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ENP after EEAS: impact, changes, implications for its delivery

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ENP after EEAS: impact, changes, implications for its delivery*

Abstract: The objective of this paper is to examine the influence of the establishment of the European External Action Service (EEAS) on the shape and implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). To this end, EEAS role in the process of ENP implementation is discussed and some comments regarding its possible future development are made. It is argued that while EEAS does have an influence on the shape of the ENP, similarly as in the past, the key decisions concerning the ENP will be taken at the intergovernmental level.

Keywords: European External Action Service (EEAS), European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), evolution, challenges

Introduction

The objective of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is to reach the

closest possible political association and the greatest possible degree of economic integration with EU southern and eastern neighbours. This goal builds on common interests and on values — democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and social cohesion¹.

Since its launch in 2004 the ENP evolved along with changes taking place in the external environment of the European Union (EU).

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1 EEAS (2014), 'European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)', http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/index_en.htm [2014-10-21].

Accordingly, over the past decade significant changes have been introduced in the ENP, including reformulation of the specific policy objectives pursued, instruments employed and, perhaps most importantly, geographical differentiation. Since its launch, three revisions of the ENP were introduced. The most important of them were outlined in a Communication from 25 May 2011 titled 'A new response to a changing Neighbourhood'². The institutional changes triggered by the Lisbon Treaty and the resulting launch of the European External Action Service (EEAS) have had an impact on the current shape of the ENP as well. The objective of this paper is to highlight the relevance of EEAS and its influence on the development of the ENP. The remainder of the article is organized as follows. First, the role of EEAS is discussed. Then, the process of ENP implementation prior to and following the launch of EEAS is elaborated. In the next step, EEAS' role in the process of progress assessment regarding ENP implementation by the partner-countries as well as EEAS role in administering ENP funds to the partner-countries are examined. In what follows the future of EEAS and its role in context of challenges that the EU faces are examined. Conclusions follow.

1. Discussing EEAS' origins and its role vis-à-vis the ENP

The need for a common European diplomacy has been stressed in article 27 of the Lisbon Treaty, along with provisions related to the creation of a new post, i.e. the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Accordingly, EEAS' objective was to support the High Representative in fulfilling her/his mandate.³ The rationale behind the establishment of EEAS was to "help strengthen the European Union on the global stage, give it more profile, and enable it to project its in-

2 European Commission, 'A new and ambitious European Neighbourhood Policy', *Press Release*, 25 May 2011, Brussels, http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-11-342_en.htm?locale=en (2014-10-21); EEAS and European Commission, 'A new response to a changing Neighbourhood', *Joint Communication by the High Representative of The Union For Foreign Affairs And Security Policy and the European Commission*, COM (2011) 303, Brussels, 25 May 2011.

3 Previously, the EU foreign policy was conducted by so-called 'troika', i.e. the High Representative for Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Commissioner responsible for external relations, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Member State exercising the rotating Presidency.

terests and values more efficiently"⁴. EEAS was formally launched on January 1st 2011, despite the fact that the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in 2009. The delay in EEAS' début was the result of unfavourable political circumstances in the EU. For instance, although following the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty preparations for the establishment of EEAS were initiated, they were withheld due to the negative outcome of the referendum in Ireland. During the Swedish Presidency in 2nd half of 2009, real groundwork for the EEAS establishment begun. After intensive work in the COREPER a proposal for the setting up of EEAS was authorized by the European Council in October 2009.⁵ In March 2010 the proposal on the establishment of EEAS was sent to the Council by the High Representative. This was followed by lengthy negotiations on the exact shape EEAS should assume. In July 2010 the European Parliament (EP) approved the proposal and then the Council of the EU adopted a decision that confirmed the proposal of the High Representative, including the EP's amendments.⁶

EEAS' headquarters are located in Brussels. Its highest organ is the Corporate Board which supervises 5 Managing Directorates (MD). The MDs cover different geographic areas, incl. Asia-Pacific, Africa, Europe and Central Asia, the Greater Middle East and the Americas. There are also 140 delegations working around the world, most of which are responsible for EU relations with a single country. Delegations exist that cover relations with a group of countries or a region; some are dedicated to international or regional organizations.⁷ EEAS is designed to cooperate with EU member states diplomacies, not to replace them. Prior to the establishment of EEAS, three Directorates of the Directorate-General for the External Relations (DG Relex) were responsible for the execution of the ENP's goals and objectives. Specifically, Directorate E was responsible for the Eastern Dimension of

4 Council of the European Union, 'Draft Council decision establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service', 25 March 2010, 8029/10 POLGEN 43 INST 93, Brussels, <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%208029%202010%20INIT> [2014-10-21].

5 P.S. Christoffersen, 'The Creation of the European External Action Service: Challenges and Opportunities', *Maastricht Monnet Paper Series*, no. 3-2011, pp. 3-4.

6 Council of the European Union, 'Council Decision of 26 July 2010 establishing the organisation and functioning of the European External Action Service (2010/427/EU)', *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 201/30, 3 August 2010.

7 EEAS, 'Structure of the EEAS', *Background/Organisation*, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/background/organisation/index_en.htm [2014-10-22].

the ENP, including partner-countries from Eastern Europe, Southern Caucasus and Central Asia. Directorate F was responsible for the Southern Neighbourhood partner-countries located in the Middle East and the Southern Mediterranean. Finally, Directorate D focused on horizontal issues of these two dimensions, i.e. Southern and Eastern.⁸ Following the establishment of EEAS, DG Relex was incorporated in it. Therefore, at present, matters related to ENP are conducted in two Managing Directorates of EEAS, i.e. MD III 'Europe and Central Asia' is involved with the Eastern Dimension (ED) of the ENP, i.e. Eastern Partnership (EaP). MD IV 'North Africa, Middle East, Arabian Peninsula, Iran and Iraq' deals with the Southern Dimension (SD) of the ENP.⁹

Apart from EEAS, also other EU institutions play an important role in ENP implementation. Specifically, EEAS cooperates on regulatory issues with the European Commission and on issues related to financing instruments with the EP, the European Commission, and the member states. Respective financing instruments include the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) for the period 2007-2013 and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) for the financial framework 2014-2020.¹⁰ For example, with regard to the ENP, an important partner for EEAS is the European Commission Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO). They work together in order to "strengthen coherence between external relations and development cooperation"¹¹. EEAS is responsible for planning specific country allocations in the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and therefore elaborates strategic papers, prepares indicative programs at national and regional level. DG DEVCO coordinates actions to be taken as well as their implementation on an annual basis.

8 H. Kostanyan, 'The EEAS and the European Neighbourhood Policy: A change in rhetoric or reality', *Neighbourhood Policy Paper*, no. 09, February 2013, Bucharest: Center for International and European Studies, p. 1.

9 EEAS, 'Structure...', op.cit. [2014-10-22].

10 The key partner in financing investment projects in ENP, via ENPI, is the European Investment Bank (EIB).

11 European Commission, 'About EUROPEAID, Relations with the EEAS, EU institutions and Member States', *Europeaid*, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/relations-eeas-eu-institutions-and-member-states_en [2014-10-23].

EEAS participates in the process of programming of the EU foreign policy. According to Article 9 par. 3 of the Council Decision of 26 July 2010 on establishing the organization and functioning of EEAS (2010/427/EU), EEAS

shall contribute to the programming and management cycle for the financial instruments, on the basis of the policy objectives set out in this instrument. It is responsible for elaborating decisions of the European Commission concerning the strategic, multiannual steps within the programming cycle.

To this end, EEAS is responsible to deliver Progress Reports on ENP implementation by partner-countries.¹² Two types of Progress Reports exist, i.e. regional reports and country reports. Regional reports are dedicated to the two specific geographically-determined dimensions of the ENP, incl. Eastern Dimension/Eastern Partnership (ED/EaP) and Southern Dimension (SD). These reports have been published since 2012. Country-reports assess progress achieved by each specific ENP partner-country. For instance, the 2013 report titled 'Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2013 Regional report: Eastern Partnership' presents actions already taken in order to strengthen activities in support of EU's bilateral relations with each of the partner-countries. It also examines the degree of political association and economic integration as assessed against the provisions of Association Agreements, and especially The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). Attention is paid to the partner-countries' commitment to human rights dialogue, including signing, ratification and implementation of international human rights instruments, adherence to international human rights procedures and mechanisms. Other areas of assessment include: Common Security and Defence Policy, economic trends, macro-financial assistance, macroeconomic dialogue, implementing the 'more for more' principle, migration and

12 Note that progress is assessed against specific objectives listed bilateral Action Plans and Association Agendas. The Action Plans are the result of in-depth country reports written for each partner-country. These documents set the priorities of reforms in the fields of politics, economy and social issues. They cover a set of political and economic reforms that shall be introduced by the partner-countries in the perspective of 3-5 years, taking into account different needs, priorities and capacities, as well as their and the EU's interests.

mobility and other freedom and security issues, comprehensive institution building (CIB) programmes, sector cooperation, strengthening of multilateral cooperation, democracy, good governance and stability, economic integration and convergence with EU sector policies. In a similar manner, EEAS traces progress attained in the process of implementation of SD. For instance, the 2013 report titled 'Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2013 Regional report: A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean Partners' highlights what has been already done regarding regional political cooperation, the role of human rights and cooperation with civil society, economic cooperation between the EU and the partner-countries, cooperation on migration and mobility issues, etc.

The application of measures outlined in respective bilateral Action Plans is supervised by sub-committees formed by experts on the subject. Twelve country reports were published until November 2014. They examined progress made by Armenia, Azerbaijan, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Tunisia, and Ukraine.¹³ When preparing country reports, EEAS cooperates with the EU Delegations if these are established in the above mentioned countries. The input collected in this way is compared with evaluations made in EEAS' headquarters. Given the fact that several issues under assessment in the reports belong to the Commissions' areas of competence, in what follows a request for additional input is sent by EEAS to the Commissions' Directorates-General. Moreover, the reports are enriched by contributions from the Council of Europe, international financial institutions and civil society. It should be emphasized that EEAS does not consult the content of the reports with the EU member states during the drafting process.¹⁴

Apart from the assessment function, EEAS is responsible for administering funding that the ENP partner-countries are eligible to. Prior to EEAS establishment, funds available under ENP were distributed differently, i.e. up until 2006 they were distributed by means of

13 EU Neighbourhood Info Centre, 'The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)', *News Service*, http://www.enpi-info.eu/main.php?id=344&id_type=2 [2014-10-24].

14 Kostanyan, *op.cit.*, p. 2.

two specialized instruments, including TACIS¹⁵ and MEDA¹⁶. These were replaced by the ENPI¹⁷ on January 1st 2007. ENPI was designed for the entire EU neighbourhood, including ED and SD as well as the EU-Russia Strategic Partnership. Since its establishment EEAS has played a vital role in managing the ENPI resources. In the MFF 2007-2013 the total amount of funds available for the implementation of ENP was EUR 11.2bn, i.e. ca. 30% more than in the case of TACIS and MEDA. Vast parts of these funds were allocated through bilateral programmes implemented in line with provisions of bilateral *Action Plans* negotiated between the EU and respective partner-countries. The objective of those programmes was to induce foster the partner-countries' reform including democratic transition; human rights and fundamental freedoms; economy; cooperation with the EU on migration and mobility, energy and transport. Other instruments for interregional cooperation, such as TAIEX¹⁸, SIGMA¹⁹ and twinning programmes, were employed in the ENP as well.

2. EEAS and financial assistance post-2011

The evolution of the priorities of the ENP reflected developments in the EU's neighbourhood. The need for the review of the ENP appeared in 2011, which has been caused by the developments in the MENA region. The new approach and the review of the ENP in 2011 proposed by EEAS consisted of two main principles, including differentiation and incentive-based approach. It translated into the rule that the more effort is made and hence more progress is achieved by a given partner-country, the more benefits it will receive. It is important to take a look at the financial assistance under ENP, considering the fact that the EEAS, as previously mentioned, plays an important

15 TACIS: Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States.

16 MEDA: Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

17 European Parliament and the Council, '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*, L 310/1, 9 November 2006.

18 TAIEX: Technical Assistance Information Exchange Programme.

19 SIGMA: joint European Commission and OECD initiative, funded by the EU. It helps to mobilize European expertise to support reforms in partner countries' public administration in: public internal financial control or public procurement.

role in managing financial instruments under ENP. Although no irregularities have been recorded as regards the disbursement of resources available under the ENP, significant differences in efficiency of the ENP implementation were observed. For instance, better results were observed in Tunisia or Morocco, whereas in Libya or Egypt limited positive changes were marked. Regarding the ED, the 2011 revamp of the ENP led to the launch of the EaP.²⁰ Here, the most important development was the signing of the Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) with Ukraine. It was signed in 2014 in context of uncertainty and divisions among EU member states. EEAS played an important role in this process. In this part of Europe, the EaPIC²¹ umbrella programme (as a one of programmes under the ENPI) was realized. The total allocation under this programme was EUR152 million.²² The ENPI supported the launch of EaP with a total of EUR 2.5 billion for bilateral and regional cooperation (2010-2013). In total, around EUR 13.4 billion were committed under the ENPI over the period 2007-2013 compared to EUR 11.2 billion programmed.²³

In the MFF 2007-2013 the major recipients of ENP funds included Palestine and Morocco and Ukraine. Over that period of time, each of these countries absorbed more than EUR 1 billion from the EU. The EU's Assistance to Palestine consisted of three elements. One of the sources was the PEGASE²⁴ mechanism. It was designed to maintain the viability of the two-state solution by avoiding fiscal collapse of Palestine and sustaining basic living conditions for the entire Palestinian population. Additional EU assistance included support for Palestinian refugees through United Nations Relief and Works Agency

20 Cf. J Kwiecień, 'ENP in the context of the EU's external policy framework: a critical examination of ENP's outcomes and prospects', *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe*, vol. 14, no. 6, 2016, pp. 147-163.

21 Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation Programme.

22 European Commission, 'European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007-2013, Overview of Activities and Results', Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid, European Union, 2014, http://www.enpi-info.eu/files/publications/ENPI%20report%202007-2013-edit_ENG.pdf, p. 15 [2014-10-25].

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

24 Mécanisme Palestino-Européen de Gestion de l'Aide Socio-Economique.

(UNRWA)²⁵ and so-called development package. Its main objective was to offer support for good governance and the rule of law, development of private sector, water facilities and land.²⁶ EEAS's evaluation of Palestinian involvement in the reform process was positive. However, the Palestinian authorities were encouraged to focus their efforts in such fields as work towards navigating the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the ongoing negotiation process and women's rights.²⁷ With regard to Morocco, the main area of EU assistance were the social and economic sectors. In case of Ukraine, EU assistance focused on reforms in energy sector, transport, trade-related issues, and public finance management. In its assessment EEAS noted that Ukraine had incompletely addressed some the recommendations elaborated in *2013 Progress Report*, even if positive developments in the fields of electoral law and practice as well as the judiciary were observed. EEAS presented a long list of further reforms that Ukraine was encouraged to do, especially regarding the institutional framework.²⁸

As mentioned earlier, in the MFF 2014-2020 ENPI has been replaced by the ENI.²⁹ ENI, similarly as ENPI, supports four categories of programmes, including: bilateral programmes for neighbourhood countries; regional programmes for the East and the South; Erasmus for All; Neighbourhood Investment Facility and umbrella programmes, i.e. cross-border co-operation (CBC) programmes designed to involve both EU member states and partner-countries. Nevertheless, due to the 2011 revision of the ENP, important changes have been introduced into the mechanisms of these programmes' implementation, including first and foremost the principle of increased differentiation and incentive-based approach, i.e. the 'more for more' principle. Another notable change consists of modification of the geographical scope of those programmes. That is, ENI no longer covers bilateral assistance

25 EU support to UNRWA has in the past years exceeded EUR 80 mn annually; European Commission, 'European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument in 2007-2013', op.cit., p. 30.

26 Ibid.

27 EEAS, 'Palestine: country report 2014', *Country Reports*, http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/2014/country-reports/palestine_en.pdf, Brussels, 2014 [2015-12-15].

28 EEAS, 'Ukraine: country report 2014', *Country Reports*, http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/pdf/2014/country-reports/ukraine_en.pdf, Brussels, 2014 [2015-12-15].

29 European Parliament and the Council, 'Regulation (EU) No 232/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing the European Neighbourhood Instrument', *Official Journal of the European Union*, L 77/27, 15 March 2014.

to Russia; even if Russia remains eligible for regional and CBC programmes. Finally, simplification and reduced time for programming and increased coordination between the EU and national programmes and amended provisions on CBC close the list of changes. One of the most successful financial programmes realized under ENP was the SPRING programme. It was launched as a response to the Arab Spring and its aftermath in order to support democratic changes in respective countries. In 2011-2013 about EUR 540 million were channelled to the EU's southern neighbours.

Table 1. Allocation of funds under ENPI 2007-2013 (in EUR million)

Southern Dimension		Eastern Dimension	
Israel	13.5	Russia	66.5
Jordan	58.9	Belarus	94.2
Libya	83	Azerbaijan	143.5
Syria	358	Armenia	281.5
Algeria	366.1	Georgia	452.1
Lebanon	388	Rep. of Moldova	560.9
Tunisia	775	Ukraine	1,005.6
Egypt	1007		
Morocco	1,431.1		
Palestine	2,501.7		

Source: European Commission, 'European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument in 2007-2013. Overview of Activities and Results', Brussels: Directorate General Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid, 2014, pp. 20-52.

The European Commission requested about EUR 16 billion for the implementation of the ENP under ENI in the Financial Framework 2014-2020.³⁰ The assigned funds reached the value of EUR 15.4 billion, i.e. less than the Commission requested, but more than in the previous MFF. As such, funding for ENP constitutes about 19.7% of total expenditures under Heading 4 (*Global Europe*) of MFF 2014-2020. The annual allocations are presented in the Table 2.

³⁰ European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, The Council, The European Economic and Social Committee and The Committee of The Regions. A Budget For Europe 2020', COM (2011) 500 final, Brussels, 29 June 2011, p. 25.

Table 2. Allocation of funds in the Multiannual Financial Framework, 2014-2020

	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	TOTAL
Development Coop. Instr. (DCI)	2309.51	2467.69	2636.07	2805.41	2988.23	3180.13	3274.60	19661.64
Euro. Neighbourhood Instr. (ENI)	2112.97	2027.28	2084.40	2159.84	2243.24	2358.38	2446.52	15432.63
Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA)	1573.77	1605.25	1637.35	1670.10	1703.50	1737.57	1771.13	11698.67
Stability (IFS)	314.47	320.77	327.27	333.90	340.53	347.36	354.43	2338.72
EIDHR	179.30	182.89	186.60	190.07	193.84	197.73	202.32	1332.75
Partnership Instrument	113.30	119.23	126.33	134.39	143.87	154.68	162.96	954.76
Other	1731.69	2025.90	2144.96	2138.30	2211.80	2292.15	2298.03	14842.83
TOTAL	8335.01	8749.01	9142.98	9432.01	9825.01	10268.00	10509.99	66262.00

Source: European Commission; 'Multiannual Financial Framework', http://ec.europa.eu/budget/mff/figures/index_en.cfm?viewas=table [2014-10-29].

In the MFF 2014-2020 countries, which will benefit most from EPI resources include Morocco, Tunisia and Georgia (Table 3). These funds represent a significant percentage of those countries' GDP, imply an FDI inflow and may constitute important source of financing of economic development projects.³¹

Table 3. Indicative allocation 2014-2020 under EPI 2014-2020 (EUR million)

Southern Neighbourhood		Eastern Neighbourhood	
Israel	n.a.	Russia	-
Jordan	567-693	Belarus	129-158
Libya	126-154	Azerbaijan	139-169
Syria	n.a.	Armenia	252-308
Algeria	221-270	Georgia	610-746
Lebanon	315-385	Rep. of Moldova	n.a.
Tunisia	725-886	Ukraine	n.a.
Egypt	210-257		
Morocco	1,323-1,617		
Palestine	n.a.		

Source: The Author's compilation, based on EEAS, 'Summary of the Single Support Framework 2014-2017', http://www.eas.europa.eu/enp/documents/financing-the-enp/index_en.htm [2014-10-30].

31 Cf. J. Stryjek, 'Inter-regional cooperation and FDI flow: one step too far? – preconditions and prospects', *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2015, pp. 125-144.

The scope of the EU financial assistance under ENP is significant compared to the partner-countries GDP. However, it has been argued in the literature³² that in some respects neither ENPI nor ENI were designed in a manner that would support swift and efficient distribution of funding to the ENP partner-countries. Specifically, the complexity and the duration of the programming process tend to be outlined as the major weakness. An explicit effort was made for the ENI to work on the premises of “increasing the consistency between the EU’s assistance and policy framework, shifting the allocation of funds towards a performance based approach and simplifying the programming process”. Nevertheless, it is still “not fully detailed in terms of developing an effective partnership with civil society in assistance priority-setting and monitoring”. Moreover, “the proposed regulation does not provide adequate procedures and mechanisms to effectively apply conditionality”³³. It poses a significant challenge for the future actions of EEAS.

3. Looking forward: the EEAS and its future

The establishment of EEAS and the frequently violent developments in the EU neighbourhood have had significant impact on ENP and its implementation.³⁴ The disbursement of funds made available to the ENP partner-countries was based on the principle of conditionality. Nevertheless, this principle has never been implemented consistently. Today, EEAS not only emphasizes the importance of conditionality but also seeks to communicate its relevance to the partner-countries more effectively. For instance, the new principle ‘more for more’ seeks to make a direct link between what a given partner-country has achieved and actual financial support that country will receive. Clearly, ENP’s credibility will only be recognized if the process of assessment will be

32 L. Delcour, ‘Improving the EU’s aid to its neighbours. Lessons learned from the ENPI, recommendations for the ENI’, *BRIEFING PAPER*, 2012, DG EXPO/B/PolDep/FWC/2009-01/LOT 1/33 2012, Brussels: European Parliament, 2012, pp. 1-5.

33 *Ibid.*

34 Kostanyan, *op.cit.*, p. 3.

conducted in accordance with the same standards for all neighbours and free of political inflections.³⁵

It seems that the Lisbon Treaty has brought a breath of fresh air into EU's foreign policy. The changes were significant and included the strengthening of the position of the High Representative, improving legitimacy of the European Commission³⁶ and the establishment of EEAS. The Russia-Ukraine conflict demonstrates shows that this policy field of the EU still needs some adjustments.³⁷ For instance, it was hardly possible to reach a conclusion as to the exact wording of the common EU member states' statement in response to the annexation of Crimea by Russia. Eventually, it was the Council, not EEAS, who designed the sanctions that were imposed on Russia. In fact, some diplomats argued that EEAS has not proved to possess sufficient knowledge of the region and the situation on the eastern border of the EU.³⁸ To be fair, it has to be stressed that the establishment of EEAS coincided with a series of domestic European and external challenges and it seems only natural that EEAS needs time to adjust.

In this sense, discussing the evolution of the ENP and EEAS' role in this process, it is also important to look at the EU member states' and their stance towards ENP. Notably, driven by diverging interests and policy goals, in the past the EU member states presented different views about the future of relations with the ENP partner-countries.³⁹ The southern EU member states sought to promote greater EU engagement with the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. To this end greater impact on transformation process and the strengthening the Union for the Mediterranean were emphasised.

35 Ibid.

36 Y. Bertoincini, A. Vitorino, 'The Commission Reform: Between Efficiency And Legitimacy', *Policy Paper*, no. 115, 7 July 2014, Paris: Institute Delors.

37 Cf. K. Górak-Sosnowska, T. Stępniewski, 'The geopolitics of ENP: from Tahrir to Minsk', *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2015, pp. 61-74; T. Stępniewski, 'ENP or ENPs? The curious web of the European Neighbourhood Policy: the Southern and Eastern Dimensions revisited', *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2015, pp. 29-42.

38 W. Skrobisz, 'Europa stawia na Włozkę – cztery wyzwania dla Mogherini na niespokojny czas' [Europe prefers the Italian – four challenges that Mogherini will have to face], *SGH Blogspot*, 1 November 2014, http://spp-sgh.blogspot.com/2014_11_01_archive.html [2014-11-02].

39 J. Kwiecień, 'Interests and preferences and their constitutive role in the EaP: regional, national and local actors vis-à-vis the ENP's goals and objectives', *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe*, vol. 13, no. 4, 2015, pp. 93-109.

From a different angle, the Central European countries and Germany promoted a more balanced approach to ENP. The new shape of the ENP was presented in the Communication 'A new response to a changing Neighbourhood'.⁴⁰ It was said that "a new approach is needed to strengthen the partnership between the EU and the countries and societies of the neighbourhood: to build and consolidate healthy democracies, pursue sustainable economic growth and manage cross-border links". The revised ENP aims to deliver bigger support to partners involved in democratization process; promote inclusive economic development; support the two regional dimensions and afford the mechanisms and instruments fit to meet given goals.⁴¹

Conclusions

It is very difficult to unambiguously assess whether EEAS has had a significant input to the delivery of ENP. However, ENP has become one of the priorities of the EU's foreign policy what has been frequently stressed yet by the former HR, Baroness Ashton, in her speeches. The rationale behind the establishment of EEAS was to bring value added into the EU's external policy making EEAS more than what a traditional foreign ministry is. EEAS has the potential to serve as a catalyst to carryout foreign policies of EU member states, execute the tasks of the development actions and reinforce the role of the EU as a global player.⁴²

The creation of EEAS and the recent developments in the EU neighbourhood brought a substantive change in the implementation of ENP. Although, drawing on the experience of the EU enlargement policy⁴³, conditionality has been ingrained in ENP, it has not been consistently implemented. EEAS made an explicit effort to address this issue, i.e. "how far we go in relations with each country will continue to depend on the progress made by the partners in their reform and modernisa-

40 EEAS and European Commission, op.cit.

41 Ibid., p. 2.

42 C. Ashton, 'Foreword', *EEAS Review*, July 2013, Brussels: European External Actions Service, http://eeas.europa.eu/library/publications/2013/3/2013_eeas_review_en.pdf, p. 2 [2014-11-03].

43 K. Żukrowska, 'Ideas in the ENP. Conflicting visions and interests of the ENP between the EU member states and institutions?', *Yearbook of the Institute of East-Central Europe*, vol. 14, no. 6, 2016, pp. 121-145.

tion efforts”⁴⁴. It must be stressed that even the best-designed policy will not be effective if the ENP partner-countries will not be able to make effective use of resources that they receive. Research suggests that while the principle of conditionality is very important, the notion of programme ownership is another important factor that adds to the success of implementation. Poland and its experiences gained during the processes of successful transition and transformation in the 90s is a good case in point. By contrast, the example of Greece and the way the economic adjustment programmes were implemented serves as a counter example.

Undoubtedly, the ENP is beneficial initiative for the EU. Development of cooperation with neighbouring countries can possibly provide impetus to rebuild European economies after the slowdown. Future shape of ENP will depend on the EU's political will and skills to find an effective solution to the conflicts in its neighbourhood and the willingness of the neighbour countries' governments to introduce reforms that will foster the achievement of expected results and closer economic cooperation and aspirations for integration in this region of the world. It is also important that the in-depth assessment of the progress made in EU neighbourhood must be done objectively, as it will have influence on the results of the future decisions taken in the EU. Therefore, an important factor in the coming years will be EEAS' staffing policy, which nowadays constitutes one of the biggest challenges.

It is too early to provide a clear assessment of EEAS' impact on ENP. So far, EEAS has been active in view of proposing a possible review of ENP.⁴⁵ Some of the suggestions include stabilization of the region in terms of: politics, economics and security. In her speech in November 2015, HR Mogherini listed five pillars of the work that has started: “focus on economic development and job creation; cooperation on en-

44 EEAS, 'The Eastern Partnership – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)' http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/faq/index_en.htm#4 [2015-12-13].

45 Federica Mogherini speech on 17 November 2015; 'ENP Review: stronger partnerships for a stronger neighbourhood' http://www.eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2015/181115_enp_review_en.htm [2015-12-11].

ergy security; migration; neighbours of the neighbours”. The measures “seek to find ways to strengthen together the resilience of our and our partners’ societies, and our ability to effectively work together on our common purposes.”⁴⁶

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46 Ibid.

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