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*Nitsovych R.***THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY  
AS A FACTOR OF DEMOCRACY PROMOTION**

*This article offers an analysis of future perspectives of democracy promotion as one of EU foreign policy tools within the European Neighbourhood Policy. The latter is considered as a very attractive model for future cooperation, especially after such recent developments as EU enlargement, wave of color revolutions and Europeanization of EU geopolitical periphery. But inefficiency of the ENP is proven by numerous institutional, political and financial problems. Thereby, some proposals are made to make ENP's democratization instruments more feasible.*

After the "big bang" enlargement in May 2004 the EU faced new challenges from its new neighbours in South and East. And the debates about the future of the Union as well as about new level of

its relations with such neighbor countries as Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus etc. The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was developed in order to solve the dilemma of EU absorption capacity [2] and to broaden the extent of political stability, economic growth and general welfare far beyond EU new borders.

But our main objective is not to argue about foreign policy of enlarged Europe, but to deal with the issue of democratization in the new neighbourhood. It's not a secret that EU is club of democracies and it has a long tradition of promoting human rights and democracy throughout the world. But how does ENP as a new policy area contribute to strengthening democracy? And how credible are the instruments involved? These questions seem to be answered in the article.

First, we should mention, that the general aim of the ENP is "...to see reinforced, credible and sustained commitment towards democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and progress towards the development of a market economy"[5, p. 11]. Undoubtedly, these issues are European informal Commandments and are included in Copenhagen political criteria since 1993 in order to set legal accession framework. Council of Europe and Court of Human Rights as well as OSCE are organizations created to pursue democratization and political stability. Why such a component is included into ENP?

Well, it's clear that not to include such fundamental principle of EU cooperation with third countries (i.e., not EU member states nor accession countries nor even candidates) was not possible. Besides, ENP methods are often compared with pre-accession methodology [8], which aims "virtual membership" [2, p. 15]. The EU seems to prefer a slight amendment of its successful "carrot and stick" approach as it was applied towards the countries of Central-Eastern Europe during their accession (now they are European NMS - new member states). ENP has nothing about future membership and without offering the big "carrot" of accession, attractive goals such as trade liberalization and enhanced financial support are designed to stimulate the process of democratization.

Another explanation of ENP attractiveness towards target countries is the gravity model [2, p. 4-5], which means that EU as strong democratic superpower definitely modifies its periphery and is the major actor of influence in the new neighbourhood. We can argue that EU is not a superpower yet and it uses soft foreign policy tools (diplomacy, economy, conditionality etc). Moreover, the influence of democratic core should not be overestimated: "The tendency for other states to con-

verge on the democratic model of the centre depends on the reputational quality and attractiveness of that democracy, its geographic and cultural-historical proximity and its openness to the periphery" [2, p. 5]. And being only a magnet is not enough for strengthening democracy beyond the borders. EU status of emerging strong international actor "...induce the EU to invest more heavily in its neighbourhood policy, precisely because the automatic gravity model may otherwise run out of steam" [1]. Finally, already since late 1980's officials and political leaders face the dispute over the quality of European democracy and are forced to solve this democratic deficit.

The same challenges occur when we have even a short look at the ENP target countries. They are not a homogeneous group, neither of democratic states nor of well-developed economies. Mediterranean countries, Southern Caucasus and Western CIS - all of them lack democracy and respect for human rights. Of course, the ENP contains positive conditionality and none of target countries will be punished for rejection of ENP support. And there is some sort of quasi-legal obligation for such states as Ukraine, Georgia or Moldova which push for enhanced cooperation and have more Western-oriented governments. But how can we deal with governments who does not want to cooperate? Libya, Syria and Belarus are strong authoritarian regimes and they are not interested in any democracy-promotion activities. The possible solution proposed by the European Commission is to support civil society developments in these countries and by that mean make governments be more controlled by their citizens. That is a wise step, but to speak generally, ENP lacks an independent monitoring mechanism or at least clear rules or guidelines for accessing the area of "stability, security and well-being" [5, p.3]. And to pump NGO's with EU project funding is not always the way of contributing to civil society development. Thus, support for democracy through civil society is a complex process which needs diverse methods to manage it [7].

Another angle on the issue is bilateral principle of ENP cooperation, i.e. EU deals with target countries and not with groups of them. Maybe, such decision is justified by differentiation of so diverse countries. But if there could be group dynamic and sort of competition, it could only pursue and maintain democracy and development of civil society. Networks consisting of target countries, EU projects in different areas of cooperation and NGO's should be created. Common activities by actors involved on the lower political levels seem to be more efficient. Furthermore, closer cooperation with

regional organizations (GUAM, Community of Democratic Choice etc.) as well as influential OSCE and Council of Europe is to be greatly emphasized because of the great potential of their development. Branch industrial, infrastructural and local projects are better managed and are more transparent in these regional networks. And such attractive opportunity should not be ignored by bureaucracy in Brussels if the ENP will be developed.

Now, let us have a look at the paper diplomacy related to the ENP. Target countries' Action Plans differ in their content depending on their political regime and European aspirations of the countries. For instance, two years after the launch of ENP nothing was negotiated about Action Plans for Belarus and Syria. And the Commission reports to the Council on progress made by each country with respect to the strengthening of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights are, of course, sort of ENP control mechanism. But, opinions and recommendations by the Commission have nothing in common with direct ENP implementation in concrete projects and can be defined as junk paper produced by smart eurobureaucracy. Besides, the Action Plans are not binding as it is in the case of EU accession key documents. The target countries will probably not implement parts of Action Plans which are not desired and, therefore, will not face negative sanctions. Even if the EU will take some "carrots" away, ENP target countries will follow such selective approach towards EU proposals within their foreign policy doctrine.

Despite the ENP partnership is EU-dominated and asymmetric, it still remains weak instrument for democracy promotion: "The EU does not seek to impose priorities or conditions on its partners. The Action Plans depend, for their success, on the clear recognition of mutual interests in addressing a set of priority issues. There can be no question of asking partners to accept a pre-determined set of priorities. These will be defined by common consent and will thus vary from country to country" [5, p. 8]. One may say EU is not obliged to push for further democratization and should concentrate mainly on important internal problems. But it is also a question of priority, "...the EU's performance as a foreign policy actor aiming at the promotion of democracy is very mixed. The distinction between enlargement and foreign policy, or between the internal and the external is thus crucial"[1]. In that aspect we are confident that peace, security, and economic welfare on the borders are more crucial for the EU and should be set as a clear priority.

One of the positive aspects in the bureaucratic support to ENP is ample information about demo-

cracy status in the target countries: "The Commission reports refer to the candidate countries, the Member States, European Parliament reports and conclusions of international as well as intergovernmental organizations as its main sources of information"[8]. That information allows making decisions within the ENP area more predictable and efficient. But all other provisions depend on the contracting parties and negotiations.

While considering financial side of this policy area, we can hardly avoid criticizing. European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) which was developed as funding for ENP projects is not the best example of good financial supply. It will replace TACIS, MEDA and INTERREG assistance programs since 2007 and will contribute up to TM4 billions in the following 7 years [4]. Simplification of money flow direction and lack of general guidance are the weakest features of ENPI. Besides, Russia is included into this initiative despite it was not included into ENP. How can EU manage and reasonably allocate these money, if Russian projects in conditions of low responsibility and quite rich financing will be nothing but money laundering?! The impact on controlled and manipulated civil society in Russia will be insignificant.

It's not the only tool of democracy promotion: European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) and Pharii program also allocate funds for civil society, institutional reform and democratization. That's why proper coordination between such programs is needed as well as setting clear project priorities. For instance, enhanced cross-border and Euroregional cooperation improve societal developments, as it was shown during NMS accession process. Therefore, ENP funds should be to a large extent amended within the new EU budget for 2007-2013.

The coherence of ENP and the mythological "united front" of EU foreign policy should not be overestimated. It's obvious, that France and Spain always preferred Mediterranean direction of cooperation, Germany was in favour of energy dialog with Russia and UK was more Atlantic than European. "There have been repeated examples of member states promoting deeper EU relations with their favourite neighbours, using their comparative advantages in relations with these states to the EU's advantage" [3, p. 178]. It's easily explained by traditional cleavages, post-colonial and post-WWII discourse. That's why list of ENP target countries is so long and so different countries were included. Finally, EU member-states will undeniably push for democratization of their preferred allies and/or friends. Therefore, this policy will be distorted de-

pending on power balance within the European Union itself and not so efficient. We should also take into account such scenarios when EU future challenges and increasing problems (slowdown of economic growth, xenophobia and other migration issues, political tensions etc.) will force our European partners to doubt the ENP and finally reject it.

As we have argued, ENP is less feasible than EU accession or at least membership perspective. It's evident, that ENP should be modified and developed. And the discussion on the issue already reached the level of high politics, especially in the EU dialog with target countries. "Instruments such as the European Neighbourhood Policy need to be used to their full potential and further developed. Through the development of a shared vision and concerted joint efforts by the EU and its partners, these instruments and the activities will deliver a strong positive impact on the process of European consolidation" [9]. The scope of cooperation with EU neighbours should be broadened. Participation in EU programmes in such areas as culture, education, youth,

R&D, environment, and science will form an important step to exporting democratic values.

Secondly, "the ENP should be tailored to the needs of the individual countries to which it applies and should not be a "one size fits all" policy" [6]. In order to push for democracy in North Africa and Middle East another tools should be used in comparison to Western CIS or Southern Caucasus.

Finally, funding the democratization projects is to be increased and well-managed. Clear priorities should be set and concrete projects in areas of cross-border cooperation, Common Foreign and Security Policy as well as Justice and Home Affairs with ENP target countries. General framework of partnership and cooperation should be also modified in order to meet the needs of each target country. Involvement of other strong European institutions and NGO's is one of the possible solutions.

In that case the component of democracy promotion will be no more a weak point of the ENP, but a significant element of stability, growth and prosperity in our common European future.

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## ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКА ПОЛІТИКА СУСІДСТВА ЯК ФАКТОР ДЕМОКРАТИЗАЦІЇ

*Проаналізовано перспективи однієї з найважливіших складових зовнішньої політики ЄС у рамках Європейської політики сусідства, а саме підтримку демократизації. Європейська політика сусідства розглядається як надзвичайно приваблива модель для подальшого співробітництва, особливо після таких процесів, як нещодавнє розширення ЄС, хвиля кольорових революцій та європеїзація геополітичної периферії ЄС. Проте численні інституційні, політичні та фінансові проблеми лише доводять низьку її ефективність. Узв'язку з цим пропонуються певні кроки до вдосконалення інструментів демократизації Європейської політики сусідства.*