4 billion of which some EUR 10 billion was actually allocated. The indicative ENI budget for the 2014-2020 period is EUR 15.4 billion.

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<sup>10</sup> For more information see: [http://eeas.europa.eu/association/docs/agreements\\_en.pdf](http://eeas.europa.eu/association/docs/agreements_en.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> For Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia the action plans have been succeeded by so-called Association Agenda's, to prepare and facilitate the implementation of their second generation Association Agreements.



EN(P)I is a regional instrument for the neighbourhood region, used to finance various bilateral programmes, regional programmes and investment facilities, such as:<sup>12</sup>

- assistance in implementing reforms using instruments such as Twinning, Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) and Support for Improvement in Governance & Management (SIGMA);
- investments in infrastructure in sectors such as transport, energy, the environment and social issues. are brought together under the Neighbourhood Investment Facility (NIF);
- instruments focused on facilitating Cross Border Cooperation (CBC), strengthening civil society and educational exchange programmes (e.g. Erasmus Mundus);
- lending and budget support via cooperation with the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank (WB) and the United Nations (UN).

Although the bulk of the funding for the Partner countries is provided via the EN(P)I instruments, funds from other – often thematic – instruments and programmes were also available. Annex 1 presents an overview of EN(P)I spending per ENP country.

### Trade

The Union offers neighbourhood countries economic integration, mostly via improved access to the internal market. This is done in various intensities of market integration:

- Free Trade Agreements (FTA's): lower tariff barriers for industrial and agricultural goods;<sup>13</sup>
- Enhanced FTA's: these go further than FTA's. An example are Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA's) where agriculture, industry and services are included. They involve legislative approximation (i.e. 'deep' integration) and have a broader scope, including areas such as public procurement, competition (i.e. 'comprehensive' integration).

### Mobility

The Union can grant ENP countries visa facilitation or visa liberalisation (the latter option is not available for the Southern neighbours). Visa facilitation, which eases visa requirements, is based upon a legally binding bilateral agreement, in practice concluded in parallel with readmission agreements. Visa liberalisation, i.e. the lifting of a visa requirement, is based upon a visa dialogue and a strict conditionality approach with country-specific visa liberalisation action plans (VLAP's) and regular Commission monitoring.

In addition, the Union concludes so-called 'mobility partnerships' with partner countries. These are aimed at combining improved access to legal migration channels, such as scholarship programs, with steps to strengthen border management and to control irregular migration. They are flexible policy frameworks ('soft law' instruments), concluded in the form of joint statements between the EU and a third country, allowing for project-based cooperation on migration issues.

### Political dialogue

The Union also makes use of political dialogue as a means to strengthen its ties with partner countries and of jointly setting the agenda for cooperation. Association Councils, sub-committees as well as informal working groups have been set up to discuss priorities set out in the action plans or association

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<sup>12</sup> For more information, visit the EN(P)I info centre: <http://www.enpi-info.eu/ENI>

<sup>13</sup> World Trade Organisation (WTO) membership is a precondition.

agenda's and other policy issues on a regular basis. ENP countries can also be invited to participate in common positions and joint actions in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP).

### Other policy areas

There are policy areas that play a significant role in the EU's relations with the ENP countries, but that cannot be considered instruments of the ENP, e.g. the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) or the EU's energy security policy. On the one hand, the ENP can be considered an important part of the EU's foreign policy, on the other, after the 2015 review the ENP is seen as providing an overarching framework guiding all of the Union's relations with its neighbours.

## 2.4 Multilateral cooperation

The ENP is primarily a bilateral policy between the EU and its respective neighbours, but it is complemented by two multilateral initiatives.

### Union for the Mediterranean

The Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was founded in 2008. The membership includes all 28 EU members states: the southern ENP countries (except Libya<sup>14</sup>), and Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mauritania, Monaco, Montenegro, Turkey and the Arab League. The UfM provides a forum for enhancing regional cooperation and dialogue in the Euro-Mediterranean region in order to support the countries' socioeconomic development and ensure stability in the region. To this end, it identifies and supports regional projects and initiatives of different sizes. Broadly speaking, regional initiatives focus on small and medium-sized enterprises, regional electricity markets, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources, environmental governance, and the prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters. The UfM has a permanent secretariat, based in Barcelona.

### Eastern Partnership

The founding of the Eastern Partnership (EaP) in 2009, followed the initiative taken by Poland and Sweden in response to the founding of the UfM. The idea gained ground after the increased attention for the Eastern neighbours due to the armed conflict between Russia and Georgia in 2008 and the gas conflicts between Russia and Ukraine.

Like the UfM, the EaP created a multilateral framework/forum for regional cooperation and opened the door for DCFTA's. The main goal is improving the political and economic relations with the Eastern neighbours. There are several institutionalized meetings within the framework of the EaP at the level of heads of state and government, foreign ministers and senior officials. In addition there are panels in which economic, social and political problems are being discussed.

## 2.5 Institutional set-up and dynamics

The institutional set-up for the EU's foreign policy – and thus for the ENP – is in a phase of consolidation. Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty (1 December 2009), the post of High Representative for the Union's foreign and security policy, who is at the same time vice-president of the Commission (HR/VP) and a European External Action Service (EEAS) were created. Although these innovations should in principle create new synergies in the EU's foreign policy, it also requires a clarification of competences, the establishment of new working relations, and more coordination.

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<sup>14</sup> Libya has observer status. Syria is self-suspended since 2011.

The Commission and the EEAS manage the EU's daily relations with the ENP countries. In the Commission, the ENP portfolio was added to the responsibilities of the Commissioner for Enlargement and his directorate general (as from November 2014 this DG is called 'Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations' – DG NEAR).

Closely linked with the HR/VP, the EEAS has a central position in the EU's foreign policy architecture. The effective fulfilment of its mandate, at least in the field of the ENP, is however largely dependent on its relations with the Commission, in particular DG NEAR, DG for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), DG Trade, DG Home Affairs, DG Health and Consumers, DG Internal Market and Services and DG Energy.

The EEAS serves both the HR/VP and the Commissioner responsible for the neighbourhood. Cooperation between the EEAS and the Commission has not always been smooth,<sup>15</sup> due to disagreements concerning which body should lead on specific policy issues, the incompatibility of goals between EEAS and the Commission DGs as well as areas where responsibilities were not clear. Reflecting the ambition of the Juncker Commission to work more jointly as a team, the new HR/VP since November 2014, Ms. Mogherini, works closer with her Commission colleagues than her predecessor. In her capacity of one of the Commission vice-presidents, she actively coordinates the external Commissioners cluster, a practice which differs from that under the second Barroso Commission.<sup>16</sup>

The member states – through the Council framework – hold the decision-making powers. The decision-making rule in the council governing the EU policies with regard to the ENP is largely based on consensus.<sup>17</sup> Finding consensus among member states is not always easy because of the heterogeneity of their interests and preferences. Consequently, decisions may tend to lowest common denominator compromises, especially if the issues are politically sensitive.

At the same time, the member states continue to have their own bilateral relations with the ENP countries.

## 2.6 The situation in the European neighbourhood

More than twelve years after the launch of the ENP, the neighbourhood region is now commonly referred to as the 'ring of instability'. In the east there are various tensions and conflicts within and between EaP countries, most notably between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh and since 2014 in Eastern Ukraine. In the South there is a combination of extremism, a lack of economic reforms, large flows of migration and several security crises.<sup>18</sup>

Lack of democratic reform is another cause for concern. In the South, reform agendas have been hindered by internal developments. In some of the EaP countries, especially Georgia, Moldova and

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<sup>15</sup> Hrant Kostanyan, 'Turf wars and control issues in EU eastern policies: Opening the 'black box' of the EU Institutions and the Member States', pp. 22-25 in: Adam Hug (ed.) *Trouble in the Neighbourhood? The future of the EU's Eastern Partnership*, The Foreign Policy Centre, 2015, p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> See Steven Blockmans and Sophia Russack, *The Commissioners' Group on External Action – Key political facilitator*, CEPS Special Report, no. 125, Centre for European Policy Studies, December 2015.

<sup>17</sup> In the ENI committee (comitology) qualified majority voting (QMV) applies.

<sup>18</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 17 April 2015, Parliamentary papers, House of Representatives 2014/15, 22 112, no. 1961, p. 6.

Ukraine, democratic structures were strengthened, but key reforms were often stopped or delayed by vested political and economic interests, making the outcome of these processes uncertain.<sup>19</sup>

Human rights and fundamental freedoms are under pressure virtually everywhere. Corruption is still widespread. Judicial reforms and police reforms remain urgent. Social inequality is a large problem as is the discrimination of lesbians, gays, bisexuals and trans-genders (LGBT) and violence against women and girls.<sup>20</sup>

There is a large variation within the ENP countries with regards to their ability and willingness to cooperate and/or integrate with the Union. This is reflected in the wide array of contractual relations that have hitherto been concluded between the EU and its partners.

Generally speaking relations between the EU and the EaP countries can have more depth. Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine have concluded a new generation of association agreements (AA's) and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTA's) with the EU in 2014; these belong to the most ambitious contractual relations between the EU and the neighbouring countries that have hitherto been concluded. With the South relations focus more on concluding mobility partnerships and various trade provisions.

Furthermore the intensity of the relations between the EU and the ENP countries, which is dependent on politics, opportunities and 'events', varies over time. E.g., after years of standstill negotiations with Belarus about visa facilitations and a readmission agreement were reassumed in 2014.

## 2.7 Challenges for the ENP

Since its establishment, the ENP has been criticised for conceptual flaws and implementation issues. In this section, IOB presents a selection of issues that are derived from a quick scan of literature and interviews with experts. The reporting of these issues does not necessarily imply that IOB subscribes to them. Rather, IOB considers them issues of interest that will be subject of study. Some of the issues are reflected in 2015 review of the ENP, which aimed to tackle a number of shortcomings (see the next section). The issues below must therefore be considered to apply to the pre-2016 ENP.

### Political strategy

Since the procedures of the ENP are clearly inspired by the EU's enlargement policy, with a focus on action plans, systematic monitoring and institution-led interaction with the partner countries, this has resulted in a rather technocratic, Eurocentric approach. The ENP has been criticised for lacking a well-thought through – political – strategic dimension and for neglecting the role and strength of other important actors in the region. The challenge of forming a strategic policy is aggravated by the fact that the EU member states have diverging interests vis-à-vis the ENP countries and different outlooks on the ENP's end goal.

### Applying conditionality

The application of conditionality in its relationships with partner countries has been criticised for being selective, inconsistent, mechanistic and ineffective. Although the incentive-based approach has certainly stimulated some reform in countries that seek closer cooperation with the Union, sometimes the EU's

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<sup>19</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 15 April 2013, House of Representatives 2012/13, 22 112, no. 1616, p. 4.

<sup>20</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 6 May 2014, House of Representatives 2013/14, 22 112, no. 1855, p. 4.

offers have received little response. This is especially the case for those countries that do not aspire closer cooperation with the Union.

Member states themselves tend to ignore ENP political conditionality in their bilateral dealings with the countries concerned and are influenced rather by traditional links as well as commercial and energy interests. Under these circumstances, EU institutions lack credibility when seeking to impose political conditionality. In addition, the EU has difficulty in being tough on monitoring issues with regard to implementation.

### Leverage

Various observers have noted that the EU lacks leverage in many partner countries, especially in those that do not aspire to engage in closer cooperation with the EU. It seems that the initial view of the EU as a centre of gravity, as it was in the framework of the enlargement policy, is no longer realistic. There is a vast divergence in the neighbouring countries' attitudes towards the EU, which was insufficiently reflected in the EU's offers and demands vis-à-vis the ENP partners. The EU's economic crisis and the EU's preoccupation with its own future has reduced its appeal as a model to many ENP countries. The transformative power that was demonstrated by the EU in the enlargement policy, is a much bigger challenge in the ENP.

In its give and take approach, the ENP seems to be asking for too much in terms of adjustments and reforms while offering only modest rewards. The extra's that the Union offers in terms of economic integration and mobility fall short of many ENP countries' initial expectations. In addition, the amount of funding is relatively small compared to the funds available to accession states. As far as the Southern partners are concerned, the EU funds pale in comparison with those mobilized by the Gulf States, who do not attach such stringent conditions.

While the pain of the reforms are felt immediately by the populations, the (potential) benefits mainly lie in the future and are thus uncertain. Even though the EU invests a lot of money in the countries, it is not very popular amongst the populations in the ENP countries.

### Security dimension

The EU has dealt with security issues in the neighbouring countries outside the scope of the EMP framework. The Union tries to support security and stability in the partner countries by employing a wide range of instruments, such as political dialogues and financial support in order to reinforce the rule of law and stimulate judicial reforms and CFSP missions (e.g. in Georgia, the Palestinian Territories, Moldova, Ukraine and Libya). Still, the EU has limited capacity for diplomacy and crisis management and member states are reluctant to allow the EU a stronger political role. This means that the EU has difficulty in addressing the security concerns of its Eastern partners, at least in a coherent and effective manner.

### Flexibility

The ENP was designed for long-term engagement in a stable environment. The ENP's instruments are ill-suited for the rapid change that characterizes much of the EU's neighbourhood today. Planning cycles for support instruments span several years. The procedures that regulate the EU's financial aid are too rigid to respond quickly to new developments.

## 2.8 The 2011 and 2015 reviews of the ENP

The ENP has been ‘reviewed’ (revised) in 2011 and in 2015.<sup>21</sup> The ENP review of 2011 was primarily designed as a response to the events of the Arab uprisings, and clearly demonstrated an optimistic view on the region’s future development. In order to promote economic development and foster democratic societies based on the rule of law, an integrated approach was chosen that would combine politics, trade, sectoral cooperation, development cooperation and CFSP instruments. Acknowledging the fact that the entire population needed to be involved in the process of societal change, civil society organizations were given a more central role in the ENP. Mobility became a central theme in the neighbourhood policy – also given the increasing influx of migrants. The EU would increase its financial aid and stimulate sector-specific cooperation to tackle root-causes of migration.

The principle of conditionality (‘more for more’) became a central element of the ENP, meaning that countries that effectively implemented reforms were offered deeper political association and economic integration with the Union. Conversely, in cases where reforms stagnated or lacked altogether, this would also reflect on the support for the country in question. The incentive-based approach was also incorporated in EN(P)I, with the introduction of incentive-based financial instruments<sup>22</sup> and a bandwidth in country budgets in order to reward countries effectively implementing reforms.

The ENP review of November 2015 took place following a request of the European Council in 2014 and was based on a public consultation procedure between March and June 2015. The review was spurred by the events in Ukraine in early 2014 and the very mixed results of the ENP as a whole. Instead of the optimism that inspired the review of 2011, there was now a more sober assessment of the possibilities of the ENP. According to the Joint Communication by the Commission and the HR/VP of 18 November 2015, the main purpose of the review was to propose how the EU and its neighbours could build more effective partnerships.<sup>23</sup> Its main features are as follows:

Differentiation and greater mutual ownership were to be the hallmarks of the new ENP. This means that the EU will recognize the fact that different partner countries aspire different relationships with the Union, so a clear step away from the previous ‘one-size-fits-all approach’. The expectation is that different patterns of relations will emerge, allowing a greater sense of ownership by both sides. Some key point of the ‘new ENP’:

- The new ENP takes stabilisation as a main political priority for the next 3-5 years. It 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).
- Ownership, both by partner countries and EU member states needs to be stepped up.
- The cooperation should be given a tighter, more relevant focus. It will be focused on fewer priorities.
- Greater flexibility must be sought to enable the EU and its partners to respond to ever changing needs and circumstances, e.g. in the implementation of the financial and technical assistance programmes.

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<sup>21</sup> Instead of review of the ENP one could speak of ‘revision’ as well.

<sup>22</sup> The Eastern Partnership and Cooperation (EaPIC) for the East and Support to Partnership, Reform and Inclusive Growth (SPRING) for the South.

<sup>23</sup> 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 the Regions, Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy*, Brussels, JOIN(2015) 50 final, 18 November 2015, p. 2.

- The ENP will seek more effective ways to promote reforms in mutually agreed formats.
- The new ENP will seek to involve other regional actors, beyond the neighbourhood, where appropriate, in addressing regional challenges.
- The ENP will do more to support civil society.

Interestingly, whereas the 2011 review reinforced the principle of conditionality, the 2015 seems to take a more nuanced, sober approach. In cases where there is no political will to reform, the EU will explore more effective ways to make its case for fundamental reforms with partners, including through engagement with civil, economic and social actors.

While the fundamental goals and instruments remain the same, the 2015 review signals a clear step away from a number of approaches used in the ENP for many years. Almost one year after the adoption of the review by the European Council, its implementation is still underway. The EU is developing new ways of framing the relationships with many ENP countries, which requires political prioritization on both sides and increased consultation between Commission, EEAS and member states. Only after this process, the real extent and impact of the review will become clear.



### 3 Dutch policy with regard to the European Neighbourhood Policy

The Dutch government has always regarded the ENP as an important instrument to promote political and economic reforms in the neighbouring countries. According to the government, these reforms are vital in creating stability and prosperity on the EU's external borders – which is of the utmost importance for both the EU and the Netherlands<sup>24</sup> as political instability and economic stagnation in the region are likely to have effects on the EU and the Netherlands.<sup>25</sup>

#### 3.1 Dutch policy positions

The government attaches importance to establishing strong local institutions, respect for the judiciary, and strong anti-corruption policy in the ENP countries. Besides, it calls for special attention for free media, internet freedom, protection of religious and national minorities, gender issues and LGBT-rights. The involvement of civil society and the participation of women are valued as well.<sup>26</sup>

##### Conditionality

The Netherlands has always encouraged and welcomed the principles of reciprocity, conditionality and the incentive-based approach in the ENP. The Dutch government considered conditionality a core principle in the pre-accession trajectory. Later, this emphasis on conditionality found its way into the ENP. For the Netherlands, the 'more for more' approach was to be applied to the regular assistance from the ENI and the whole package offered by the EU, including market access and mobility.

According to the government 'more for more' also implied 'less for less': in cases of infringement on human rights and repression, support could be cut and – theoretically – sanctions could be a possible course of action. If countries risked going in the wrong direction, but not to an extent that sanctions would be justified, the EU should be able to give a signal, for example by cutting aid or freezing trade negotiations.<sup>27</sup>

Based on the mixed experience in applying the principle, e.g. in Egypt, the government gradually changed its approach to conditionality from 2013 onwards. Conditionality is currently considered most effective when deployed in a pragmatic fashion and on a case-by-case basis. For example, a lack of reforms in the area of human rights could be due to the regime, in which case a shifting of funding to civil society organisations could be an option. But this ought not be an automatic reaction, as a lack of progress could also be related to a lack of institutional capacity, in which case support would be warranted.<sup>28</sup> Whilst retaining the 'more for more' approach as an important principle of the ENP, conditionality was to be implemented with care and with restraint.<sup>29</sup>

##### Trade

The Netherlands, as a trading-nation is an advocate of lowering trade barriers and of strengthening trade relations with the neighbourhood countries. The government considers that trade agreements/DCFTA's in combination with economic reforms give political transition in the partner

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<sup>24</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 6 May 2014, House of Representatives 2013/14, 22 112, no. 1855, pp. 6-7.

<sup>25</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 15 April 2013, House of Representatives 2012/13, 22 112, no. 1616, p. 7.

<sup>26</sup> Letter by the State secretary for Foreign Affairs of 8 June 2012, House of Representatives, 21 112, no. 1426, pp. 6-7.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> Answers to written questions, House of Representatives 2014/15, 32 623, no. 149, 6 May 2015, p. 13.

<sup>29</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 15 April 2013, House of Representatives 2012/13, 22 112, no. 1616, p. 5.



countries a durable political basis in an open economy with an equitable division of prosperity.<sup>30</sup> In the southern neighbourhood countries a lack of economic perspective is especially important as it could foster unrest and radicalization among a fast growing population.<sup>31</sup>

### Mobility

The Netherlands appreciates the value of mobility partnerships with the ENP countries, both out of the mutual interest in controlling migration and ‘people to people’ contacts<sup>32</sup>, but emphasises the importance of a tailored approach and conditionality. In the case of the Eastern partners, the government supported – gradually – working towards visa liberalisation, whereas for the Southern partners visa facilitation is the maximum. The government advocated a country specific approach in this respect. It was willing to look into the possibilities of visa facilitation for certain target groups such as entrepreneurs, students, journalists, and civil society organisations in countries such as Tunisia. Lebanon and Jordan had different needs due to the refugee-crisis. The Netherlands insists on keeping a link between readmission agreements and visa facilitation. It considers the willingness of the partner countries to cooperate on the issue a precondition to reaching visa facilitation agreements.<sup>33</sup>

### Financing

The government regards the ENI as a priority instrument under heading 4 of the EU budget. Beforehand, the Dutch position regarding the new ENI programme was that programming should not pre-empt the review of the MFF 2014-2020. Afterwards, the Netherlands appreciated the rise of the budget with 7% for the 2014-2020 period in the light of the strategic relevance of the ENP-countries to the EU. The government maintained that the seven percent budgetary increase for the Neighbourhood instrument (in comparison to the 3% for the External Policy as a whole) reflected the desired outcome.<sup>34</sup>

In the allocation of the EN(P)I funds, the government argued that allocation ought to be based on the regular budgetary procedures and ought to remain within the existing limits of the EN(P)I’s multi-annual financial framework. The Netherlands also emphasises conditionality and requirements on good governance, human rights, democratization as distribution-criteria for the EN(P)I funds and calls for restraint in the use of budget support.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, it encourages possible synergies and cooperation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Bank (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and other international financial institutions, and therefore supported increasing the credit lending capacity of both the EIB and the EBRD.

### Security Policy

Against a background of increasing tensions in the partner countries, the Dutch government sees security in the neighbourhood region as a strategic interest of the EU and its member states, and promoted the central role of the security dimension in the ENP review (next to economic development and migration and mobility).<sup>36</sup> In order to become a more effective partner in promoting security, the EU

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<sup>30</sup> Answers to written questions, House of Representatives 2014/15, 32 623, no. 149, 6 May 2015, p. 8.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>32</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 17 April 2015, House of Representatives 2014/15, 22 112, no. 1961, p. 4.

<sup>33</sup> Letter from the State secretary for Foreign Affairs of 17 April 2012, House of Representatives 2011-2012, 21 501-20, no. 628, p. 7.

<sup>34</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 6 May 2014, House of Representatives 2013/14, 22 112, no. 1855, p. 2.

<sup>35</sup> Letter from the State secretary for Foreign Affairs of 17 April 2012, House of Representatives 2011-2012, 21 501-20, no. 628, p. 9.

<sup>36</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 6 May 2014, House of Representatives 2013/14, 22 112, no. 1855, pp. 4-5.

has to differentiate between partners, operate in a more flexible manner and prevent a too technocratic approach.<sup>37</sup>

The Netherlands advocates a comprehensive policy development and implementation, in which all EU instruments are considered and implemented based on an overarching policy strategy. This concerns the neighbourhood policy, but also the CFSP. Security is considered to be a part of this. However, the application of sanctions, EU special envoys, and civilian and military missions are evidently broader applicable than just the neighbouring countries and are therefore not to be a part of the ENP.<sup>38</sup>

### Energy security

Energy policy and energy security have been of growing importance in Dutch foreign policy. Energy security, the necessity of reinforcing economic and political stability worldwide and the interests of Dutch business all ask for an ambitious energy diplomatic approach.<sup>39</sup> The government therefore, considers this a priority that deserves a central place in the European external policy.<sup>40</sup> As an illustration, the government has made 'a forward-looking climate- and energy policy' one of the four policy priorities for its EU presidency in the first half of 2016.<sup>41</sup>

The EU and the EaP countries are vulnerable to political pressure from Russia due to their dependency on Russian gas. The Netherlands has a special position in this matter due to its strong trade relations with the Russian Federation in the area of oil and natural gas. The government wants the Netherlands to become the main trade and transit country for gas, the 'gas hub' of Northwest Europe. In order to achieve this, it has a strong mutual investment relation with the Russian Federation making the energy sector vulnerable to conflict with the Russian Federation. This is an illustration of the possible tension between Dutch energy-interests on the one hand and the relation between energy and political stability on the other.

As a result of recent tensions with Russia, the EU, and the Netherlands have sought to decrease their dependency on Russian energy by intensifying their relations with other energy suppliers such as the countries connected to the so-called Southern Gas corridor, Algeria and Eastern Africa. The Netherlands also cooperated bilaterally with these countries in the field of energy.<sup>42</sup>

### Membership perspective

The government acknowledges that based on article 49 of the Treaty on European Union, European states can apply for EU membership. However, it is against offering the Eastern partners a concrete membership perspective;<sup>43</sup> EU accession and the Eastern Partnership ought to be regarded as two separate tracks.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Non-paper by The Netherlands, Slovakia, Malta, *The European Neighbourhood Policy and CFSP/CSDP*, 23 June 2015.

<sup>38</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 17 April 2015, House of Representatives 2014/15, 22 112, no. 1961, p. 11.

<sup>39</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives 2015/16, 34 300 no. 1, 15 September 2015, p. 22.

<sup>40</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 15 February 2013, House of Representatives 2012/13, 33 551, no. 1, pp. 27-28.

<sup>41</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 16 November 2015, House of Representatives 2015/16, 34 166; 34 139, no. 22, pp. 3-4.

<sup>42</sup> Minister of Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, 2015/16, 34 300 no. 1, 15 September 2015, p. 22.

<sup>43</sup> The article states that: 'Any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union'.

<sup>44</sup> Letter from the Minister of Foreign Affairs of 15 August 2011, House of Representatives 21 501-20, no. 552, p. 3.

### 3.2 The Dutch position in the European arena of interests

With its insistence on a strict approach aimed at promoting reforms, the Dutch position is typical for a group of North-western EU member states. With the risk of over-generalising, the North-western member states are likely to be in favour of an incentive based methodology, especially with regards to the development of deep democracy (rule of law, free elections, combating corruption) and free trade. With the exception of Sweden, they are generally not in favour of providing a clear perspective on EU membership.<sup>45</sup>

The Southern member states can be said to focus more on sectoral cooperation with the partner countries and in general put more emphasis on building relationships with the partner countries than on maintaining strict conditionality-based support. As can be expected based on their geographic location, these countries prioritize the relationship with the southern partner countries.

The Eastern member states prioritise relations with the Eastern partners. They generally favour an incentives-based approach – in which they stress that more needs to be done for Eastern partners in order to support their rapprochement to the EU. They view the ENP as a long term commitment in countries with which they share a past. They regard the geopolitical aspects of the ENP – i.e. the security-situation vis-à-vis Russia – as especially important. In general they are more inclined to providing a membership perspective to the EaP countries.

### 3.3 Dutch policy actors

Through intra-European diplomacy at both multilateral (EU) and bilateral level, the Netherlands is involved in shaping the ENP. The main actors are the following:

#### Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- The External Policy Division of the European Integration Department (DIE/EX) is responsible for coordinating the Dutch position on the ENP at EU level. A staff member of DIE/EX represents the Netherlands in the ENI committee.
- The Political Affairs Section (BPZ) is responsible for the overall coordination of foreign policy in general and Dutch input in the CFSP in particular. Over the years, it started playing a larger role as the ENP more and more took the character of foreign policy.
- The Europe Department (DEU) is responsible for coordinating the bilateral policy with the EaP countries and the EU member states, including the MATRA programme, and instructing the embassies in the region. DEU is involved in shaping the Dutch positions on EaP countries in Brussels.
- A Special Representative for EU-Russia relations and the Eastern Partnership (SVOP) was appointed, in order to have a single point of contact within the Dutch government representing the EaP region and to give impetus to the Dutch policy. The SVOP pays several working visits to the partner countries and has consultations at political, governmental, civil society (NGO's) and business level.
- The North-Africa and Middle East Department (DAM), is responsible for coordinating Dutch bilateral relations with the Southern ENP countries and is involved in shaping the Dutch positions in Brussels on the southern neighbours.
- The International Trade Policy and Economic Governance Department (IMH), under the directorate-general for Foreign Economic Relations (DGBEB), is responsible for shaping the trade-related

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<sup>45</sup> Sweden would be the exception here, as it has advocated a concrete membership perspective for the eastern partners.

elements within the ENP, such as trade agreements (DCFTA's), tariffs, customs, and 'rules of origin' matters.

- Within the Ministry, the Inclusive Green Growth Department (IGG) is involved in the energy portfolio within the ENP. The IGG resides under the Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS).

#### **Permanent Representation and embassies**

- The staff of the Permanent Representation of the Netherlands to the European Union represents the Netherlands in the Working Party on Eastern Europe and Central Asia (COEST) and the Mashreq/Maghreb Working Party (MaMa), the Political and Security Committee (PSC) and Committee of Permanent Representatives.
- The Dutch embassies in the ENP countries – or those accredited for those countries – are responsible for: reporting local developments to the Ministry, executing Dutch bilateral policy and representing the Netherlands in the respective local multilateral fora with regards to the ENP – e.g. the EU Heads of Mission (HoMs) meetings.
- The Dutch embassies in the EU member states report on developments with regards to the ENP in those countries and are instrumental in reinforcing the bilateral relations with other member States with a view to influencing EU policy.

#### **Other ministries**

Apart from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, virtually every other ministry is at least to some extent involved in policy areas connected to the ENP. Most noteworthy in this respect are:

- The Ministry of General Affairs (AZ) prepares – together with BZ – the input of the Prime Minister for the European Council, for the bi-annual EaP Heads of State and Government meetings, and for ad hoc meetings with government leaders etc.
- The Ministry of Security and Justice (VenJ) is involved in the framing of mobility partnerships and the EU's migration policy in general.
- The Ministry of Economic Affairs is involved in shaping the EU's energy and trade policy. The Netherlands Enterprise Agency (RVO) – part of the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs – coordinates the Dutch input for the EU's Horizon 2020 project.
- The Ministry of Finance is involved in the MFF negotiations, which is relevant for the allocation of funds to the Neighbourhood instruments. It is also responsible for specific macro-financial support instruments.
- The Ministry of Education Culture and Science (OCW) is involved in the spending of the Erasmus Mundus and NUFFIC funds.

## 4 Research framework

### 4.1 Aim of the study

This policy evaluation aims to provide insight into how the Netherlands has tried to promote the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the ENP. Firstly, in order to give account of the Dutch contribution to the foreign policy of the EU, secondly in order to draw lessons for the future Dutch contribution to a more effective, efficient and coherent ENP. By focusing on issues such as policy coherence and institutional aspects of the ENP's conduct, some findings may be relevant for the conduct of EU foreign policy at large.

### 4.2 Research questions

The policy evaluation will provide answers to the set of questions specified in the *Order on periodic evaluation* (see box 1).

#### **Box 4.1** Questions specified in the *Order on periodic evaluation 2014*

- 1) Which policy article(s) (or components thereof) is or are covered in the policy evaluation?
- 2) If applicable, when will the other components be evaluated?
- 3) What was the reason for the policy? Is this reason still relevant?
- 4) What is the responsibility of the Dutch government?
- 5) What is the nature and coherence of the instruments used?
- 6) What expenditure is involved, including costs in other areas or for other parties?
- 7) What is the justification of spending? How to relate these to the components volume / use and prices / rates?
- 8) Which evaluations have been performed (mention the sources), in which way has it been evaluated and for what reasons?
- 9) Which policies have not (yet) been evaluated? Including explanations about the possibility and impossibility to evaluate the effectiveness and efficiency of the policy in the future.
- 10) To what extent does the available evidence allow statements about the effectiveness and efficiency of the policy?
- 11) Have the goals of the policy been achieved?
- 12) How effective has the policy been? Are there positive and / or negative side effects?
- 13) How efficient has the policy been?
- 14) What measures could be taken to further increase the efficiency and effectiveness?
- 15) In the event that there are significantly fewer resources available (approximately 20% of the resources) on the policy article(s), what policy options are available?

Questions 1-10 are descriptive in nature. They will be answered based on existing research material, both at the level of the EU and that of the Netherlands. Questions 11-14 in fact require additional research, which will be undertaken by IOB. The remainder of this chapter is devoted to this research. The answer to question 15 will be prepared by the policy departments of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs responsible for the framing and implementation of the Dutch policy with regard to the ENP, taking into account the findings of this study.

To guide the actual research that is to be undertaken, IOB has formulated the following research questions:

- A) To what extent can the ENP be considered effective, efficient and coherent?
- B) Which factors explain the level of effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the ENP?
- C) How has the Netherlands contributed to the framing and implementation of the ENP?
- D) To what extent can the Dutch contribution be considered beneficial for the effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the ENP?
- E) How could the Netherlands contribute to a more effective, efficient and coherent ENP?

### 4.3 Approach

The research takes a two-step approach: 1) an analysis of the ENP at EU level and 2) an analysis of the Dutch policy level. In order to make a judgement on the Dutch contribution in the past years and to draw lessons for the future Dutch contribution, we need to analyse the strengths and weaknesses of the ENP first (research questions A and B). In order to answer question D, we need to confront the answer to question C with the answers to questions A and B. The answer to question E will follow from the analysis at EU level.

#### 1) Effectiveness, efficiency and coherence at EU level

##### Effectiveness

Effectiveness relates to the extent to which the direct results of interventions (output) contribute to the sustainable achievement of policy objectives (outcome). An intervention is considered effective if its outputs made a demonstrable contribution to the achievement of its objectives. The effects of an intervention are beyond the direct control of the implementer. Interventions generate outputs which are assumed to generate the desired effects. Evaluating effectiveness aims to establish this causality.<sup>46</sup> In addition to establishing the causality between outputs and the desired effects, one can also analyse the occurrence of unintended effects.

It is not realistic to expect that the effectiveness of the ENP as such can be established, because of the abstract level of its objectives, the multiplicity and dynamic nature of the policy interventions and the complexity of the causal mechanisms at play. Table 1 (see next page) presents the various results levels of the ENP in order to support the following explanation of the limited way in which this study will deal with effectiveness (see below). NB. The table is not meant to provide a framework for the measurement of effectiveness.

This study will (by means of country studies, see 4.4 Methodology) try to identify occasions when certain developments (outcomes) in the ENP countries can be attributed to concrete policy interventions (outputs) by the EU. This could, for instance, concern the adoption of legislation in country x at the request of the EU as part of the incentives-based approach. Even then, the ambition can be no more than to arrive at plausible explanations rather than of 'proving' effectiveness. The relationship between outputs and the impact level (stability, security and prosperity) (*sphere of concern*) is even harder to determine. Although the study will gather and present current explanations, these explanations are more speculative in nature.

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<sup>46</sup> IOB, *Evaluation policy and guidelines for evaluation*, The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 2009, p. 18.

**Table 1** *Results levels ENP*

Goals/means	Indicators	Sources
<b>Impact level</b> (effects)		
Sphere of 'concern'		
Stability Security Prosperity	Absence of violent conflict Absence of negative spill-overs Economic growth, employment, human development index score	International reports/literature on latent/manifest conflict Reports on illegal migration Economic statistics (UN, WB, OECD)
<b>Outcome level</b> (intermediate effects)		
Sphere of 'influence'		
Respect for democracy Respect for fundamental human rights Application of Rule of Law Economic integration/cooperation with the EU Personal mobility Access to knowledge networks Well-functioning civil society	Free and fair elections and civil liberties Legislation and application in accordance with international human rights standards Trade and investment relations Cross-border workers, exchange students, tourist levels Number, character and roles of CSO's	Democracy scores (Transparency International, Bertelsmann etc.) Human rights scores (HRW, Amnesty, Transparency International) Economic statistics (UN, WB, OECD) Statistical reports on human mobility Civil society monitoring reports
<b>Output level<sup>47</sup></b> (results)		
Sphere of 'control'		
Budget support and technical assistance provided Political dialogue Application of conditionality Mobility partnerships Free trade agreements CFSP missions	Character and size of assistance Issues discussed at high-level meetings Reforms in exchange for EU benefits (Progressive steps in the) conclusion of mobility partnerships (Progressive steps in the) conclusion of free trade agreements Number of civil/military agents and mandate	DEVCO/Europe Aid reports, evaluations, Court of Auditor Reports; Political declarations Meeting reports Embassy reporting (cables) ENP Progress Reports interviews
<b>Input level</b>		
Policy Human resources Money/assistance instruments	Policy choices with regard to ENP countries No. of staff employed at EU institutions and delegations Budget available for EU assistance	Policy documents Working Party meeting reports

<sup>47</sup> Some 'outputs' may be considered as inputs when viewed from the perspective of the policy process that takes place between the EU and the ENP countries. In this analysis, however, the instruments applied by the EU are perceived as a product of an EU (internal) policy process, and thus as outputs.



More than demonstrating the (in)effectiveness of the ENP, this study is focusing on identifying the factors that explain the EU's effectiveness in the neighbourhood. A key point of interest in this regard is the way in which the EU succeeds in building and using its leverage in its relationships with the neighbouring countries in order to promote favourable developments, by means of an 'incentives based approach'. Special attention will be devoted to the EU's ability to build effective partnerships by means of political dialogue, the conclusion of mobility partnerships and free trade agreements, and the application of conditionality. The effectiveness of the EU's financial and technical assistance will be taken into account, solely based on the insights provided by existing evaluation and audit reports (see annex 2).

### Efficiency

Efficiency measures how economically resources (inputs) – and the way they are applied – are converted into direct results. The concept therefore illustrates the relationship between input and output and refers to a level of results that the implementer can check.<sup>48</sup> According to the *Order on periodic evaluation (RPE)* efficiency concerns the relationship between the policy effects and the policy costs. Efficiency (or cost-effectiveness) thus concerns both the relation between input and output and between input and outcome. Since it will be too difficult to relate effects at outcome level to the inputs of ENP, the analysis will focus on the input-output relation. More concretely, the study will be limited to the cost-effectiveness of the EU's financial and technical assistance, by making use of existing evaluations and audits.

### Coherence

For the purposes of this study, coherence will be defined as: systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions, creating synergies towards achieving the agreed objectives. As such, coherence is one step up from consistency, the latter being the absence of contradiction.

Coherence is understood as a principle guiding the foreign policies of the EU as well as other international actors. It is generally considered a necessary requirement in order to achieve effectiveness in foreign policy outcomes. Also, being perceived as an incoherent actor may harm the legitimacy of the EU as a foreign policy actor and decrease the willingness of member states to achieve foreign policy goals by means of EU structures.

The policy evaluation will look into the following four types of coherence with regard to the ENP:

- a) the extent to which the EU's various policy areas and instruments (e.g. trade, assistance, mobility, energy, CFSP) have been implemented in a mutually reinforcing way (*horizontal coherence*);
- b) the extent to which the policies of the member states (including the Netherlands) vis-à-vis the neighbourhood countries was aligned with agreed EU policy (*vertical coherence*);
- c) the extent to which working relations between the EU institutions/actors allowed an effective and efficient policy conduct (*institutional coherence*);
- d) the extent to which EU policies were mutually reinforcing with policies of other international organisations (*multilateral coherence*).

Coherence requires some form of coordination between the relevant actors (between EEAS and Commission DG's, EU institutions and EU member states, EU and other international actors etc.). The study will therefore take into account the various attempts to coordinate policies among relevant actors and the success of these attempts.

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<sup>48</sup> IOB, *Evaluation policy and guidelines for evaluation*, The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, October 2009, p. 17.



## 2) The Dutch contribution to the ENP

Based on a description and analysis of the way in which the Dutch government has tried to contribute to the framing and implementation of the ENP, IOB will analyse the way in which the Netherlands has contributed to its effectiveness, efficiency and coherence. In doing so, the study will analyse the extent to which the ENP reflects the Dutch positions and efforts on a number of key issues. The following issues have been identified (the list may be extended during the study):

- framing the political (strategic) relationships between the EU and ENP countries;
- framing and implementing the principle of conditionality;
- establishing the EN(P)I budget;
- programming of EU assistance;
- negotiating free trade agreements (allowing market access);
- negotiating visa facilitation and liberalisation agreements and mobility partnerships;
- granting the membership perspective to some EaP countries or not;
- balancing interests (such as energy security, migration) with values (promotion of democracy, rule of law and human rights);
- integrating security concerns in the relationships with the ENP countries.

These issues are likely to play a role with regard to the ENP's effectiveness, efficiency and coherence. During the study, when the explanatory factors of the EU's effectiveness, efficiency and coherence are identified, IOB will analyse the Dutch role with regard to these factors, by means of interviews and desk study of policy documents.

Although the study will assess to what extent the ENP reflects the Dutch positions and efforts, it does not aim to establish whether the elements of the ENP can be attributed to the negotiation efforts by the Netherlands (in other words, the net negotiation effectiveness of the Netherlands). This type of measurement of influence would require a different type of research and is beyond the scope of this study. The Dutch negotiation effectiveness was the subject of an earlier IOB policy evaluation.<sup>49</sup>

### 4.4 Methodology

The policy evaluation will be conducted by means of a combination of a literature review, desk study (analysis of policy documents), interviews in The Hague, Brussels and other EU capitals, and four country case studies, including country visits. Information already gathered by IOB during the evaluation of the Dutch contribution to transition in the Arab region<sup>50</sup> and the evaluation of the MATRA programme in the EaP countries<sup>51</sup> (both published in 2015) will be of use as well.

It is important to note that the research is (partly) explorative in nature, since many factors that are important for the EU's effectiveness, efficiency and coherence, are unknown in advance, at least in their detail. Methodologically, the study takes an iterative research design, by which the various research

<sup>49</sup> IOB (2014) *A strategic approach? Dutch coalition-building and the 'multi-bi approach' in the context of EU decision-making (2008-2012) – Summary, main findings and issues for consideration*, IOB Evaluation 395, July 2014 (full report in Dutch only).

<sup>50</sup> IOB (2015a) *The only constant is Change. Evaluation of the Dutch support to the democratic transition in the Arab countries*, IOB Evaluation no. 400, April 2015.

<sup>51</sup> IOB (2015b) *Evaluation of the Matra programme in the Eastern Partnership countries 2008-2014*, IOB Evaluation no. 409, The Hague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, September 2015.

activities will constantly feed into each other. This means that first phase of the research will be guided by rather broad and open questions and that towards the end the research will focus more and more on the factors and events that were identified as relevant, following a funnel approach.

## 1) Analysis at EU level

### Literature review

A literature review will be performed to collect and present the current 'state of knowledge' with regard to the ENP's effectiveness and coherence. The literature review will not deal with the criterion of efficiency, since this criterion is applied only to the financial instruments and is (expected to be) scarcely covered by academic literature.

The literature will be conducted by an external research team and will answer the following questions:

- a) How are effectiveness and coherence of the ENP conceptualised in the literature?
- b) To what extent is the ENP being considered effective and coherent in the literature?
- c) Which factors are identified in the literature that explain the effectiveness and coherence of the ENP?

The literature review will draw on all available published (academic) and grey literature on the topic and use transparent procedures to find, assess and synthesize the results of relevant literature. The focus will be on literature with a strong empirical foundation as opposed to more opinionated publications.

The literature review will result in a report, that will be published on the IOB website. The findings of the literature review will be presented and discussed in a seminar, bringing together experts and stakeholders with regard to the ENP. This seminar may generate insights that will inspire the drafting of the policy evaluation.

### Desk study

IOB will conduct desk study (EU and Dutch policy documents) that serves the following purposes:

- To make a general reconstruction of the core elements of the ENP, in order to assess the extent to which this reflects the Dutch policy positions (sources: EU policy documents, Dutch diplomatic cables);
- To provide an overview of relevant developments in the ENP countries, including their relationships with the EU, in order to gain insight into their socio-political context and relations with the EU (sources: country reports by international NGOs, EU action plans and progress reports, literature review Arabic region);
- To verify/triangulate the insights gained from the literature review with regard to the ENP's effectiveness and coherence;
- To synthesise the findings on the effectiveness, efficiency (and possibly elements of coherence) of the EU's assistance programmes, which may be found in evaluation and audit reports.

### Interviews

Semi-structured interviews will be held with policy makers and experts in The Hague, Brussels and (by phone or video-call) other EU capitals. These interviews will serve a better understanding of the policy objectives, instruments and effects of the ENP, to gather views on the factors that explain effectiveness, efficiency and coherence of the ENP, and to gather views on the Dutch contribution to the ENP. Interviews will guide further desk study and will allow to verify the insights gained from the literature review. They are thus a vital element in the iterative research design.

The Dutch embassies in the ENP countries will be surveyed by means of a (short) questionnaire, in order to gather their experience with and views on various aspects the ENP. Four of them will be visited during the country visits.

### Country case studies

Four in-depth country studies will be undertaken by the IOB team to provide insights into the ways the EU shapes its relations with the neighbouring countries.

The country case studies aim to provide a deeper understanding of:

- the dynamics of the relationship between the EU and individual neighbouring countries, in particular in terms of leverage/the incentives-based approach;
- the progress made on a number of specific policy issues such as democratisation, human rights, mobility/migration, energy and the CFSP;
- the coherence of EU policy (including that of member states) in the implementation phase at country level;
- the implementation and results of the EU's assistance programmes; and
- the role played by Dutch actors in EU policy making and implementation at country level.

The country case studies will be conducted by means of a combination of desk study, interviews and country visits. During the country visits interviews will be held with staff of EU delegations, member State embassies (including of course the Dutch embassy), non-EU states' embassies, missions of international organisations, local academics/experts, NGO's, parliamentarians and government representatives.

### Country case selection

Given the diversity, complexity and volatility in country dynamics it does not make sense to select a 'representative sample' of four countries, nor typical (average) cases. To start with, Belarus, Libya, Syria are not considered eligible for selection, since they are not part of some important ENP arrangements. Israel and the Palestine territories are not considered eligible either, due to the specificity of their conflict and the related Middle East peace process.

A different means of selecting cases was used, in both the South and the East two countries have been selected: a regional 'front-runner' and a country with which relations have been more problematic, so that the country pairs reflect different dynamics and intensities of relations with the EU. At the same time, both countries need to cover most of the issues that are at play in the region. The following countries have been selected:

- Eastern neighbours Georgia and Azerbaijan; and
- Southern neighbours Egypt and Tunisia.

Georgia has signed an Association Agreement in 2014 and can be considered a front-runner among the EaP countries, whereas Azerbaijan is not interested in concluding an AA and it is much more difficult for the EU to apply an incentive-based approach towards the country. In the South, Tunisia can be considered a regional front-runner, with which the EU has a relatively effective relationship, whereas the EU has much more difficulty in building an effective relationship with Egypt. Other countries could have been selected as well. These four countries are considered interesting from the Dutch policy perspective.

The fact that these countries are selected for case studies does not mean that the study will ignore the other countries. They are included in the literature study, desk study and interviews.

## 2) Analysis of the Dutch policy level

The Dutch contribution will be analysed along the following lines:

- a) a reconstruction of the Dutch policy (positions, interests/motives, actors and procedures) with regard to the ENP;
- b) a description of how the Netherlands has tried to (co-)shape the ENP, by means of multilateral (EU) and bilateral diplomacy;
- c) an analysis of the extent to which the ENP corresponds with the Dutch preferences; and
- d) an assessment of the Dutch policy positions and efforts given the findings with regard the ENP's effectiveness, efficiency and coherence.

This analysis will be based on:

- desk study: a study of policy documents, internal memoranda, meeting reports, negotiation instructions, diplomatic cables etc.;
- interviews: with policy makers in The Hague, Brussels and other EU capitals; and
- country studies: the country studies will look specifically at the Dutch role in the bilateral relations between the EU and the selected ENP countries, including the cooperation with EU delegations and other EU member states' embassies. During the country visits, IOB will assess the role played by the relevant Dutch embassies in the Dutch policy process and in the co-implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy. In addition, perceptions by local stakeholders and experts on the Dutch role within the ENP will be gathered.

## 4.5 Scope and limitations

### Regional scope

The policy evaluation will cover both the Eastern and Southern dimensions of the ENP. It will take into account the regional cooperation forums of the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean.

### Research period

The policy evaluation will cover the period January 2011 – June 2016. The year 2011 is a logical starting point since the previous review of the ENP took place in early 2011. The latest review dates from 2015, the implementation of which is ongoing. The research period ends in 2016 so that the findings, when they are presented in 2017, are still current and relevant. At the same time, the policy evaluation needs to have a clear cut-off point. Financial data for 2016 will not be available until mid-2017 and existing evaluations and audits are likely to apply to periods partly preceding 2011.

### Objectivity of information

It is inevitable that this policy evaluation will for a good part be based on the perceptions of and personal judgements by stakeholders – i.e. policy makers, implementers, target groups, recipients/beneficiaries. In order to arrive at sound conclusions, this subjective information will be triangulated with objective sources and confronted with alternative perspectives as much as possible.

### Robustness of the findings

In the same vein, the robustness of the findings depends for a great deal on the availability of sound research, in the form of (academic) literature and evaluation and audit reports. Especially with regard the issue of effectiveness of the ENP, expectations have to be realistic. Due to the complex nature of the ENP, demonstrating the level of effectiveness is not possible. Instead, the focus will be on the relation between policy outputs and direct outcomes and even more so on identifying the factors explaining the effectiveness.

### Time and money

Given the breadth and complexity of the ENP on the one hand and the limits of time and money on the other, pragmatic choices with regards to the extensiveness of the research that can be devoted to each of the sub-questions will have to be made during the study. These choices will primarily be made on the basis of the importance that stakeholders attach to the relevant issues.

## 4.6 Planning and output

From a methodological perspective, there is a sequentially in the use of the research instruments: the country case studies and the assessment of the Dutch contribution should be guided by the literature review, and thus ideally follow at a later stage. In practice, the most important elements dealt with by the literature study are already known beforehand, so the conduct of the other two parts will be guided by these (provisional) insights. In addition, there will be close and permanent communication with the researchers performing the literature review, in order to bring additional elements into the analysis.

**Table 2** *Planning of the study*

	07 '16	08 '16	09 '16	10 '16	11 '16	12 '16	01 17	02 '17	03 '17	04 '17	05 '17	06 '17
Selection/contracting of researchers literature review												
Literature review												
Desk study support programmes												
Desk study country studies												
Field missions				GE	AZ	EG	TU					
Analysis of Dutch contribution												
Preparing draft report												
Draft report												
Finalisation of the report												
Describing +/- 20% policy options												
Adoption of final report												

The policy evaluation will result in a final report, to be sent to parliament. The report will be written in English. A summary, covering the answers to the questions of the *Order on periodic evaluation (RPE)* will be translated into Dutch.

The literature review will result in a paper, to be made public (possibly in the form of an IOB Study) and discussed in a seminar, prior to the finalisation of the policy evaluation.

## 4.7 Organisation of the study

The IOB team responsible for coordinating and conducting the policy evaluation consists of senior evaluator Bas Limonard and researcher Tim Scheerder.

The literature review will be contracted out to a team of external researchers.

### Quality assurance

A reference group will advise the director of IOB, Wendy Asbeek Brusse, on the quality of the draft Terms of Reference, draft intermediary reports and the draft final report. Members of the reference group are:

#### *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*

- Dirk Jan Kop (until August 2016) and Adriaan Palm (as from August 2016), the Minister's special envoy for EU-Russia relations and the Eastern Partnership (SVOP)
- Johanneke de Hoogh, Europe departement (DEU)
- Huub Alberse, External Policy Division of the European Integration Department (DIE/EX)
- Rob Anderson, Political Affairs Section (BPZ)
- Luc Schillings, Northern Africa and Middle East Department (DAM)
- Bert Vermaat, Financial and Economic Department (FEZ)

#### *Ministry of Finance*

- Ruud Druenen and Simone Zwijsen, Inspectorate of the Budget (IRF)

#### *Independent experts*

- Max Bader, university lecturer, specialised in Russia and Eurasia (post-Soviet space)
- Peter van Elsuwege, professor European Union Law, specialised in external relations and institutional law, Ghent University and the Asser Institute

The IOB internal peer reviewers are senior evaluators Paul de Nooijer and Frans van der Wel.

The Terms of Reference was approved by the (deputy) director general for Political Affairs (DGPZ) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The final report will be approved by the director of IOB.

## Annex 1 EN(P)I spending per country

### ENPI disbursements 2011-2013 in EUR million (rounded figures)

Country/Programme	2011	2012	2013	Total ENPI
<b>Part 1 EaP Region</b>				
Armenia	27.7	25.5	25.7	<b>78.9</b>
Azerbaijan	15.2	18.7	8.6	<b>42.5</b>
Belarus	1.1	9.3	15.7	<b>26.1</b>
Georgia	66.3	61.2	47.6	<b>175.1</b>
Moldova	79.3	53.1	65.0	<b>197.4</b>
Ukraine	22.2	9.0	6.7	<b>37.9</b>
Russia	103.7	79.9	152.8	<b>336.4</b>
Sub-total bilateral programmes	315.5	256.6	322.1	<b>894.2</b>
Regional and inter-regional programmes	80.7	123.8	116.6	<b>321.1</b>
<b>Total EaP region</b>	<b>396.2</b>	<b>380.4</b>	<b>438.7</b>	<b>1215.3</b>
<b>Part 2 Southern Region</b>				
Algeria	42.9	30.3	37.3	<b>110.5</b>
Egypt	39.1	93.2	28.2	<b>160.5</b>
Israel	4.5	3.5	3.6	<b>11.6</b>
Jordan	76.3	91.6	96.6	<b>264.5</b>
Lebanon	14.1	29.3	79.3	<b>122.7</b>
Libya	8.0	2.9	7.7	<b>18.7</b>
Morocco	151.5	110.1	84.1	<b>345.7</b>
Palestine	322.3	264.7	305.5	<b>892.5</b>
Syria	18.8	1.8	29.4	<b>50</b>
Tunisia	114.3	145.2	80.3	<b>339.8</b>
Sub-total Bilateral Programmes	791.8	772.6	752.0	<b>2316.4</b>
Regional and interregional Programmes	115.6	118.3	97.1	<b>331</b>
<b>Total Southern Region</b>	<b>907.3</b>	<b>890.9</b>	<b>849.1</b>	<b>2647.3</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL ENP + Russia</b>	<b>1303.2</b>	<b>1271.3</b>	<b>1287.8</b>	<b>3862.6</b>

### Indicative allocation ENI commitments first period 2014-2017 in EUR million (rounded figures)

Country	Indicative allocation 2014-2017 <sup>52</sup>
Algeria	121-148
Armenia	140-170
Azerbaijan	77-94
Belarus	71-89
Egypt	(for 2014-2016) 311-380
Georgia	335-410
Israel	2 <sup>53</sup>
Jordan	312-382
Lebanon	(for 2014-2016) 130-159
Libya	(for 2014-2015) 40 <sup>54</sup>
Moldova	335-410
Morocco	728-890
Palestine	(indicative, per year) 300
Tunisia	(2014-2020) 725-886

EU assistance to the ENP countries is funded mainly under ENI. Most countries also benefit from other regional and multi-country programmes – cross border cooperation and regional allocations – these not included in the above figures. The range given in the table is an indication of the minimum and maximum allocations in the 2014-2017 period – unless specified otherwise. These figures are indicative: final allocations depend on the countries needs and commitments to reforms.

Most countries can also benefit from additional financial assistance under an incentive-based mechanism that rewards process in building deep and sustainable democracy.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Figures are for the 2014-2017, unless indicated otherwise.

<sup>53</sup> Although it is part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), Israel, due to its advanced economy, receives limited funding from the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) for the implementation of institutional Twinning projects.

<sup>54</sup> Since mid-2014, the EU cooperation portfolio for Libya has been under constant revision to enable it to respond optimally to the needs emerging from a rapidly changing political and security situation. This figure is indicative: the final allocation will depend on the country's needs and the evolution of the political and security situation.

<sup>55</sup> Source: [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/overview/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/overview/index_en.htm)



## Annex 2 List of evaluation and audit reports

European Commission evaluations:

### Ongoing

- Evaluation of European Neighbourhood Instrument
- Evaluation of Joint programming

### 2016

- Strategic evaluation of EU support to the transport sector in Africa (2005 - 2013) (case: Morocco)
- Strategic evaluation of EU support to Research and Innovation for development in partner countries (2007-2013) (cases: Ukraine and Tunisia)

### 2015

- Strategic evaluation of the EU support to environment and climate change in third countries (2007-2013) (cases: Egypt and Ukraine)
- Review of evaluations of EU Private Sector Development Support to Third Countries (case: Morocco)
- Strategic evaluation of the EU cooperation with Georgia (2007-2013)
- Strategic evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Partner Countries (cases: Armenia and Morocco)
- Strategic evaluation of the EU Cooperation with the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (2007-2013)

### 2014

- Synthesis of Budget Support Evaluations (2010-2014) (Cases: Tunisia and Morocco)
- Joint strategic evaluation of budget support operations in Morocco (2005-2012)
- Study on the uptake of strategic evaluations in EU development cooperation - 2014
- Strategic evaluation of the EU cooperation with the occupied Palestinian Territory and support to the Palestinian people (2008-2013)
- Strategic evaluation of the EU cooperation with East and South ENPI regions (2004-2010)
- Strategic evaluation of the support to integrated border management and fight against organised crime in third countries (2002-2010) (cases: Belarus, Ukraine, EUBAM)

### 2012

- Strategic evaluation of the EU cooperation with the Council of Europe (2000-2010)
- Strategic evaluation of the visibility of the EU external action (2005-2010)
- Strategic evaluation of the EU support to justice and security system reforms in third countries (2001-2009) (case: Georgia)

European Court of Audit reports:

- Special report No 13/2016: EU assistance for strengthening the public administration in Moldova
- Special Report No 9/2016: EU external migration spending in Southern Mediterranean and Eastern Neighbourhood countries until 2014
- EU migration spending in neighbourhood countries

- Special Report No 4/2013 EU Cooperation with Egypt in the Field of Governance
- Special Report No 1/2011 “Has the devolution of the Commission's management of external assistance from its headquarters to its delegations led to improved aid delivery?”
- Special Report No 13/2010: “Is the new European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument successfully launched and achieving results in the Southern Caucasus (Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia)?”, published on 31 January 2011