

## THE REFORM OF THE EU NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICIES AND INSTRUMENTS IN THE POST-2020 PERIOD

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**Abstract.** *This study aims at a synthesis of European policies, programs, mechanisms and instruments directed at developing a special good neighbourly relationship at the borders of the European Union. Methodologically, we aim to identify the main reforming guidelines concerning primarily the neighbourhood policies and instruments in the post-2020 period. The new multiannual financial framework is thus taken into account. In order to capture the main changes to these policies and instruments, we purpose to diachronically capture their evolution from the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy until the beginning of 2020.*

*The reform of the European Neighbourhood Policy has been a complex process imposed by the internal realities of the EU, but, naturally, it was marked both by the position of the partners or by the global geopolitical and macroeconomic context. During the period since the launch of the ENP (2004) the context has changed. Some neighbours have since become members of the EU. Then, in 2008 and 2009, the two partnerships aimed at the southern dimension (Union for the Mediterranean) and the eastern dimension (Eastern Partnership) are launched. The instruments are updated, reformed and resized through a constantly increasing allocation for each multiannual financial framework. Moreover, these instruments with which the EU operates in relation to its partners have been diversified to respond to the context, but also to stimulate both the partner state and the society, the population as a whole.*

*The European policy implementation framework has been shaped by the internal and external context. The multilateral dimension of cooperation has increasingly been replaced by the bilateral dimension. The more for more principle applied in this context was intended as a stimulus for partners. This incentive must be understood not only in the sense that a state that reforms more, that integrates more, gets more support, including financially. The process is more complex and includes, as has become increasingly evident after 2015, a sectoral dimension of integration and differentiation. Thus, within the same state, some sectors have received additional support to the detriment of others. The differentiation was made starting from the same principle (more for more).*

**Keywords:** *Neighbourhood Policies, European Instruments, Eastern Partnership, European Union, cooperation, partnership*

### Introduction

This study aims at a synthesis of European policies, programs, mechanisms and instruments directed at developing a special good neighbourly relationship at the borders of the European Union. Methodologically, we aim to identify the main **reforming guidelines** concerning primarily the neighbourhood policies and instruments in the post-2020 period. The new **multiannual financial framework** is thus taken into account. In

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order to capture the main changes to these policies and instruments, we purpose to diachronically capture their evolution from the launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy until the beginning of 2020.<sup>1</sup>

**The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)** was initiated in 2003 and officially launched in May 2004 (European Commission, 2004). This policy represents the European Union's perspective on its relations with its neighbours. The European Union aims to avoid the emergence of a new dividing line between the EU and its neighbours (Pop, 2006: 8). In this regard, the EU aims, through privileged relations with its neighbours, to harmonize all levels of cooperation, including by the implementation of common standards. The **areas of cooperation** at the external borders are diverse: from politics to economics, from culture to security (Pop, 2006: 9). The European Commission (2007) and later the Parliament and the Council of the European Union have reported the results of the European Neighbourhood Policy from the first years of its implementation. "The ENP has strengthened relations with partner countries and brought concrete benefits to both the Union and its partners, including the launch of regional initiatives and support for democratization in the European neighbourhood" (OJEU, 2014). Furthermore, these **desiderata** of the European Union can also be found in the **ENP Strategy Paper** (the act attesting the creation of the new ENP, as well as its scope). EU's desire to be surrounded by countries that are prosperous and strengthened in terms of peace and security is brought into focus. Thus, the EU could ensure its own security only by expanding economic, political and security cooperation with these states and transforming them into more prosperous, more democratic ones and more able to ensure their own security (Lynch, 2005). The main instruments of the European Union for the implementation of the ENP are Country Reports, Action Plans, European Neighbourhood Agreements and, very importantly, the financial instruments dedicated to these programs carried out in cooperation with neighbouring partners.

Following the European enlargement in 2004 and 2007, the European neighbourhood has also expanded. The new neighbouring area has become more challenging in the context of the many crises that the European Union and its neighbouring partners have had to deal with. The ENP has been constantly reformed. In 2008 the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) appeared in Paris, and in 2009 the Eastern Partnership (EaP) was launched in Prague. There was a need for a differentiated approach to the neighbouring area. Moreover, over the last decade, it has become increasingly clear that the two projects for the southern and eastern neighbourhoods could not be viewed and managed strictly at a multilateral level, either. The bilateral and sectorial dimension has become increasingly clear. We are therefore talking about a new, differentiated approach to integration, in line with the ever-present principle of *more for more* imposed as an incentive to get partner states to choose a stronger partnership with the EU.

In line with the EU priorities, cross-border cooperation at the EU's external borders has become increasingly consistent concerning the programs and tools it provides.<sup>2</sup> The EU budget allocated to the neighbourhood, in particular to cross-border cooperation, has steadily

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<sup>1</sup> We mention that at the time of writing this paper, the negotiation process regarding the EU's multiannual budget hasn't been completed; the options which are under discussion and which have been made available to the public may suffer considerable changes.

<sup>2</sup> One of the priorities of ENP is cross-border cooperation with the neighbours. The European Union aims to promote, first and foremost, the development of common border regions, as well as the security at the EU's external borders, encouraging cooperation at a regional and local level (EUR-Lex, 2007).

increased throughout this period, as a result of the involvement and determination to make the border more flexible and open, a border which needs to become softer and more permissive for the "good" neighbourliness. From this perspective, the favourable, good neighbourliness becomes a space that ensures the security of the EU borders (Brie, 2017: 56; Matuszewicz, 2007: 109). The good neighbourliness develops and takes cooperation to a higher level of expression. The European Union is interested in the success of this neighbourhood policy, which it has sought to reform as concerns both instruments and programs. In view of the new concepts, EU support is used for the benefit of partner countries and areas involved in cross-border cooperation, through a separate approach, but also for the common benefit of the Union and partner countries (Bărbulescu et al. 2016: 70). By implementing European instruments designed for good neighbourliness or cross-border cooperation, there is a tendency to move "the real border outwards by building a new, symbolic one, including a privileged peripheral area that benefits from the advantages of the neighbourhood" (Brie & Horga, 2009: 7- 8; Bărbulescu et al. 2016: 65).

The European Neighbourhood has not proved to be a challenge-free space for the EU. From North Africa to Syria and Ukraine, numerous conflicts have generated considerable crises and pressures which have dictated the reform of EU policies and instruments. Many analysts see all these crises as a sign of failure from the part of the EU and the EaP, as these forms of cooperation have failed to constantly provide adequate answers to those crises, or to satisfy the changing aspirations of the Eastern partners, "this being (...) as well, to the detriment of the EU's interests"(European Commission, 2015a: 2). Then, some states in the EU's immediate neighbourhood tried to adapt their relations with the EU to the need not to "upset" other actors involved at regional level. We mention here Russia, as well as Turkey (for additional reading, see Berbec, 2010: 7; Shapovalova, 2010: 70-71; Sasse, 2019; Korosteleva, 2017: 167-176; Marciacq & Flessenkemper, 2018; Kobzar & Paul, 2017; Naumescu & Dungaciu, 2015; Nixey, 2019; Freyburg et al., 2009, pp. 916-934; Kostanyan, 2017). All of these posed major challenges for the EU, which was forced to respond through appropriate policies to the new needs and geopolitical realities present at its borders.

### **EU financial instruments for the neighbourhood in the period of 2007-2020**

The financial assistance of the European Union intended to implement the European Neighbourhood Policy is directed towards the financing of the following categories of programs (MFA Romania, 2020):

- bilateral (intended for the bilateral relationship between the EU and each partner state and representing the largest part of the funds);
- ENI Inter-regional (Erasmus for All, Neighbourhood Investment Facility-NIF, Umbrella programs, etc.);
- ENI Regional East and ENI Regional South (dedicated to regional projects);
- ENI-CBC (intended to finance cross-border cooperation programs).

In the case of the EU financial period 2007-2013, the implementation of the ENP in the Eastern Neighbourhood area, including the European Union's cross-border cooperation with neighbouring Eastern States, was in line with the *European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument* (ENPI). The importance given to the ENP has increased during its implementation and also in the context of new challenges and needs in evidence at a regional level. The ENPI is the financial instrument of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). It is intended for ENP partner countries and Russia, providing co-financing for the

process of strengthening governance and equitable economic and social development. The ENPI also supports cross-border and cross-regional cooperation.

According to *Regulation (EC) No 1638/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 October 2006 laying down general provisions establishing a European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument* (Official Journal of the European Union, 2006: 164), ENPI supports, inter alia:

- political reforms: creation and adaptation of institutional and administrative capacities, good governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, participation of civil society, multicultural dialogue, as well as the fight against fraud, corruption, organized crime, and terrorism;
- economic reforms: economic development, the market economy, intensification of trade and compliance of the regulatory framework to that of the EU in areas of common interest, with a view to progressive economic integration on the internal market;
- social reforms: integration, employment, non-discrimination, the fight against poverty;
- sectorial cooperation, especially in sectors of common interest: environment, sustainable development, energy, transport, telecommunications, health, food security, education and training, research and innovation;
- regional and local development, along with regional (Euro-Mediterranean and Eastern European regions) and subregional integration;
- participation in community programs and agencies.

The budget allocated to the ENPI was EUR 11.181 billion for the period 2007–2013. Of these funds, 95% were directed to national and multinational programs, and 5% to cross-border cooperation programs (EU Neighbours 2020). Multinational programs may also provide for transregional cooperation between Member States and partner countries on matters of common interest without geographical restrictions. Thus, the allocation for cross-border cooperation has increased considerably. In the period 2007–2013, for the 15 *cross-border cooperation programs*, both for the southern and eastern areas, the EU finally allocated more than EUR 1.1 billion through ENPI (AEBR 2007).

During the implementation of this European policy supporting good neighbourliness, there were times when financial allocations were supplemented. One such moment was the launch of the Eastern Partnership (EaP), when funds for cooperation with the partner states were substantially supplemented. Thus, the Joint Declaration also contained a commitment "complementary to the macro-financial assistance provided by relevant international instruments" (European Commission, 2009). The European Commission allocated EUR 600 million for the period 2010–2013, including 350 million for new funds (European Moldova, 2019). It can, therefore, be seen that the Eastern Partnership was supported both by the amounts which had already been allocated and were specific to the ENPI and by the additional allocations for this special purpose. For the period 2010–2013, the total value of ENPI funds, including the additional amounts allocated through the EaP, intended for Eastern partners amounted to EUR 1.9 billion (Bocková & Lenč 2014: 162). This European policy supporting the consolidation of political and economic relations with neighbouring states continued to be a priority, and it was included in the plans for "cooperation, association and partnership" (European Commission, 2015c: 2). This was in line with the text of the Treaty on European Union which states that "the Union shall develop privileged relations with neighbouring countries aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterized by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation". (art. 8 para. (1); European Commission 2015c: 2).

ENPI Cross-Border Cooperation  
Indicative allocations per programme, 2007-2013

	2007-10	2010-13	Total 2007-13
<i>Land-Border Programmes</i>			
Kolarctic/Russia	14.728	13.513	28.241
Karelia/Russia	12.101	11.102	23.203
SE Finland/Russia	18.871	17.314	36.185
Estonia/Latvia/Russia	24.915	22.859	47.775
Latvia/Lithuania/Belarus	21.766	19.970	41.737
Lithuania/ Poland /Russia	68.908	63.222	132.130
Poland/Belarus/Ukraine	97.107	89.094	186.201
Hungary/Slovakia/Ukraine/Romania	35.796	32.842	68.638
Romania/Moldova/Ukraine	66.086	60.632	126.718
<i>Sea-Crossing Programmes</i>			
Spain/Morocco	81.738	74.993	156.732
CBC Atlantic Programme	16.773	15.389	32.162
Italy/Tunisia	13.138	12.054	25.191
<i>Sea-Basin Programmes</i>			
Black Sea	9.025	8.281	17.306
Mediterranean	90.539	83.068	173.607
Baltic Sea Region (ENPI contribution to the integrated Baltic Sea programme)	11.791	10.818	22.608
<b>Total</b>	<b>583.283</b>	<b>535.152</b>	<b>1.118.434</b>

*Source:* European Neighbourhood & Partnership Instrument, *Cross-Border Cooperation. Strategy Paper 2007-2013* (2007), [http://www.enpicbmed.eu/documenti/29\\_38\\_20090108121312.pdf](http://www.enpicbmed.eu/documenti/29_38_20090108121312.pdf), accessed on 05.05.2020.

The multiannual financial framework for the period 2014-2020 contains a review of instruments and policies for the support of good neighbourliness. European neighbourhood policies are reformed. The multilateral dimension of the approach is increasingly accompanied by a bilateral perspective of cooperation in the border area and in the neighbourhood in general. In this context, along with the bilateral or regional programs for East and South, a new European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) is proposed to succeed the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument rethought in the spirit of the new policies of the European Union (EU Neighbours, 2014). According to this new instrument, which funds the implementation of the ENP, EU support for its neighbours becomes faster and more flexible, allowing for increased differentiation and incentives ("more for more" – a principle that includes both differentiation among states and the stimulation of the best-performing ones) granted to states that are most committed to the adoption of reforms and that have made progress in strengthening a deep and lasting democracy.

Despite the financial crisis and the reduction of the EU's overall budget, the level of funding reserved for the European Neighbourhood Instrument amounts to EUR 15.4 billion (EU Neighbours, 2020), which highlights the fact that the EU considers its neighbourhood a priority. Up to 5% of the total value of the financial package shall be allocated to cross-border

cooperation programs. The European Neighbourhood Instrument, which replaced the ENPI, provides support for the implementation of policy initiatives aimed at shaping the ENP, including the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean. Neighbour assistance is reformed, reducing the complexity and duration of the programming process, so as not to undermine the relevance of assistance (European Moldova, 2014).

Through the European Neighbourhood Instrument, the European Union aims to "create an area of shared prosperity and good neighbourliness between EU countries and partner countries". In this regard, the following are pursued (EUR-Lex, 2014a):

- the promotion of human rights, the rule of law, sustainable democracy and citizen participation;
- sustainable and inclusive economic, social and territorial growth and development, including through progressive integration in the EU internal market;
- mobility and interpersonal contacts, including student exchanges;
- regional integration, including cross-border cooperation programs.

Regarding *cross-border cooperation programs*, 17 programs, including the maritime ones, were developed and promoted for the period 2014-2020. The total amounts allocated to these programs was EUR 1,052,650,355 (EEAS 2014: 18; Annex 2, Table 2: 1-2).

ENI Cross-Border Cooperation  
Indicative total allocations per programme, 2014-2020

Land border programmes (Figures in EUR)	TOTAL 2014-2017	TOTAL 2018-2020	TOTAL 2014-2020	2018-2020 Additional ERDF <sup>10</sup>
Kolarctic/Russia	16,451,819	8,266,271	24,718,090	10,355,241
Karelia/Russia	13,938,222	7,562,832	21,501,054	8,106,616
SE Finland/Russia	21,665,925	14,480,857	36,146,782	9,355,180
Estonia/Russia	9,030,972	7,776,552	16,807,524	1,826,238
Latvia/Russia	11,191,052	4,683,976	15,875,028	8,162,486
Lithuania/Russia	10,865,846	8,149,384	19,015,230	13,492,385
Poland/Russia	33,681,960	14,902,154	48,584,114	23,608,291
Latvia/Lithuania/Belarus	36,437,715	37,562,285	74,000,000	
Poland/Belarus Ukraine	86,563,853	89,235,451	175,799,304	
Hungary/Slovakia/Romania/Ukraine	36,414,080	37,537,920	73,952,000	
Romania/Ukraine	29,544,094	30,455,906	60,000,000	
Romania/Moldova	39,884,526	41,115,474	81,000,000	
Sea crossings programme				
Italy/Tunisia	16,423,966	16,930,854	33,354,820	
Sea basin programmes				
Baltic Sea Region	5,028,571	3,771,429	8,800,000	
Black Sea	19,977,347	19,061,250	39,038,597	
Mediterranean	102,940,394	106,117,418	209,057,812	
Mid-Atlantic	69,854,564	30,145,436	100,000,000	49,868,589
Programme Support	8,571,429	6,428,571	15,000,000	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>568,466,335</b>	<b>484,184,020</b>	<b>1,052,650,355</b>	<b>124,775,026</b>

*Source:* SEAE, 2014, Annex 2, Table 2: 1-2

The European Union has also promoted other instruments or programs designed to implement and finance the European Neighbourhood Policy. Among these, we mention: ***Challenge Facility for Civil Society*** with a special component addressed to the EaP states (EaP-CSF 2017b). At the same time, Brussels provides financial support through grants to partners, and the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development complement this support with loans. In parallel, other new instruments have been created within the ENP in order to promote market access, in particular through the negotiation, initialling and implementation of ***Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements***. In order to improve mobility and manage migration, the European Commission proposed the conclusion of mobility partnerships and the facilitation/liberalization of visas (signed with some of the Eastern partners). In this regard, after 2016 the EU provided a specific financial instrument – ***the Mobility Partnership Instrument*** (European Parliament 2019d). In the southern region, a number of regional and bilateral initiatives on migration and mobility are funded under the ***EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa***, the "North Africa" component.

ENI was created with the purpose of differentiating the levels of support for partner countries according to the needs and progress of each partner country. Another purpose is to "strengthen the links between EU citizens and citizens of partner countries", by encouraging these states to participate in other EU internal programs, such as ***Horizon 2020***, ***Erasmus +*** and ***COSME*** (EUR-Lex, 2013a; EUR-Lex, 2013b; EUR-Lex, 2014a; EUR-Lex, 2014b).

The European Union has proven to be a major financial supporter of the neighbourhood not only through the European Neighbourhood Instrument. The neighbourhood could also be supported by other ***programs and instruments*** which, together with the ENI, amount to an allocated budget for the period 2014-2020 of over EUR 51.41 billion, as follows: The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance – IPA (EU Neighbours, 2020) – EUR 11.69 billion; The Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) – EUR 19.66 billion; The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) – EUR 15.43 billion; The Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries (PI) – EUR 0.95 billion; The EU Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP): EUR 2.33 billion; The European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR): EUR 1.33 billion.

### **A new approach to the neighbourhood in the post-2020 period**

A new reform of the neighbourhood policies and instruments has become increasingly necessary in the context of the new internal and geopolitical realities, both globally and in the immediate vicinity. The political and security instability that characterizes a large part of the southern and eastern space of the borders of the European Union is associated with phenomena such as increasing migratory pressure, major socio-economic imbalances, increasing organized crime, etc. All this calls for an appropriate EU response. Our debate cannot be complete without presenting the general framework of the Union's internal context. The need for reform has primarily internal, institutional and structural arguments. Brexit is just one of the elements that require a major rethinking of policies and instruments. The health crisis caused by the spread of COVID-19, associated with a deep economic and social crisis (possibly generating political crises in the weaker states in the European neighbourhood), calls for the EU to take appropriate measures and decisions that must keep it relevant on the global stage, and particularly in the neighbourhood area. The EU's response must be clearly instrumented, including financially, given the very high need for assistance that its partners have during this period.

This complicated period overlaps and over the discussions within the EU around the construction of the multiannual financial framework for the 2021-2027 cycle. The EU, through its institutions, and the Member States as well, aim to redesign the architecture and functionality of the EU financial instruments in the field of foreign policy, including those pertaining to the European Neighbourhood Policy. We, therefore, expect a revision of the ENP instruments, including the European Neighbourhood Instrument as the main financial instrument. Flexibilization and differentiation, accompanied by a quantitative and qualitative increase in financial support, can be elements of the new directions of expression of neighbourhood policies and instruments.

Having as main declared objective the revision of the ENP instruments in the post-2020 period, the European Parliament adopted on 18 April 2018 a report on the implementation of EU external financing instruments, including the future post-2020 architecture (European Parliament, 2018). With regard to the ENI, the text of the resolution calls for more flexibility, a better use of the "more for more" approach and the incentive-based approach and a better coordination between regional and bilateral programs (European Parliament, 2019). In this document, Parliament calls for "funding of external relations instruments to reflect ambitious external actions, and for the budget for the EU as a global player" (European Parliament, 2018, point 114), accompanied by a reform of the current instrument architecture in order to provide more accountability, transparency and public oversight, and also to increase efficiency, coherence and responsiveness (European Parliament, 2018, point 116). The EU's commitment to issues such as human rights, democracy, support for civil society, as well as the various goals, objectives and the specific political and strategic value of current instruments stresses that the reform should not undermine the political objectives of each instrument; understands the specificity of the objectives and the implementation of the ENI (European Parliament, 2018, point 118). Parliament also calls for improved requirements for faster decision-making in order to increase the EU's capacity to respond to rapidly evolving events (European Parliament, 2018, point 133), but also for EU delegations to play a key role in local programming and oversight of programming and eventual disbursement of funds, and identification of beneficiaries, particularly in the case of human rights defenders and civil society organizations active in sensitive areas (European Parliament, 2018, point 135). The programming of instruments must closely involve the civil society in the respective countries in order to establish strong and long-lasting partnerships, to meet the specific needs of the population and take the social realities of the population into account (European Parliament, 2018, point 136).

The text proposed by the European Parliament emphasizes the importance of *increasing the visibility and raising awareness of the EU's external action* – including through the utilisation of the EU's Strategic Communication Task Force – *and its influence around the world*. Moreover, it is expressly requested that it be considered as a "policy objective" (European Parliament, 2018, point 134).

The resolution emphasizes that stronger conditionality mechanisms should be set up whereby direct budget support to state authorities, government bodies or non-state actors can be suspended or, when possible, redirected to civil society, in cases where such institutions do not adhere to or comply with the need to meet the objectives of the dispersed funding, or do not comply with them, or violate the rule of law and human rights (European Parliament, 2018, § 138). In view of a proper implementation, it is necessary "to ensure transparency, accountability, scrutiny, development additionally, as well as



respect for aid/development effectiveness principles and strong environmental, human rights and social safeguards (European Parliament, 2018, pt. 139).

In the same direction of reforming EU neighbourhood instruments, the European Commission published on 14 June 2018 a *Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)* (European Commission, 2018). This Commission proposal seeks to help simplify funding mechanisms and procedures for the European Neighbourhood, external action in general. Thus, in the new multiannual financial framework, the EU aims to integrate more financial instruments into the new NDICI format.

This new instrument will integrate the following instruments from the previous multiannual financial framework (European Commission, 2018c):

- the European Development Fund (EDF), currently out of budget;
- the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI);
- the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI);
- the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR);
- the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP);
- the Partnership Instrument for cooperation with third countries (PI);
- the Guarantee Fund for External Actions.

This global instrument will be complemented by other instruments, such as (European Commission, 2018c):

- the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA);
- Humanitarian aid;
- the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP);
- Overseas countries and territories (including Greenland);
- the European Instrument for Nuclear Safety.

On 27 March 2019, Parliament adopted a position at first reading on this proposal from the European Commission. Parliament called for additional funding, but also for suspension of assistance in cases of human rights violations (European Commission, 2018).

The overall objective of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument is to support and promote the values and interests of the Union throughout the world, in order to pursue the objectives and principles of its external action (European Commission, 2018). With regard to the EaP States, the specific objectives of the NDICI are supporting and promoting dialogue and cooperation with partner countries; strengthening and supporting democracy, the rule of law and human rights, supporting civil society organizations, contributing to stability and peace and addressing other global challenges such as migration and mobility; providing a rapid response in the following cases: situations of crisis, instability and conflict; resilience issues and providing the link between humanitarian aid and development actions and responding to the needs and priorities of foreign policy (European Commission, 2018).

The financial allocations envisaged in the current discussions for the EU's external action are: NDICI (EUR 89.2 billion) plus a European instrument for nuclear safety (EUR 300 million). Moreover, consideration is given to a pre-accession assistance instrument (EUR 14.5 billion), a humanitarian aid instrument (EUR 11 billion), a EUR 3 billion budget for the common foreign and security policy and for cooperation with overseas countries and territories, including Greenland (EUR 500 million). In addition, the High Representative,

supported by the Commission, proposes the establishment, outside the EU budget, of the European Instrument for Peace, which is to have a budget of EUR 10.5 billion.

The multiannual financial framework proposed for financing the EU external action 2021-2027 (EUR million) (current price commitments)

<b>1. Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument</b>	<b>89,500</b>
<b>1.1 Geographic programmes</b>	<b>68,000</b>
Neighbourhood	22,000
Sub-Saharan Africa	32,000
Asia and the Pacific	10,000
Americas and Caribbean	4,000
<b>1.2 Thematic programmes</b>	<b>7,000</b>
Human Rights and Democracy	1,500
Civil Society Organisations	1,500
Stability and Peace	1,000
Global Challenges	3,000
<b>1.3 Rapid response</b>	<b>4,000</b>
<b>1.4 Emerging challenges and priorities cushion</b>	<b>10,200</b>
<b>2. Complementary European Instrument for Nuclear Safety</b>	<b>300</b>
<b>3. Instrument for Pre-accession</b>	<b>14,500</b>
<b>4. Humanitarian aid</b>	<b>11,000</b>
<b>5. Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP)</b>	<b>3,000</b>
<b>6. Overseas countries and territories (incl. Greenland)</b>	<b>500</b>
<b>7. Other</b>	<b>1,070</b>
<b>8. Decentralised agencies</b>	<b>149</b>
<b>9. Margin</b>	<b>3,283</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>123,002</b>

*Source:* European Commission, 2018c

Specifically, neighbourhood and international cooperation policies are supported, in accordance with the Commission Communication of 2 May 2018, by an allocation for the implementation of the NDICI amounting to approximately EUR 89.2 billion for the period 2021-2027<sup>3</sup> (European Commission, 2018). Of this amount, EUR 22 billion is earmarked exclusively for the EU's neighbourhood. Other amounts can also be accessed by EU neighbouring states. In this regard, we recall the allocation of EUR 7 billion for thematic programs (EUR 1.5 billion for human rights and democracy; EUR 1.5 billion for civil society organizations; EUR 1 billion for stability and peace, and EUR 3 billion for global challenges). EUR 4 billion has been allocated to rapid response actions, and EUR 10.2 billion is a reserve for emerging challenges and priorities (European Commission, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Negotiations on the multiannual financial framework for the 2021-2027 cycle were not completed until the end of April 2020, as they were also complicated by the health crisis generated by the spread of COVID-19. Most likely, the financial dimension of support for NDICI will undergo adjustments, as well.

In order to increase the efficiency and speed of the response of European support to the needs identified at the level of external action, in particular at the level of supporting good neighbourliness, the simplification of procedures and the flexibilization of financial intervention, of instruments in general, are considered. In this regard, it will be possible to utilise and reutilise on a multi-annual basis all the allocated amounts that have not been used, and, through the funds from the rapid reaction pillar (EUR 4 billion), immediate actions will be considered for crisis or emergency situations. This flexibilization is possible primarily due to the reserve set up for this purpose (EUR 10.2 billion) through which the EU will intervene in the context of unforeseen situations. The EU will call on this reserve fund to address some priorities identified during the implementation of the multiannual financial framework that have not been allocated or have insufficient budgets.

The size and nature of the financial support that the EU provides to geographical programs in the EU neighbourhood is different in form and amounts allocated, according to (European Commission, 2018):

- the needs of the partner country, determined on the basis of indicators such as population and level of development;
- the commitment of the partner country to the mutually agreed objectives of political, economic and social reform and the progress made in their implementation;
- the commitment of the partner country to building a solid and sustainable democracy and the progress made in this process;
- the country's partnership with the Union, including the level of ambition of that partnership;
- the absorption capacity of the partner country and the potential impact of Union support provided under this Regulation.

Regarding the legal format of implementation, at a general level, but also particularly regarding the support of the neighbourhood, NDICI will be able to be implemented in accordance with the general framework of Association Agreements, Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, Multilateral Agreements and other agreements establishing a legally binding relation with partner countries. Furthermore, the same general regulatory framework for European instruments shall also include the conclusions of the European Council and the conclusions of the Council, the summit declarations or the conclusions of high-level meetings with partner countries, relevant European Parliament resolutions, Commission communications or joint communications of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (European Commission, 2018).

Funding will be provided through *multi-annual indicative programs*. These shall be based on internationally agreed results and objectives, in particular those set for sustainable development goals. The European Parliament and the Council participate, together with the Member States, in the process of adopting these programs (European Commission 2018c). For EaP countries, association agendas, partnership priorities and other equivalent documents agreed upon are key benchmarks for setting EU support priorities for neighbouring countries (European Commission, 2018c).

As mentioned, the NDICI contains a chapter on the neighbourhood, with specific provisions applicable exclusively to countries in the eastern (but also southern) neighbourhood. “These specificities and key principles are maintained and strengthened, particularly the performance-based approach ('more for more'), the differentiation-based approach, thus stimulating the implementation of mutually agreed political and economic

reforms. Given the very good results achieved so far, cross-border cooperation between EU Member States and partner countries will also continue, both in the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhoods” (European Commission, 2018c).

### Conclusions

The reform of the European Neighbourhood Policy has been a complex process imposed by the internal realities of the EU, but, naturally, it was marked both by the position of the partners or by the global geopolitical and macroeconomic context. During the period since the launch of the ENP (2004) the context has changed. Some neighbours have since become members of the EU. Then, in 2008 and 2009, the two partnerships aimed at the southern dimension (Union for the Mediterranean) and the eastern dimension (Eastern Partnership) are launched. The instruments are updated, reformed and resized through a constantly increasing allocation for each multiannual financial framework. Moreover, these instruments with which the EU operates in relation to its partners have been diversified to respond to the context, but also to stimulate both the partner state and the society, the population as a whole.

The European policy implementation framework has been shaped by the internal and external context. The multilateral dimension of cooperation has increasingly been replaced by the bilateral dimension. The *more for more* principle applied in this context was intended as a stimulus for partners. This incentive must be understood not only in the sense that a state that reforms more, that integrates more, gets more support, including financially. The process is more complex and includes, as has become increasingly evident after 2015, a sectoral dimension of integration and differentiation. Thus, within the same state, some sectors have received additional support to the detriment of others. The differentiation was made starting from the same principle (more for more).

The process of implementing the external action and the European neighbourhood policy in particular, has become more complex through the range of instruments. At the same time, the EU has proposed simplified and more flexible mechanisms, by refining them and by stimulating the achievement of the objectives set out.

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