
Recasting Relations with the Neighbours - Prospects for the Eastern Partnership

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Contents

INTRODUCTION	2
THE STATE OF PLAY IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE EU AND THE EASTERN NEIGHBOURS	5
EaP Partners: Overview of Relations with the EU.....	5
THE REDESIGN: THE COMMISSION'S VISION OF AN EASTERN PARTNERSHIP	11
Deeper Bilateral Engagement - Bolstering ENP	11
Stimulating Regional Cooperation - New Modes of Multilateral Cooperation.....	13
CONCLUSIONS: THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP – CONDITIONS FOR SUCCESS	16

Abstract

The European Commission's proposal for an Eastern Partnership has found a groundswell of support in the run up to the Prague Eastern Summit in May. The Commission's vision sees both strengthened bilateralism as well as innovative multilateral initiatives and "flagship" projects to put relations with the eastern neighbours on a more dynamic and strategic footing. Though the proposal holds much promise, its ultimate success rests on a number of conditions, including whether the prospective partners can be convinced of the partnership's value and equally whether the EU can prove that it is serious about free trade, mobility and energy policy in the Eastern neighbourhood.

Keywords: Eastern Partnership, ENP, Ukraine, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Georgia

Introduction

Is the EU giving up on its “one size fits all” approach to neighbourhood policy by dividing it into “ENP South” and “ENP East?” Six months after the adoption of the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) the European Commission has presented plans for a new Eastern Partnership (EaP) as a specific “Eastern dimension within the ENP.”¹ The EaP is an attempt to recast and intensify relations with the eastern neighbours, by bringing Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus,² Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia closer to the EU.

Subsequent to the initial Polish-Swedish paper of May 2008,³ which was well received after some initial reluctance in Brussels, the European Commission presented a far reaching and enthusiastic document on EaP, which also found a favourable response from the European Council in December.⁴ The Czech EU Presidency will take the project fast forward in the Spring with an Eastern Summit of the EU 27+6 to be held in Prague on 7th May, with the Swedes set to pick up the baton in July. Meanwhile, the gas-crisis between Russia and Ukraine has increased speculation as to whether the EaP in particular and ENP in general is viewed by Russia as western expansionism, which clashes with its own designs for the CIS states.

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¹ Eastern Partnership, Memorandum, MEMO 08/762, Brussels, 3 December 2008, <ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/docs/com08_823_en.pdf>.

² Whilst Belarus is cited as one of the six neighbours to be included in the EaP, the EU will stick to a rigid set of conditions for Minsk to meet if it is to fully join, especially in the areas of electoral law and freedom of the press. In December 2008 the Commission was saying that it expected Belarus to join EaP, but only at the “technical level.” In January 2009 it seems that the EU expects that by the time of the Eastern Summit in May that Belarus may well be in EaP, but not as a “full member.”

“EU Says Belarus ‘Halfway’ in Eastern Partnership Project,” <www.rferl.org/content/EU_Says_Belarus_Halfway_In_Eastern_Partnership_Project/1375435.html>, 27 January 2009.

³ <www.msz.gov.pl/Polish-Swedish,Proposal,19911.html>.

⁴ Presidency Conclusions, Council of the European Union, European Council, Brussels, 12 December 2008, 17217/08, CONCL 5, <www.ue2008.fr/webdav/site/PFUE/shared/import/1211_Conseil_europeen/Europea_n_Council_12-12-2008_Conclusions_EN.pdf>.

The EaP picked up on a range of deficiencies in the current set up of ENP, finding a groundswell of support for change. At the core of this was the fairly widespread belief that ENP, as currently configured for the East was suboptimal. A “miss-match” of expectations between what the EU expected of the neighbours, and what the neighbours themselves were willing or able to deliver, lay, perhaps, at the heart of the problem. EaP, as envisaged by the Commission, tries to tackle this miss-match by stressing the principle of “more for more” – meaning that partners can only expect to get more from the EU, if they, themselves give more of a sustained commitment to reform.

In the course of 2008 a range of other factors, such as the Georgia-Russia war in August and the rising prominence of energy security, brought about an even keener sense of urgency to the EaP project, which though still a policy in the making, has already garnered a fairly distinct profile.

The Eastern Partnership remains as yet a blueprint and a great deal of work has to be done in the course of 2009, if the kind of projects envisaged by the Commission, are to be realised. Of course the possibility persists that some member states will seek to reign in the kind of ambitious plans outlined in the Commission paper, especially on funding and other resource questions. There is also likely to be controversy over how the EaP will fit with the modalities of the EU’s strategic relationship with Russia, how it links, or not, to the enlargement dynamic and how it will affect the EU’s relations with the southern neighbours. Finally, aspiring member states, and Ukraine and Moldova in particular, will need to be convinced of the value of EaP and crucially, that it will not be a fixed alternative to actual membership.

EaP will focus on three priorities – trade, mobility, and energy. In terms of methods, according to the Commission’s proposals, the initiative will seek to enhance bilateral relations and the existing ENP, but will also attempt to “region build” by encouraging cooperation and integration amongst the neighbours themselves, no doubt inspired by earlier examples such as Visegrad and the Central European Free Trade Agreement (CEFTA).

In this Europe.Visions paper we put the Eastern Partnership under the spotlight as the EU edges closer to the Eastern Summit. We also provide an overview of the current ENP configuration in the East and consider why it seems flawed. By way of a conclusion we identify some “conditions for success” which, we argue must be seriously considered if the Eastern Partnership is to meet its potential to recast the EU’s relations with the Eastern neighbours.

The State of Play in Relations between the EU and the Eastern Neighbours

The EU's relations with the six prospective members of the EaP have, since 2003, been conducted in the context of ENP. Although the original blueprint for ENP was focused purely on the East (specifically Ukraine, Moldova, and Belarus), it was subsequently expanded to the EU's Mediterranean neighbours. This "balanced approach" aimed at mollifying certain member states' concerns that the EU had overly focused on the East in the course of the 1990s, to the detriment of the South. Thus from the outset of the ENP the mixing of the southern and eastern neighbourhoods into one pot became a key characteristic of Brussels' approach – which thus far has resisted change. Despite this, the EU *has* dealt with the two neighbourhoods in manifestly different ways.⁵ In the East the EU pursued an almost exclusively bilateral, country by country approach, shying away from regional integration and engagement with regional groupings – chiefly because of the Russia factor, which stood in contrast to the South, where, via the multilateral Barcelona Process, the EU fostered regional integration, albeit with mixed results.

EaP Partners: Overview of Relations with the EU

Though the six prospective EaP partners have much in common as former entities in the Soviet Block, it is worth remembering that there are also strong differences between them and in the nature of their relations with the EU (as well as with Russia), thus it is far from evident that the group constitutes a "region" as such.

⁵ See K. Longhurst, "Injecting More Differentiation into Neighbourhood Policy," *Russie.Nei.Visions*, N° 32, July 2008, *Ifri.org*.

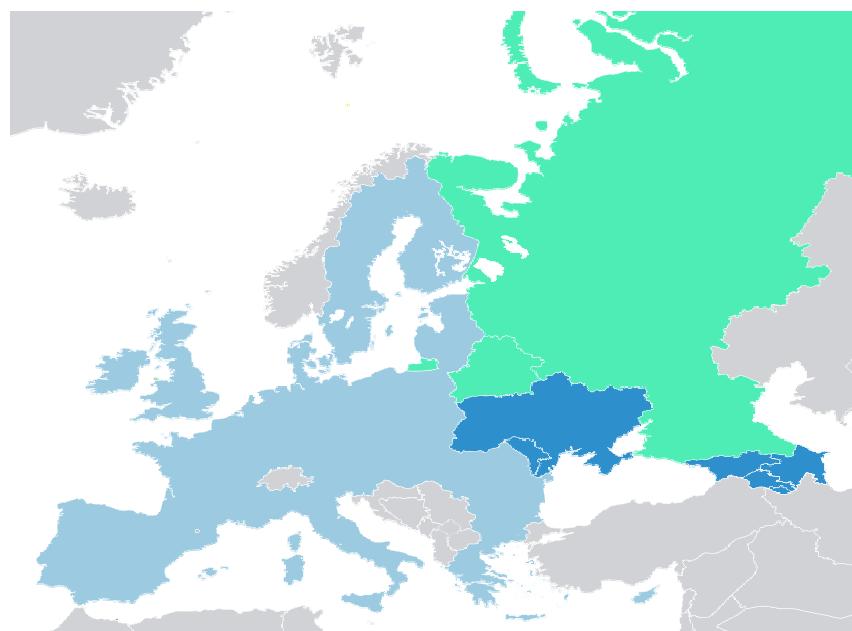
Table 1

EAP countries	Entry into force of contractual relations with EC	ENP Country Report	ENP Action Plan	Adoption by EU	JOINT adoption WITH partner country	WTO	Membership in other regional organisation
Armenia	PCA – 1999	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	13.11.2006	14.11.2006	Since 2003	CIS
Azerbaijan	PCA – 1999	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	13.11.2006	14.11.2006	--	CIS GUAM ¹
Belarus	--	--	--	--	--	--	CIS
Georgia	PCA – 1999	March 2005	Agreed autumn 2006	13.11.2006	14.11.2006	Since 2000	CIS, leaving on 17 September 2009 GUAM
Moldova	PCA - July 1998	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	22.02.2005	Since 2001	CIS GUAM
Ukraine	PCA – March 1998	May 2004	Agreed end 2004	21.02.2005	21.02.2005	Since 2008	CIS GUAM

1. GUAM is the acronym for the Organization for Democracy and Economic Development. Uzbekistan was a member, but subsequently left.

Source: <ec.europa.eu/world/enp/faq_en.htm and own>.

Map 1. Eastern Partnership (“Full” EaP countries in Dark Blue, Belarus [and Russia] in Green)



Ukraine

Without a doubt Ukraine occupies an exceptional status within the group of EU neighbours and moreover, cherishes its status as “more than just a neighbour.” Already in 1999 the EU developed a Common Strategy towards Ukraine which acknowledged Ukraine’s “European aspirations and pro-European choice” and is now on the cusp of finalising an Association Agreement (AA) (which may serve as a model for further AAs with EaP countries). The EU has endeavoured to support good governance and democracy in Ukraine, especially since the Orange revolution, but results have been mixed. Continued domestic political turmoil at the highest levels, which is likely to continue in the run up to the forthcoming presidential elections in 2010,⁶ as well as the handling of the recent gas transit crisis, demonstrates the lack of good governance in Ukraine, which is of concern to the EU. In addition, Ukraine’s economic situation has worsened with the financial crisis, thus Kiev was obliged in October 2008 to ask the IMF for a 16.5 billion Dollar loan. Despite this, in 2009 the EU plans to stride ahead with its relations with Ukraine, in the first instance with the new AA and the deep free trade area. Already in 2008 the EU and Ukraine signed Visa Facilitation and Readmission

⁶ One part of the problem is clearly the constitution, which attributes executive power more or less equally to the Prime Minister and the President. For example, the cabinet is appointed partly by the president (Foreign Minister, Defence) and the Prime Minister (all the other ministers).

agreements,⁷ and the Ukrainian government hopes to fulfil conditions for visa free travelling already by 2012. The state and ambition of EU-Ukraine relations will undoubtedly be a benchmark for the EU's relations with other EaP states. Ukraine supports the EaP, but crucially does not accept it as an alternative to membership.

Moldova

Moldova has also edged closer to the EU on a similar range of issues as Ukraine. In October 2008 the Council stated that it was ready to start negotiating a similar type of Association Agreement with Moldova to that of Ukraine. Thus, in 2009 a priority will be to get a mandate for a new AA drafted. Comprehensive and deep free trade between the EU and Moldova was highlighted in the same discussion and the introduction of a visa-free travel regime set as a long-term objective.⁸ Since February 2007 there has been an EU Special Representative for Moldova (Mr Kalman Miszei) a key part of whose remit being the unresolved Transdnistria issue.⁹ In this context, the EU runs the border assistance mission "EUBAM Moldova/Ukraine",¹⁰ and participates as an observer in the 5+2 talks on Transdnistria. The Moldovan reaction to the EaP has been more muted than that of Ukraine, nonetheless, like Kiev, Chisinau wants to ensure that EaP does not put a permanent block on the enlargement dynamic and seeks a "clear perspective on accession".¹¹

Belarus

The EU currently has no contractual relationship with the EU,¹² despite this, Brussels is keen to draw Minsk into the EaP and to normalise relations under the right conditions. The EU's offer of closer cooperation is contingent on the Belarussian government committing to democratic reforms, especially on electoral law and the freedom of the press. The future path of EU-Belarus relations will be conditioned by the latter's own relationship with Russia. Indeed, if Minsk were to push ahead with the democratic reforms requested by Brussels, it would indicate a willingness to pull away from Russia. Having said this, the picture is likely to remain fuzzy. Whilst the outcome of the recent meeting between ENP Commissioner Ferrero Waldner and the Belarussian Foreign Minister Sergei Martynov seemed to inspire a new sense of confidence that Belarus might come into the EU-fold,

⁷ <www.nrcu.gov.ua/index.php?id=148&listid=82910>.

⁸ Council Conclusions on the Republic of Moldova, 2896th General Affairs Council Meeting, 13 October 2008.

⁹ <consilium.europa.eu/cms3_fo/showPage.asp?id=263&lang=EN>.

¹⁰ *Eubam.org*.

¹¹ Meeting of Andrei Stratan and Radoslaw Sikorski, 11 July 2008, <www.mfa.gov.md/news/3012/>.

¹² <ec.europa.eu/external_relations/belarus/intro/non_paper_1106.pdf>.

Minsk's real commitment to substantial reforms is doubted.¹³ Moreover, the Lukashenka regime appears set to further entrench its dependency on Russia, economically as well as politically.¹⁴

The Southern Caucasus

The very notion of the "Southern Caucasus" has been invented by EU policy makers – the three countries themselves do not in fact, consider themselves as belonging to a common area, moreover, Georgia's relations and aspirations vis a vis the EU currently outstrip those of both Armenia and Azerbaijan. Having said this, there are common threads that put these three countries on to the EU's radar, namely energy and unresolved conflicts (Nagorno Karabakh, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia), which provide the rationale for their inclusion into EaP.

Though the Commission's proposal is not actually that explicit about ramping up the EU's role in solving the region's unresolved conflicts, it does see that EaP should be capable of promoting stability and multilateral confidence building "with the goal of consolidating the sovereignty and territorial integrity of partners."¹⁵ It also foresees the necessity of enhancing early-warning arrangements with a focus on conflict areas, as well as the participation of partner countries in ESDP missions and exercises. Moreover, it was the Georgian-Russian war of August 2008 that provided the EU with a strong impulse to move ahead with the EaP. On the question of energy, the delivery of Central Asian and Caspian resources through the "Southern Corridor" has reinforced the strategic importance of this former Soviet region for the EU.

The forerunner in the region, Georgia, is in the early stages of talks on deep free trade with the EU and has declared that it aspires to EU (as well as NATO) membership. An EU Civilian Rule of Law mission EUJUST *Themis* in Georgia was put in place already in 2004, after the Rose Revolution, to support the country's transition.¹⁶ Then, subsequent to the war of August 2008, an EU monitoring mission (EUMM) was established. Georgia has also gained in prominence for the EU as an important energy transit route. This was all but natural since the direct link between Azeri resources and Turkey, and then further on to Western markets would have crossed Armenia, but because of the unresolved Karabakh conflict, as well as the dispute on the recognition of the Armenian genocide this transit route has not

¹³ <www.rferl.org/content/EU_Says_Belarus_Halfway_In_Eastern_Partnership_Project/1375435.html>.

¹⁴ "Russia and Belarus Sign Air Defence Pact," *Telegraph.co.uk*; "Russia, Belarus Agree Joint Anti-Crisis Measures," <www.ruvr.ru/main.php?lng=eng&q=39913&cid=56&p=03.02.2009>.

¹⁵ Eastern Partnership, Memorandum, MEMO 08/762, Brussels, 3 December 2008, <ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/docs/com08_823_en.pdf>.

¹⁶ <consilium.europa.eu/cms3/_fo/showPage.asp?id=701&lang=fr&mode=g>.

been possible. Tbilisi has benefited from this situation, being chosen as the transit country for the oil pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (in service since 2006), and the gas pipeline Baku-Tbilisi-Erzurum, which opened one year later.¹⁷ The August war with Russia has damaged Georgia's reputation as a safe and reliable transit route and put into question Western supplies from the Caspian region and Central Asia.

Thus the EaP group of states present an array of challenges for the EU and enjoy different types of relations with Brussels. Ukraine, Moldova, and Georgia look at the EU, for the most part, in a fundamentally positive way – in that they want membership. But Georgia's pro-European stance, more than the other two's sets it on collision course with Moscow. The extent to which the other prospective EaP states fall into pro-Europe category is less clear; both Belarus and Armenia are dependent upon Russia and Azerbaijan's energy-rich status diminishes the extent to which it "needs" the EU: it's declared "positive neutrality" since the Georgian-Russian war confirms the idea of a desire of equal proximity towards East and West. A final point to reiterate here is that cooperation and trade between the six prospective EaP partners remains low and regional efforts at cooperation, such as GUAM, have proved to be largely moribund. Moreover, entrenched trade patterns from the Soviet era, political sensibilities and conflicts continue to afflict the economic development of some of the prospective EaP states.

Certainly ENP has helped anchor the EU's relations with its eastern neighbours after the 2004 enlargement, but beyond this, the overall score sheet has been much less than exceptional. ENP wasn't able to foster all-round better governance in the region. Instances of good governance remain patchy, and even where democracy has been established it remains fragile and could easily backslide. Elections in 2008 in Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan were all judged to be flawed,¹⁸ which remains one of the EU's chief gripes with the regimes in the region. ENP also proved ill equipped to ameliorate or prevent conflicts in the region and also did not deliver the security of energy supply for the EU. Finally, the EU's visibility in general and that of ENP in particular remain low in the neighbourhood.

Various factors can be identified to explain why ENP did not deliver as it might, but arguably at the core is the apparent mismatch between what the EU expected of the neighbours and what the neighbours were able or willing to do in terms of reform. With this point in mind a *leitmotif* of EaP is "more for more;" as mentioned at the start of this paper, the notion that the neighbours need "to do more" if they want "to get more" from the EU.

¹⁷ If the first supplies the World Market with roughly 1% of global oil production, the latter is exclusively used for supplying the Turkish domestic market for the time being, but would be branched later into the Nabucco project, if ever this will be constructed. S. Nies, *Oil and Gas to Europe*, Paris, Ifri, 2008, *Ifri.org*.

¹⁸ <unzipped.blogspot.com/2008/05/armenia-georgia-azerbaijan-amnesty.html>.

The Redesign: The Commission's Vision of an Eastern Partnership

The Commission proposal of December 2008 reemphasises the EU's interest in assuring stability, good governance, and economic development on the eastern border. EaP is presented as a "step change" in relations with the neighbours "without prejudice to individual countries" aspirations for their future relationship with the EU." The proposal talks about going further than ENP, offering the "maximum possible" through both *bilateral* and new *multilateral* tracks according to the principle of "more for more."

Deeper Bilateral Engagement – Bolstering ENP

The Commission re-emphasises the EU's interest in assuring stability, good governance, and economic development in the neighbourhood. EaP is presented as a "step change" in relations with the neighbours "without prejudice to individual countries" aspirations for their future relationship with the EU." The vision combines a call for deeper bilateral engagement, including new Association Agreements (AAs) and a new generation of ENP Action Plans, coupled with an innovative multilateral strategy to nurture cooperation amongst the neighbours, and third, a number of "flagship initiatives" to enhance the visibility of the EU in the region.

Within the bilateral strand of EaP the following are key priorities:

- The conclusion of deep and comprehensive free trade areas with each EaP partner, and ultimately the creation of a "Neighbourhood Economic Community."
- The creation of "mobility and security pacts" with each neighbour to foster mobility of people within a "secure environment."
- Ensuring the security of energy supplies. In EaP the EU wants to update existing frameworks with energy security paragraphs, much like those to be included in the new EU-Russia PCA.

Free Trade and a Neighbourhood Economic Community

A key element of the proposed new AAs is provision for the neighbours' gradual integration into the EU economy. The goal is to create deep and comprehensive free trade areas with each EaP partner, once they have joined the WTO.¹⁹ In addition, the proposal sets out the goal of creating a network of bilateral agreements amongst the neighbours themselves – ultimately envisaging a Neighbourhood Economic Community – with partner countries committing to a free trade network amongst themselves.

Mobility

A further priority under the bilateral heading of EaP is the theme of mobility of people. The Commission envisages the creation of "mobility and security pacts" with each neighbour geared to foster mobility and at the same time to create and sustain a "secure environment." The fight against illegal migration, upgrade of asylum systems to EU standards, integrated border management systems aligned to EU acquis, together with the enhancement of the Police and judiciary's abilities in this arena are outlined as areas to be included into these pacts. Visa policy will be significant here as neighbours have high expectations for greater and speedier liberalisation. The Commission's concept is for a phased approach beginning with talks on visa facilitation, to include agreements on readmission, which could then be followed by the waiving of visa fees, ultimately towards visa-free travel. Meanwhile, the Commission would initiate studies on the costs and benefits of labour mobility, the results of which will shape options for a possible targeted opening up of EU labour market to workers from EaP states.

Energy Security

In this domain the EaP will try to go much further than ENP did hitherto. Energy security is elevated as a priority much like as it is in the revised PCA with Russia. Particular focus is given to Azerbaijan, potentially a major hydrocarbon exporting partner to the EU, but also Ukraine, a major transit country with 80% of gas from Russia and the CIS transiting via Ukraine. The EaP envisages the setting up of "energy interdependence," to integrate Ukraine and Moldova into the nascent Energy Community for South East Europe in Vienna.²⁰ Within the "multilateral" strand of EaP initiatives the goal of strengthening the Southern Corridor, which is considered by the Commission as key for the diversification of routes and sources, is pursued. In Ukraine, the security of operating plants and the rehabilitation of the gas transit network are important issues. EaP countries, it is proposed should

¹⁹ Belarus and Azerbaijan are not in the WTO.

²⁰ Energy-community.org.

also participate in the “Intelligent Energy Europe Programme.”²¹ Electricity interconnection is another prominent issue. Europe is divided into two major electricity systems: the Russian Rim or IPS/UPS system²² and UCTE, which is the Western European System. Some bridges between the two systems exist – such as in Poland, as well as in a small part of Western Ukraine, but they are not sufficient and keep these countries dependent on Russia. Russia strongly opposes Ukrainian integration into UCTE, so again, EU energy relations with the Eastern Partnership run the risk of being framed by the complicated relationship with Russia. This will be a key test for EaP.²³

Stimulating Regional Cooperation – New Modes of Multilateral Cooperation

The Commission’s vision of EaP sees a role for the EU in “region building.” The EaP promises to provide “a forum to share information and experience on partners’ steps towards transition, reform, and modernisation,” to help facilitate common positions and joint activities – elements conspicuously absent from ENP in its current set up. How will this work? The Commission paper proposes: (i) Meetings of EaP Heads of State every two years (ii) Annual Spring meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs (attached to a GAERC) (iii) The establishment of four “thematic platforms” (Democracy, good governance, and stability; Economic Integration, and Convergence with EU Policies; Energy Security; Contacts between People) meetings for which will be held at least twice a year involving senior officials. These platforms will report to the Foreign Ministers annual meetings and will have their agendas prepared by the Commission in collaboration with the EU Presidency and EaP partners (iv) Panels, established to support the platforms. Crucially, these new configurations would increase significantly the number of meetings between the EU and the neighbours.

Towards greater Visibility – “Flagship Initiatives”

In addition, the Commission’s proposal details a number of “Flagship Initiatives” including Integrated Border Management Programme; an SME facility; promotion of regional electricity markets, energy efficiency, and renewable energy resources; development of the Southern energy corridor; cooperation on prevention of,

²¹ <ec.europa.eu/energy/intelligent/>.

²² Which still includes the Baltic States, as well as all the other former Soviet Republics

²³ See forthcoming: S. Nies, *At the Speed of Light? Electricity Interconnections in Europe*, Paris, Ifri, May 2009.

preparedness for and response to natural and manmade disasters. The flagship initiatives have also the advantage to meet the particular interest of potential external sponsors, and will thus be boosted thanks to the Neighbourhood Investment Facility.

The Institutional Setting and Finance

How will the new EaP be organised? Will it resemble the Union for the Mediterranean? There will be no separate secretariat for the EaP, which will be a crucial difference with the UfM with its new body recently set up in Barcelona. As the Commission explains, the UfM has a project-based approach and as such does not look for support from the Community budget, but rather for private funding and international financing. As proposed by the Commission, the EaP is of a different nature, crucially it is seen as an integral part of EU policies and thus should be supported financially by the Commission, rather than being a separate entity as is the case for the UfM.²⁴ Consequently, the EaP, it is proposed would be fully within the remit of DG Aidco as well as RELEX.

Financing²⁵

Whilst the Polish-Swedish proposal of May 2008 claimed that EaP would be neutral for the EU budget, the Commission proposals emphasise both the better use of existing funds designated for the East, but also that more funding be made available in the future.

The EaP proposal goes along with 350 million Euro in addition allocated to ENP-East. This has been required already for years by the European Parliament.²⁶ Nevertheless one needs to underline that the ENP budget dedicated to the Eastern partners would have increased anyhow. Getting the three priority areas – *free trade, mobility, energy* – going, EU is committed to develop the necessary capacities together with the Partners Existing EU funds could be supplemented by EIB or EBRD credits as well as resources from

²⁴ John O'Rourke, Head of Unit DG Relex, ENP, Ifri, Brussels, 10 December 2008.

²⁵ Historically, ENP finance stems from TACIS for the East, and MEDA, for the South, as well as thematic programs. Funding approximated for the period 2002-2006 3,1 billion euros for TACIS (5,3 billion for MEDA), plus 500 million euros European Investment bank lending for TACIS countries (and 2 billion for MEDA). In the beginning of 2007, the EU replaced its existing financial instrument with the ENPI, the European Neighbourhood Instrument, completed with the Neighbourhood Investment Facility. 12 billion euros are available for the ENP member states for the period 2007-2013. These are for the Eastern Partnership countries, for the period 2007-2010, as follows: 98,4 million euros for Armenia, 92 million euros for Azerbaijan, 120,4 million for Georgia with an additional 500 million fund for the consequences of the august war, 209,7 million euros for Moldova, and 494 million euros for Ukraine (<ec.europa.eu/world/enp/funding_en.htm>). For the support for the Eastern partnership countries data stem from MEMO 08/762, 3 December 2008.

²⁶ J. Saryusz-Wolski MEP, "Eastern Partnership will strengthen the Union," EPP-ED Press, Brussels, *Epp-ed.eu*.

willing EU member states or other interested parties within the framework of the Neighbourhood Investment Facility. Furthermore, EC delegations on the ground need to be bolstered, numerically and financially. But again finance is not all, and the cases of the accession countries of 2007 (Romania and Bulgaria) have demonstrated how EU finance may contribute to changes in government, corruption, and abuse.²⁷ EU has to make a clear signal that it is not a bank, but a community based on values.

Table 2. Funding EaP

	2008	2009-2012	2013
ENPI	€450 million	Steady increase, €350 million for the period	€785 million (only approximate figure yet: Financial Framework has not been set up yet for period 2010-2013)
EIB Loans	€500 million	€500 million (maybe increased after EIB midterm review)	€500 million
NIF means	n.a. (leveraging ration loans to grants: more than 3)	n.a.	n.a.

Source: authors.

²⁷ A. Mungiu-Pippidi, "South-East Europe challenges after Kosovo independence," Ifri, Brussels, 3 June 2008.

Conclusions: The Eastern Partnership – Conditions for Success

The Commission's proposal for an EaP is a convincing one, not least because it would seem to address some of the flaws present in the existing configuration of ENP and offers the prospect of putting the EU's relations with the Eastern neighbours on a more energetic and strategic footing. But what are its chances of success? Will the EaP be able to deliver and meet the varied expectations of both EU member states and the neighbours too? By way of a conclusion in the following assessment we present what we view as key conditions for the success of EaP.

Ensuring and Communicating “More for More”

The EU needs to ensure that EaP partners are fully cognisant of what is required of them, and that the EU will only give rewards and take deeper cooperation forwards if partners demonstrate sustained commitment to political and economic reforms. Naturally this also means that Brussels has to say what exactly is on offer, how to get there and just how neighbour's progress will be measured (and rewarded) en route. Such a strategy can only work, of course, if it is replete with “sticks” as well as “carrots”, meaning the EU needs to make clear what can be taken away or denied if a given partner reneges on reform. This should ensure that the principle of “more for more” is met.

Clarifying the Relationship to Enlargement

Whilst ENP was always distinct from enlargement, might EaP be sending out a mixed signal? The task is to clarify how EaP and enlargement relate to one another, in other words what will be the finalité? This is crucial not just for the neighbours but for internal EU consumption too. The Commission proposal says that states join EaP “without prejudice to (their) aspirations for their future relationship with the EU,” which leaves the field open for multiple interpretations and simply reinforces the ambiguity for aspirant members like Ukraine and Moldova. Polish Foreign Minister Sikorski stated that EaP is designed

to strengthen the EU's policies towards those states that *could* eventually join, but at present are held back by enlargement fatigue.²⁸ Similarly, Czech Deputy Foreign Minister Vondra, argued that EaP should not be a fixed alternative to membership – and that the EU door should stay open.²⁹ But other member states will want to ensure that EaP acts as a firm break, rather than a facilitator for enlargement. The EU must tackle this uncertainty head-on by confirming unambiguously and in unison whether the door remains open and that EaP puts the ball in the partner's court by providing them with the opportunity to make themselves "look like candidates." Here, again, the slogan "more for more" applies. The EU as a whole needs to tell the EaP states that they themselves have the chance to accelerate the process to get closer to the EU by engaging on the partnership track the EaP sets out for them.

Balancing Differentiation and Regionalism

The success of EaP will rest to a significant extent on how the neighbours respond and the degree to which they see EaP as satisfying expectations of their future relations with the EU. Though the Commission's proposed new regional approach is a positive innovation, this needs to be balanced with an upgrade in bilateralism and national differentiation. Though the six partners share similarities, there is much that divides them. Kiev has already said that it doesn't relish being lumped together with the "troublemakers" of the South Caucasus. The obvious qualitative differences between six's relations with the EU need to be reflected in the configuration of EaP to enable forerunners to move ahead and not be "held back" by the region.

Creating Meaningful Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas

DCFTAs will only have a chance of success if EaP states are not held back by undue EU protectionism. Moreover, not too much hope should be put into the plan for a regional free trade arrangement, after all CEFTA's record is disappointing and the level of trade amongst the six EaP states is incredibly low.

Helping Regional Conflicts

The war in Georgia in August 2008 bolstered the EU's resolve to make the EaP equipped to deal with neighbourhood conflicts. The tools and instruments foreseen in EaP, such as reinforced bilateralism, prominent high-level meetings, as well as an active regional strategy are welcome innovations, but are no guarantees for success

²⁸ "Eastern Partnership' could lead to enlargement, Poland says," EUobserver 27 May 2008, *EUobserver.com*.

²⁹ European Voice, 6 November 2008.

on hard security issues. As proposed, EaP is a framework for conflict prevention, but one which may become flaccid once a conflict turns “hot,” for this scenario an optimal relationship needs to be in place between EaP as a part of ENP and the Council/High Representative.

Mobility as a Litmus Test

EaP’s capacity to create real mobility options for citizens from the neighbour states is a litmus test of the EU’s commitment to the region, the Commission is aware of this and the high expectations the neighbours have for real progress in this area. And different from the European Migration Pact, The migration related paragraph in the Eastern Partnership puts more emphasis on mobility than on security.³⁰ The EU must spell out the precise detail of its “mobility and security pacts” for the neighbours, so that they know for sure what needs to be done and what they can expect in return from the EU. Realistic time horizons should be formulated for each EaP state, and the “long term” clearly defined. Finally, targeted mobility for certain labour markets should be given a greater priority than the Commission suggests.

³⁰ See C. Bertossi, “Le pacte européen, une occasion ratée,” *Libération*, 10-11 January 2009, p. 1-4; C Bertossi, *How can Europeans Agree on a Common Migration Policy*, Report of the Ifri/Barrow Cadbury Trust “Anglo-French Policy Dialogue on Regularisation and Co-Development,” Paris, Ifri, January 2009.