

European Neighbourhood Policy and Its Significance in Establishing
Stability on the European Continent

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This article analyses the contribution of the European Union on the security and stability of its neighbourhood countries through a specific initiative named as the European Neighbourhood Policy. It attempts to find out whether the EU has been successful in its main initiative or whether this is a 'cover' for security of its 'own' interests.

Key words: Interdependence, security, stability, common values, common threats, dividing lines, security community

Introduction:

In an ever-interdependent world, regionalisation is an instrument of regional and global security and stability. It is argued that regionalisation can 'counteract the establishment of new dividing lines by creating a multi-layered, transboundary, co-operative network'; emphasising the concept of indivisibility of security. By dealing with non-military security issues in political, economic and environmental fields, as well as social and cultural topics, regional organisations build a sense of common interest and, to a certain extent, a shared identity. Thus they can easily create localised confidence-building measures in a region and speedily tackle soft security issues such as organised crime, terrorism, and illicit drug and arms trafficking. Their existence simply induces their members to develop non-coercive attitudes and 'reduces the tendency to resort to non-peaceful means in pursuit of national interests'. In short, they can enhance security simply by fostering dialogue, personal contacts and mutual understanding (1).

The European Union (EU) can be shown as the best example of a regional grouping designed to promote security and stability. Since its foundation, the strategic purpose of the union was to increase security and stability among its members by promoting economic and social relations beyond military and strategic interdependence. As time passed it evolved into a security community defined by shared values, empathy, trust, and dependable expectations of peace.¹

According to Anders Björner (1999), *EU enlargement* should be regarded as 'perhaps the most important security-producing process taking place in Europe today' (2). It is a fact

¹ The security community concept was originally advanced by Karl Deutch and others after World War II. Deutch and his colleagues explored the potential of a regional political community to perform security functions through the development of 'mutual sympathy and loyalties, of we feeling, trust and mutual consideration, of partial identification in terms of self-images and interests, of mutually successful predictions of behaviour'. It involved in short a matter of a perpetual dynamic process of mutual attention, communication, perception of needs, and responsiveness in the process of decision-making. (3)

that the EU performed security functions by expanding a prospering, democratic political and economic system and thus enlarging its security community through successive rounds of enlargement in 1972, 1981 and 1986 respectively. Prior enlargements had altered the geopolitical balance within the EU with no external implications, as the union had little independent weight in the regional distribution of power (though internally, ever since the accession of the UK, enlargement had served as a dynamic reconfiguration of the EU power structure). With the eastern enlargement of the EU completed in May 2004, this process is now also endowed with external implications.

Since the end of the Cold War, the EU's security concerns in enlargement emerged out of several premises. Specifically a demand-driven reorientation of its capacity to create security became necessary when the end of the Cold War changed the context of European relations. The end of ideological, military, and economic confrontation in Europe imposed a redefinition of the existing security infrastructure. Specifically, there was an expansion of a security agenda in which military security decreases and threats of international crime, economic destabilisation, migration and human rights issues, cross-border environmental pollution and nuclear safety acquire a security profile. Thus security provision by a defence alliance outside the EU became at odds with the diminishing levels of military threat. The deepening of integration and its growing membership base exerted considerable pressure toward the acceleration of the process in the political domain (3).

Thus the eastward enlargement was probably the principal mode institutionalising the process of expanding EU's characteristic of security community and producing security. With the end of the Cold War, the EU's security interest has evolved from implicit to direct formulation. While it had concentrated mainly on non-military issues as summarised above, the progressive institutionalisation of interdependencies had led the EU to follow a *nonconventional* mechanism for creation of security. This was aimed at the promotion of democracy and civil values; the EU inevitably acted as an anchor of stability and a standard of reference for the democratic reforms in the entire region of Eastern Europe. This mechanism specifically included:

- extension of European governance to Eastern Europe and beyond through the externalisation of policies,

- adding conditionality, or the formulation of explicit criteria for the economic and political performance of the EU's partners, whose fulfilment is a condition for their continued and closer relationship with the Union ending ultimately in full membership

So enlargement became a mechanism of reducing instability outside the core by reducing the latter's exposure to external threats and by projecting democratic values and political stability into its periphery. Thus the eastern enlargement developed into a significant process of creating security for the EU core by transferring its external eastern border further away.

However, this process is far from being without any problems. EU integration cannot bring about the ultimate unification and stabilisation of Europe, as its enlargement mechanism creates new divisions vis-à-vis non-members in the wider periphery with major socio-political and security implications; resulting in political and societal insecurity both within the core and the outlying periphery. (3) The hard experience of the past ten years has shown member governments how difficult it is to police its extended land and sea borders. With each new effort to stem illegal routes of entry, other weak points are discovered. Human and economic links extend across the EU's borders between the North African communities established in Western Europe and their homelands, as for the Russian minorities in the Baltic states and for the Poles, Belarussians, Ukrainians and Hungarians who overlap their borders redrawn several times within the last century. So the EU was confronted by a challenge: the necessity to maintain European order by securing the outlying periphery, to extend its zone of peace and prosperity further east and south and find incentives to offer these states excluded from the 2004 eastern enlargement.

Without an acceptable alternative to membership, the EU was likely to be faced with a lengthening queue of applications from governments resentful of their exclusion and envious of the privileges others have won. Thus, parallel to enlargement, the union developed a network of agreements with these countries with significant political and stabilisation effects. The creation of what is now commonly called 'the wider Europe' emerged as a major mechanism of security creation inseparable from the eastward enlargement and an illustration of the security-oriented character of the process. The whole strategy was named as the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and it was made sure that the ENP provided a framework for the development of a new relationship which would not, in the medium term include a perspective of membership or a role in the Union's institutions. It was promoted quite overtly as a generous integration scheme designed to stave off new accessions, e.g. Moldova and Ukraine in the near to medium term (3)

Given this background, in this paper the main aim will be to explore in detail whether the EU could act as a security provider to its immediate surroundings through the ENP. First, there will be an explanation of the main arguments behind the EU's initiative for establishing

the ENP. A section where there will be detailed analysis of whether this policy was useful in providing security to the European continent will follow afterwards. After the analytical section, the case of Ukraine will be explored in detail for the further proof of the significance of the ENP on providing security and stability followed by the conclusion chapter.

What exactly is the ENP?

With the notion of partnership envisaged through the ENP, the EU pursued the objective of achieving community not exclusively through membership to its institutions but extending the Union's values and standards making them into shared values, common ideas and common goals with a motto 'sharing everything with the Union but institutions' (4)²

This objective was first explained in the March 2003 publication of the Commission's Communication to the Council and the European Parliament, *Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with our eastern and southern neighbours* (5).

The Communication mainly considered how to strengthen the framework for the Union's relations with those neighbouring countries that do not currently have the *perspective of membership of the EU*. The communication proposed that the EU should aim to develop a *ring of friends*, with whom the EU enjoys close, peaceful and co-operate relations for the sake of consolidating security. It provided a number of proposals for defining a future partnership, such as progressive integration of the countries concerned into the EU's internal market and its regulatory structures, including those pertaining to sustainable development (health, consumer and environmental protection) and the four freedoms (free movement of goods, services, capital and persons).

After the main aims of the ENP were established by the EU, the Commission presented a Strategy Paper and Country Reports on May 12, 2004. The Strategy Paper is an important step in setting out the concrete terms how the Union can work more closely with its

² The importance of the neighbourhood for EU policy making specifically based on security concerns has been reiterated at the highest levels. In the Thessalonica European Council in June 2003, the foreign ministers approved a draft paper on European security strategy, prepared by Javier Solana and his secretariat named as *A Secure Europe in a Better World*. Adopted in December 2003 the European Security Strategy declared that, environmental hazards, trafficking in human beings and illicit goods, organised crimes and specifically the events unleashed by the terrorist attacks on September 11 introduced a greater urgency to call for a 'zone of security' around Europe. Emphasising the fact that the enlarged Union has now even greater exposure to a decidedly less predictable and less peaceful set of states on its external borders in Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean region, the Strategy states that 'building security, stability and good governance in our neighbourhood and extending the zone of security around Europe' is one of the three strategic objectives for the EU'. This statement places neighbourhood policy at the centre of EU foreign policy priorities rather than at the periphery of member state attention. (6) In addition, this strategy affirms the strong strategic interest of the union in the effective promotion of its core clause and outlines the international security position of the EU as a *global* actor and a frontrunner in the international system. (3)

neighbours and extend the benefits of enlargement. It offers a means for an enhanced and more focused policy approach of the EU towards its neighbourhood, bringing together the principal instruments at the disposal of the Union and its member states.

On the basis of the Strategy Paper, the Commission on December 9 2004 presented a first set of draft Action Plans with partner countries. These action plans are key political documents for the further development of relations between the EU and its neighbours. They are very much on the model of the conditional approach adopted towards the CEECs, but without the incentive of membership at the end of the process. In the action plans the EU was planning to set out the values and standards that the neighbours should adopt, with detailed objectives and ‘precise’ priorities for action, whose fulfilment will bring them closer to the European Union.

How successful is ENP for bringing security and stability: Challenges and Problems:

Can ENP be really characterised as a form of *new regionalism* designed by vital concerns? The idea of ‘vital concern’ is very different from the idea of ‘vital interest’ which has connotations of geo-political or hegemonic ownership and this is not what the EU intends. Vital concerns reflect a geo-politics of *reciprocity* and *dialogue*. In the view of the author, unfortunately despite the fact that the ENP is shaping up to be an ambitious cross-pillar and possibly well-funded foreign policy initiative, for many reasons it is difficult to say that it will provide its neighbours with clear benchmarks for reform and thus enhance security and stability in its surroundings.

One of the reasons is that the fact that EU membership is not an immediate or probable option for states that consider themselves very close to the EU becomes a serious problem for the success of the ENP. The incentive for reform created by the prospect of membership has proved to be strong for the eastern enlargement (enlargement has unarguably been the Union’s most successful foreign policy instrument), but in the case of ENP this is an important lacking concept and a significant deficiency for its aim of providing security for the whole European continent.

The second reason is that by projecting its own values and standards as ‘shared values’, the EU goes further away from stabilising and securitising its surroundings and creates a buffer-zone that shields *Core Europe* from threats of political and economic destabilisation. (7) Because these standards are determined by the EU this process inevitably creates a system of hierarchical relationships, unilateral asymmetrical measures, and top-down communication structures. (8) Thus when Robert Cooper (2002) refers to Europe’s

contemporary order as a post-modern *imperial* configuration in which the EU is the leading representative of a particular type of liberal imperialism, the imperialism of neighbours, he may not be wrong.

Other than these two problems related specifically with the ENP's role in providing security and stability, there are other challenges against the success of the ENP:

-EU is faced with the problem of building a neighbourhood with some degree of cohesiveness. This basically means how to connect the disparate countries and regions included in the ENP.

-A problem related to the above-mentioned one is the difficulties faced by the EU of influencing positively the serious roles afflicting several of those neighbours. This basically means for the EU how to deal with countries of concern and serious conflicts in and between the neighbours such as Belarus and Libya.

-The Action Plans of the ENP are also problematic. Observers have questioned rightly whether the *acquis communautaire* of the EU is an appropriate framework for countries struggling with basic economic reforms.

Below there will be a detailed analysis of how the lack of membership perspective in the ENP, probably its biggest deficiency, could endanger the reform process within Ukraine and thus the overall security within the EU.

The Case of Ukraine:

The reason why this paper chooses Ukraine as a case study is that its size, geopolitical standing and ambivalent external orientation make it an important element in evaluating the impact of EU initiatives in its immediate neighbourhood. Situated on the fault lines between two emerging geopolitical power blocs and constantly torn between a European and an East Slavic choice, Ukraine constitutes a critical test case for the viability and success of the EU'S new neighbourhood policy.

Why Ukraine, a country of some fifty million people located on the intersection of strategic transportation routes that connect Europe to Eurasia be relegated to the resented status of a perennial neighbour and why was not Ukraine encouraged applying for EU membership?

Is Ukraine not ready to join the EU?

There are several arguments supporting the fact that Ukraine's lack of success in moving closer to Europe is best explained by the *domestic* factors:

After the presidential elections in 1999 the president at that time, Leonid Kuchma, tried to don the image of a vigorous Westerniser. During this term, associate membership of the EU was officially proclaimed as the ‘main foreign policy priority’ of Ukraine in the middle term perspective. However, while lobbying Western governments and international organisations to define Ukraine as European and stressing the need for the EU to send a signal, in fact the Kuchma leadership experienced several problems:

-Economic reform was subverted by the state-sponsored rents that created an oligarchy dependent on its *political* connections to a much larger degree than on business prowess or the market fortunes. (9)

-Democracy had degenerated into the defacto presidential authoritarianism, characterised by increased capriciousness and disdain for the powers of the parliament. (9).

At the same time Ukraine’s regression in democratisation was *not* blamed on Ukraine’s elected leaders but that of an outside body; the EU. The perception in Ukraine was that it is historically, culturally and geographically part of Europe, therefore has a right to membership; the country has started undertaking all of the tasks set for it and only needs a ‘signal’ of future EU membership prospect and the support from the EU regarding Ukraine’s ‘European concept’. The EU’s lack of response is the real problem. But actually the EU officials were frustrated by repeated failures to follow promises to pursue reforms needed for the implementation of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement (PCA), by widespread corruption within the Ukrainian administration, and by organised cross-border crime.

Kuchma’s presidency has therefore been convenient for the EU, because it has permitted the EU to put off any decision on Ukraine and thereby not formulate any coherent strategy towards it. However, Yushenko, the presidential candidate in the 2004 elections led a pro-western strategy, stated his aim of focusing on rapidly improving ties with the EU, anchoring Ukraine to western liberal institutions and incorporating values such as the rule of law, freedom of speech, and the gradual strengthening of the market economy within Ukraine’s political culture. (10).

Why is ENP not suitable for the reform process in the Ukraine:

Ukraine wants EU membership in the long run and associate membership of the EU in the medium run. The EU did not want to encourage premature aspirations for full membership of Ukraine but given the huge importance of Ukraine on the European map, it needed to work harder at finding an effective incentive and dignified European perspective without offering membership hopes; which could only be done through the ENP.

Will the ENP improve the EU's relations with Ukraine and remove virtuality on both sides? This is doubtful. From a Ukrainian perspective, though the ENP is an improvement on the PCA and amorphous Common Strategy there remain three flaws:

- The ENP puts the Western CIS in the same category as the Southern Mediterranean and the Middle East. This mixing of targets has become the document's key problem. It serves to reinforce the perception in Kiev that the EU does not see Ukraine as part of Europe or even as a potential future member.

- Ukraine can hardly be said to have reacted enthusiastically to this prospect of the ENP's underlying 'everything but membership' approach, particularly because it was –and still is– seen as spoiling their chances for EU accession as the notion of 'integration not accession' reduces all four Western CIS states to the level of Russia's objective of non-membership (11).

This lack of membership prospect and 'waiting room formula' has reduced the incentive in Ukraine to work towards EU 'common values' thus causing a distinct lack of success of the ENP for motivating Ukraine for reforming itself (Kuzio, 2003: 27-28). Also, the fact that the EU continues to fudge the question of an 'open door' policy for Ukraine but sends a clear signal to the Western Balkans, although they have a long path to membership ahead, makes Ukraine much more frustrated and cause it to accuse the EU of applying double standards. It is not clear, why the benefits of co-operating with the EU lead to membership only in the case of the Western Balkans but not the Western CIS, especially as both regions belong to Europe.

Thus the EU should take a more positive and serious approach by dropping its own virtual policy towards Ukraine.³ Ukrainian leaders are not able to use EU membership as a 'selling point' for reforms when dealing with their public; something widely implied during the Orange Revolution.⁴ It would not be very easy for the EU officials to make Ukraine's

³ After the revolution of 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe it took the EU until 1993 to sign Association Agreements regardless of the state of the commitment to common values. Some CEECs had proved their commitment to 'common values' in the intervening four years, but Slovakia, Bulgaria and to some extent, Romania, only began catching up in the late 1990s. Yushenko would also show such a commitment and the EU should respond in the same manner to Ukraine as it did to CEECs. (10)

⁴ On November 22 2004, the Central Electoral Commission of Ukraine declared Viktor Yanukovich the winner. Accusations of widespread vote rigging and falsifications followed immediately and were verified by reports from domestic and international observers including the OSCE. By the evening of 22 November 2004, in what became known as the Orange Revolution, over 100,000 demonstrators had taken to the streets of central Kiev and other cities in western and central Ukraine calling for the immediate resignation of the ongoing president Kuchma and the instatement of the opposition candidate Viktor Yushenko as the President of Ukraine. What was unusual was the scale of the protests and their duration. Hundreds of thousands of protestors came out each evening in Independence Square in central Kiev. It was this 'people power factor' above all else that acted as the driving force behind Ukraine's *Orange Revolution* between November 22 2004 and December 8 2004. The

leadership agree to everything requested from Brussels, as it will have to attend to its own, national priorities.

Conclusion:

Against the background of the enlarging EU's changing geopolitical environment, the purpose of this article was to explore the motives behind the ENP and attempt to answer the following questions: Has the EU been helpful in providing security and stability for the European continent through this policy?

This article supported the view that unfortunately the ENP is still far from establishing security and stability in the EU's immediate surroundings. The following main problems circumscribe the aspects of this approach:

EU programmes are expressed in terms of 'alignment with Community legislation' and though each neighbouring state will negotiate, separately, with the Commission on the details of its Action Plan, the implementation of the programme agreed is a process of one-sided adaptation to EU rules. However the fact that the immense costs of 'aligning legislation with the *acquis*' as the Commission calls when there is no incentive regarding potential EU membership is making the ENP insufficient for guaranteeing security and stability in the states concerned.

Indeed when the extension of EU values is applied towards third countries which lack the prospect of membership, the attempt to extend the EU's legal boundary may be seen not only a benevolent projection of acquired civilian virtues but as an *imperial* imposition of values (13)⁵

Thus in this critical perspective, economic and security agendas are seen to be focused primarily on a rather *one-sided* notion of free trade and on controlling illegal immigration, marginalizing the very socio-political elements that EU discourse so vocally promotes, e.g.

demonstrations for the most part were not strictly in favour of Yushenko; a man, who was relatively unknown to most Ukrainians before the election campaign began. The crowds were protesting for democracy, the rule of law and an end to the corruption of the Kuchma era. In short, the demonstrators wanted a democratic system. The events that followed have fundamentally altered relations between Ukraine and the European Union (12).

⁵ Indeed this method of the EU can be seen from the way the EU tries to expand its sphere of governance. It does so in particular in areas which have become securitised inside and where vulnerability is attributed to developments in the third country in question. Such a perspective explains not only why specific issues of domestic politics gain priority in relations with neighbouring countries, but also why these priorities fluctuate over time, such as manifested in EU-Mediterranean relations. Securitisation from this perspective does not directly derive from objective external threats but it is the outcome of framing processes within an evolving institutional environment (13).

democratic progress, sustainable development and human rights.⁶ Unfortunately when the EU follows a strategy geared at stabilisation and integration with the attempt to bind third countries to the pursuit of internal policy goals, it does not extend its values and tries to enhance the reform processes in these countries but only benefit from the latter's political and material problem-solving resources.

The instruments of the ENP and the incentives it offers are also ill defined and inadequate for reaching the explicit and implicit policy objectives and are surrounded by a number of myths which do not hold up against a realistic investigation. Specifically when conditionality is not existing such as the case of the eastern enlargement, the result may be not that fruitful. Thus, it is unlikely that the ENP will contribute consistently to the socio-economic development of the EU's neighbours and in that sense be helpful in consolidating the overall security and stability of the regions surrounding its core (Schumacher and Sorto, 2004: 20).

⁶ At the same time, border-related issues loom large and the EU demands 'shared responsibility' for combating illegal cross-border activities and common security threats.

APPENDIX I:

Country	Agreement and date
Algeria	Euro-Med association agreement signed, April 2002
Armenia	Partnership and Cooperaton agreement in force (PCA), July 1999
Azerbaijan	PCA in force, July 1999
Belarus	PCA signed, Mrach 1995
Egypt	Euro-Med association agreement in force, June 2004
Georgia	PCA in force, July 1999
Israel	Euro-Med association agreement in force, June 2000
Jordan	Euro-Med association agreement in force, May 2002
Lebanon	Euro-Med association agreement signed, April 2002
Libya	None in force
Moldova	PCA in force, July 1998
Morocco	Euro-Med association agreement in force, March 2000
Palestinian Authority	Interim Euro-Med association agreement in force, Juşy 1997
Tunisia	Euro-Med association agreement in force, Mrach 1998
Ukraine	PCA in force, March 1998

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