

**Integrating Environment, Development and Conflict Prevention  
European and National Approaches and Challenges (30 Mar 2007)**

WG B I     **Regional Cooperation (emphasis on ENP)**

**A few words on ENP, to explain why and how we work with partners**

- **Foreign policy priority** for EU. Strategic interest in prosperity, stability and security
- EU is **not a state actor**, doesn't work or think how states do. Equally true in this area and on these subjects:
  - **Framework** relationship (enables a group of 27 states to *offer* more to 16 neighbours than individually) as well as **tailor-made** bilateral relationships
  - **Working with** (sharing expertise, agreeing not imposing reforms, which doesn't work even if we wanted to).
  - Working not just on traditional issues but **all issues at all levels**, bilaterally and multilaterally, thematically. Enables us to have **holistic approach**, to see bigger multi-dimensional picture, to think long-term and achieve interlinkages on both sides e.g.
    - regional cooperation – EU's own history, both explicit and implicit mention in ENP Action Plans, political & sectoral regional cooperation, cross-border cooperation (CBC)
    - working with all levels including civil society, whose role we explicitly and implicitly support in the Action Plans
    - Indirect approaches to conflict prevention – addressing root causes / issues preventing resolution. Top-down and bottom-up.
  - **Socialisation** as a deliberate method - through twinning and TAIEX, through opening EC programmes and agencies ... all supporting contacts with and among ... neighbours

**What does this mean for environment and resource issues ?**

- No shortage of challenges – key among which is that progress is by its nature **incremental**. Time horizon is not the 3-5 years of the Action Plans but maybe a couple of decades or generational.
- No shortage of declarations and initiatives, shortage of **implementation**. No shortage of processes – but impetus often lacking. Through ENP, we

aim to give new **impetus** to existing initiatives and to indicate key **steps** towards the overall objectives.

- All APs contain objectives about enhanced **regional cooperation**, including on environment issues. Wording is general but allows us to raise concrete issues. Examples:
  - Middle East / water scarcity / cooperation ISR-PA-JOR
  - Southern Caucasus – management of transboundary rivers
  - And other potential sources of concern identified for S Caucasus and BY/MOL/UA such as identified in the ENVSEC initiative done i.a. by UNEP.
  
- Through APs, giving impetus to **existing cooperation networks** and foster implementation of the many **multilateral environment agreements** of transboundary importance. Example:
  - UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in transboundary context, where partners commit to notify and consult re projects likely to have significant adverse environmental impact. Important, if implemented.
  - Aarhus – references throughout Action Plans
  
- **Civil society** has a role to play in promoting reform, in all areas but particularly environment policy. Can engage on policy dialogue issues at non-political level, helping to reduce risk of potential conflict. Example:
  - Action Plans promote a stronger role for civil society in environment and also
  - support the Regional Environment Centres (RECs in Moldova and S Caucasus, Ukraine being established).
  
- ENP is also about promoting **coordination and consistency** with cooperation in **other fora/networks** e.g. EUWI, FLEG ...
  
- Promotes consistency, complementarity and coherence also among **external actors**. We take existing obligations into account in drafting APs (pol: CoE/OSCE, econ: WB/IMF, all: UN family etc) and many actors therefore see benefit of aligning with the ENP Action Plans – not because they're perfect but because they are fully agreed with the partners and are consistent with (their and) other initiatives (and wider interests).

- Also prepared to use our leverage to achieve these goals. For instance, as mentioned in our August 2006 Communication on Governance, we look at sustainable use of natural resources as a measure of governance, something we will also be taking into account in the €300m **Governance Facility** which we are developing for the ENP.
- At its highest level, ENP can put environment **higher on partners' political agenda**, helping them to adopt **more sustainable approaches** to resource use and promoting **more strategic and long-term thinking**. Examples are difficult but slowly legislation, plans and programmes are being developed. Partners are certainly eager to learn from EU experience (TAIEX seminars). Not realistic that they take fully our *acquis* but would be useful to subscribe to a number of our principles and objectives, taking into account the specificities of each country. Not least because use of natural resources is an issue also on our side of the border and, since we also depend on resources coming from our neighbours, we need a coordinated approach. **ENP helps us to deliver that.**

### **Integrating Environment, development and conflict prevention – European and National Approaches and Challenges**

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Regional cooperation is at the core of the European Union. As such, it features also in the EU's approach to its neighbours, including the European Neighbourhood Policy. For the EU, regional cooperation is important in its own right, as well as in relation to sectoral issues such as environment.

The European Neighbourhood Policy is the framework by which the European Union works together with its neighbours to support their own reform processes – political, economic and sectoral. These reform processes, together with regional cooperation and a stronger role for civil society, should contribute to preventing conflicts arising in the first place, better managing those that do and creating environments in which they might be resolved. Partners have shown interest in greater EU involvement on these issues.

The European Neighbourhood Policy is also helping to put environment issues higher on the political agenda in partner countries, promoting more strategic and long-term thinking on these issues. Partners have shown interest in learning from EU experiences in this field.