

# THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE EUROPEAN NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY: THE CASE OF UKRAINE AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE RELATION WITH RUSSIA

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**Abstract.** *The implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2004 was an instrument established to achieve a rapprochement between the countries of Eastern Europe and the Southern Mediterranean with the European Union. Since this common policy began, it has evolved very differently in the distinct countries that are part of it. One such country is Ukraine, which has developed special relations with the European Union. So much so that, since the implementation of a specific dimension called the Eastern Partnership in 2009, relations have been fluctuating between Ukraine and the European Union.*

**Keywords:** *European Union, Ukraine, European Neighbourhood Policy, Regional development, Eastern Partnership, Russia.*

## **Introduction**

To begin with, it should be borne in mind that the EU relations with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe began between the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s of the last century. For instance, the Cooperation and Trade Agreement between the Soviet Union and the European Community was signed in 1989 (García Andrés, 2018: 108) through Decision 90/116/ECC. These relations were the result of the progressive disintegration of the Soviet Union at that time. There were certain regulations and decisions aimed to assist these countries in their transition to democracy and a market economy.

In this way, certain European policies were implemented in the various neighbouring countries. Even some applications to join the EU were accepted. Therefore, in the first years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the limits of the EU were extended towards other countries. Due to this fact the EU had new borders shared with new countries. 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004 was one of the most important moments for the EU, with the largest enlargement in its history. Thus, the new borders of EU extended to new Eastern European countries: Belarus and Ukraine. In addition, in the year 2004, the accession processes in Bulgaria and Romania for 2007 were already in operation, so Moldova also got in contact with the new enlarged EU.

Following these enlargements, there was a need to strengthen and deepen relations with those who became the new direct neighbours of EU. Thus, from 2002 onwards, talks were initiated to develop a new policy based on closer ties with the countries of Eastern Europe. The basis for this new initiative was found in the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) that were ratified at the end of the 1990s. These PCA initiated bilateral

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relations between the EU and its Eastern neighbours (except Belarus which did not ratify its PCA with the EU).

Due to the great interest generated by the creation of this new policy within the EU institutions, it was taken beyond the land borders. Two nearby regions entered the orbit of this policy: The Southern Caucasus with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia; and the Mediterranean region with Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestinian Authority, Syria and Tunisia. In the case of the last region mentioned, the first approximation made was the so-called Barcelona Conference of 1995. This was a broad framework of political, economic and social relations between the members of the EU and the countries of the Southern Mediterranean (Treviño Ruiz, 2014: 15).

### 1. The European Neighbourhood Policy

The process of creating a new policy for the EU neighbouring countries started in 2003. In March, the European Commission (EC) presented a communication to the Council and European Parliament (EP) entitled “Wider Europe Neighbourhood: a new framework for relations with our Eastern and Southern neighbours.” The main idea that emerges from this communication was the establishment of a prosperous zone that maintained closer relations based on cooperation (Commission of the European Communities, 2003a: 9).

It was essential to know which the necessary strategies for the creation of the European Neighbourhood Policy were (ENP). In the same way, it had to be considered the different degrees of intensity in the EU relations with these countries. This issue could be reflected in the negotiations and entry into force of the PCA of these countries with the EU (Table 1). In some neighbouring countries progress had been made more than in others. However, the first initiatives should be allocated to general areas in all of them: the democratic situation, respect for human rights and the promotion of the rule of law.

**Table 1:** PCA with ENP countries

COUNTRY	Signature of agreement	Official publication	Document
Algeria	22 April 2002	18 July 2005	2005/690/CE
Armenia	22 April 1996	<b>31 May 1999</b>	<b>1999/602/CE</b>
Palestinian Authority	24 February 1997	2 June 1997	97/430/CE
Azerbaijan	22 April 1996	<b>31 May 1999</b>	<b>99/614/CE</b>
Belarus	6 March 1995	On standby	
Georgia	22 April 1996	<b>31 May 1999</b>	<b>99/515/CE</b>
Egypt	25 June 2001	21 April 2004	2004/635/CE
Israel	20 November 1995	19 April 2000	2000/384/CE
Jordan	24 November 1997	26 March 2002	2002/357/CE
Lebanon	17 June 2002	14 February 2006	2006/356/CE
Libya	Without agreement		
Morocco	26 February 1996	24 January 2000	2000/204/CE
Moldova	28 November 1994	<b>28 May 1998</b>	<b>98/401/CE</b>
Syria	19 October 2004	On standby	
Tunisia	17 July 1995	<b>26 January 1998</b>	<b>98/238/CE</b>
Ukraine	14 June 1994	<b>26 January 1998</b>	<b>98/149/CE</b>

*Source:* author's own elaboration with information from the European External Action Service, Treaties Office Database

Considering the unequal point in which the EU relations with the different neighbouring countries were. It had to be understood that the ENP could not be approached as a single policy. Therefore, one of the characteristics of this policy should be based on the differentiation between countries. The EU urged these countries to participate in the EU internal market and to continue with integration and liberalisation to promote the free movement of people, goods, services and capital (European Commission, 2003a: 10). In such a way that the instruments that already existed for a greater collaboration with them were complementing.

Thus, in July 2003, a new communication from the EC came out, entitled "Paving the way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument," in which were considered the objectives that the ENP had to fulfil during the first decade. It analysed the cooperation instruments that had been developing in the neighbouring countries and proposed new neighbourhood programmes (Commission of the European Communities, 2003b: 8-9). As said throughout this chapter, for the achievement of the ENP the regional priorities of each country would be considered. In May 2004 the EC Communication was published, launching the ENP under the title "European Neighbourhood Policy: Strategy Paper." As this strategy says: "The European Neighbourhood Policy's vision involves a ring of countries, sharing the EU's fundamental values and objectives." (Commission of the European Communities, 2004: 5) However, also the EU itself stated that the degree of participation of neighbouring countries in the ENP would depend on their acceptance of these values and objectives.

### **1.1. Objectives, instruments and financing**

With the communications mentioned above the EU interest in maintaining a secure area at its external borders, whether on land or at sea can be ascertained. Taking this premise into account, the main objectives that can be drawn from the ENP are:

- A) To create and consolidate an area of stability. It was necessary to consider the political situations developing in the various countries of Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean.
- B) To avoid diving lines or socio-economic fractures. This would seek to bring the ENP partner countries closer to the benefits of a stronger link with the EU.
- C) To share the benefits of enlargement. The new countries that joined in 2004 began to receive certain Community policies. This objective ensured that neighbours benefiting from these policies due to their proximity to the EU.
- D) To intensify relations between the EU and neighbouring countries.

With the approach of the ENP objectives the elements that were part of this policy began to be developed. Two of them should be highlighted: the Action Plans and the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

As for the first instrument, the Action Plans were defined as the central tools that set out the reforms to be carried out in the countries where the ENP was being developed. The Action Plans are triennial or five-year policy documents defining objectives and priorities for cooperation between the EU and the partner country (Pertusor and Shumylo-Tapolia, 2011: 218). Within these Actions Plans, the main interests of these countries related to the EU values and its priorities were exposed. As a result, the implementation of the different Action Plans depended on the political, economic and social situation in each neighbouring country.

Three stages can be established for the implementation of the ENP in each country. Firstly, periodic reports were to be made to assess the current situation of each

neighbouring country. The EC oversaw the preparation of these reports called: National Reports. Secondly, ENP bilateral Action Plans were established with each country. In these two steps, it was necessary to consider the status of the previous relations of these countries with the EU in order to deepen certain aspects. During the first years of the ENP various Action Plans were implemented. The number of these Plans that were created was 12 (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Moldova, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Ukraine) as not all ENP countries had one. Thus, Algeria began conversations to the implementation of an Action Plan a few years ago, while Belarus, Libya and Syria have not even agreed to start negotiations.

Thirdly and finally, regular monitoring of the progress of the Action Plans would be carried out, updating them if the review was favourable. The EC was responsible for publicising the progress being made towards the achievement of these Action Plans. This review would be carried out after analysing the studies provided by the institutions responsible in each of the ENP countries. Thus, taking these assessments into account, new relations between the EU and other countries could be achieved or further improvements could be made. These instruments were welcomed with great enthusiasm by many of the EU partner countries. However, one of the main scarcities of the initial Action Plans was that they did not include specific objectives or deadlines for their fulfilment.

The second instrument on which we will focus is the ENPI. A regulation dealing with the financing of the ENP came into being in 2006 (Official Journal of the European Union, 2006). This regulation established a community amount for the development of the different Action Plans in each neighbouring country. However, until the advent of the ENPI, funding during the early years of ENP development was provided through other community programmes. At the beginning, the EU used the funds allocated to the programme Technical Assistance for the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) with a budget of approximately EUR 3.1 billion. Moreover, the EU used as well part of the EUR 5.3 billion allocated to the programme Financial and Technical measure to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the framework of the Euro-Mediterranean partnership (MEDA) (Pertusot and Shumylo-Tapiola, 2011: 218).

The period of action covered by the ENPI was from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007 to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2013. The amount allocated to this programme was almost EUR 12 billion, which was a large increase in funding in general terms. Following the creation of this instrument, the EC adopted two plans for the implementation of this assistance in ENP countries: the National Strategic Plan and the National Indicative Plan. The vast majority of the projects were implemented by the ENPI. However, funding was also received through loans from other instruments to the EU institutions: the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

When the period of application of the ENPI came to an end, it was replaced by the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) through a regulation published in 2014 (Official Journal of the European Union, 2014). In this case, the period of action of the new programme was carried out in the multiannual period 2014-2020. With this new mechanism, the financial amount can be extended over EUR 15 billion.

## **1.2. Regional development**

A Communication from the EC to the Council and the EP “on strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy” was published at the end of 2006. This document was the first assessment of the ENP, reflecting the strategic importance of this policy for the EU neighbours (Commission of the European Communities, 2006: 2). However, they also

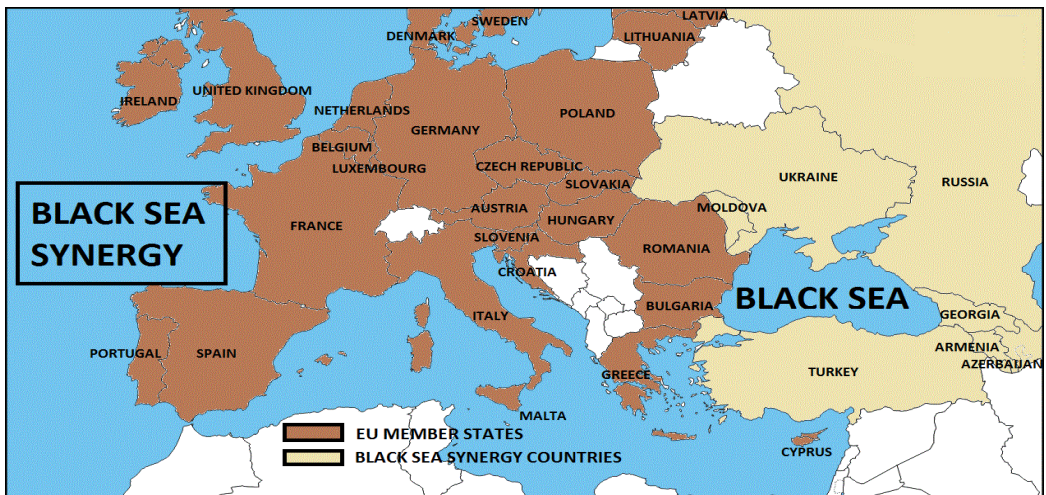
pointed out that no positive progress had been made in areas such as economic integration, migration flows or political and regional cooperation.

It is from this moment that new regional initiatives were developed within the ENP. Some of them can be highlighted:

#### A) *Black Sea Synergy*

With the entry into the EU in 2007 of Romania and Bulgaria, this regional initiative was launched in order to strengthen relations between the countries surrounding the Black Sea. Thus, the Black Sea region became an area of strategic importance for EU policies. At that time, the need was to create an organisation that would focus on coordinated action on issues concerning several countries in the region.

The Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organisation was established in 1999 as a precursor to this initiative and it had been operating as an intergovernmental forum since 1992 (Remiro Bretóns, 2008: 415). In addition, the EU itself had set up in 1993 the Interregional Technical Assistance Programme called Transport Corridor Europe Caucasus Asia (TRACECA). This mechanism was designed to develop the EU-Central Asia transport corridor



**Map 1:** Black Sea Synergy  
*Source:* author's own elaboration

With the development of these projects, a Communication from the EC to the Council and the EP on Black Sea Synergy came to light in April 2007 as a new regional cooperation initiative. The main areas of cooperation were developed in this Communication, including the following (Commission of the European Communities, 2007: 4-9):

- A) Training and exchange programmes and encouragement of regional dialogue with civil society.
- B) Initiatives on better migration management and tackling illegal migration.
- C) Strengthening confidence-building measures in the “frozen” conflict regions of Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno Karabakh.
- D) Dialogue on energy security.
- E) Support for regional transport cooperation in order to improve efficiency and physical and operational security.

- F) Enhance the implementation of multilateral environmental agreements.
- G) Dialogue on the emerging maritime policy configuration.

Therefore, a complementary initiative to the ENP was established for the integration of the Black Sea region into (Community policies Commission of the European Communities, 2008a). The EU presence in this area broadened the scope of the problems or conflicts that took place there.

A report on the first year of life of the Black Sea Synergy was produced in 2008. This report highlights the usefulness of this initiative and calls for greater long-term cooperation among all participants. In addition, 2010 was a major step forward with the creation of the Black Sea Synergy Environmental Partnership. In this way, with the first review of the ENP in 2011 the revision of the evolution of the Black Sea Synergy occurred. Thereby, a strategic plan that would be coherent with the rest of the actions being carried out at national level in the Black Sea was requested. The next review of the ENP took place in 2015, reaffirming the importance of the Black Sea Synergy in the political and economic reforms it promotes. In the last review of the ENP in 2017, there was little talk of the Black Sea Synergy and it only comment on the continuation of work within the framework for action. While the Council Conclusions on the EU's engagement in the Black Sea area in 2019 reaffirmed the Black Sea Synergy regional initiative as the basis for its development.

#### *B) Union for the Mediterranean*

On 13 July 2008, the Heads of State and Government of the EU Member States and the neighbouring Mediterranean countries met in Paris. In this Summit the Joint Declaration for the Mediterranean took place (Union for the Mediterranean, 2008). At first, it was thought that only the EU countries that were bathed by the Mediterranean would be part of this organisation. Finally, it was decided to involve all the EU countries together with the neighbouring Mediterranean countries. In addition to the EU Member States, the Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) was formed by: Albania, Algeria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Mauritania, Morocco, Monaco, Montenegro, Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Turkey. Syria was originally part of the Union, but since 2011 its participation has been suspended due to the internal situation in the country. As for Libya, it was an observer member from the outset.

As mentioned above, cooperation in the Mediterranean area started with the 1995 Barcelona Process and was driven by the ENP. It was at this time that it was favoured by regional integration with the EU in this geographical area. The main purpose of the Declaration in 2008 was to improve relations in the light of the objectives of the Barcelona Process. To this end, a series of provisions were agreed (Office of the Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, 2008):

1. The holding of biennial meetings of Heads of State and Government to launch regional projects. Similarly, it was proposed that annual meetings be held by Foreign Ministers to assess the progress of these actions.
2. The Summits were to be held alternately in the EU countries and in the neighbouring Mediterranean countries by consensus.
3. Creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Foundation for the Dialogue of Cultures.

The choice of projects should be based on the regional needs of the countries and it should be transnational in nature. In particular, priority should be given to three



objectives: the obtaining of peace, security, stability and economic prosperity. During the Paris Summit in 2008 were held the first negotiations for the implementation of some projects in the UfM framework, including: the fight against pollution in the Mediterranean, the establishment of the so-called Motorways of the Sea to facilitate trade, cooperation in civil protection to struggle natural disasters, and an ambitious plan for the development of solar energy (Sorolla & Santos, 14/7/2008). In 2010, the UfM Secretariat was created in Barcelona with the approval of the Statutes. Through this Secretariat was developed the creation of a series of Commissions: Political Affairs, Economic Affairs, Culture, Women and Energy. From 2012 onwards, the UfM was given a real boost due to the increase in the number of projects. During 2015, the ENP review took place providing new elements to strengthen the UfM.



**Map 2:** Union for the Mediterranean

*Source:* author's own elaboration

The major role that this Union could play in cooperation with its Southern Mediterranean neighbours was raised. Among the means proposed the following stand out: the promotion of exchanges on education, training and education policies; the increase of political and economic discussion forums; and the promotion of sub-regional cooperation.

To conclude with the analysis of this regional initiative, a new roadmap entitled “The Union for the Mediterranean: an action-oriented organisation with a common ambition” was launched at the beginning of 2017. This document listed the number of regional projects that had taken place up to that year with a total of 47 (Union for Mediterranean Secretariat, 2017: 9). But the most important thing was to establish deeper and more operational cooperation within the UfM itself.

Thus, the new challenges to be faced were highlighted: strengthening the political dialogue among member States, ensuring the contribution of UfM activities to regional stability and human development, strengthening regional integration, strengthening the UfM capacity for action, and holding an annual UfM Regional Forum. Undoubtedly, the UfM initiative presents many challenges and some associated issues, including the security and stability of the EU's southern border (Casado Raigón, 2009: 266).

### *C) Eastern Partnership*

In the case of Eastern Europe, there was no precedent as in the case of the Mediterranean. The creation of a specific partnership and cooperation of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine with the EU was therefore a novelty. However, the aforementioned PCA with the countries of Eastern Europe, except with Belarus, which did not enter into force (due to the special political situation in the country) can be seen as a precedent of this Eastern Partnership (EaP).



**Map 3:** Eastern Partnership  
*Source:* author's own elaboration

The Presidency Conclusions of the Council of the European Union of 19-20 June 2008 in points 68-70 (Council of the European Union, 2008a: 20) spoke of the need to promote regional cooperation between the EU and Eastern neighbours. The EC therefore started to prepare a proposal for the EaP to be ready for the following year. In September of the same year, works on the EaP were accelerated due to the ongoing war emergency in Georgia. Due to this fact, the Extraordinary Council of the European Council of 1<sup>st</sup> September highlighted the need for the EU to support regional cooperation in the region as soon as possible (Council of the European Union, 2008: 1). Thus, before the end of that year, in December, an EC Communication was presented to the EP and the Council on the EaP setting out the new contractual relations between the Eastern partners and the EU.

After a few months of negotiations and with the bases in operation, the first EaP Summit took place on 7 May 2009 in Prague. The Joint Declaration published the following day sets out the lines of this partnership: the principles of international law and fundamental values, the market economy, sustainable development and good governance. Among the main objectives of the EaP were the creation of good conditions for



accelerating political association and further economic integration (Council of the European Union, 2009: 5-6). In the same way, four thematic platforms were created with the purpose of achieving greater precision in the topics to be dealt with:

1. Democracy, good governance and stability.
2. Economic integration and convergence with EU sectoral policies.
3. Energy security.
4. Contacts between people.

For the development of broader relations, it was established that bilateral cooperation would take place through Association Agreements (AA) and the establishment of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTA) between the EU and these countries. In turn, the Summit encouraged the mobility of citizens of partner countries through visa facilitation agreements. Finally, it scheduled biannual meetings for the EaP Summits in order to promote this ambitious project.

The second EaP Summit took place from 29-30 September 2011 in Warsaw, Poland. The Joint Declaration of the Summit signalled the start of negotiations on AA aimed at implementing the DCFTA. Progress was also noted in the dialogues on visa facilitation regimes (Council of the European Union, 2011: 2).

The third Summit took place in Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, between 28 and 29 November 2013. The ensuing Joint Declaration discussed the way forward for cooperation between the EU and the EaP. However, the timing of this Summit was marked by the political situation in Ukraine (which will be discussed in the next section) although it was very fruitful for the other Eastern partners (Council of the European Union, 2013: 3). The AA including the DCFTA between EU with Georgia and Moldova were initialled at this meeting. This supported the political and socio-economic reforms carried out in these countries for a global approach to the EU. In the cases of Azerbaijan and Armenia, there was a possibility of starting to negotiate AA, while Belarus remained much further apart from the other Eastern partners.

**Table 2:** EU-EaP Agreements

<b>COUNTRIES</b>	Visa facilitation	Visa liberalisation	Association Agreement	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
Armenia	2014	-----	Negotiations concluded in 2017	-----
Azerbaijan	2014	-----	Start of negotiations in 2017	-----
Belarus	Start of negotiations in 2014	-----	-----	-----
Georgia	2011	2017	2016	2016
Moldova	2008	2014	2016	2016
Ukraine	2008	2017	2017	2017

*Source:* author’s own elaboration with information from European Council

On 21<sup>st</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup> May 2015, the fourth EaP Summit was held in Riga, Estonia, reviewing the events of the previous meeting and setting new challenges for the next Summit. The fifth Summit was held in Brussels on 24 November 2017. This new meeting opened up a new range of possibilities for Eastern partners. Armenia signed a

comprehensive and strengthened AA; Azerbaijan started negotiations for a new agreement, and as regards Belarus started an intensification of EU commitments in this country (Council of the European Union, 2017: 8-12). Finally, in May 2019, the last summit to date was held in Brussels to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the creation of this initiative, which highlighted the milestones achieved during this time, although much remains to be done.

## **2. The Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in Ukraine**

To learn more about how the ENP has been implemented in the countries that are part of it, the features that define this policy in the case of Ukraine are going to be analysed.

Ukraine proclaimed its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991 and since that moment it has been between two spheres of influence: the EU and Russia. In the first years of its autonomy, it was more closely linked to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as it was not in Russia's interest to move out of its area of influence. However, due to the serious economic and social crisis in Ukraine at that time, it was necessary to approach the institutions in Brussels. Thus, negotiations for the launch of a PCA began in June 1994, but it was not until March 1998 that the agreement entered into force. This agreement laid the foundations for intensifying relations between the two parties over the next years. As from the implementation of the ENP, the Action Plan for Ukraine started to be proposed at the beginning of July 2004. The process was therefore completed in December 2002 with the proposal for a Council Decision on the establishment of the EU-Ukraine Action Plan.

In the same year 2004, one of the most important events in Ukraine's recent history took place. At the end of that year, irregularities were reported in the results of the presidential elections in the country. The population took to the streets to demand that the elections be repeated and that they be completely free from suspicion of manipulation. It was the so-called "Orange Revolution," which was part of the so-called "Revolutions of Colours" that were taking place in some former Soviet countries and it called for an improvement in the democratic system of their countries. So, the EU saw the ENP as a tool to support these changes that the population was calling for.

A next step was taken at the EU-Ukraine Summit in 2005, where was discussed the replacement of the PCA with Ukraine, which ended in 2008. It was in July 2007 when the EP made a recommendation to open negotiations for a new agreement between the EU and Ukraine. The importance of implementing the revised Justice, Freedom and Security Action Plan was discussed at the next EU-Ukraine Summit in September 2007 (Council of the European Union, 2007: 4). For the agreements to reach all areas, in February 2008 negotiations were opened for the creation of a DCFTA with the EU, by this time the World Trade Organisation (WTO) had accepted the accession of Ukraine (García Andrés, 2018: 401).

In this environment of important EU-Ukraine partnerships, the EaP for further political and economic integration was launched in 2009. Events accelerated, and the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda was published in the same year to prepare and facilitate the implementation of the AA as a fundamental basis for the EaP. The political situation in Ukraine turned around in 2010 with a presidency change, when Yanukovych came to power. The list of priorities of the EU-Ukraine Association Agenda was published in 2011. One such priority became a reality on 30 March 2012 when the AA between the EU and Ukraine, including the DCFTA, was signed. Entry into force was scheduled for 28-29

November 2013 at the EaP Summit in Vilnius, Lithuania. Surprisingly, on 21<sup>st</sup> November, a decree by the Ukrainian Government suspended preparations for the signing of the Agreement. The reasons given were both the loss of the Russian and CIS markets and the lack of an internal market that would resist competition from Community products (Martín de la Guardia, González Martín, & García Andrés, 2017: 109).

The developments have accelerated since this suspension of the ratification of the AA. The people of some of the cities in Ukraine spoke out against this decision by their Government. The main concentrations took place in the capital, Kiev, where the *Euromaidan* movement began. Already in February 2014, President Viktor Yanukovich had to leave the country and it was proclaimed an Interim Government. Following this event, the illegal annexation of the Crimea to Russia took place in March, worsening relations between Russia and the EU, as we shall see in the following chapter. A few days later, on 21 March, the new Interim Government and the EU initialled the AA in their political provisions, leaving the economic aspect for later. At this very moment the problems in Eastern Ukraine were beginning (*Donbass*) where a group of pro-Russian rebels defied the decisions of the government and demanded to be united with Russia.

The new presidential elections were held on 25 May of the same year, with the pro-European Petro Poroshenko winning. With a legitimately elected government, the remaining provisions that had not yet been signed on 27 June, and those corresponding to the DCFTA, were signed. Some of the items were provisionally applied from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2014, with strong EU support for Ukraine. Whereas the part relating to the DCFTA was provisionally applied from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2016.

To conclude this brief review of the implementation of the ENP in Ukraine, the Council Decision of 11 July 2017 on the conclusion of the AA between the EU-Ukraine should be borne in mind. Through this Decision, the AA entered into force on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2017, thus promoting closer political and economic ties, together with respect for common values. More than two years after the entry into force, the situation in Ukraine remains complicated in both the Crimean Peninsula and the Donbass, but after the April 2019 elections a new framework for improving the situation is opened with the presidency of Volodimir Zelenski.

### **3. Relations between EU and Russia**

Bilateral relations between the EU and Russia started in 1994 when negotiations for the establishment of a PCA began. After years of discussions in the EP and in the national parliaments of the Member States, the PCA entered into force in September 1997 for an initial period of ten years (Official Journal of the European Communities, 1997: 1-2). In June 1999, the Common Strategy for Russia was published, recognising the main objectives to be developed with Russia: the consolidation of democracy, the rule of law and public institutions in Russia, the integration of Russia into a common European economic and social area, the strengthening of stability and security in Europe, and cooperation on common challenges on the European continent (European Parliament, 1999, Annex II).

At the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century Russia, as it already happened with east countries, began to border the EU. Nonetheless, there was an exception due to the fact that since 1995 Russia had shared a border with the EU following the integration of Finland. Following the entry of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in 2004, the north-western Russian provinces were now bordering the EU, and the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad between Poland and Lithuania was surrounded by new EU accessions. Therefore, Russia was

initially within the EU idea for the establishment of the ENP, although its implementation would have a different linkage for Russia.

In this context, another path was taken in relations with Russia, since in May 2003 the EU and Russia had agreed to strengthen their cooperation through the creation of four common spaces: the economic space, the space of freedom, security and justice, the space of external security and the space of research and education inside of the PCA (Nieto, 2016: 200). It was against this background that the Moscow Summit in 2005 created the roadmaps for the development of the four previous spaces.

As said above, the PCA was concluded in 2007, which entered into force ten years ago but was automatically renewed each year until the conclusion of negotiations for the entry into force of a new “Strategic Agreement” between the EU and Russia. Discussions were launched in 2008 to create an agreement covering the areas of EU-Russia cooperation. However, during these years, a series of conflicts occurred that weakened the relations that were being created between the EU and Russia. From 2006, but especially from 2007 to 2009, there was a gas crisis that confronted Russia and Ukraine over the supply of gas, but directly affected the EU countries. The year 2008 also saw Russian intervention in Georgia, which led to the temporary suspension of EU negotiations on the new “Strategic Agreement.” Another of the moments that cooled relations between Russia and the EU was the launch of the EaP in 2009 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

After overcoming these tense times between the two sides, the EU-Russia Partnership for Modernisation was launched in 2010. Despite this, negotiations stalled again in 2012, mainly for two reasons. The first of these was due to the lack of a consensus between the EU and Russia to reach agreements on trade; and the second was the Agreement between Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia itself to create an Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) together with the pressure that Ukraine was under to become part of it. But there is no doubt that from the end of 2013 onwards, relations between the EU and Russia experienced one of the most delicate moments. As mentioned above, the Eastern Partnership Summit was held in Vilnius on 28-29 November 2013, at which Ukraine suspended its AA with the EU. From that moment on, and especially at the beginning of 2014, seeing the situation that was being created by the so-called *Euromaidan*, Russia began a series of incitements in various regions of Ukraine to protest the rapprochement with the EU. The most dramatic point came in March when, following an illegal referendum in Crimea, the Ukrainian peninsula was annexed to Russia.

From that moment on, the EU initiated a series of restrictive measures in form of sanctions against Russia. They were initially carried out against Russian officials who had carried out activities against the integrity of Ukraine. But the situation worsened with the outbreak of armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, between the pro-Russian rebels and the Ukrainian military forces. The rebels in eastern Ukraine had Russian military support, and the initial sanctions were extended to other Russian strategic sectors. Similarly, the Russian Government also began to place prohibitions on certain products from the EU and on diplomats from member states.

The situation did not improve with the entry into force of the EEU in 2015, to which Armenia and Kyrgyzstan would join the founding countries. This highlighted the difficulties the EU would face in reaching an agreement with Russia. Thus, in 2016, EU Foreign Ministers met to agree on the five new principles that would become the basis of the EU policy towards Russia (European Parliament, 2016: 2):

1. Insisting on full implementation of the Minsk agreements before economic sanctions against Russia are lifted;

2. Pursuing closer relations with the former Soviet republics in the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood (including Ukraine) and of central Asia;
3. Becoming more resilient to Russian threats such as energy security, hybrid threats, and disinformation;
4. Engaging selectively with Russia on a range of foreign policy issues.
5. Increasing support for Russian civil society and promoting people-to-people contacts.

To conclude with this section, it can be ensured that relations between the EU and Russia are at a difficult moment. On the one hand, restrictive measures have not been absent from relations with Russia, as this situation continues nowadays, with a further extension of EU sanctions for actions against Ukraine territorial integrity in March. On the other hand, Russia's actions in the Syrian War and the cyber-attacks that occur in EU countries from Russia that are contrary to the EU's interests.

### **To Conclude**

As we have seen throughout this paper, the main objective of the ENP is reaching a greater cooperation in relations with the countries that are part of it. It is true, however, that the implementation of the ENP was generally seen as an alternative to EU enlargement, especially in Eastern European countries.

To know the greater or lesser success of the ENP, it is necessary to analyse the countries that are part of it in a particular way. However, there has been much criticism of this policy over the years. First of all, it has not achieved the notoriety that was expected, since many of these countries have experienced serious crises, mainly political ones. And, secondly, the problem of introducing countries of such a different nature into the same policy, which it tried to settle by creating regional initiatives.

The international scenario where the ENP has been developed must be considered. During these years, different factors have emerged highlighting the difficulties in the implementation of its policies. Among those issues it must be highlighted the political mobilisations called "Revolutions of Colours" from 2003 onwards in countries such as Georgia or Ukraine; the so-called "Arab Spring" from 2010 onwards which sought the implementation of democracy and social rights in countries of the Arab world such as Libya, Egypt, Syria or Tunisia; the war in Syria, which began after the "Arab Spring" of that country and continues to develop today; the emergence and extension of the "Islamic State" by the Arab territories that have been part of the ENP since 2013; and, the crisis in Ukraine from 2014 until nowadays with the loss of Crimea to Russia and the war in the East of the country.

The practical application of the ENP to a specific country such as Ukraine may lead to some conclusions. The initial impact of the ENP on Ukraine was not very high, however, since the emergence of the EaP in 2009 there has been a great advance. Despite this, Ukraine's internal situation from 2013 onwards, together with Russian interference, slowed down the great momentum of the relations that were taking place. The idea of losing Russia's influence over Ukraine following the signing of Ukraine's AA with the EU led to the Crimean crisis and the outbreak of war in the east of the country. As a result, relations between the EU and Ukraine continued and were further strengthened with the entry into force of the AA in 2017. Supporting the new policies of the new Ukrainian government related to further integration into the EU.

About relations between the EU and Russia, the EU's energy dependence on Russia must be considered from the outset, as it is one of its main suppliers. That is why

the European institutions have always sought good relations with Russia. However, the integration into the EU of countries that had belonged to the Soviet sphere has caused relations between the two sides to fluctuate. That is why the main problem for good relations is the sphere of influence that Russia wants to maintain in the former Soviet space. This situation was jeopardised by the implementation of the ENP.

To conclude, the ENP can be said to be one of the most important policies being developed in the EU, but the current international context has nothing to do with what it was when it began. As has been stated, this policy has been given a great boost for the last ten years or so by the creation of regional initiatives. We cannot forget the major challenges taking place near the EU, whether in Eastern Europe or in the Mediterranean. That is why there must be more progress in this policy and, above all, an understanding between all parties to achieve greater success.

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