THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP, 2009-2015

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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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DECLARATION

I declare that the thesis entitled **"THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE EASTERN PARTNERSHIP, 2009-2015"** submitted by me for the award of the Degree of **Doctor of Philosophy** of Jawaharlal Nehru University, is my own work. This thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of any degree of this University or any other university.

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"When you go through a hard period, When everything seems to oppose you ... When you feel you cannot even bear one more minute, NEVER GIVE UP! Because it is the time and place that the course will divert!"

Rumi

Dedicated to

My

Mother and Father

For teaching me to never give up, no matter what...

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List of Abbreviations

AA	Association Agreements
AC	Arctic Council
ANP	National Platform in Armenia
BEAC	Barents Euro-Arctic Council
BSS	Black Sea Synergy
CAAC	Children and armed conflict
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CARDS	Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation
CBSS	Council of Baltic Sea States
CEECs	Central and Eastern Europe Countries
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIB	Comprehensive Institution Building
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
CoE	Council of Europe
CORLEAP	Conference for Regional and Local Authorities of the Eastern Partnership
CP	Civil Protection
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSF	Civil Society Forum
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DOP	Declaration of Principles
E5P	Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environmental Partnership
EaP CSF	Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

EC	European Communities
EC	European Commission
ECU	Eurasian Customs Union
ECSC	European Coal and Steel Community
EEA	European Economic Area
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EFI	European Financial Institutions
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EIB	European Investment Bank
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EMAAs	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership Association Agreements
EMP	Euro-Mediterranean Partnership
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENPI	European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument
EOM	Election Observation Missions
EPTATF	Eastern Partnership Assistance Trust Fund
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
ESS	European Security Strategy
EUEOMs	EU election observation missions
EUSR	EU Special Representative
EuroNest	EU-Neighbourhood East
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
GAERC	General Affairs and External Relations Council
GAMM	Global Approach to Migration and Mobility

GAP	Gender Action Plan
IBM	Integrated Border Management
IcSP	Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace
IfS	Instrument for Stability
ILO	International Labour Organisation
INOGATE	International Energy Cooperation Programme
IRPs	Institutional Reform Plans
KfW	German Development Bank (Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau)
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NCM	Nordic Council of Ministers
NESCO	Network of Energy Security Correspondents
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIF	Neighbourhood Instrument Facility
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OIDHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OPAL	Ostsee-Pipeline-Anbindungsleitung
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe
PACE	Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreements
PHARE	Poland and Hungary: Assistance for Restructuring their Economies
PPRD	Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made disasters
SAA	Stabilisation and Association Agreement
SBA	Small Business Act

SMEs	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
STAREP	Strengthening Auditing and Reporting in the Countries of the Eastern Partnership
SUDEP	Sustainable Urban Demonstration Energy Projects
TACIS	Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States
TEC	Treaty (establishing) European Community
TEU	Treaty on European Union
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UK	United Kingdom
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
US	United States of America
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

The European Union and the Eastern Partnership, 2009-2015

The European Union as an institution was created to encourage economic cooperation among the European countries and prevent them from future conflicts. The Eastern Partnership was one of EU's regional policies launched in Prague in May 2009 to counterbalance the French-led Union for the Mediterranean which aimed to restore European Union relations with the countries to the south of EU. The main aim of Eastern Partnership was to upgrade and expand their relationship, and to facilitate political affiliation and intensify economic integration between European Union and its neighbours by strengthening existing bilateral relations, multilateral and regional initiatives. The objective was to create a stable neighbourhood based on EU values of democracy, human rights, rule of law and a functioning market economy. Most of the Member States took the initiative positively and saw it as an example of how a coordinated effort among the members of EU can yield a positive growth and stability in the region. However the Eastern Partnership initiative was seen as a tool of containment by Russia, which saw it as a substitute to overcome Russian influence in the region. The proposed study will try to analyse, to what extent EU and Russia influence the region. It would also explore the changing security dimensions in the region post Ukrainian crisis. The EU offer is restricted to economic and infrastructural benefits along with the signing of Association Agreements, but lacks membership offer. Russia, on the other hand, offers partnership in the Customs Union and cheaper gas prices and supplies. Another aspect of Russia's interests in this region was that the member countries of this Partnership were former Soviet states, and thus Russia did not want to give up on its political, economic, and geopolitical aspirations vis-à-vis these countries.

The key objective of the study is to understand the role of the European Union in maintaining peace, security and stability in its neighbourhood, with particular emphasis on the Eastern and Caucasus region. It will examine the evolution, nature, objectives and success or failure of the European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. The recent Ukrainian crisis, annexation of Crimea, the military

operations and the ongoing civil war in the country are some of the important issues where Russia has an edge over EU. These issues have challenged the EU-Russia relations in this ‘common neighbourhood’ raising doubts regarding the EU’s influence in the region. The study will help us understand Europe as a normative power in its neighbourhood and will analyse the European Neighbourhood Policy to deduce framework within which Europe propagates its security interests in the neighbourhood. Further, it intends to analyse the Eastern partnership for its aims and objectives, take into account the EU’s security and democratisation agenda, and the means and methods that the European Union has used to promote it. The implications of this policy, both positive and negative, on the partner countries and how far has it affected the relationship with Russia will also be dealt with. It would also discuss the geopolitical and strategic importance of this region, and to what extent has EU been successful in promoting democracy in the region under study.

Chapter 1

The European Union and the European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Union as an institution was created to encourage economic cooperation among the European countries and prevent them from future conflicts ensuring lasting peace in the continent. The process of European integration began in the aftermath of the Second World War with the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), where security became the top priority for the European countries. France and Germany had fought three wars between 1870 and 1945 and hence efforts were made towards maintaining peace in the continent. The treaty for ECSC was signed on 18 April 1951 and entered into force on 23 July 1952, fora period of 50 years, with an aim, as stated in Article 2, to contribute, through the common market for coal and steel, to economic expansion, growth of employment and a rising standard of living. The founding members were Belgium, Germany, Italy, France, Luxembourg, and Netherlands. It was further transformed into European Economic Community (EEC) or 'Common Market' created through Treaty of Rome 1957. The task now was to foster economic cooperation among the six founding members, abolish quotas and tariffs of trade, and establish a joint external tariff, the unification of trade policy towards the rest of the world as well as the organization of a single internal market.According to Article 98 of the treaty on European Coal and Steel Community, "any European State may request to accede to the Coal and Steel Community".[1] Hence, ever since its foundation, the process of European integration has continued with the aim to maintain peace, security and prosperity in the continent.

[1] This was further incorporated in the Treaty on European Union which states:- Any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union. The European Parliament and national Parliaments shall be notified of this application. The applicant State shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members. The conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the Union is founded, which such admission entails, shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. The conditions of eligibility agreed upon by the European Council shall be taken into account. Lisbon Treaty (2008), *Article 49*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 April 2017, URL: http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-european-union-and-comments/title-6-final-provisions/136-article-49.html.

The chapter focuses on the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) at length, various mechanisms that were adopted prior to its creation and answer questions like why it was created, its successes and failures. It is divided into various sections starting with the enlargement process, its drawbacks, and the enlargement fatigue that had set in among the policy makers, which finally led to the creation of ENP. It would discuss in detail various mechanisms that shaped the ENP, its aims and objectives, the regional instruments created prior to the neighbourhood policy along with the successes and failures of this policy.

1.1 Enlargement

Enlargement is one of the most important foreign policy tools of the European Union and the process of membership being granted has evolved over the years and through successive treaties.[2] Enlargement was considered as a tool to end the post Second World War division in the continent and bring about peace, stability and prosperity, thus enhancing security of Europe. It has been enshrined in the Union's Charter since the Treaty of Rome.[3] For any applicant country to accede to the Union, the basic requirement was to be a democratic state with a market economy along with commitment towards the *acquiscommunitaire.* These conditions were elaborated during the Copenhagen European Council meeting in 1993 where candidate countries were required to achieve:

- stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities;

[2] The conditions laid down in the Lisbon treaty are more specific compared to the former ECSC, EAEC and EEC Treaties. In particular, the procedure enshrined in the EEC Treaty only required that the applicant be a European State, and that its application be sent to, and dealt with by the Council after an opinion from the Commission, and with the approval of the Member States. Successive revisions of the procedure have also strengthened the role of the European Parliament, to the effect that it now has to approve of any expansion of the Union. Since the Treaty of Lisbon, the enlargement procedure requires that national parliaments be informed of any third state's application for membership.

[3] Article 237 of the Treaty states, any European State may apply to become a member of the Community. It shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after obtaining the opinion of the Commission. The conditions of admission and the adjustments to this Treaty necessitated thereby shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the Contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. This clause has been reiterated since and in all Treaties that succeeded the Rome Treaty. In the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) it was added that a country that wishes to join should be democratic and this condition was further specified in the present Treaty on the European Union (TEU) (article 49).

- the existence of a functioning market economy, as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; and
- the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.[4]

The Madrid European Council (1995), further refined the need to "create conditions for the gradual, harmonious integration of [the applicant] countries, particularly through the development of the market economy, the adjustment of their administrative structures, the creation of a stable economic and monetary environment, and emphasised the importance for the candidates to establish the appropriate structures to cope with the well-established obligations of membership(implementation of the *acquis*)".[5] The Luxembourg European Council of 1997 affirmed the importance of the enlargement process stating that

> The task in the years ahead will be to prepare the applicant States for accession to the Union and to see that the Union is properly prepared for enlargement, an ongoing process which is comprehensive and inclusive, and will take place in stages. Each of the applicant States will proceed at its own rate, depending on its degree of preparedness. As a prerequisite for enlargement of the Union, the operation of the institutions must be strengthened and improved in keeping with the institutional provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty.[6]

Another criterion for applying for EU membership was added through the Helsinki European Council (1999), which stated that a country must first settle its bilateral disputes before acceding to the EU.

> The European Council reaffirms the inclusive nature of the accession process, which now comprises 13 candidate States within a single framework. The candidate States are participating in the accession process on an equal footing. They must share the values and objectives of the European Union as set out in the Treaties. In this respect the European Council stresses the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the

[4]Copenhagen European Council (1993), *Conclusions of the Presidency*, European Union, 21-22 June 1993, Copenhagen, 180/1/93 REV 1, para 7 A (iii).
[5]Hillion, Christophe (2010), "The Creeping Nationalisation of the EU Enlargement Policy", *Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies*, Report No.6, November 2010, Stockholm, p.10.
[6] European Council (1997), *Presidency Conclusions: Luxembourg European Council*, European Union,12-13 December 1997, Luxembourg. See Annexure I.

> United Nations Charter and urges candidate States to make every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes and other related issues. Failing this they should within a reasonable time bring the dispute to the International Court of Justice. The European Council will review the situation relating to any outstanding disputes, in particular concerning the repercussions on the accession process and in order to promote their settlement through the International Court of Justice, at the latest by the end of 2004. Moreover, the European Council recalls that compliance with the political criteria laid down at the Copenhagen European Council is a prerequisite for the opening of accession negotiations and that compliance with all the Copenhagen criteria is the basis for accession to the Union.[7]

Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union has described the values of the EU and states, "the Union is founded on the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. These values are common to the Member States in a society in which pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity and equality between women and men prevail".[8]

Thus, the enlargement process acts as aninstrument through which the EU can project its norms and values in an efficient and legitimate way. It is through this carrot and stick policy that the EU exerted influence on its partners. This foreign policy instrument was not only about drawing new geographical boundaries but also about establishing an order in Europe through norms, values, rules, and regulations.[9] However, studies have proved that political conditionality offering eventual membership has had a positive impact on the countries concerned thus, encouraging democratic reforms. Compared to this,

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[7] European Council (1999), *Presidency Conclusions: Helsinki European Council,* European Union, 10-11 December 1999, para-4. See Annexure II.

[8] Lisbon Treaty (2008), *Article 2,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 April 2017, URL: http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-european-union-and-comments/title-1-common-provisions/2-article-2.html.

[9] Any country seeking EU membership must conform to the conditions set out in Art. 49 and the principles laid out in Art. 6(1) of the Treaty on European Union. Relevant criteria were established by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 and strengthened by the Madrid European Council in 1995. To join the EU, a new member state must meet three criteria: (1) political –stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities–; (2) economic – existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU–; and (3) acceptance of the Community acquis –ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union.

countries that are offered only association with the Union have not been able to perform well in bringing about reforms. According to the Treaty of Rome, any European country could join the EU, but today after more than five decades, the question arises as to what extent the EU can continue to offer membership to its neighbours. As Karen Smith stated, "Inclusion means bridging the old Cold War divide and uniting a continent, but could end up shredding the carefully woven fabric of the Union itself. Exclusion means isolating countries that can ill afford isolation, and making a mockery of the very term 'European Union'".[10]

The post-Cold War period saw the EU expansion towards the east. In 2004, ten new members were added to the Union. The number of candidates and potential candidates continued to grow with membership being granted to Romania and Bulgaria in 2007 and Croatia in 2013. These enlargements further provoked the inclusion/exclusion dilemma with countries like Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and Serbia–Montenegro expressing their desire to join the EU. The challenge was thus to ensure a stable neighbourhood and keep away from the instability spill-over effect. Christopher Hill has argued, "the extension of the EU's border is the most important of all the foreign policy implications of enlargement". New boundary lines are created between insiders and outsiders, with differences in living standards between countries within the Union and outside, faster growth, challenges in the fields of environment, organized crime, public health, etc. to be tackled which would otherwise create problems for the countries on either side. He further emphasised the need for an efficient and secure border management that would both protect and secure borders and also assist legitimate trade passage.[11]

1.1.1 The EU Accession Process

The Treaty of Paris (1951) and the Treaty of Rome (1957) were signed by the six founding members (Benelux, Germany, Italy, and France) of the ECSC (which later became EEC). Since then there have been seven phases of enlargement. The accession

[10] Smith, Karen. E (2005), "The Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy", *International Affairs,* 81 (4):p.757.
[11] Smith, Karen. E (2005), "The Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy", *International Affairs,* 81 (4):p. 758.

negotiations took about 6-8 years on an average and were based on article 237 of the Treaty of Rome. Before the Copenhagen Summit of 1993, the accession criterion was very simple. "The candidate was expected to fulfil the admission conditions, without any interference by the Union, while the post-Copenhagen approach entailed a proactive engagement of the EU to steer and monitor the process whereby candidates prepare their accession".[12] The European Council would closely watch on the progress made by the country towards fulfilling the conditions of accession.

The general accession process to the EU involves negotiations followed by signing of the Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA), which is to be ratified by all the member states and the European Commission. Once done, the candidate country becomes part of the accession process. There exist a host of pre-accession assistance programs, the funds of which are available to the countries to support the reform process. After this the country is expected to "develop a national program for the adoption of the *acquis*, the common legal framework of the European Union that all the member states adhere to, and to which they align their national legislations. The SAA monitoring along with intensive political dialogue and progress reports track the countries' successes and obstacles in completing the set terms. Once a country receives candidate status, official accession negotiations begin with the EU and determine under which conditions that country would join the European Union".[13]The negotiations usually last several years, for the countries are expected to align their national legislation with the founding EU treaties' content (mainly the treaties of Rome, Maastricht, Amsterdam and Nice).

The EU accession process is subject to approval by all EU Member States and encompasses several stages: the process is officially launched when a country submits the formal application for EU membership to the European Council. The European Council then asks the European Commission to assess the application based upon established criteria and conditions.In the "avis", the European Commission presents its recommendations for further steps. Depending on the extent in which the applicant

[12]Hillion, Christophe (2010), "The Creeping Nationalisation of the EU Enlargement Policy", *Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies,* Report No.6, November 2010, Stockholm, p. 11.
[13]Nenadović, M (2012), "State of Play and Lessons learned", in Swoboda, H. et. al. (eds.) *EU Enlargement: Anno 2012- A Progressive Engagement,*European Union: Brussels,p.26.

country fulfils the accession criteria, the European Commission may recommend the opening of accession negotiations or at first the granting of the candidate status only.Based upon this opinion, the European Council unanimously and formally decides whether to accept the membership application and whether to launch the negotiations for accession.Accession negotiations begin once the European Council issues a negotiating mandate to the European Commission. In a first step, a negotiation framework is adopted which lays out the principles and red lines for the negotiations. The *acquiscommunitaire*, the body of European Union law, is then divided in 35 policy areas called chapters in order to conduct the negotiations thematically[14] (For details see Annexure I on Negotiations).

Enlargement, thus, became one of the defining features of the integration process in Europe and was neither a part of nor distinctly mentioned in the Treaty of Rome (1957). Article 237 of the Treaty stated that any European state could become a part of the ECSC, but did not elaborate on the details of the integration process.

1.1.2 Various Enlargements, 1973-2013

The first set of countries to join the EEC was United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark, which became members in 1973. However, a question is often raised on UK's membership because it opted out of the meetings held during the formation of ECSC and the Treaty of Rome. French Foreign Minister Robert Schuman, on 9 May 1950, came up with a plan to link up coal and steel industries of France and Germany and make war between historic rivals "not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible". One of the key features of the Schuman Plan was to pool the natural resources and institute power in a "High Authority" whose decisions would bind France, Germany and other member states. It was a first step towards formation of a European Federation that would maintain

[14] In the so-called Screening process, the European Commission undertakes a detailed examination of each chapter to determine the degree to which the candidate country's legislation deviates from the EU acquis and requires adaptation. The Commission then informs the European Council of the results of the Screening process and, if appropriate, recommends the opening of negotiations under a specific chapter. Austrian Embassy, *EU Enlargement*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 May 2017, URL: http://www.austria.org/eu-enlargement/.

peace.[15] British Prime Minister Clement Atlee rejected participation in the Schuman Plan negotiations on 2 June 1950 on the grounds of *supranational power* proposed to be vested in a "High Authority". Some called it a 'wasted opportunity' for Britain that could have instead played a leadership role in Europe, while others called it as a careful balancing act of Britain's post-war foreign policy.[16] The UK, along with Denmark, Ireland and Norway applied for EEC membership in August 1961. However, in January 1963 President De Gaulle vetoed the membership request.[17] The second membership request to the EEC was made in 1967 which was again vetoed by France on the pretext that the British economy was incompatible with the EEC membership.[18] It was only in 1969 when De Gaulle left the government that chances of British membership increased. It was under George Pompidou that the integration process with Britain began and in January 1972 it signed the EEC treaties and became member of the EEC in 1973. In Denmark a referendum was held in October 1972 where 63 percent voted a "Yes" against

[15] The Schuman Plan - The task with which this common High Authority will be charged will be that of securing in the shortest possible time the modernization of production and the improvement of its quality; the supply of coal and steel on identical terms to the French and German markets, as well as to the markets of other member countries; the development in common of exports to other countries; the equalization and improvement of the living conditions of workers in these industries. European Union (1950), "The Schuman Declaration", [Online:Web] Accessed on 28 May 2017, URL:https://europa.eu/european-union/about-eu/symbols/europe-day/schuman-declaration_en.

[16] Lindsay (2014), "A wasted Opportunity for Leadership in Europe", *Tutorhunt,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 28 May 2017, URL: https://www.tutorhunt.com/resource/9358/.

In June 1955 the "six" founding members invited Britain to attend the Messina conference which was intended to revive European integration through the creation of a European Economic Community and a European Atomic Community. However, Britain withdrew its participation from further talks as it fell to direct the new project in the direction that suited it the most. Britain was opposed to the nature of the integration; it wished for the formation of a free trade area, while Germany wanted a common market that had been proposed by the Dutch government, and France's interests were for an atomic energy community as well as a common agricultural policy. In 1958, British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan urged French President Charles de Gaulle to give up the idea of 'Common Market' and to prevent the establishment of EEC. Upon rejection Britain formed a European Free Trade Area with Austria, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, and Switzerland in 1959 through the Stockholm Convention. With lack of US support, the EFTA could not achieve its goals. It was this EEC success that led Britain to apply for EEC membership in 1961 for the first time. (https://www.ukessays.com/essays/politics/reasons-for-uk-hesitation-in-joining-europe-politics-essay.php#ixzz40eBcXVPY).

[17] Britain had close tied with the US and was seen as its ally. De Gaulle feared US influence in the EEC through Britain which would threaten France's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Also, France found another opportunity to veto British membership, that of the Nassau agreement through which Britain had committed to buy Polaris Missiles from the US. This deal had been earlier rejected by De Gaulle. Hence he vetoed on the pretext that Britain favoured US over Europe. (https://www.ukessays.com/essays/politics/reasons-for-uk-hesitation-in-joining-europe-politics-essay.php#ixzz40eBcXVPY).

[18] Roberts, N (1967), "Emphatic 'No' by de Gaulle", *The Guardian,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 May 2017, URL: https://www.theguardian.com/world/1967/nov/28/eu.france.

a 37 percent "No" vote. Hence the country's entry into the EEC was approved and it became member in January 1973. Ireland's application for accession into the EEC was closely linked to that of UK with which it had close economic ties. Also, the membership of the EEC would benefit the country economically, especially the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). A referendum was held on10 May 1972 where 81 percent supported accession into the EEC. It joined the EEC along with Denmark and UK in January 1973.

In case of Norway, according to the constitution, it had to submit the decision on membership of the European Communities to popular referenda, since the entry automatically involved surrender of certain areas of sovereignty to Community institutions. One of the sensitive issues in the accession negotiations was Norwegian fishing, which was an important economic sector. Accession into the EEC would have given access to the national territorial waters to all the Community members. Also agriculture was not really competitive and was subsidised by the government. Hence even the CAP was not alluring enough. A referendum took place on 26 September 1972 where more than 53 percent voted a "No". Thus Norway did not become a member of the EEC but a FTA was signed between the two in May 1973.[19]

The second phase of integration was in 1981 when Greece acceded into the European Community. Greece submitted the application of accession to the EEC in 1959. In June 1961, an Association Agreement was signed between EEC and Greece as the first step towards integration into the EEC. However, the integration process was frozen in April 1967 when dictatorship was imposed in the country and was reactivated only in July 1974 when democracy was restored. It was in July 1975 that Greece applied for full accession into the Community. The reasons behind Greece's choice can be summed up as follows:

- Greece considered the Community to be the institutional framework within which stability could be brought into its democratic political system and institutions.
- Greece sought to reinforce its independence and position within the regional and international system as well as its "power to negotiate", particularly in relation to

[19] Historical Events in the European Integration Process (1945-2014), *Norway's Refusal*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 May 2017, URL: http://www.cvce.eu/en/education/unit-content/-/unit/02bb76df-d066-4c08-a58a-d4686a3e68ff/8bf94809-5b45-4840-8a90-9a33b4479419.

Turkey, which, after the invasion and occupation of Cyprus (July 1974), appeared as a major threat to Greece. Within this context, Greece also sought to loosen its strong post-war dependence upon the United States of America (US).

- Accession to the Community was regarded by Greece as a powerful factor that would contribute to the development and modernisation of the Greek economy and society.

- Greece wanted to be present in, and have an impact on the process of European integration as well as the configuration of the European model.[20]

Accession negotiations were initiated in July 1976 and concluded in May 1979, with the signing of the Accession Deed in Athens. The Greek Parliament ratified the Accession Deed of Greece to the European Community on 28 June 1979 and the Accession Treaty entered into force two years later, on 1 January 1981.

The third enlargement took place in 1986 when Spain and Portugal became members of the EC.Spain was under a dictatorship rule for almost 40 years. In February 1962, the Spanish Foreign Minister sent a letter to Walter Hallstein, President of the Commission of the European Community,asking for the opening of negotiations with the objective of examining the possible accession of Spain to the Community. This was criticised by many organisations and even newspapers that pressured the Community to reject the request. After such a request, the Congress of European Movement passed a resolution in Munich in 1962 stating that only democratic countries could join the EC. It was after eight years of negotiations that an agreement was reached in June 1970 establishing a preferential system between Spain and EC that lasted six years. Finally after the death of General Franco in 1977 the new democratic government requested for formal negotiations, which began in February 1979. Portugal applied for membership in March 1977 and the formal negotiations began in October 1978. During the 1980s their stand

[20] Hellenic Republic, "Greece's Course in the EU", *Ministry of Foreign Affairs,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 May 2017, URL: http://www.mfa.gr/en/foreign-policy/greece-in-the-eu/greeces-course-in-the-eu.html.

was strengthened by the formation of stable governments, and the two joined EC on 1 January 1986.[21]

Austria, Sweden and Finland applied for membership to the European Communities on 1 February 1993. Norway applied for a second time on 5 April 1993. The treaty on European Union entered into force on 1 November 1993 and the negotiations were formally transformed into accession to the European Union. Negotiations were concluded at the political level with Austria, Sweden and Finland on 1 March 1994 and with Norway on 16 March 1994.[22] Following a referendum in Austria, Finland, and Sweden on 12 June, 16 October and 13 November respectively, the majority voted a "Yes" and the three countries joined the EU on 1 January 1995. Norway on the other hand again held a referendum, the last one, on 28 November 1994 which again resulted in a "No" vote. Hence it did not accede to the EU though remained a member of the EEA.

The fifth and the most important round of enlargement was completed in 2004 when ten countries of Baltic, Central and Eastern Europe became members of the European Union. This round was completed in two stages where a total of 8 states[23] along with Cyprus and Malta acceded into the EU on 1 May 2004, and the second stage where Romania and Bulgaria became members of the EU on 1 January 2007. This enlargement was considered different because a number of post-Soviet states became members of the EU, overcoming the post Second World War division in Europe, aimed at ensuring peace and stability in the continent. After disintegration of USSR, the Central and Eastern European Countries proposed their will of closer integration with the EU. As a result European Agreements (different from Association Agreements) were negotiated that focused on gradual opening of market access for goods. In the Agenda 2000, the Commission had emphasised that each country would be assessed on its merits and the progress made in reforms. The Kok Report (2003) was an important contribution in the preparation of this

[21]Royo, S (2002), "The Experience of Spain and Portugal in the European Union: Lessons for Latin America", *Working Paper Series*, Vol 2 (2): 1-42.
[22] European Commission (1994), *Negotiations on the Accession of Austria, Sweden, Finland and Norway into the EU,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 May 2017, URL:http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-94-32_en.htm.
[23]The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

enlargement.[24]Negotiations for the 2004 enlargement officially started in March 1998 with six of the countries (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia and Cyprus) and in October 1999 were expanded to include Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Romania and Slovakia. They were concluded in December 2002 and assent to the accession treaties was given on 9 April 2003. It was then sent to the 15 EU member states and 10 candidate states for ratification. The second group comprised of Bulgaria and Romania that were given additional three years for reforms and membership negotiations and finally joined the Union in May 2007.[25] This enlargement was considered a great success because of the democratic and structural reforms in these post-Soviet states and secondly because of the shift in the strategic balances vis-à-vis Russia.[26] However, there was a gradual shift in the public opinion and many started viewing it as enlargement fatigue. The 2004 enlargement was criticized by many for it was felt that despite candidate countries not being fully prepared to join the EU, were granted membership. There has been a decline in the quality of democracy in four post-communist members namely Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria and Latvia, with continuous deterioration in Latvia and Bulgaria since 2006 and 2007 respectively. The behavioural change in governments of Hungary (since 2010) and Romania (since 2012) also challenged the values of democracy and rule of law. "The EU's qualified success with regard to Romania and its

[24] The Report was commissioned by Commission President Romano Prodi late in 2002 to be delivered by end of March 2003. Former Prime Minister WimKok was given the mandate to examine the implications of enlarging the European Union from 15 to 25 Member States and subsequently more. It stressed on the importance of improved implementation of EU rules and policies by all, prospective and old, Member States emphasising that, for all Member States, the enlargement was not a threat but an impetus for renewal. To ensure that enlargement is a success, the Kok Report proposed a five–point agenda covering the following issues: acting together in Europe, boosting the European economy, making Europe safer for its citizens, developing our partnership with our European neighbours and giving Europe a voice in world affairs. This strategy was intended not just to provide a framework within which the success of enlargement could be secured but also to respond to the concerns that EU citizens persistently expressed in the advance towards the 2004 enlargement. The Report argued that the EU should reflect on developing a genuine common foreign policy and it should also modernize its foreign policy instruments. Finally, since "enlargement is, in fact, the EU's most successful act of foreign policy" the Report stressed that not only the EU should develop better relations with its neighbours but it should also continue the enlargement process with Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

[25]Emmert and Petrovi (2014), "The Past, Present, and Future of EU Enlargement", *Fordham International Law Journal,* Vol 37 (5): 1349-1419.

[26]Walldén, Axel (2017), "The Demise of EU Enlargement Policy", p. 1-28, [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 May 2017, URL: http://www.eliamep.gr/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Enlargement-policy-1701-fin.pdf.

failure in Hungary illustrate well the scope and limits of the ability of EU institutions to counteract democratic backsliding in the Member States".[27]

Croatia has been the latest country to become member of the European Union in July 2013. It had become important as it was not a part of 2004 and 2007 accessions due to the 1991-1995 war with Serbia and Croatia's failure to guarantee democracy, rule of law and human rights protection. Croatia signed a Stabilisation and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU on 29 October 2001 becoming the second country to do so after Macedonia. Croatia applied for full EU membership on 21 February 2003 as it fulfilled the requirements of a functioning democracy, stable institutions guaranteeing the rule of law, and a functioning market economy. Accession negotiations ended in June 2011. A national referendum was held in January 2012 where 66.25 percent voted in favour. It finally became member of the EU on 1 July 2013.[28]

1.1.3 Enlargement Fatigue

Despite enlargement being an important foreign policy tool, it had its limitations. The EU expansion has continued ever since 1957 from the original six members (Benelux, Germany, Italy and France), to the present 28 member states.[29] Former European Commission President Romano Prodi in his 2002 speech reiterated that "enlargement was one of the most successful and impressive political transformation of the twentieth century".[30] However, with Romania and Bulgaria becoming members of the EU, the question arose regarding the need for further enlargement, where would be the limits of European borders, and whether an EU of 30 or 35 members would be able to work efficiently. European Commission President Prodi said that "a debate is needed in Europe to decide where the limits of Europe lie, as enlargement could not go on forever and the European political project cannot be watered down turning the EU into just a free trade

[27]Sedelmeier, Ulrich (2014), "Europe after the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union: 2004-2014", *Heinrich BöllStiftung,* p. 1-13.
[28]Emmert and Petrovi (2014), "The Past, Present, and Future of EU Enlargement", *Fordham International Law Journal,* Vol 37 (5): 1349-1419. It is the only country to have completed accession negotiations under the new 2006 enlargement strategy.
[29] The total number of member states came to 28 with Croatia becoming a member in 2013 but post- Brexit the number of EU members came down to 27.
[30] Prodi, Romano (2002), "A Wider Europe: A Proximity Policy as the key to Stability", *European Commission,* Speech/02/619, Brussels, 5-6 December 2002, p.3.

area on a continental scale".[31] The enlargement policy was one of the EU's most powerful tools that has helped countries of Central and Eastern Europe transform from communist regimes to well-functioning democracies. The Commission's approach towards enlargement was based on three basic principles i.e. consolidation, conditionality and communication.[32]

European integration during the Cold War period was confined mostly to Western Europe. However, the end of Cold War saw a change in the integration process. The Central and Eastern European Countries that were until now under Soviet influence showed inclination towards becoming a member of the EU. The Union took this as an opportunity to spread its influence in the region by offering financial assistance (in the form of PHARE programme), opening negotiations for single market and initiating reforms through *acquiscommunitaire*. During the 1990s, the EU was involved in dealing with crisis in Yugoslavia, transition in former Soviet republics and the Gulf War. Despite many countries willing to join the EU, membership was not on cards for these newly emerging states in the Balkans, Central and Eastern Europe. This approach gradually changed when negotiations opened with 13 states within a single framework at the Helsinki European Council of 1999.[33] Turkey was another country that had applied to

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[31] Prodi, Romano (2002), "A Wider Europe: A Proximity Policy as the key to Stability", *European Commission*, Speech/02/619, Brussels, 5-6 December 2002, p.3.

[32] Consolidation, i.e. the EU cannot ignore its responsibilities to ensure stability, security and prosperity in its own continent and further afield. The Union's capacity to absorb new members, while maintaining the momentum of European integration, is an important consideration in the general interest of both the Union and the candidate countries. The pace of enlargement has to take into consideration the EU's absorption capacity. Conditionality, i.e. the EU must remain rigorous in demanding fulfilment of its criteria, but fair in duly rewarding progress. Aspirant countries can only proceed from one stage to the next once they have met the conditions for that stage. Moreover, the Commission can suspend the progress in case of a serious and persistent breach of the EU's fundamental principles, or if a country fails to meet essential requirements at any stage. Communication, i.e. broad public support that is essential to sustain the enlargement policy. The EU needs to communicate better the objectives and challenges of the accession process and how it deals with the countries to cater the concern of the public and the challenges of globalization, along with the debate about the future of Europe. Better communication about previous enlargements is vital to ensure support for future accessions. European Commission (2005), *Communicationfrom the Commission: 2005 Enlargement Strategy Paper,* COM (2005) 561 final, Brussels, 9 November 2005, p. 2-4.

[33] European Council (1999), *Presidency Conclusions: Helsinki European Council*, 10-11 December 1999, para-4.The European Council reaffirms the inclusive nature of the accession process, which now comprises 13 candidate States within a single framework. The candidate States are participating in the accession process on an equal footing. They must share the values and objectives of the European Union as set out in the Treaties. The Commission has made a new detailed assessment of progress in the candidate States. This assessment shows progress towards fulfilling the accession criteria. At the same time, given that difficulties

join the European Economic Community in 1987 and was declared eligible to join EU at the Helsinki Council in 1999, despite the country not fulfilling the complete Copenhagen criteria.[34] The Copenhagen European Council of 2002 concluded negotiations with 10 Balkan and Central Eastern European countries that became members of EU in May 2004.[35] The 2005 Enlargement Strategy Paper stated that the enlargement policy was about "sharing a project based on common principles, policies and institutions that would ensure and maintain a fair balance within its institutions, respect budgetary limits, and implement common policies to achieve their objectives".[36]

HiskiHaukkala points out that EU does not have a defined criterion for enlargement and there was no outer limit to the number of countries being granted membership. Enlargement would not only alter the European space but would create a division between those accepted as members and those left out.[37] This would be the case with countries like Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia that have adopted the reforms, have opened

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remain in certain sectors, candidate States are encouraged to continue and step up their efforts to comply with the accession criteria. It emerges that some candidates will not be in a position to meet all the Copenhagen criteria in the medium term. The Commission's intention is to report in early 2000 to the Council on progress by certain candidate States on fulfilling the Copenhagen economic criteria. The next regular progress reports will be presented in good time before the European Council in December 2000.

[34] European Council (1999), *Presidency Conclusions: Helsinki European Council,* 10-11 December 1999, para-12. The European Council welcomes recent positive developments in Turkey as noted in the Commission's progress report, as well as its intention to continue its reforms towards complying with the Copenhagen criteria. Turkey is a candidate State destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States. Building on the existing European strategy, Turkey, like other candidate States, will benefit from a pre-accession strategy to stimulate and support its reforms. This will include enhanced political dialogue, with emphasis on progressing towards fulfilling the political criteria for accession with particular reference to the issue of human rights. Appropriate monitoring mechanisms will be established. With a view to intensifying the harmonisation of Turkey's legislation and practice with the *acquis*, the Commission is invited to prepare a process of analytical examination of the *acquis*. The European Council asks the Commission to present a single framework for coordinating all sources of European Union financial assistance for pre-accession.

[35] Council of the European Union (2002), *Copenhagen European Council: Presidency Conclusions,* 12-13 December 2002, 15917/02 POLGEN 84, para-3. The European Council in Copenhagen in 1993 launched an ambitious process to overcome the legacy of conflict and division in Europe. Today marks an unprecedented and historic milestone in completing this process with the conclusion of accession negotiations with Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia. The Union now looks forward to welcoming these States as members from 1 May 2004. This achievement testifies to the common determination of the peoples of Europe to come together in a Union that has become the driving force for peace, democracy, stability and prosperity on our continent. As fully fledged members of a Union based on solidarity, these States will play a full role in shaping the further development of the European project.

[36] European Commission (2005), *Communication from the Commission: 2005 Enlargement Strategy Paper,* COM (2005) 561 final, Brussels, 9 November 2005.

[37]HiskiHaukkala (2003), "A Hole in the Wall? Dimensionalism and the EU's "New Neighbourhood Policy"", *Ulkopoliittineninstituutti (UPI) – The Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA)*, p.1-25.

up negotiations and are willing to become members of EU. European Integration process was one of its kind where any 'European State' could become a part of the EU if it complied with the *acquiscommunitaire* of the European Union. Enlargement has been the Union's main foreign policy tool and acts as an instrument through which the Union can enhance stability in its immediate neighbourhood.

1.2 Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy

The 2004 and 2007 enlargements altered the borders adding complexities to the EU governance system by bringing EU closer to countries like Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and the Mediterranean states. The EU adopted "stabilisation approach based on region building, progressive economic integration and closer political cooperation, excluding the prospect of membership. Thus, the ENP may be characterized as a "Stabilisation, Transition and Partnership Process"".[38]SevilayKahraman points out, "the logic of stabilisation central to European neighbourhood policy reflects the member states' interest in the security challenges of the neighbourhood.In the East, EU is faced with many security challenges ranging from illegal trafficking, organised crime, terrorism, nuclear proliferation, to environmental degradation". Hence, the choice with the EU leaders was either to extend stability and security in the neighbourhood or risk importing instability which would be harder to seal despite tighter borders.[39]

The ENP was a result of this "security interdependence" through which EU wanted to promote reforms, democracy, and expand the zone of security, stability and prosperity in the absence of eventual membership. It was a policy instrument to deal with the internal transformations and outcomes of the 'big-bang' enlargement that would change the geopolitical landscape of the Union's borders in the east and lead to new security challenges. Another reason was to create a stable neighbourhood. As Ian Manner puts it, "the ENP is best characterised as a mass of contradictory impulses, led by an EU desire to improve relations with its nearest neighbours in the aftermath of its most recent

[38]Kahraman, Sevilay (2005), "The European Neighbourhood Policy: The European Union's New Engagement towards wider Europe", *Perceptions,* p.4.
[39]Kahraman, Sevilay (2005), "The European Neighbourhood Policy: The European Union's New Engagement towards wider Europe", *Perceptions,* p.5.

enlargements".[40] The enlargement policy had been a successful foreign policy tool in stabilising the central and eastern European countries. But the concern was that the Union's expansion could not go on forever.[41] Hence it was important for the ENP to pursue both "development and stabilisation" and offer most of the benefits to these countries, but membership.

The European Parliament during a questionnaire round asked the Commissioner-Designate Johannes Hann:

> *Q. To what extent could enlargement and neighbourhood policies interact (principles, policy frameworks, financial incentives etc.) and help define a potential intermediate status between enlargement and neighbouring countries?*
>
> A. The European Union has a clear strategic interest to develop relations in all areas in the immediate proximity. Many of the structural challenges facing the pre-accession and other neighbouring countries are similar, including the need to improve governance, make economic and other reforms. Similarly, there are parallels between what the EU can offer to partners from both groups. For example, many obligations under the DCFTAs and Association Agreements (AAs), recently concluded with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, are inspired by those under the SAAs and in some cases the acquis. The announced establishment of a Directorate General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations will provide added opportunities and synergies for a more coordinated and strategic approach to both enlargement and neighbourhood countries, at the same time as benefiting from internal concentration of structures and political and sectoral expertise. We will apply lessons learned from the use of our financial

[40] Manners, Ian (2010), "As You Like It: European Union Normative Power in the European Neighbourhood Policy", in Richard Whitman and Stefan Wolff (eds.), *The European Neighbourhood Policy in Perspective: Context, Implementation and Impact,* London: Palgrave Macmillan, p.30.

[41] Article 49 of the Lisbon Treaty states that, "any European State which respects the values referred to in Article 2 and is committed to promoting them may apply to become a member of the Union. The European Parliament and national Parliaments shall be notified of this application. The applicant State shall address its application to the Council, which shall act unanimously after consulting the Commission and after receiving the assent of the European Parliament, which shall act by an absolute majority of its component members. The conditions of admission and the adjustments to the Treaties on which the Union is founded, which such admission entails, shall be the subject of an agreement between the Member States and the applicant State. This agreement shall be submitted for ratification by all the contracting States in accordance with their respective constitutional requirements. The conditions of eligibility agreed upon by the European Council shall be taken into account. Lisbon Treaty (2008), *Article 49,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 April 2017, URL: http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-european-union-and-comments/title-6-final-provisions/136-article-49.html.

> instruments, and continue to provide technical assistance under Taiex for both enlargement and neighbourhood countries. The reflection on ENP that has been announced will provide an opportunity to consider whether new options should be considered. In both Enlargement and ENP, I will seek to achieve a higher profile for the EU as a key actor in its own neighbourhood, making clearer both to our citizens and to our partners the contribution we are making to prosperity and stability in our mutual interest.[42]

This indicates that the EU was keen play an important role to maintain peace and stability in the neighbourhood and at the same time not compromise on its security. The EU used enlargement policy as an instrument pushing its neighbours towards a stable and democratic transition. This was the case with Greece, Portugal and Spain, and more recently with the Eastern enlargement. Security in Europe became of foremost importance in the post-Cold War period. For the European continent to grow, it was important to enhance security and prosperity in the neighbouring countries. The European Security Strategy (ESS)was based on this line of argument.

Ian Manners pointed out:

> The enlargement of the European Union will have far-reaching consequences. We all hope that a larger union will also be a stronger union that will make an even more decisive contribution to global progress and stability. That contribution will be badly needed because in this century, so many of the threats to our peace and security are global, from international terrorism ...to ...climate change ... [T]he EU is a beacon of hope for peace and reconciliation, not only for Europe, but for the whole world.[43]

For Ian Manners, normative power was a conceptual move through which the EU sought to propagate its norms and values globally. Enlargement was one of the active, institutionalised, and structured process that provided membership of the Union. The EU's normative power acted as an important element for accession into the Union

[42] European Parliament, Answers to the European Parliament Questionnaire to the Commissioner-Designate Johannes Hahn, European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 July 2016, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/cwt/files/commissioner_ep_hearings/hahn-reply_en.pdf.

[43]Manners, Ian (2006), "European Union 'Normative Power' and the Security Challenge", *European Security*, 15 (4), p.406.

through which it offered complete stake in European institutions. "The Union in effect uses its economic and normative clout to create a set of highly asymmetrical bilateral relationships between itself and the candidates where the projection of norms and values is entirely one-sided: The candidates are supposed to internalise not only the approximately 80,000 pages of *acquiscommunitaire* but also the value-basis of the Union, as exemplified in the Copenhagen criteria of 1993 which sets out the other prerequisites for European belonging and full accession".[44] Thus the neighbourhood policy was seen an alternative to enlargement through which the EU imposed its normative power on non-candidate countries, based on conditionality. It was a response to the enlargement fatigue. The ENP would offer everything to the partner country, but institutions. It created an image of the EU as a "Fortress Europe", and the main objective shifted from integration to maintaining peace and stability among the 'ring of friends', with more focus on economic integration and cooperation with the neighbouring countries.[45]

1.3 Is ENP an Alternative to Enlargement?

The ENP was launched to encompass 16 diverse countries in the neighbourhood within a framework of the EU's shared values of rule of law, democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. Along with bilateral agreements, the EU offered market access, visa facilitation, and financial aid to the partner countries in exchange for domestic reforms in political, social and administrative spheres. Often a question is raised, if the ENP was an outcome of enlargement or not. The answer to this question lies in the 2004 enlargement when ten countries from Central Europe became members of the EU. This brought the EU close to countries with which it did not have any formal ties. Also the consensus among the policy makers and heads of member states was to deepen rather than widen the scope of Union in future. David Cadier[46] in his article deals with the "institutional ambiguity of the ENP and elaborates in the geopolitical considerations

[44]Haukkala, Hiski (2007), "A normative power or a normative hegemon? The EU and its European Neighbourhood Policy", A paper prepared for EUSA 10th Biennial Conference in Montreal, Canada, 17–19 May 2007, Panel Session 9I: Normative Power Europe II: Global Perspectives.
[45]HiskiHaukkala (2003), "A Hole in the Wall? Dimensionalism and the EU's "New Neighbourhood Policy"", *Ulkopoliittineninstituutti (UPI) – The Finnish Institute of International Affairs (FIIA),* p.1-25.
[46]Cadier, David (2013), "Is the European Neighbourhood Policy a Substitute for Enlargement?", [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 May 2017, URL: https://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR018/Cadier_D.pdf.

behind the creation of the ENP". The 9/11 attacks totally changed the definition and the nature of threats, that were now more diffuse, transnational and non-state in nature. The EU's relations with the neighbouring countries were more interdependent now, i.e. a stable periphery would mean a stable Europe and vice versa.Thus, the EU wanted to explore other alternatives to enlargement (especially because of the enlargement fatigue that had set in post-2004 accession) to influence the neighbouring countries. The first time a policy towards neighbours was mentioned was in 2002 when Romano Prodi, the then President of European Commission, said that the EU would create a 'ring of friends' with whom it would share 'everything but institutions'. The ENP Strategy Paper (2004) therefore referred to the countries on the periphery as 'neighbours' rather than 'friends' with no membership offer. The ENP was more of an ambiguous policy with varied interpretations both with reference to the Eastern and Southern neighbours.

The ENP was similar to the enlargement policy for it aimed towards building a stable neighbourhood by promoting EU's norms and values, but was more of a bilateral policy. With the membership option being unavailable to the partner countries, the EU offered Association Agreements (AAs) to ENP partner countries, which provided a roadmap or a set of political and economic reforms to be completed within three to five years. These Agreements are signed once these priorities were met. Through these AAs, the ENP offered the partners financial assistance, market access without any tariff and custom barriers, and free movement of people through visa liberalisation. Despite all the incentives, the ENP as a replacement for enlargement policy could not achieve much. On the economic front there has been an overall increase in trade, but on the political front it has achieved very little. The recent events in the neighbourhood have further hampered the partner countries to bring about reforms. As Cadier puts it, the ENP overstretched the institutional model of enlargement policy which was conceived for a different end, i.e. accession and for a different region i.e. Central Europe.[47] He further adds:

> The EU will never be able to replicate in the ENP the transformative power it exerted in the past through the framework of the enlargement process. Nevertheless, its incentives in

[47]Cadier, David (2013), "Is the European Neighbourhood Policy a Substitute for Enlargement?", [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 May 2017, URL: https://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR018/Cadier_D.pdf.

money, markets, and mobility are not negligible; and they can and should be beefed up and used more instrumentally. The EU also retains a significant share of soft power in its neighbourhood and thus ought to pursue its socialisation endeavour and continue reaching out to civil society. The ENP is not a substitute for enlargement and should not be. The EU should think strategically about its neighbourhood and need not have any complex about pursuing its interests in the area. The very nature of the challenges emanating from the region necessitates that the ENP be political; it cannot be limited to technical programmes.[48]

1.3.1 Origin of European Neighbourhood Policy

With the end of Cold War, and disintegration of Soviet Union, there emerged host of new independent countries in the Central and Eastern Europe. This led to a serious debate concerning the security architecture across Europe and that further enlargement would risk the integration process. As a result, different ideas were put forward as an alternative for building relations with the Central and Eastern Europe Countries (CEECs). The neighbourhood policy was not the first initiative towards the neighbouring countries of the Union where they were offered "everything but institutions". In September 1990 French President Francois Mitterrand came up with the idea of "European Confederation", to involve the CEECs in a parallel institutional framework along with that of the Union. On the other hand, European Commission President Delors proposed his vision of a "Europe of concentric circles, of which the innermost would be CEECs and Soviet Union". He further suggested creating a "European Economic Area (EEA)" to differentiate between CEECs and EFTA countries. Later in April 1991, External Relations Commissioner Andriessen proposed the idea of a "European Political Area" to strengthen political relations and affiliate membership. The affiliate members would have a seat in the European Council at par with the members in some areas along with membership in other institutions. The proposal was rejected by many within the Community as a "second class" membership offer.[49]

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[48]Cadier, David (2013), "Is the European Neighbourhood Policy a Substitute for Enlargement?", [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 May 2017, URL: https://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR018/Cadier_D.pdf.

[49]Kahraman, Sevilay (2005), "The European Neighbourhood Policy: The European Union's New Engagement towards wider Europe", *Perceptions,* p.6.

The December 1994 Essen Summit approved a pre-accession strategy where a country would be required to have an enhanced structured relationship with EU institutions along with progressive integration into the single market. The pre-accession strategy emphasized on "good neighbourly relations" and was a precondition for accession reflecting European Union's concern for instability via enlargement. In March 1995, EU launched a multilateral diplomatic process, at the behest of French Prime Minister Balladur, which led to the signing of a Pact on Stability in Europe. A series of good neighbours and cooperation agreements were signed between the applicant countries, and between them and their non-EU neighbours. The European Commission, in its Agenda 2000 document, advocated an inclusive enlargement process with three elements that were endorsed in the December 1997 Luxembourg European Council: 1) a single accession process involving 11 countries; 2) the opening of accession negotiations with the six CEECs and Cyprus; and 3) a European Conference.[50] In October 2001 the European Conference expanded to include 40 members including EFTA countries, South-east European countries, Moldova, Russia and Ukraine with no decision-making power. All the policies stated above included meetings on political issues at high levels and were simply outlines for consultations.

The 2002 Copenhagen Council further approved the idea of a "Wider Europe", also including Southern Mediterranean countries. The United Kingdom had pushed for an initiative aimed at Belarus, Moldova, Russian and Ukraine, not including the South-East European countries and the former Soviet Republics of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Russia turned down the offer to be a part of this policy, and the ENP was extended to the three Caucasian republics. The ENP comprises of 16 countries and are listed in Table 1.1 according to the year and agreement they signed with the EU.

Table 1.1: ENP Partners and Their Current Contractual Links with the EU

[50]Kahraman, Sevilay (2005), "The European Neighbourhood Policy: The European Union's New Engagement towards wider Europe", *Perceptions,* p.7. The aim was to bring the EU and all the European countries aspiring for membership in a single multilateral framework that would act as a forum for political cooperation on matters of external and internal security. The emphasis on conference partners' commitment to shared values and settlement of disputes by peaceful means was specially addressed to Turkey. The European Conference would serve as a multilateral framework for Turkey to negotiate bilateral disputes with Greece. The European Conference involved periodic meetings of the Heads of States or Governments, or Foreign Ministers, to discuss foreign policy problems and issues such as immigration or transnational crime. Turkey denied being a part of it for several years.

Country	Agreement and Date
Algeria	**Euro-Med association agreement signed, April 2002**
Armenia	**Partnership and Cooperation agreement in force, July 1999**
Azerbaijan	**Partnership and Cooperation agreement in force, July 1999**
Belarus	**Partnership and Cooperation agreement signed, March 1995***
Egypt	**Euro-Med association agreement in force, June 2004**
Georgia	**Partnership and Cooperation agreement in force, July 1999**
Israel	**Euro-Med association agreement in force, June 2000**
Jordan	**Euro-Med association agreement in force, May 2002**
Lebanon	**Euro-Med association agreement in force, June 2004**
Libya	**None in force**
Moldova	**Partnership and Cooperation agreement in force, July 1998**
Morocco	**Euro-Med association agreement in force, March 2000**
Palestinian Authority	**Interim Euro-Med association agreement in force, July 1997**
Syria	**Euro-Med association agreement signed, October 2004**
Tunisia	**Euro-Med association agreement in force, March 1998**
Ukraine	**Partnership and Cooperation agreement in force, March 1998**

***The ratification process was then frozen due to lack of democracy in Belarus.

Source:Smith, Karen (2005), "The Outsiders: The European Neighbourhood Policy", *International Affairs*, 81(5): p.760.

1.3.2 Regional Instruments before ENP

1.3.2.1 European Economic Area

The European Union developed regional strategies prior to the launch of European Neighbourhood Policy. These strategies would be analysed in terms of what alternatives

to enlargement were formulated by the Union and how the EU applies these policies with regard to its neighbours.

One such partnership was the European Economic Area (EEA) agreement proposed by the European Commission President Jacques Delors in 1989 with an intension of creating an internal market by 1992 and an alternative for EU membership. It was a multilateral agreement the EU concluded with European Free Trade Association (EFTA)[51] countries (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) to enable them to participate fully in the single market. However, three of the EFTA members, Austria, Sweden and Finland decided on full membership of EU and became members in 1995. The agreement for EEA was signed on 2 May 1992 and entered into force on 1 January 1994, with the objective "to promote a continuous and balanced strengthening of trade and economic relations between contradicting parties… with the view to creating a homogenous European Economic Area".[52]The 28 Member States of the EU along with three EFTA states, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, forms part of the EEA contracting parties. The agreement offers for inclusion of EU legislation in all policy areas including four freedoms i.e. movement of goods, people, services, and capital, along with consumer protection, company law, environment, social policy, statistics and guarantees equal rights and obligations within the single market for citizens and economic operators in the EEA.[53] The EEA agreement remained "the most ambitious and the most complete agreement ever signed by the Community with a group of third countries".[54]It is through thisagreement that Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein essentially became part of the EU's Single Market. However it did not include common agriculture and fisheries policies, customs union, common trade, common foreign and security policy, justice and

[51] The EEA has its origins in the European Free Trade Area (EFTA) that was created in 1960 involving seven countries, i.e. Austria, Finland, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. The EEA comprises of all EU member states plus the three i.e. Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein.

[52] Policy Department External Policies (2005), "EEA Plus? Possible Institutional Arrangements for the European Part of the European Neighbourhood Policy", *Directorate-General External Policies,* European Parliament, p.6.

[53] European Union, The Basic Features of EEA Agreement, EFTA, URL: http://www.efta.int/eea/eea-agreement/eea-basic-features#1.

[54]Vahl, Marius (2005), "Models for the European Neighbourhood Policy- The European Economic Area and the Northern Dimension", *CEPS Working Document no. 218,* February 2005, [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 August 2016, URL: https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/1192.pdf.

home affairs or economic and monetary union.[55]The EEA, unlike other association agreements, was a multilateral agreement. It differed from most other EU agreements as it was more forceful, with detailed provisions for the incorporation of new EU *acquis* into the agreement, whereas most of the other EU agreements with third countries were either stagnant or needed to be discussed and concluded again.The EEA agreement became more broad and inclusive in scope due to the inclusion of rules and directives outside its capacity.[56] The EEA members added considerably to the common programs, however, they cannot be compared to states such as Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Georgia and Azerbaijan, which have different political and economic situation.

1.3.2.2 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership

The European Commission launched its Global Mediterranean Policy in 1972 to create a single and organised framework for existing bilateral trade and cooperation agreements. It was enhanced to Euro-Arab Dialogue in 1974. With the end of cold war and fall of communism, EU's focus shifted from being a regional power to that of being a global actor with security becoming the central factor in the Union's foreign policy. A need was felt to create a stable and secure eastern and southern periphery. On the eastern front, the Central Eastern European Countries were integrated into the Union through accession, whereas for the countries to the South, the EU decided on a partnership approach aimed towards stabilisation and transition in this region.[57] Also, the shift of EU's aid towards the countries in Eastern Europe increased the insecurity of countries in the South. It was these factors that led to the creation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership that was one of the EU's "most ambitious and innovative foreign policy initiatives".[58] The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership or the Barcelona Process was a framework for relations between the European Union, its member states and the countries to the south and east of Mediterranean area. It included twelve countries i.e. Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel,

[55] The EEA EFTA States are however part of the Schengen area European Union. The Basic Features of EEA Agreement, EFTA, URL: http://www.efta.int/eea/eea-agreement/eea-basic-features#1.

[56]Vahl, Marius (2005), "Models for the European Neighbourhood Policy- The European Economic Area and the Northern Dimension", *CEPS Working Document no. 218,* February 2005, [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 August 2016, URL: https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/1192.pdf.

[57]Kahraman, Sevilay (2005), "The European Neighbourhood Policy: The European Union's New Engagement towards wider Europe", *Perceptions,* p.10.

[58] Pace, Michelle (2007), "Norm shifting from EMP to ENP: The EU as a norm entrepreneur in the South?",*Cambridge Review of International Affairs,* 20(4), p.659.

Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestinian Territories, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey. At the November 1995 Barcelona Conference an agreement was adopted to launch a partnership vis-à-vis three areas, political and security, economic and financial, and social and cultural. The main objectives were to create a zone of peace, stability and security in the Mediterranean region, hold meetings at Ministerial level, establish a free trade area by 2010 (an important objective of EMP) in accordance with the Barcelona declaration along with more intensive cooperation among members in the fields of investment, agriculture, industry, transport, energy, science and technology, migration, terrorism, environment etc.[59]

The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership was a bilateral one, implemented through Association Agreements (EMAAs) (signed between the EU and Member States on one hand and the 12 partner countries on the other). It aimed to establish, over a period, free trade in industrial goods and the progressive liberalisation of trade in the agricultural sector and services, cooperation in social, cultural and economic matters, along with justice and home affairs. These EMAAs have established specific approaches towards each partner country and aim to contribute towards economic and social stability of the Mediterranean region.

1.3.2.3 The Northern Dimension

The Northern Dimension initiative was a Finnish proposal, put forward in 1997 by then Prime Minister PaavoLipponen at the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. In a Speech, Prime MinisterLipponen, claimed that the "ultimate goal of an EU policy [for the Northern Dimension] is peace and stability, with prosperity and security shared by all nations [in the region]".[60] The policy was initiated in 1999 and renewed in 2006. It included European Union, Norway, Iceland, and the Russian Federation. Four regional councils

[59] European Union (1995), *Barcelona Declaration*, adopted at the Euro-Mediterranean Conference, 27-28/11/1995, [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 August 2016, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/research/iscp/pdf/policy/barcelona_declaration.pdf ; and Emerson, Michael and GerganaNoutcheva (2005), "From Barcelona Process to Neighbourhood Policy: Assessments and Open Issues", *Centre for European Policy Studies*, Working Document No. 20, [Online: Web] Accessed on 4 August 2016, URL: https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/29101/220_From%20Barcelona%20Process.pdf.

[60]Vahl, Marius (2005), "Models for the European Neighbourhood Policy- The European Economic Area and the Northern Dimension", *CEPS Working Document no. 218*, February 2005, [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 August 2016, URL: https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/1192.pdf.

(i.e. Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM), and the Arctic Council (AC)) along with their different memberships were also part of the initiative. The main objective was to promote dialogue (people-to-people contact) and cooperation (regional and sub-regional), strengthen stability, economic cooperation and integration, and sustainable development in Northern Europe. It aimed to improve movement of people and goods across borders thus enabling economic cooperation and people-to-people contact.[61] The Initiative was seen as a manifestation of two factors: 1) EU's immediate presence in Northern Europe post 1995 accession of Sweden and Finland; and 2) Security challenges vis-a-vis Russia in the neighbourhood and cooperation needed in tackling them. The initiative was a shift in EU's relations with its neighbours from bilateral association agreements to regional policies.[62]

The Northern Dimension dealt with various contentious issues including withdrawal of Russian forces from the Baltic States, and NATO expansion in Poland and Baltic States, without direct involvement of EU. However, post 2004 enlargement it became limited to EU-Russia affairs, a regional element of EU-Russia bilateral cooperation, and a regional approach in Northern Europe. The Northern Dimension initiative was an example about how membership along with presidency could be exploited to uphold national interest.[63] The Presidencies of Finland (1999), Sweden (2001) and Denmark (2002) provided active support in elevating EU policies in areas of national interest.

1.3.3 Evolution of European Neighbourhood Policy: Establishment Process

According to the Treaty of Rome, any European country could join the EU. Here two pertinent questions arise, one, the geographical extent to which the EU can expand, and two, how many countries should be part of it. Post-Cold War, and with the disintegration of Soviet Union, EU was faced with the dilemma of including or excluding the former

[61] European Union, (2006), Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document, European External Affairs Service, para 10 and 17, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/north_dim/docs/nd_framework_document_2006_en.pdf.

[62]Kahraman, Sevilay (2005), "The European Neighbourhood Policy: The European Union's New Engagement towards wider Europe", *Perceptions,* p.11.

[63]Vahl, Marius (2005), "Models for the European Neighbourhood Policy- The European Economic Area and the Northern Dimension", *CEPS Working Document no. 218,* February 2005, [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 August 2016, URL: https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/book/1192.pdf.

Soviet republics into a united European continent. The enlargement policy altered the European borders, creating challenges and opportunities. The European Neighbourhood Policy was an outcome of these circumstances where Europe had to deal with new neighbours and integrate the old ones within the Union.

The idea establishing a policy framework for the European Neighbourhood was officially put forward in April 2002 by the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), with a request made to Chris Patten (then External Relations Commissioner) and Javier Solana (then High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy) proposing EU policy towards post-enlargement neighbourhood. It stressed on enhancing relations with countries in the eastern neighbourhood, especially Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus, and that the EU should follow an "ambitious, long-term and integrated approach towards each country with an objective to promote economic and democratic reforms, sustainable development and trade thus ensuring stability and prosperity beyond its borders".[64] However, the initiative followed a differentiated approach as its relations with countries depended on the reforms undertaken and their dedication towards the values of democracy, human rights and rule of law. The GAERC also stated that progress would be made in the ENP keeping in mind EU's deepening relationship with the Russian Federation, which is an important partner.

The European Council of Copenhagen (December 2002) marked the historic milestone with completion of accession negotiations of ten countries, becoming members of the EU with effect from 1 May 2004. It further endorsed that:

> Enlargement would bring about new dynamics in the European integration and would present an important opportunity to take forward relations with neighbouring countries based on shared political and economic values. The Union remains determined to avoid new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union.[65]

[64] European Union (2002), *General Affairs and External Relations 2463rd Council Meeting,* 14183/02 (Presse 350), 18 November 2002.
[65] Council of European Union (2002), *Copenhagen European Council*: *Presidency Conclusions*, 15917/02, Brussels, p.6.

1.3.3.1 WiderEurope-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours

The European Commission launched a Communication, "Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours", in March 2003, where it indicated that European Union had a "duty" not only towards its citizens and member states but also "towards it present and future neighbours to ensure continuing social cohesion and economic dynamism". The idea was to avoid formation of new dividing lines in Europe and to promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the EU's borders. The Communication proposed that the EU should "develop a zone of prosperity and a friendly neighbourhood – a 'ring of friends' - with whom it can enjoy close, peaceful and co-operative relations". In return of the reforms and progress made, countries in the neighbourhood would be able to reap the benefits of closer economic integration with the EU. To this end, Russia, the countries of the Western NIS and the Southern Mediterranean would be offered the prospect of a stake in the EU's Internal Market and further integration and liberalisation to promote the free movement of – persons, goods, services and capital (four freedoms). Thus "the EU must act to promote the regional and sub- regional cooperation and integration that are preconditions for political stability, economic development and the reduction of poverty and social divisions in our shared environment".[66]

The Communication further reflected on the Union'sexisting relations with the neighbouring countries and how they differed on case to case basis. For example:

> There has little progress in EU's relations with Belarus since 1996, the growth in EU-Russia dialogue and cooperation on political and security issues, energy etc. have gained momentum. It has Free Trade Agreements (FTA) with countries of Southern Mediterranean and the Barcelona Process envisages that these should be expanded to include services and goods sector more fully. In contrast, the Partnership and Cooperation

[66] European Commission (2003), "Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours", *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament,*COM(2003) 104 final: Brussels.

agreements (PCA) in force with Russia, Ukraine and Moldova, grant neither preferential treatment for trade nor timetable for regulatory appropriation.[67]

Hence, the EU's approach towards its neighbours cannot be a 'one-size-fits-all' policy. Countries in the neighbourhood are faced with challenges and opportunities surrounding Proximity, Prosperity and Poverty. The EU should reflect a vision to reinforce and unite its existing neighbourhood policy based on two objectives: 1) To work with the partners to reduce poverty and create an area of shared prosperity and values based on deeper economic integration, intensified political and cultural relations, enhanced cross-border cooperation and shared responsibility for conflict prevention between the EU and its neighbours, and 2) To anchor the EU's offer of concrete benefits and preferential relations within a differentiated framework which responds to progress made by the partner countries in political and economic reform.[68]

The June 2003 Thessaloniki Council endorsed the GAERC conclusions and stated, "Enlargement is expanding the borders of our European Union and is bringing us closer to new neighbours. Their stability and prosperity is inextricably linked to ours. To reinforce our shared values and promote our common interests, we have been developing new policies toward Wider Europe, our New Neighbourhood".[69]

1.3.3.2 Paving the Way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument

The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) that was first envisaged in the Communication-*Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*- was further developed in this Communication. The new instrument "would build on the experience of promoting cross-border co-operation within the PHARE, TACIS and INTERREG programmes", which could focus "on ensuring the smooth functioning and secure management of the future Eastern and Mediterranean borders, promoting sustainable economic and social development of the

[67]European Commission (2003), "Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours", *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament*,COM(2003) 104 final: Brussels.
[68]Ibid.
[69] Council of the European Union (2003), *Thessaloniki European Council: Presidency Conclusions*, 11638/03, Brussels, p.13.

border regions and pursuing regional and transnational co-operation" and also "help to avoid drawing new dividing lines in Europe and promote stability and prosperity within and beyond the new borders of the Union".[70]

The General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) in June 2003 welcomed the Wider Europe Communication, which was followed by the Commission to present a Communication on the concept of a new Neighbourhood Instrument and further examining ways to improve interoperability between the different instruments. The Thessaloniki European Council endorsed these conclusions.

In July 2003, the Commission came up with the Communication "Paving the Way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument" that provided an assessment of the possibilities of creating a new Neighbourhood Instrument. Considering some constraints in coordination between existing financial instruments, i.e. INTERREG, PHARE Cross-border Co-operation Programme, Tacis Cross-border Co-operation Programme, CARDS and Meda, the Commission proposed a two-step approach. First phase from 2004-2006 focused on improving coordination between the various financing instruments concerned within the existing legislative and financial framework. The second phase covering the period post-2006 during which the Commission proposed a new legal instrument to address the common challenges identified in the Wider Europe Communication.[71]

1.3.3.3 European Security Strategy

In December 2003, the European Union adopted a *European Security Strategy* similar to the United States *National Security Strategy* in the aftermath of 11 September attacks. Europe was facing new challenges like terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, regional conflicts, organised crimes to name a few, which were more diverse, and less predictable. It was a target as well as the base for these threats. The Union and its Member States were involved in resolving regional conflicts in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of Congo, restoring good governments, encouraging democracy and

[70] European Commission (2003), "Paving the way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument", *Communication from the Commission*, COM (2003) 393 final: Brussels.
[71] European Commission (2003), "Paving the way for a New Neighbourhood Instrument", *Communication from the Commission*, COM (2003) 393 final: Brussels.

facilitating authorities to tackle crime in effective ways. The European Strategy Paper, adopted in Brussels on 12 May 2004, officially launched the neighbourhood policy. It emphasised on building security in the neighbourhood and that it is in European interest to have well-governed neighbours. Irrespective of countries sharing borders with Europe or not, those facing instability, violent conflicts, dysfunctional societies or rising population, would pose problems and threats for Europe.

The European Security Strategy Paper further stated:

> It is not in our interest that enlargement should create new dividing lines in Europe. We need to extend the benefits of economic and political cooperation to our neighbours in the East while tackling political problems there. We should now take a stronger and more active interest in the problems of the Southern Caucasus, which will in due course also be a neighbouring region.Resolution of the Arab/Israeli conflict is a strategic priority for Europe. Without this, there will be little chance of dealing with other problems in the Middle East". The European Union must remain engaged and ready to commit resources to the problem until it is solved. The two state solution-which Europe has long supported-is now widely accepted. Implementing it will require a united and cooperative effort by the European Union, the United States, the United Nations and Russia, and the countries of the region, but above all by the Israelis and the Palestinians themselves.[72]

The 2004 enlargement shifted the borders of the European Union to the east and brought the Union closer to a region that was both strategically and geopolitically important to Europe. It not only altered the number of member states, but also brought in countries having different cultural identities and political set-ups as most of them belonged to authoritarian regimes. With countries like Romania, Bulgaria in their final stages of accession process, Croatia and Turkey to begin their membership negotiations in 2005, Balkan countries wanting to join the EU, and the Union coping with *enlargement fatigue*, the European Neighbourhood Policy was launched to tackle these challenges. To build on a secure neighbourhood was one of the strategic objectives along with addressing the new forms of threats.

[72] European Council (2003), *A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy*, Brussels, 12 December 2003.

The European Neighbourhood Policy as an instrument was envisaged to maintain security and stability around the Member States of the EU that had been exposed to the vulnerabilities of permeable borders and internal as well as external threats. The ENP was established to spread values of democracy, market economy, human rights and pursue them to create a circle of states that are well administered and maintain stability and security around the Union. The neighbourhood policy was crafted as an alternative to enlargement to establish privileged relations with countries of Eastern and Southern Europe, and that of Southern Caucasus, countries that did not intend to accede to the EU but establish special affiliation through gradual economic integration. It aimed at preventing new dividing lines between an enlarged Europe and its neighbours, and provide the latter with the prospect of participation in different initiatives of the Union through political, security, economic and cultural cooperation.[73] The ENP comprised of sixteen countries including Algeria, Morocco, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, The Palestinian Authority, Syria, Tunisia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. Initially the ENP was directed towards neighbours to the east of EU. The Mediterranean region was included after strong pressure from France, Spain and Italy. The neighbourhood policy included proposals on the progress of regional cooperation and assimilation through integration, and trade to deal with issues on the EU's periphery. Action Plans were developed to replace the existing bilateral agreements. One of the objectives was to see a constant support and commitment towards the values of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and progress towards the development of a market economy. It encompassed security and foreign policy issues including with conflict resolution, conflict prevention, terrorism, trafficking, and proliferation of arms. However, the diversity and proximity of these countries vis-à-vis EU became the main problem for policy efficiency.

1.3.3.4 European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy Paper

[73]Laschi, Giuliana (2013), A Larger and More Secure Europe? Security, Space, Borders and New Neighbours in Historical Perspective,*Eurolimes*, 229: p. 185-196.

The European Commission published a Communication on "European Neighbourhood Policy-Strategy Paper" in 2004:

> With its historic enlargement, the European Union has taken a big step forward in promoting security and prosperity on the European continent. EU enlargement also means that the external borders of the Union have changed. We have acquired new neighbours and have come closer to old ones. These circumstances have created both opportunities and challenges. The European Neighbourhood Policy is a response to this new situation. It will also support efforts to realise the objectives of the European Security Strategy. Since this policy was launched, the EU has emphasised that it offers a means to reinforce relations between the EU and partner countries, which is distinct from the possibilities available to European countries under Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union. The objective of the ENP is to share the benefits of the EU's 2004 enlargement with neighbouring countries in strengthening stability, security and well-being for all concerned. It is designed to prevent the emergence of new dividing lines between the enlarged EU and its neighbours and to offer them the chance to participate in various EU activities, through greater political, security, economic and cultural co-operation.[74]

The EU emphasised that through this policy it would reinforce relations with the neighbouring countries but would be different from the clauses applied under Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union. The ENP Strategy Paper also mentioned that the relationship would be based on mutual commitment to the EU values of rule of law, respect for human rights, minority rights, good governance, market economy and sustainable development. These set of priorities would be incorporated in the jointly agreed Action Plans further encompassing key areas of political reforms and dialogue; economic and trade measures to gain a stake in the EU's internal market; justice and home affairs; energy; transport; information society; environment, research and innovation; and social policy and people-to-people contacts.The Action Plans would be based on a common set of principles but would vary depending on the relations with each country. Further progress would be monitored through Partnership and Cooperation Agreements or Association Agreements. The Action Plans would provide a point of

[74] European Commission (2004), "European Neighbourhood Policy: Strategy Paper", *Communication from the Commission*, p. 1-2.

reference for the programming of assistance to the countries concerned. Assistance from existing sources would be complemented in the future by support from the European Neighbourhood Instrument. The communication discussed an outline of this instrument, building on the Commission's communication of July 2003.[75] The Communication elaborated on the need to reinforce stability and security, and also contribute towards conflict resolution by giving recommendations on the development of regional cooperation and integration, as a means to address certain issues arising at the enlarged EU's external borders.The Action Plans, which were to be developed on the basis of the principles set out in this Communication, would define the way ahead over the next three to five years.

The European Parliament, during the motion for resolution on European Neighbourhood Policy in 2005, declared that EU's relations with its neighbours would aim at the fundamental values of the rule of law, good governance, respect for human rights and fundamental freedom, democracy, market economy and sustainable development; that the Union would support people's aspirations towards complete political autonomy, justice, and social development; emphasised the need to establish an effective monitoring mechanism and a willingness to restrict or suspend aid or cancel agreements with countries which violate international and European standards of respect for human rights and democracy, and ensuring access to independent media and information; called on the Commission to define the rationale and priority of the ENP, thus, providing for European neighbourhood agreement for countries that cannot become members but wish to have closer relation with the Union; that it would promote progress towards full access to the internal market and participation in the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), which will require appropriate financial and technical support from the EU; that it would allow cooperation in the field of justice and home affairs, defence of human rights, fight against trafficking of weapons and human beings, terrorism, organised crime etc.[76] The underlined aim was not only to build up bilateral relations between the EU and partner

[75] European Commission (2004), *Communication from the Commission- European Neighbourhood Policy:Strategy Paper*, European Union, p. 3.
[76] European Parliament (2005), "Report on the European Neighbourhood Policy", *Committee on Foreign Affairs*, European Union, Final, A6-0399/2005, 17 December 2005.

countries, but also to construct a system based on cooperation and development through regional integration.

1.3.4 Core Principles of ENP

Roman Petrov elaborates on certain core principles on which the ENP was based. These include: 1) the ENP was a tailor made approach through which the partner countries develop bilateral relations with the EU to suit their own national political, economic and legal ambitions; 2) political conditionality - through which these countries adhere to the values of the EU including democracy, rule of law and fundamental freedoms; 3) the ENP lacked the membership offer and instead provided stakes in internal market, political cooperation and financial assistance through European Neighbourhood Instrument.[77]

According to Atilgan and Klein, economic integration within the EU single market was one of the core elements of the ENP where the goal was to remove trade barriers and improve access to common market that can be accomplished through adoption of legal EU norms and standards. In the political field, like CFSP, or environmental or energy policy, cooperation should be strengthened. In the area of justice and home affairs, the goal can be achieved through closer cooperation in securing borders to manage migration, the fight against terrorism, and preventing human, drug, and weapons trafficking. They further pointed out that the EU and its neighbours had varied interests when it came to cooperation where EU was concerned about security and stability, while its neighbours were more inclined towards single market and financial aid.[78]

1.3.4.1 ENP as a Foreign Policy Instrument

David Cadier describes the ENP "as not a clear alternative to membership but as an indefinite, composite, and multidirectional policy that remained ambivalent about its

[77]Petrov, Roman (2007), "Legal and Political Expectations of the Neighbouring Countries from the European Neighbourhood Policy", in Cremona, M and G. Meloni (eds.), *The European Neighbourhood Policy: A Framework for Modernisation,* European University Institute Working Paper (2007/21), [Online:Web] Accessed on 22 April 2017, URL: http://cadmus.eui.eu/bitstream/handle/1814/6976/LAW-2007-21.pdf;jsessionid=CBE1B95D43B4B0BD87C36466C7563991?sequence=1.

[78]Atilgan, Canan and Deborah Klein (2006), "EU Integration: Models beyond Full Membership", *Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung*, Working Paper/Documentation, No. 158/2006, Berlin.

ultimate purpose".[79] It was created on the pretext of the EU being affected by instabilityon its periphery post 2004 enlargement. The ENP was bilateral in nature i.e. the policy was built on individual partnerships between the EU and the partner countriesthrough a single policy. According to the European Commission Joint Communication (2013), "It was based on mutual accountability and a shared commitment to the universal values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law, which is complemented by the two regional dimensions of the ENP. The Eastern Partnership and the Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean neighbours aim to foster regional cooperation and to develop regional synergies and responses to the specific geographic, economic and social problems of each region".[80]

While the rules and objectives apply to all the partners, the European Union modified its association/relationship with each country based on various instruments like Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, Action Plans, and Association Agreements. These instruments helped EU distinguish its policy responses according to the ambitions and requirements of its partners. The ENP was a key example of EU's wide-ranging external policies that could be used to create coherent action concerning all significant EU actors.

1.3.5 Aims and Objectives

The European Union through its neighbourhood policy promoted various proposals in almost all the areas ranging from energy to education, research, economic and trade, to broaden and deepen cooperation with its neighbours. However, there was scope to improve, build and buttress the partnership by uniting the countries with stable democracies, following sustainable economic growth, facilitating the mobility of workers, students and tourists, managing cross-border links, commitment to fight against human rights violations, and support social development in the region. The partnership was mutually beneficial, varied with neighbours based on their needs and objectives for

[79]Cadier, David (2013), "Is the European Neighbourhood Policy a Substitute for Enlargement?", [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 May 2017, URL: https://www.lse.ac.uk/IDEAS/publications/reports/pdf/SR018/Cadier_D.pdf.

[80] European Commission (2013), "European Neighbourhood Policy: Working towards a Stronger Partnership", Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Brussels, 20.3.2013 JOIN(2013) 4 final, para 61, p.14.

reform, and was directly proportional to the extent of support extended by the Union. The rapid the progress of a country in its internal reforms, the more support was provided from the EU.

In the 2010 Communication, the European Commission affirmed that the ENP aimed at intensifying political dialogue, economic integration and cooperation with each partner country in the neighbourhood , a partnership for reform that offered "more for more": the more deeply a partner engaged with the Union, the more fully the Union would respond.[81] Association Agreements have been concluded with countries in the south to bolster their relations. Similarly, the Eastern Partnership, the Eastern dimension of the ENP, has also substituted the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements with Association Agreements to deepen relations. The ENP was committed towards EU's shared values of democracy, rule of law and human rights and has been assisting the partner countries in their democratisation efforts. However, progress remained a concern as implementation of these values was slow. Issues related to women rights, fight against torture, freedom of expression (in Ukraine where media freedom was demanded by abolition of issuing 'temniki', i.e. instructions by the authorities on what to report), freedom of assembly, remained difficult to achieve.

A review of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2011 declared that:

> A functioning democracy, respect for human rights and the rule of law are fundamental pillars of the EU partnership with its neighbours. There is no set model or a ready-made recipe for political reform. While reforms take place differently from one country to another, several elements are common to building deep and sustainable democracy and require a strong and lasting commitment on the part of governments. They include: – free and fair elections; – freedom of association, expression and assembly and a free press and media; – the rule of law administered by an independent judiciary and right to a fair trial; – fighting against corruption; – security and law enforcement sector reform (including the police) and the establishment of democratic control over armed and security forces.

[81] European Commission (2010), "Taking stock of the European Neighbourhood Policy", *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council*, Brussels, 12/05/2010 COM(2010) 207.

This could be achieved through a successful civil society that can empower the citizens enabling them to contribute to policy-making, facilitate an inclusive economic growth and assist in the rise of democratic political parties. Social and economic challenges like poverty, low life expectancy, and unemployment were some of the key issues being faced by the countries in the neighbourhood, with most of them having weak economies. These issues can be tackled through pilot programmes of the EU in the field of agricultural, rural and regional development. Thus, the main objective was to raise the economic standards by creating jobs and improving growth. For many partners, EU was their main source of imports and exports. Hence, effective and mutually beneficial instruments like Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) should be developed for closer trade ties between the EU and its neighbours.

The Joint Communication (2011) pointed out that the ENP "aimed to develop a mutually beneficial approach where economic development in partner countries and in the EU, well-managed legal migration, capacity-building on border management, asylum and effective law-enforcement co-operation go hand in hand.Mobility Partnerships provided the comprehensive frameworks to ensure that the movement of persons between the EU and a third country was well-managed".[82] Such partnerships have been launched with the Republic of Moldova and Georgia. Despite the diversity among the countries of the neighbourhood policy, the European Union has extended partnerships individually, based on mutual accountability, encouraging regional cooperation, to take on threats such as terrorism, irregular migration, and dealing with social and economic challenges.

1.3.6 European Neighbourhood Policy Review 2015

In 2015, the EU came up with a review of its ENP initiative in order to access the progress made over the past years and give new recommendations. The purpose of this review was to assess the present challenges, be it conflict in the Middle East, human rights violations, rising extremism and terrorism, dealing with an assertive Russia, energy crisis, and the most important being influx of refugees into the EU to find safe havens,

[82] European Union External Action (2011), "A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A review of European Neighbourhood Policy", *Joint Communication by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security and the European Commission,* 25 May 2011, Brussels.

and find solution as to how the EU and its neighbours can build more effective partnerships in the neighbourhood. The EU has been built on a set of universal values and its stability depends on those values. However, in the present context, stabilisation has been considered as the main political priority in this 2015 review. Stabilisation of the neighbourhood would be the most urgent challenge in the coming years. The EU's approach would be"to comprehensively address the sources of instability likepoverty, inequality (which was a perceived sense of injustice), corruption, weak economic and social development and lack of opportunity, particularly for young people, thus increasing vulnerability to radicalization".[83]To deal with this the new ENP has been determined to make efforts to support economies and improve prospects for the local population enabling people to build their future, simultaneously tackling uncontrolled movement of people. On good governance, rule of law, democracy, and human rights, the consultation emphasised that these would remain a priority for the EU for they are crucial to social and economic stability. It further stressed on "an independent, transparent and impartial judicial system free from political influence which would guarantee equal access to justice, protection of human rights, gender equality and non-discrimination, and full application of the law would continue to be a goal of the EU with all its partners".[84] To strengthen and reform democratic and independent institutions along with local and regional authorities was also considered essential. Economic and social development, modernisation and investment are important factors to stabilise the neighbourhood and build partnerships for it would provide innovation and also create jobs for the youth.

In June 2015, the European Council restated the need to empower and enable partners to prevent and manage crises, through concrete projects of capacity building with a flexible geographic scope. "Partner countries are facing specific security challenges, and the EU should focus on enhancing cooperation on security sector reform. Building further on the European Agenda on Security[85], the new ENP will prioritise tackling terrorism and preventing radicalisation; disrupting serious and organised cross-border crime and

[83] European Commission (2015), *Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy*,JOIN(2015) 50 final, Brussels, 18 November 2015, p. 2.
[84] European Commission (2015), *Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy*,JOIN(2015) 50 final, Brussels, 18 November 2015, p. 5.
[85]A communication that came out on 28 April 2015 elaborating on how the Union can bring added value to support the Member States in ensuring security.

corruption; improving judicial cooperation in criminal matters, and fighting cybercrime, in full compliance with the rule of law and international law, including international human rights law".[86]

1.3.7 Report on the Implementation of European Neighbourhood Policy Review 2017

It was the first report following the 2015 Review of the ENP that sets out a new framework for building more effective partnerships between the EU and its neighbours with stabilisation as a top priority. It laidemphasis on how the EU and its Eastern and Southern partners were working to promote stabilisation and resilience with focus on "economic development, employability, youth employment, and upholding the EU's commitment to promote democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights, and good governance along with effective participation of civil society".[87]The 2017 review recognised the different objectives of partner countries and refocused the ENP to adopt an approach towardspartners based on both partners' needs and EU interests, along with flexible use of EU instruments. The new approach re-energised the EU's relations with the ENP partner countries through negotiation and adoption of new Partnership Priorities and continuous updating of Association Agendas. This has led to flexibility in the EU funding (through the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)) that has been increased through trust funds. The renewed policy has been able to support reforms in four priority areas: good governance, democracy, rule of law and human rights; economic development for stabilisation; security; migration and mobility. The review has been able to boost sustainable economic development, focus on security challenges and bring about structural reforms. Refugee crisis and irregular migration remained the top challenges in the report. In terms of financial assistance, in 2016, the support extended to the neighbourhood through the ENI was over €2.3 billion. Since the Review, a number of

[86] European Commission (2015), *Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy*,JOIN(2015) 50 final, Brussels, 18 November 2015, p. 12.
[87] European Commission (2017), *Report on the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Review*, JOIN(2017) 18 final, Brussels, 18 May 2017.

different tools have been merged to further improve the coordination and coherence of all aid modalities.[88]

Federica Mogherini, High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, said

> The European Union has been investing a lot in economic development, resilience, security, democracy and the rule of law in our Eastern and Southern neighbours. One year and a half after the review of the European Neighborhood Policy, we have managed to build - in cooperation and full partnership - a tailor made approach with each and every country, to ensure it addresses the real needs and interests, for the sake of all our citizens.[89]

Johannes Hahn, EU Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations also added,

> We consulted widely before updating the Neighbourhood Policy – and this report shows how we are really putting into action the results of that consultation: a stronger focus on mutual interests, greater differentiation to reflect the diversity of our partners, a greater sense of shared ownership of the policy and more flexibility in how it is implemented.[90]

1.4 EU Global Strategy and the ENP

A Global Strategy for European Union's Foreign and Security Policy was published in June 2016. The time it has been published in was when the purpose and even the existence of the Union is being questioned, especially with the exit of Britain from the Union. The EU as well as the neighbourhood today is more unstable and insecure than ever before. According to Federica Mogherini, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Vice-President of the European Commission, there is a need to rethink the functioning of the Union and that there should be a shared vision

[88] European Commission (2017), *Report on the Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy Review*, JOIN(2017) 18 final, Brussels, 18 May 2017.
[89] European Commission (2017), *Revised European Neighbourhood Policy: supporting stabilisation, resilience, security*, Press Release, Brussels, 18 May 2017, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 May 2017, URL: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1334_en.htm.
[90] European Commission (2017), *Revised European Neighbourhood Policy: supporting stabilisation, resilience, security*, Press Release, Brussels, 18 May 2017, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 May 2017, URL: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1334_en.htm.

and common action to cope with the challenges, not uncertainty.[91] Thus, there should be common internal and external policies to confront new challenges. The EU Global Strategy aimed towards making the Union more effective in confronting energy security, migration, climate change, violent extremism, and hybrid warfare for these challenges cannot be tackled by countries alone. The Global Strategy also stressed on maintaining peace, prosperity and democracy, which promoted a rule-based global order modelled on the United Nations and based on multiculturalism. It pointed out that Europe must be prepared to defend itself and respond to threats confronting Europe. For this purpose "an appropriate level of ambition and strategic autonomy is important for Europe's ability to foster peace and safeguard security within and beyond its borders". In terms of energy security, the EU should build strong relations with countries that are resource rich or provide transit for supply of resources to the EU markets. Favouring the enlargement policy, it reiterated that any country that promoted the EU values could become a member of the Union. The policy was a strategic investment in Europe's security and prosperity, which has already contributed greatly to peace in formerly war-torn areas. Through this policy many challenges like migration, energy security, organised crime, and terrorism could be dealt with collectively by an enlarged EU and countries that aspire to become part of the Union. Through the ENP, the EU has been determined towards a stable, peaceful, prosperous and democratic country in the Mediterranean and Eastern region in order to bring the region close to the EU.

"Echoing the Sustainable Development Goals, the EU will adopt a joined-up approach to its humanitarian, development, migration, trade, investment, infrastructure, education, health and research policies, as well as improve horizontal coherence between the EU and its Member States". Sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of states, the inviolability of borders and the peaceful settlement of disputes remained to be key elements/principles of the European security order that would apply to all states, both within and beyond the EU's borders. The Global Strategy also mentioned Russia being the key challenge to the EU, and offered a more consistent and united approach towards Russia. To be able to engage in the world more responsibly the Union should have

[91] European External Action Service (2016), *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy,* European Union Global Strategy, p.1-60.

credibility and must be more responsive. The EU Global Strategy sets out the EU's core interests and principles for engaging in the wider world and gives the Union a collective sense of direction. The aim is to make Europe stronger, an even more united and influential actor on the world stage, that would keep citizens safe, preserves their interests, and upholds values.

1.5 Successes and Failures of ENP

The European Neighbourhood Policy was conceived post big bang enlargement with a hope to bring about security and stability in the neighbourhood. Initiatives like, 1) Africa-EU Partnership established in 1960s that provided general framework for relations between European Union and African, Caribbean and Pacific group of states, 2) Euro-Mediterranean (part of the Barcelona process) that formed partnership between 28 EU member states and 15 Southern Mediterranean, African and Middle Eastern countries, and 3) the Northern Dimension (1999), which was an instrument of cooperation between EU, North-West Russia and Baltic Sea, and Arctic regions, were all precursors to the ENP. The Eastern Partnership on the other hand, launched in 2009 between the EU and six countries including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine to develop cooperation, was an extension of and a supplement to the neighbourhood policy in the east. The ENP, thus, covered a large geographical area including countries from Belarus to Azerbaijan and from Algeria to Syria. The only aspect in which the neighbourhood policy differed from enlargement policy of the Union was the accession criteria. The neighbourhood policy offered everything to the member countries from financial support to political and economic reforms based on the country's needs, but membership. The Action Plans between the EU and ENP partners formed a key feature of cooperation along with grants being provided, directly or indirectly, for further economic integration. Presently, 12 out of 16 ENP partner countries have agreed action plans with the EU, with Algeria, Belarus, Libya and Syria remaining out of most of ENP structures.[92]

[92]Veebel et.al. (2014), "Conceptual Factors Behind the Poor Performance of the European Neighbourhood Policy", *Lithuanian Foreign Policy Review*, 31, p. 85-102.

This policy was an outcome of the fifth enlargement of 2004, initiated as an instrument to promote democratisation and modernisation in the new neighbourhood. It aimed to create an area of "prosperity and good neighbourliness based on the values of the Union", as stated in Article 8 of the EU treaty.[93] However, today, after more than ten years the policy's success and relevance is being questioned. Instability in the neighbourhood, with escalating conflicts in Syria, Ukraine, Libya and the Middle East region, has raised security concerns among the EU members.

Boedeltje, Freerk and Henk Van Houtum (2011) have analysed that these changing circumstances have led to new rationales: 1) coping with its new external borders and neighbours and 2) finding a solution for a further enlargement problem. According to them, both rationales have been drawn out of strategic interest avoiding potentially damaging consequences on stability and development. The new incentives, for more cooperation, were seen as necessary in order to 'include' the neighbouring states and create a prosperous and stable 'ring of friends'. The ENP was created to contribute to internal transformation and to further the process of 'Europeanisation',i.e. to promote EU as a normative powerby sharing European values through policies of conditionality and socialisation of neighbouring states, beyond the EU borders.[94]On the one hand, the ENP builds an image of an inferior neighbour that needs to be reformed and move towards European standards and on the other hand, produces a speech politics of mutuality and dialogue.[95] The question that arises is that why has the policy failed in maintaining and guaranteeing stability and security in the neighbourhood, when it was the premises of the initiative. What are the factors responsible, and the reforms that are required to make ENP more effective?

One of the questions asked by the European Parliament during a questionnaire round to the Commissioner-Designate Johannes Hann was:

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[93] European Union (2009), Treaty on European Union-Lisbon Treaty, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 July 2016, URL:http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-european-union-and-comments/title-1-common-provisions/6-article-8.html.

[94]Boedeltje, Freerk and Henk Van Houtum (2011) "Brussels is Speaking: The Adverse Speech Geo-Politics of the European Union Towards its Neighbours", *Geopolitics,* 16:130–145.

[95]Boedeltje, Freerk and Henk Van Houtum (2011) "Brussels is Speaking: The Adverse Speech Geo-Politics of the European Union Towards its Neighbours", *Geopolitics,* 16:130–145.

Q: Do you consider the current policy framework covering under a single umbrella 16 countries from Morocco to Ukraine still relevant, given diverging prospects for political stability, security, capacity for reform and commitments to reform?

A. Since the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was launched ten years ago, there have been profound changes in our neighbourhood. Although the ENP was revised in 2011 in response to the Arab Spring, the instability throughout the neighbourhood but in particular in Ukraine, Syria and Libya underlines the need for further change. President-elect Juncker has asked me to take stock and suggest a way forward within the first year of the new mandate, and I regard this task as both essential and pressing. Without prejudging the outcome of this reflection, I believe the ENP continues to provide a broad, overarching framework for our action in the neighbourhood, based on European interests as well as values, ensuring coherence of all policy instruments of EU external action, and underlining the high importance the EU attaches to relations with its nearest partners. If confirmed, it will be my priority to ensure that the ENP is fitter for purpose and that it contributes more effectively to preserving Europe's security and values. To achieve this, it is clear that the ENP must be further adapted to and targeted on our neighbours' individual situations and needs. The ENP needs to become more flexible. Our neighbouring countries are too diverse to apply a one-size-fits-all approach. The ENP needs to be able to respond more quickly and effectively to crises. The policy needs to work not just country by country, but field by field, to ensure that we have the right tools to deliver on all key issues, including energy, free trade, migration, and with a particular emphasis on good governance. The Union must deliver when our partners do, but also have a clear strategy how to maintain our influence with partners who do not, or who do not at present, embrace European values. Lastly, the ENP needs to allow for stronger joint ownership of bilateral relations with each partner country. I want to see more local buy-in, with a strengthened role both for businesses and civil society. I will work closely with the HR/VP on the changes that are necessary to bring the ENP into today's world. I will closely associate the European Parliament in this process and look forward to an intense dialogue to ensure that the European Parliament's expertise, as reflected in its resolutions on the matter, is used to its full potential. The overall objective remains as

> clear as ever: building as close a political association and economic integration as possible, in the joint interests of the EU and its partners.[96]

In 2006, the European Commission presented a Communication where it illustrated the strengths of the ENP and ways through which it can be improved. It emphasised on a series of proposals to improve the policy for instance, deepen the integration process- both economic and political including a whole range of issues ranging from trade to human rights; second, joint ownership- i.e. a fully agreed and negotiated Action Plans; third, better use of funds- where European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) would provide assistance to partner countries; mobility and migration- i.e. enabling free movement of the citizens from partner countries through visa facilitation; and lastly, an enhanced civil society participation in the ENP.[97]

ÖzgürÜnalEriş (2012) pointed out five main problems that proved the ENP to be ineffective. 1) lack of the EU membership - this has been a major drawback in promoting democracy among the partner where countries like Ukraine and Moldova anticipated stronger inclusion within the EU. With the membership incentive missing, the EU found it difficult to propagate its norms and values, and further weakened the likelihood of neighbouring countries carrying out necessary reforms; 2) the lack of financial and technical support for reforms process was also a major hindrance for gathering support of political and economic actors in partner countries; 3) the unbalanced relationship between the EU and the partner countries, where the EU does not give any meaningful say to its neighbours in setting the normative agenda; objectives and means were non-negotiable; 4) lack of cohesiveness among the EU member states and the neighbouring countries, as the ENP stretched over a very large geographical area and covered a wide diversity of countries; 5) the action plans of the ENP were challenging for they expected partner

[96] Answers to the European Parliament Questionnaire to the Commissioner-Designate Johannes Hahn, European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 July 2016, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/cwt/files/commissioner_ep_hearings/hahn-reply_en.pdf.

[97] European Commission (2006), "Strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy", *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament,* Brussels, 4 December 2006,COM(2006)726 final.

countries to adopt EU values and standards and be a part of internal market without realising that the countries may be struggling with basic economic reforms.[98]

The 2014 Communication pointed out the problems, security threats and challenges that were being faced by the EU and countries in the neighbourhood due to changing and difficult geo-strategic environment. The neighbourhood policy was thus an important step towards promoting stability, security and respect for human rights. Terrorism, organised crimes, trafficking, frozen conflicts have undermined the role of ENP. Hence, to address these challenges, the EU and its Member States should play an active part through bilateral efforts, to deal with and prevent these crises. It should adopt instruments like diplomacy, conflict prevention and mediation, apart from traditional capabilities of military training, police, justice and border management cooperation in providing aid and dealing with such security and economic crises. The Union should focus on reforms, a more transparent, responsible and democratic environment, for an overall comprehensive growth both in the east and the south. The EU cannot stick on the individual components like democracy, economic integration, mobility etc. to achieve the stated objective. With the fast changing situations and the geopolitics it needs to adopt a different approach and policy instruments like conflict prevention, conflict resolution, management to deal with crises vis-a-vis the neighbouring countries.[99]

The neighbourhood today is more fragmented than ever. The Arab Spring uprising in North Africa, which began in 2011 and aimed at democratic transformations, has not been successful. The Syrian Civil war has destabilised the neighbouring countries, Jordan and Lebanon, and the Middle East region continues to face unrest and turbulence. Russia, on the other hand, has challenged EU influence in the eastern region. The Joint Consultation Paper on review of ENP stated that the developments in the neighbourhood have made it less stable today than it was ten years ago.[100] This has led to various

[98]ÜnalEriş, Özgür (2012), "European Neighbourhood Policy as a tool for stabilizing Europe's Neighbourhood", *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 12(2), p.249-250.

[99] European Commission (2014), "Neighbourhood at the Crossroads: Implementation of the European Neighbourhood Policy in 2013", *Joint Communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions*, Brussels, 27 March 2014 JOIN(2014) 12 final.

[100] European Commission (2015), "Towards a New Neighbourhood Policy", *Joint Consultation Paper*, Brussels, 4 March 2015 JOIN (2015) 6 final.

challenges being faced by EU and its partner countries including security threats, economic pressure, and unbalanced flow of refugees.

The European Neighbourhood Policy offered partnership and cooperation between the EU member states and the strategically important countries. On the one hand, it assisted and provided support towards establishing democracy, European values and stable economies in partner countries, and on the other hand, it tries to maintain stability and security around its external borders. However, ENP has fallen short of fulfilling its aims, as it has neither been able to offer solutions to the recent crisis in the neighbourhood, nor serve EU's own interests.

A Wikileaks cable, dated 28 November 2008, mentioned the difference between the EU projects of ENP and Eastern Partnership. Johan Frisell, the then deputy of Swedish MFA's Eastern Europe desk, said that Eastern Partnership's goal was to create a sub-region of six states, i.e. Ukraine, Moldova, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia, and treat it "as a whole". He further mentioned that the, "efforts to shape civil society would be done "regionally", though parliamentary cooperation would be targeted at the legislatures of all six states simultaneously. On immigration, there would be a "visa-free regime, extending Schengen to these countries"".[101] The aim was to work closely with these six countries together. This was not the case with ENP, where the EU dealt with partner countries individually.Another difference between Eastern Partnership and ENP was that the former would have "some sort of roadmap or timetable", for example, a target date of 2012 for a regional Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the EU. The goal was a deep FTAwith the six states to become part of the EU internal market.[102]

1.6 Conclusion

The main problem being faced by the Union is the territorial limit of the European borders and the institutional capacity of the institutions to take decisions on critical

[101]Wikileaks (2008), "Sweden on the EU Eastern Partnership and Nordstream", Canonical ID: 08STOCKHOLM792_a, 28 November 2008, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 May 2017, URL: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08STOCKHOLM792_a.html.
[102]Wikileaks (2008), "Sweden on the EU Eastern Partnership and Nordstream", Canonical ID: 08STOCKHOLM792_a, 28 November 2008, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 May 2017, URL: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08STOCKHOLM792_a.html.

issues. There has been rise in terrorism, influx of migrants from candidate countries, unstable neighbourhood, and the economic crisis. The neighbourhood policy was adopted towards maintaining stability and common interests (democratic transition, conflict resolution, working market economy, fight against human rights violation) of the EU. The member states, today, are involved with problems like emergence of right wing, euro-scepticism, radicalisation, etc. at the national level, resulting in lack of interest in the problems being faced at EU level. Hence, what was perceived as a source of stability and cooperation has itself becoming unstable. The neighbourhood policy has not been able to reap benefits that it was supposed to.

The European Security Strategy (2003) had set out a vision of how Europe would contribute towards a fairer, safer and a more united world, and has since been addressing crises both near and beyond its borders. The 2008 Report on the Implementation of European Security Strategy concluded that there has been a considerable progress in the implementation of objectives set out in the ESS, though at a slower pace. Enlargement continues to be an important foreign policy tool for stability, peace and reform. However, the eastern and southern expansion, without the incentive of membership has resulted in the emergence of new threats, in the form of 'frozen conflicts'. The ENP managed to build up stronger bilateral relations between the individual countries and the EU. The Union for Mediterranean was launched in July 2008 and included wide-ranging issues from energy, maritime security, to terrorism.

On the other hand, the Eastern Dimension of the neighbourhood policy, the Eastern Partnership, was initiated in 2009 that would be covered in the next chapter in detail. This neighbourhood is not just an area of interest to the EU, but also to Russia that has played an important role in this Post-Soviet space. The Eastern Partnership initiative was seen as a tool for containment by Russia, which saw it as a substitute to overcome Russian influence in the region. These countries were former Soviet states with Russia having political, economic and geopolitical interests in the region, for example the strategic position of Sevastopol, which is a base to the Russian Black Sea Fleet. These republics hold a very important place in Russia's foreign policy agenda as they also have security implications for the Russian Federation. As a result Russia introduced the Customs Union

(2010), the Common Economic Space (2012) between Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan and the most recent being that of Eurasian Union. The study will try to analyse as to what extent EU and Russia influence the region. The EU offer is restricted to economic and infrastructural benefits along with the signing of Association Agreements, (which is like a 'golden carrot') once the applicant country fulfils the criteria of *acquiscommunitaire.* Russia on the other hand offers partnership in the Customs Union and cheaper gas prices. The events in Ukraine, the military operations and the ongoing civil war in the country are some of the important issues where Russia has an edge over the EU, making it difficult for the EU to contain Russia.

Chapter 2

The European Union and the Eastern Partnership

> This is not supposed to replace or erase a country's hopes of EU membership. This is one of the keystones of the partnership. A country's aspirations to EU membership can run alongside its role as an eastern partner of the bloc. The Eastern Partnership allows countries to strengthen their bilateral and multilateral relations with the EU. It gives countries a chance to choose their own tempo, their own priorities in the course of this process.[1]
>
> *Prime Minister MirekTopolánek*

The Eastern Partnership is the most recent initiative launched by the European Union (EU) under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) to strengthen relations with its six Eastern partner states, namely Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia, and Ukraine. These countries had expressed their will to deepen political cooperation and economic integration so as to gain assistance from the Union, to make possible the political transition,and economic reforms based on EU standards thus, facilitating business mobility between the EU's partner countries.

The Eastern Partnership was a more targeted approach towards the east because the ENP, which was originally set-up as a special policy towards the EU's neighbours, appeared to be ineffective, as discussed in chapter-1. The Partnership was initiated so that the EU could play an active role in the Black Sea and Caucasus region. The main goal of the Eastern Partnership was to create the conditions to accelerate political association and deepen economic integration between the EU and the Eastern European partner countries. To create the necessary conditions for further integration, the Eastern Partnership supported and advocated political and socio-economic reforms in the partner countries. Its reform agenda was guided by European values like democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedomsand attempts to bring these countries closer to such European values. Economic integration and increasing mobility through visa facilitation were the two most important incentives for the partner countries to participate in the Eastern Partnership.

This chapter would elaborate on the Eastern Partnership in detail, covering its evolution, why was it launched, its aims and objectives, and the successes and failures

[1] He made this statement at the 2009 inaugural summit of Eastern Partnership in Prague.

of thisPartnership. It is divided into various sections and sub-sections. The first section deals with the evolution of Eastern Partnership and EU's relations with the six partner countries. The second section will elaborate on various summits that were held in order to discuss the progress made over the years and to find ways to further this cooperation. The third sections deals with the successes and the failures of Eastern Partnership and elaborates on the necessary steps that need to be taken to strengthen the partnership. The chapter tries to answer certain questions like how far the EU has been successful in implementing the Eastern Partnership and to what extent the policy has been successful in implementing the ideal of *acquiscommunitaire.*

2.1 Evolution of the Eastern Partnership

The EU's 'Big Bang' enlargement in 2004 brought the Union's eastern border closer to neighbouring countries with unstable and short or shaky traditions of statehood, struggling with serious economic and social problems.Its new eastern neighbours were different because of their democratic deficits, weak and inefficient legal institutions, underdeveloped civil societies, and their low levels of economic development. These countries had recently become independent – following the demise of communism – and had to design a new economic system, confront all the problems created by the disintegration of cooperative ties within the former USSR, and at the same time build the foundations of their own statehoods.

The Eastern Partnership initiative was a result of certain factors. The first serious move towards the formation of a policy towards its eastern neighbourhood was the launch of the Black Sea Synergy (BSS) in 2007 that was regarded as an intermediary step toward a cohesive EU strategic vision for the region. Basically, it was the first document that identified the key areas where regional cooperation could be promoted including, among others, issues of energy, trade, environment, transport, good governance as well as contacts between local authorities. It also provided additional opportunities for concrete cooperation, based on the idea of sectoral partnerships, following the model of the Northern Dimension and thus, improving the relations between the EU and certain key actors in the region. However, the Eastern Partnership

was more flexible than the BSS as it included 5 (+1) countries and thus, could be tailored to each partner's needs and capacity.[2]

A further push was initiated by Poland, which even before its accession into the EU, had advocated the concept of eastern dimension in 2003 to deepen relations with countries on the eastern borders, especially Ukraine. The idea was rejected by the EU member states, for building relations with countries like Armenia, Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia meant souring of relations with Russia, in accordance with 'Russia First' principle emphasised by countries like France and Germany.[3]

The first reference in EU documents was made in March 2003 when the European Commission came up with a document titled *Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours* that proposed to create a zone of prosperity and promote stability, security and sustainable development. The countries concerned were offered access to free market, movement of goods, services and people, provided they adhered to the EU values and adopted political and institutional reforms. The document reiterated what Romano Prodi, then President of European Commission, said during a speech in 2002 where he spoke of a policy instrument that would offer "everything but institutions".[4]

The 2008 Communication on Eastern Partnership from the European Commission to the Parliament and the Council further discussed the importance of intensifying relations with partners at the Eastern borders. It laid down the proposals for an Eastern Partnership emphasising the need to support and bring about reforms in these countries for a stable, secure and prosperous EU. The Communication elaborated that "the Union's policy towards them must be proactive and unequivocal: the EU will give strong support to these partners in their efforts to come closer to the EU, and will give

[2]Tsantoulis, Yannis (2009), "Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership: Different Centres of Gravity, Complementarity or Confusing Signals?",*International Centre for Black Sea Studies*,Policy Brief no.12, February 2009, p.1-10.
[3]Adamczyk, Artur (2010), "The Role of Poland in the Creation Process of the Eastern Partnership", *Yearbook of Polish European Studies,* p.196, [Online:Web] Accessed on 20 October 2016, URL: http://www.ce.uw.edu.pl/pliki/pw/y13_adamczyk.pdf.
[4] Prodi, Romano (2002), "A Wider Europe-A Proximity Policy as the key to stability: Peace, Security and Stability International Dialogue and the Role of the EU", *Sixth ECSA-World Conference. Jean Monnet Project,* Speech/02/619, Brussels, 5-6 December 2002, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 September 2016, URL: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-02-619_en.htm.

all necessary assistance with the reforms this entails, through a specific Eastern dimension within the European Neighbourhood Policy".[5]

The Polish-Swedish Eastern Partnership initiative laid down a new structure for tightening cooperation with these eastern partners.This added a missing dimension to the emerging architecture of the EU's relations with neighbouring regions and states, which until then had consisted of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Strategic Partnership with Russia, Black Sea Synergy and the EU's strategy on Central Asia.According to Polish plans, the project aimed to divide the ENP countries into the European neighbours and the neighbours of Europe, and to remain open for the former group with any opportunities concerning the lead to the final stage of the EU integration.[6]

The Eastern Partnership was also one of the core priorities of the Czech EU Presidency in the arena of external relations. The fact that the initiative was endorsed by the March 2009 European Council and that the first Eastern Partnership summit took place in Prague on 7 May 2009 illustrates how much importance was attached to this new EU policy by the Czech political representation. The Czech prioritisation towards Eastern Europe was built on several presumptions on which there was a relative consensus among the policy-makers: the need to support democratisation and "Europeanisation" in the Eastern neighbourhood, and the need to pursue economic integration of the Eastern neighbours with the EU.

The other motive for a resurgent interest in Eastern Europe was explicable by economic considerations. With the economic growth and increased competition from newly industrialising countries, the Czech companies were in a pressing need to look for new markets and cheap labour. From this perspective, Eastern Europe was a natural choice for Czech businesses due to the knowledge of local environment, as well as good reputation of Czech industry and products in the region. To

[5]European Commission (2008), "Eastern Partnership", Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council, COM (2008) 823 final, Brussels, 3 December 2008, p.2.
[6]Grajewski, Przemysław (2009), "The Eastern Partnership of the EU-Main or supporting tool of Polish Eastern Policy", in IzabelaAlbrycht (ed.), *The Eastern Partnership in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy and V4 Agenda*, Policy Documentation Center, Position Paper, The Kosciuszko Institute, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 October 2016, URL: http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00006313/01/eastern_partner.pdf.

securesupport for the Czech proposals, they prepared consultations with its Visegrad[7] partners as well as other like-minded EU states (such as Sweden, Germany and the Baltic countries) on the enhanced Eastern dimension of European Neighbourhood Policy through a non-paper circulated in 2007. The basic element of the Czech proposal was to develop a multilateral, project-based Eastern dimension of current ENP through a flexible framework of relations. This would add a multilateral framework to co-operation on concrete actions, in addition to existing bilateral framework implemented through country specific ENP action plans. The European Council conclusions of 14December 2007 called for developing "both the Eastern and the Southern dimensions of ENP in bilateral and multilateral formats on the basis of the relevant Commission communications and proposals".[8]

Another factor was the French initiative of establishing a Union for Mediterranean within the framework of the neighbourhood policy. This entailed closer ties with EU's southern neighbours with France dominating EU's external policy. The announcement of the creation of the Union for the Mediterranean by Nicolas Sarkozy on 13 August 2008 created a favourable environment for the regionalisation of ENP. However, the French initiative was treated by the Germans with reserve. Germany as the leading donor to the EU budget and the only big country of the "old" EU thatprioritised the Union's orientation towards the East than towards the South of the continent, gave impetus to the Polish-Swedish initiative.The French proposal, however, was accepted as a concept by the Council in March 2008, despite some initial controversies particularly between France and Germany, where the latter was opposed to including only some of the EU countries in the project and was concerned about feasibility of this new initiativevis-a-vis existing community instruments, such as the ENP and the Barcelona process. The French proposal aimed very much at the same thing as the Polish-Swedish initiative, i.e. to provide the southern EU neighbours with new institutional and policy framework mainly of a multilateral character. The other issue worth examining was that the Eastern Partnershipcame into being at the time of the global financial crisis, which was more difficult for Russia and the Commonwealth of

[7] The Visegrad Group comprised of four Central European states i.e. Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia.

[8]Král, David (2009), "The Czech Republic and the Eastern Partnership – from a by-product to a beloved child?", in IzabelaAlbrycht (ed.), *The Eastern Partnership in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy and V4 Agenda*, Policy Documentation Center, Position Paper, The Kosciuszko Institute, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 October 2016, URL: http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00006313/01/eastern_partner.pdf.

Independent States (CIS) than for Poland and the rest of the EU. As a result, the Russian economy had lost its capability to attract Eastern Partnership countries thatwere looking for solution to overcome the economic collapse, leading to the reorientation of the Eastern economies towards the EU.[9]

An additional impetus that pushed the Czech government to make the Eastern Partnership one of the top priorities for its EU presidency, was the Russian – Georgian conflict in August 2008. The intentions of Russia towards its neighbours were viewed as undermining the credibility of Eastern European countries in the eyes of the EU, and of restoring its "sphere of influence" over the former Soviet republics. The Russian aggression against the Georgian territory urged the European Union to make a more attractive offer to these countries. The consensus within the EU member states was to create a stable neighbourhood based on EU values of democracy, human rights, rule of law and a functioning market economy.Therefore, an initiative was jointly proposed by Poland and Sweden at Council of European Union Prague Summit in May 2009 which was aimed at restoring EU relations with countries to the east of the Union.[10]

Also a strong incentive to turn the Eastern partnership into the flagship initiative of the Czech EU presidency came with the gas crisis between Ukraine and Russia in January 2009, which seriously affected some of the EU member states. The challenge for the Czech Presidency was to have the Eastern Partnership endorsed by the European Council, the highest political body in the EU, and to prepare the inaugural summit in the spring of 2009. The main points that the Czech diplomacy had to repeatedly underline were: firstly, the Eastern Partnership was not anti-Russian, secondly, it was not seeking re-distribution of ENP funds in favour of Eastern neighbours, thirdly, it was not undermining the existing community policies and instruments (especially

[9]Grajewski, Przemysław (2009), "The Eastern Partnership of the EU-Main or supporting tool of Polish Eastern Policy", in IzabelaAlbrycht (ed.), *The Eastern Partnership in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy and V4 Agenda*, Policy Documentation Centre, Position Paper, The Kosciuszko Institute, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 October 2016, URL: http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00006313/01/eastern_partner.pdf

[10]Makarychev, Andrey and Deviatkov, Andrey (2012), "Eastern Partnership: Still a missing link in EU strategy?",*Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS) Commentary,* 12 January 2012, Brussels.

ENP) and lastly, it did not mean initiation for the six countries concerned to become part of the enlargement process, i.e. a de facto recognition of their candidate status.[11]

Despite laying a solid groundwork, it was underlined that the Eastern Partnership remained at the level of concept, which needed to be elaborated further especially when it came to sensitive issues like visa liberalisation. Moreover, the inaugural summit in 2009 was not attended by the major EU leaders, such as Nicholas Sarkozy, Gordon Brown, Silvio Berlusconi and José Luis RodríguezZapatero and was interpreted as a virtual lack of interest in the initiative from the biggest EU players.Similarly, regarding the partnership countries, Moldovan President Voronin and Belorussian President Lukashenka did not attend the summit. Eastern countries that were represented at the meeting, particularly Ukraine and Georgia, showed regret over what the Eastern Partnership was offering them, because they expected more ambitious tasks, for instance, the recognition of membership aspirations, visa liberalisation,and insufficiency of finances available (€600 million for the period until 2013). The Russian reaction to the Summit was very hostile, with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov calling the initiative "totally unacceptable" and accusing the EU of trying to extend its "sphere of influence" through the partnership. Eastern Partnership was viewed as a platform to counterbalance the resurgent Russian influence particularly in Western-oriented countries, particularly Ukraine and Georgia.[12]

2.2 Inaugural Summit (Prague) May 2009

The representatives of the six Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus countries[13]launched the Eastern Partnership on 7 May 2009 in Prague that was based on shared interests/values and commitment towards democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, along with market economy, sustainable development and good governance. It was created within the framework of ENP. The

[11]Král, David (2009), "The Czech Republic and the Eastern Partnership – from a by-product to a beloved child?", in IzabelaAlbrycht (ed.), *The Eastern Partnership in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy and V4 Agenda*, Policy Documentation Centre, Position Paper, The Kosciuszko Institute, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 October 2016, URL: http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00006313/01/eastern_partner.pdf.

[12]Král, David (2009), "The Czech Republic and the Eastern Partnership – from a by-product to a beloved child?", in IzabelaAlbrycht (ed.), *The Eastern Partnership in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy and V4 Agenda*, Policy Documentation Centre, Position Paper, The Kosciuszko Institute, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 October 2016, URL: http://pdc.ceu.hu/archive/00006313/01/eastern_partner.pdf.

[13] The six countries comprised of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine.

Eastern Partnership was established as a multilateral political framework for six countries to strengthen political association and economic integration of these countries. It was perceived as a step to build on the ENP and further develop EU's engagement in the region.

Map 2.1: Map of Eastern Partnership Countries

Source: https://www.google.co.in/search?q=eastern+partnership&source=lnms&tbm=isch&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiLm8_F1rfUAhUKPI8KHeezBwwQ_AUICygC#imgdii=gtjOsmWR9FzcpM:&imgrc=5ns19a3oLBZTcM.

The main concern for the EU's Eastern Partnership was to bring these countries closer to the EU by deepening political, social and economic ties. The Initiative was supported through the EU budget.[14] In 2014-2020 €15.4 billion have been earmarked under the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI). Other sources

[14] The initial budget extended for each of the six country was 15 million Euro per year. French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner acknowledged that the fund was insufficient to have any impact on these countries especially when economically they were much below European standards. However, he rejected EU External Relations Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner's proposal to increase the Eastern Partnership budget by 350 million Euro which would help in stabilizing the political and economic situation in the region. On the contrary French Minister declared that two-third of neighbourhood policy budget was to be given to the Mediterranean countries and one one-third to Eastern Partnership countries. Wikileaks (2009), "Central Europeans Drive Eastern Partnership but Face Financial Obstacles", *Cable no. 09BRUSSELS331_a*, 11 March 2009,[Online:Web] Accessed on 24 April 2017, URL: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BRUSSELS331_a.html.

of funding included Development Cooperation Instrument (€19,662 million), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (€1333 million), and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (€2339 million).[15]

The Joint Declaration proposed that the Heads of the State or Government would meet every two years whereas the Ministers of Foreign Affairs would meet once a year to discuss the working and future of the Initiative. Also four thematic platforms were formed to serve as forum for cooperation and open and free discussions. These included Democracy, good governance and stability; Economic integration and convergence with EU sectoral policies; Energy security; and Contacts between people. Flagship initiatives were launched to give further momentum to the Eastern Partnership. The participants thus agreed to promote the key principles and purpose of the Eastern Partnership, and raise its awareness through concrete projects and activities that will bring the initiative closer to the citizens.[16]

2.2.1 Aims and Objectives of the Eastern Partnership

The EU launched Eastern Partnership in 2009, five years after the launch of European Neighbourhood Policy, with the aim of filling the gaps of ENP and building a stronger policy towards the Eastern partners. The main aim of the Eastern Partnership was to upgrade and expand their relationship, enhance cooperation, strengthen political association, and deepen economic integration between EU and its neighbours by strengthening existing bilateral relations, multilateral and regional initiatives.The joint Polish and Swedish initiative was for closer cooperation with the aim of supporting transformation by stimulating their economic development and strengthening democracy, freedom and civil societies by enhancing legal and administrative capacities enough to approach EU standards. Also, the advantages of establishing a free-trade zone with the area of almost a million square kilometres, and a consumer market of almost 80million people gave the European economy a boost, and the new eastern partners an access to the EU's single market. As the countries of Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus are strategically situated between the EU and the

[15] European Parliament (2016), Financial Support for Eastern Partnership countries, P-000668-16, 28 January 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 March 2017, URL: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bP-2016-000668%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN.

[16] European Union (2009), "Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit", *Council of the European Union*, 8435/09 (Presse 78), Prague, 7 May 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 13 October 2016, URL: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf.

natural resources rich region of the Caspian Sea, Central Asia and Russia[17], the gradual integration of these countries into the EU economy would strengthen Europe's energy security.[18]

The objectives of Eastern Partnership were confined to areas of politics and security, boundary and trans-boundary movement, economics and finance, environment, and society.[19] As laid down in the Joint Declaration, it aimed to create the necessary conditions to accelerate political association and further economic integration between the European Union and interested partner countries, recognising the economic benefits of enhancing trade in goods and services, the potential for increased investment flows and the importance of progressive economic integration with the EU Internal Market. It remained a core objective of the Eastern Partnership to enhance mobility of citizens in a secure and well-managed environment.[20]

A salient feature of the initiative was that the Eastern Partnership was built on a dual framework, with a bilateral and multilateral approach towards its partner countries. Bilateral cooperation included Association Agreements (AAs), deep and comprehensive free trade areas (DCFTAs) to strengthen trade and investment liberalisation, developing comprehensive institution building (CIB) to improve the administrative capacity of each partner country, support visa liberalisation i.e. promote free movement of the people of partner countries through visa facilitation and readmission agreements. Multilateral cooperation would provide for a platform to hold discussions on the development of Eastern Partnership, and share information and experience with the partner countries, enabling a smooth transition through reforms and joint activities.

According to a Wikileak cable, dated 12 June 2009, even after a month of the launch of Eastern Partnership, the Polish officials were struggling to maintain the momentum

[17] This area is crucial because important energy transit routes to the EU go through Ukraine, Belarus and Georgia, and Azerbaijan is itself a major oil producer.

[18]Sikorski, Radoslaw (2009), "The EU's "Eastern Partnership" with former Soviet states holds the key to relations with Russia", *Europe's world,* I June 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 21 October 2016, URL: http://europesworld.org/2009/06/01/the-eus-eastern-partnership-with-former-soviet-states-holds-the-key-to-relations-with-russia/#.WAr25eV97IX.

[19]Calvo, Giorgiana (2014), "The Eastern Partnership as an Expression of the European Neighbourhood Policy: Reinforcing the European normative power with the Eastern partners", *Eastern Journal of European Studies,* 5(1), p.134.

[20]European Union (2011), "Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit," *Council of the European Union,* 29-30 September 2011, Warsaw.

of the initiative, especially after the changes in the Union's leadership and Russian hostility. Polish Foreign MinisterRadoslawSikorski and Swedish counterpart CarlBildt successfully pushed theEastern Partnership through the European Union's bureaucracy, but the difficult part was implementation of the policy, which was just the beginning. A Polish Ministry expert on Eastern Partnership, MarcinZochowski, said that the main challenge was to sell the Eastern Partnership initiative to beneficiary countries as a substitute for EU accession. Among the beneficiary countries, Ukraine took the leadership role, and Belarus adopted an "a la carte" approach to the Eastern Partnership, steering clear of any initiatives that would favour civil society development. Georgia on the other hand fell short on proposing constructive projects and lacked security component. WitoldWaszczykowski, Deputy Director of the President's National Security Bureau, bluntly advised a Georgian delegation to "be smart, don't whine, use the EU assistance wisely, do your homework, and move closer to the EU".[21]

2.3 Bilateral and Multilateral Relations

The Eastern Partnership was a policy based on having a differentiated approach with each partner, dedicated to support each individual country to progress in its own way and at its own speed.This approach provided for flexibility and enhanced efficiency. It took into account that the six partner countries were at a different levels of execution of reforms, with some interested only in economic cooperation while others seek full integration. It offered both bilateral and multilateral measures for enhanced cooperation. It established stronger channels of communication through the launching of Summits at a higher political level that represented the beginning of a "socialisation process" among the partners. It contained a more coherent group of non-EU countries, i.e. countries that were easier to handle as a group. More specifically, the "exclusion" of Russia and Turkey in this regard was important since both countries had acquired a different status in their relationship with the EU (Turkey – accession country; Russia – strategic partnership) than the other states of the region.[22]

[21]Wikileak Cable (2009), "Poland: Moving Forward on Eastern Partnership", Canonical ID: 09WARSAW597_a, 12 June 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 May 2017, URL: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09WARSAW597_a.html.

[22]Tsantoulis, Yannis (2009), "Black Sea Synergy and Eastern Partnership: Different Centres of Gravity, Complementarity or Confusing Signals?", *International Centre for Black Sea Studies*,Policy Brief no.12, February 2009, p.1-10.

2.3.1 Multilateral Cooperation

Multilateral cooperation was a new form of approach that the EU came up with for deepening ties the partner countries. The Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit stated that the multilateral framework of the Eastern Partnership would provide for cooperation activities and an open and free dialogue serving the objectives of the Partnership. It would operate on the basis of joint decisions of the European Union and the partner countries and also provide a forum to share information and experience on the partner countries' steps towards transition, reform and modernisation. It would facilitate the development of common positions and joint activities. The multilateral framework was to provide a forum for discussion on further developments of the Eastern Partnershipaimed at fostering links among partner countries themselves.[23]In this regard four thematic platforms were introduced in order to provide a more target-oriented approach in the main areas of cooperation (Table 2.1). These included 1) Democracy, good governance and stability; 2) Economic integration and convergence with EU sectoral policies; 3) Energy security; and 4) Contacts between people.Each platform adopted a set of rational core objectives that would be updated occasionally with a corresponding work programme, and would review the progress achieved. Senior officials engaged in the reforms in related policy areas would meet twice a year in Brussels if not otherwise. The platforms would report to the annual meetings of Ministers of Foreign Affairs and their work may occasionally be promoted through sector-specific Ministerial meetings. There would also be panels to support the work of the thematic platforms in specific areas. The EU Member States, the Partner Countries, the European Commission and the European External Action Service are full participants of the four platforms.[24] The objectives pursued under the multilateral framework include:

1) To create a medium where partner countries'can share their knowledge and experiencetowards 'transition, reform and modernisation',
2) To assistin the improvement and progress of joint activities,
3) To encourage relations among the partners themselves, and

[23]European Union (2009), "Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit", *Council of European Union,* 8435/09 (Presse 78), 7 May 2009, Prague.
[24] European External Action Service, (2011), Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms, 17 November 2011, [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 December 2016, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/eastern/platforms/rules_procedure_en.pdf.

4) To contribute towards starting a structured process based on related EU legislation.[25]

The work of the thematic platforms was supported by the following expert panels: on integrated border management, the fight against corruption, improved functioning of the judiciary, migration and asylum, trade related regulatory cooperation linked to DCFTA, SME Policy, transport and on environment and climate change. They further review and evaluate the situation in the partner countries with regard to the matters managed by the Platforms, and gave recommendations for action and proposal for projects.[26]

[25]Delcour, L (2011), "The Institutional Functioning of the Eastern Partnership: An Early Assessment", *Estonian Centre for Eastern Partnership,* p.1-24.
[26] Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland, "Eastern Partnership", [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 December 2016, URL: http://fundacjanowydom.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Partnerstwo-Wschodnie_MSZ-PW-EN.pdf.

Table 2.1: The Multilateral Dimension of Eastern Partnership

POLITICAL	Biannual EAP Summits of Heads of States	
	Annual Meetings of Foreign Affairs Ministers	
TECHNICAL	Thematic Platforms • Platform 1: Democracy, good governance and stability • Platform 2: Economic integration and convergence with EU policies • Platform 3: Energy security • Platform 4: Contacts between people	Flagship Initiatives • Integrated border management • Small and medium enterprises (SME) facility • Regional electricity markets, energy efficiency and renewable energy sources • Prevention, preparedness and response to natural and man-made disasters (PPRD) • Environmental governance
PARTICIPATORY	EURONEST: Parliamentary Assembly • Committee on Political Affairs, Human Rights and Democracy • Committee on Economic Integration, Legal Approximation and Convergence with EU policies • Committee on Energy Security • Committee on Social Affairs, Education, Culture and Civil Society	CORLEAP: Conference of the Regional and Local Authorities for the Eastern Partnership • 18 EaP local and regional politicians • 18 EU Council of the Region members • Strengthening of regional and local authorities • Exchange and capacity building
	Civil Society Forum • Annual General Assemblies • Working Group 1: Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability • Working Group 2: Economic integration and convergence with EU policies • Working Group 3: Environment, climate change and energy security • Working Group 4: Contacts between people • National Platforms	

Source: Ferrari,Heidrun (2014), "Partnership for all? Measuring the Impact of Eastern Partnership on Minorities", *Policy Paper- Minority Rights Group*, Europe, p.13, [Online:Web] Accessed on 11 June 2017, URL: http://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/old-site-downloads/download-1373-Policy-paper-English.pdf.

2.3.1.1 Platform 1: Democracy, Good Governance and Stability

The Eastern Partnership Platform 1 was adopted on 5 June 2009 in accordance with general guidelines and rules of the Eastern Partnership Multilateral Platforms. The priority areas of cooperation and the core objectives included democracy and human

rights - where the issues dealt with regulation of the media, maintaining electoral standards, fight against corruption, and civil service reforms along with training and networking of local authorities, promoting local government reform and strengthening administrative capacities; justice, freedom and internal security- by supporting partner countries' efforts to establish integrated border management systems, facilitate a secure and well managed mobility of people, and cooperate on law enforcement issues, combat organised crime and trafficking in human beings; and stability and security - by pooling in resources and information on prevention of and preparedness for any natural or man-made disasters, and cooperation on specific CFSP and ESDP issues. The work programme for the period 2009-2011 was finalised at the second meeting of the Platform on 7 October 2009 where it agreed to focus on three aspects of democratic governance: First, improved functioning of judiciary, which would include independence of magistrates i.e. no political interference, accountability of judges and training the judges on issues dealing with human rights; Second, public administration reform i.e. to increase the transparency in decision making and inter-ministerial cooperation, explore cooperation procedures with the civil society and other interested stakeholders, to improve the integrity of the civil service, promote democracy at the local level also; and Third, fight against corruption by maintaining transparency of rules and procedures, checks and balances in decision making, through anti-money laundering measures, implementation of anti-corruption conventions.[27] A report by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Poland, stated that reforms in partner countries vary from one another for these countries face similar problems related to stable democratic institutions and effective state structures.[28] During the year 2012-2013, the core objectives remained the same as before. The work programme for the period 2012-2013 focused on the priority areas which included: 1) Democracy and human rights where they touched on many aspects of public life and it was therefore essential to concentrate work on those aspects where a multilateral approach could bring added-value to what is predominantly a bilateral EU - Partner State policy dialogue; 2) Public Administration Reform in order to set up a

[27] European External Action Service (2009), Eastern partnership, Platform 1 "Democracy, Good Governance and Stability", Core Objective and Work Programme 2009-2011, [Online:Web] Accessed on 16 November 2016, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/eastern/platforms/docs/platform1_091009_en.pdf.

[28] Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland, "Eastern Partnership", [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 December 2016, URL: http://fundacjanowydom.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Partnerstwo-Wschodnie_MSZ-PW-EN.pdf.

professional and accountable civil service and develop a national comprehensive reform strategy. Compared to the previous work programme (2009-2011), the focus was more on national public administrations and their backgrounds in the Eastern Partner countries; 3) Fight against corruption by cooperating with civil society and implementing national anti-corruption plans in both the public and private sectors along withenhanced vigilance, required in order to guarantee the accountability of public officials; 4) to maintain the electoral standards in the partner countries and discuss the legal and practical barriers in the areas of concern identified by the Council of Europe (CoE) monitoring mechanisms, the European Union (EU) progress reports and the beneficiary countries themselves; 5) Integrated Border Management (IBM) where discussions were focused on coordinated border management combined with field trips to border management facilities on ground. The Panel on IBM would also monitor the implementation of the flagship initiative training project and pilot projects, including border infrastructure and equipment; 6) Asylum and migration which has become very complex and required a targeted response. The multilateral cooperation in the area of migration would seek to enhance the bilateral track like visa dialogues, mobility partnerships, cooperation with relevant agencies; 7) Prevention of, preparedness for, and response to natural and man-made disasters where activities included a review of existing resources and available mechanisms working on this flagship initiative in Eastern Partnership countries and the preparation of an Electronic Regional Risk Atlas, prevention-aimed awareness raising campaign for stakeholders in general, a full-scale simulation exercise and trainings for civil protection experts similar to those established in the framework of the EU CP Mechanism; 8) CFSP and CSDP cooperation through which stronger dialogue and cooperation on international security issues would be sought with interested partners, including their possible participation in EU led civilian missions and military operations.[29]

The core objectives for the period 2014-17 were adopted in accordance with the general guidelines and rules of procedure of Eastern Partnership multilateral platforms involving democratic governance with a view to strengthen the administrative capacities of local authorities, their training and networking,and promote local

[29] European External Action Service (2012), Eastern partnership, Platform 1 "Democracy, Good Governance and Stability", Core Objective and Work Programme 2012-2013, [Online:Web] Accessed on 2 June 2017, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/eastern/platforms/docs/work_programme_2012_13_platform1_en.pdf.

government reform which would be carried out in cooperation with the Committee of the Regions under the Conference for Regional and Local Authorities of the Eastern Partnership (CORLEAP); support partners' efforts to establish integrated border management systems, pursue dialogue and cooperation in the framework of the Global Approach to Migration and Mobility (GAMM); and facilitate the capacity of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including the CSF for advocacy and promoting confidence building in the field of conflict settlement.[30]

The 16th Eastern Partnership Platform 1 meeting was held on 5 December 2016 in Brussels and was chaired by European External Action Service (EEAS) in the presence of representatives from all the six partner countries, Member States and other officials. The meeting was held to review the activities and progress in the areas of Public Administration Reform, Rule of Law, Integrated Border Management, Migration and Asylum, CSDP and Prevention of natural or man-made disasters since the last meeting that was held in April 2016. Also the representatives assessed the contributions made towards the Eastern Partnership up till now under this Platform and how it can be improved by the next Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in December 2017. Local and regional democracy were the important themes of this meeting which emphasised that the Eastern Partnership was not only about intergovernmental relations but also covered local and regional dimension to develop closer relationship among citizens of both the EU and the Eastern partners. Some of the key programmes in this field including Covenant for Mayors and Mayors for Economic Growth, on-going activities of the Council of Europe in this field, Programmatic Cooperation Framework, were presented. Other initiatives discussed were activities of the East Stratcom Task Force and the EU's OPEN programme aimed towards improving branding of EU projects.[31]

[30]European External Action Service (2014), Eastern partnership, Platform 1 "Democracy, Good Governance and Stability", Core Objective and Work Programme 2014-2017.

[31] European External Action Service (2016), "The Eastern Partnership Platform on Democracy, Good Governance and Stability discusses local and regional democracy and looks ahead towards the Summit of 2017", 7 December 2016, Brussels, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/16690/eastern-partnership-platform-democracy-good-governance-and-stability-discusses-local-and_en.

Table 2.2: Core Objectives and Work Programme of Eastern Partnership Platform 1 on Democracy, Good Governance and Stability

Year	Core Objectives and Work Programme								
	Democracy and Human Rights	**Public Administration Reforms**	**Fight against Corruption**	**Electoral Standards**	**Integrated Border Management**	**Improved Functioning of Judiciary**	**Asylum and Migration**	**Cyber crime**	**Cooperation among Law Enforcement Agencies**
2009-2011	Allocation of resources for the training of local authorities; Exchanges of best practices and workshops on such issues as electoral standards, regulation of the media, it also aimed at improving the functioning of the judiciary.	Aimed towards improving the effectiveness of public administration by exploring measures to increase transparency; improve the integrity of the civil service by keeping them independent of political pressure.	Introduce preventive and repressive measures to fight corruption like implementation of anti-corruption conventions, development of anti-corruption strategies.	n.a.	Focused on exchange of best practices among EU and Eastern partners on training and capacity building. The IBM activities are funded under ENPI regional programme.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.

	Democracy and Human Rights	**Public Administration Reforms**	**Fight against Corruption**	**Electoral Standards**	**Integrated Border Management**	**Improved Functioning of Judiciary**	**Asylum and Migration**	**Cyber crime**	**Cooperation among Law Enforcement Agencies**
2012-2013	Emphasis on sharing of best practices and lessons learned by EU Member States and Eastern Partners in the implementation of reforms in the selected areas.	Aimed towards setting up a professional and accountable civil service. The work in this field would specifically focus on six work areas: civil and public service laws, statutes, rule, e-government; relations between local and regional government; effective management of technical assistance; and improving the internal and external cooperation of administrations.	Cooperate with civil society in the implementation of national anti-corruption plans that remains critical in all partner countries. Enhanced vigilance is required to guarantee transparency in public procurement in order to hold public officials accountable of any corruption.	Aimed to discuss the legal and practical obstacles to implement the European standards in the participating countries and to adjust their respective policies in the areas of particular concern identified by the Council of Europe (CoE) monitoring mechanisms.	It was proposed that meeting would continue to be held twice a year and would focus discussions on a limited number of topics of particular interest to participants with a view to improve coordinated border management. Training activities include data integration, detection of forged travel documents.	Support objectives set out in the bilateral dimension to secure greater judicial independence, effectiveness and impartiality. This would also aim at improvement of the accountability of judges.	The overall objective of the Panel would be to strengthen asylum and migration systems of Partners and advance the dialogue on migration and asylum. Bringing the Soderkoping process under the aegis of the Eastern Partnership will enhance the broader migration, help achieve objectives of Warsaw Summit.	The work would continue in this field primarily through the Council of Europe Facility which started in 2010. The aim is to support the reform processes in the six partner countries through facilitating approximation to the European Union and the Council of Europe standards.	The initiative under this platform should support further cooperation among law enforcement agencies, in particular the police, on issues related to cross-border crime. Work should focus on promoting EU standards for cooperation among law enforcement agencies; etc.

	Democracy and Human Rights	**Public Administration Reforms**	**Fight against Corruption**	**Electoral Standards**	**Integrated Border Management**	**Improved Functioning of Judiciary**	**Asylum and Migration**	**Cyber crime**	**Cooperation among Law Enforcement Agencies**
2014-2017	Contribute to HR objectives of the Bilateral Action Plans (BAP) or Association Agendas (AA) by strengthening ombudsman institutions in Eastern Partnership countries in order to improve their ability to contribute to the establishment of deep and sustainable democracy.	Extend support towards the implementation of reforms agreed in BAP or AA through contributing to establishment of a professional, accountable and value based apolitical civil service, and contribute to the increased efficiency of public administration and policy making process by promoting European standards	Support the implementation of BAP or AA, including the recommendations of the CoE of States against Corruption (GRECO), the European Commission, the UN Convention against Corruption, and other relevant mechanisms; promote good governance and boost the capacity of public administration and the criminal justice sector to fightcorruption etc.	The objective was to continue to strengthen the objectives under BAP or AA regarding the respect for the democratic electoral standards based on recommendations of CoE's Venice Commission and OSCE/ODHIR, thus aiming towards improving awareness of European electoral standards in the Partner countries.	The objective was to step up operational cooperation, trainings and exchange of best practice between border and customs services and provide support to the establishment of the advanced training systems on specific issues by boosting the training capacity of the partner countries' institutions.	To introduce European law-inspired tools into their legislation including support for the application of ICT in court system. The aim was to ensure that all judicial systems meet the European standards in order to achieve an independent, efficient, impartial, accountable judiciary and equal accessto justice.	The objective was to contribute to meeting the agreed reforms in BAP or AA and achieve improved asylum and migration systems of Eastern Partnership countries, in line with best practices and European and international standards.	To work towards supporting the reform process based on Budapest Convention, and boosts the capacity of criminal justice authorities to cooperate effectively against cybercrime by assisting these countries in defining strategic priorities regarding cybercrime.	The objective was to promote and enable the transfer of European standards for cooperation among law enforcement agencies in these countries and help introduce modern investigation tools such as Joint Investigation Teams.

Source: The Table is compiled by Author using European External Action Service (2009), Eastern partnership, Platform 1 “Democracy, Good Governance and Stability”, Core Objective and Work Programme 2009-2011; European External Action Service (2012), Eastern partnership, Platform 1 “Democracy, Good Governance and Stability”, Core Objective and Work Programme 2012-2013; European External Action Service (2014), Eastern partnership, Platform 1 “Democracy, Good Governance and Stability”, Core Objective and Work Programme 2014-2017.

2.3.1.2 Platform 2: Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies

The first meeting of the Eastern Partnership Platform 2 meeting was held on 26 June 2009 in Brussels. The long-term goals of Platform 2 included: the approximation of legislation, including trade, financial and macroeconomic cooperation, stimulation of socio-economic development and environmental protection. The main focus was primarily to boost cooperation in trade and trade-related regulatory cooperation which was a precondition for negotiations on DCFTAs including assistance to partners in their efforts concerning trade and enhancing the administrative capacity building process, customs and trade facilitation, services, establishment, investment, capital movement and payments; andin the area of environment and climate change. It was for this purpose that the European Commission suggested the creation of two Panels, one on "Trade and Trade related Regulatory Cooperation linked to DCFTAs" and another on "Environment and Climate Change". The core objectives of the first panel would include three core objectives:

1) Regulatory approximation across the whole spectrum of the EU acquis related to trade and investment, and enhancing the administrative capacity of Partners;
2) Support for creating a network of bilateral Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas;
3) Involvement of the business community.[134]

The second panel would focus on:

1) Convergence towards EU environment legislation; and
2) Action to address climate change.[135]

Economic integration has been an important factorin the formation of the European Union since the beginning,has led to shared prosperity and brought the countries together to an extent that they cannot get into conflicts with each other.[136] During the

[134] European External Action Service (2009), Eastern Partnership: Platform 2 "Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies- Core Objectives and proposed Work Programme 2009-2011", [Online:Web] Accessed on 21 March 2017, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/eastern/platforms/docs/platform2_151109_en.pdf.
[135] Ibid.
[136] European External Action Service (2009), Eastern Partnership: Platform 2 "Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies- Core Objectives and proposed Work Programme 2009-2011", [Online:Web] Accessed on 21 March 2017, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/eastern/platforms/docs/platform2_151109_en.pdf.

2012-2013 period the work programme included a follow-up regarding the activities of the Panels formed between 2009-2011. The objectives of the Panel on DCFTAs were to enhance safety and security of specialised services like Customs Cooperation and Trade Facilitation, combat customs fraud, and facilitate trade and economic interaction throughout the region and with the EU. The Panel on Environment and Climate Change would continue to focus on the same objectives set before. It would provide a forum for exchange of best practices to enable Partner Countries actively use long term climate support and other financial elements to reach their climate policy aims. The EU would share knowledge gained from the practical implementation of the EU financial instruments, provide information on the available EU climate assistance instruments and strive to assess climate needs of Eastern Partnership countries. Another Panel to be created during this period was that on "Transport" that would facilitate implementation of measures set out in the Communication to strengthen transport connections with the EU's neighbours covered by the Eastern Partnership. Its activities included - discussion on policies and reforms needed for closer market integration; identification of possible regional actions; discussion on regional transport networks; sharing of information and best practices between the EU and partner countries, etc. The Civil Society Forum can be invited to participate in the work of the Panel where relevant and when needed. The areas of work covered by the Platform are 1) Enhanced cooperation in the Field of Taxation and Public Finances, 2) Cooperation in the Field of Labour Market and Social Policies, 3) Cooperation in Questions of Macroeconomic and Financial Stability, and 4) Information Society. Harmonisation of Digital Markets was another Panel aimed at enabling individuals and businesses to exercise online activities at better prices and boost employment.[137]

[137] European External Action Service (2012), Eastern Partnership: Platform 2 "Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies- Core Objectives and proposed Work Programme 2012-2013.

Table 2.3: Core Objectives and Work Programme of Eastern Partnership Platform 2 on Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies

Year	Panel on Trade and Trade related Regulatory Approximation linked to DCFTAs	Panel on Environment and Climate Change	Panel on "SME Policy"
2009-2011	The core objectives included regulatory approximation of the EU *acquis* related to trade and investment and enhancing the administrative capacity of the Partners; create a network of bilateral DCFTAs; and involvement of business community. The Panel would help the Partner countries better understand the EU legislation and regulatory approximation process. Priority areas undertaken by this Panel included: • Customs and Trade Facilitation • Sanitary, Phytosanitary measures (SPS) and Animal Welfare • Intellectual Property Rights • Public Procurement • Technical Regulations and Standards	The main focus of this Panel was: • Convergence towards EU environmental legislation; and • Action to address climate change This Panel aimed to extend capacities for strategic planning and environmental governance; exchange experience and best practices in related areas; support partners' efforts to prioritise and plan the steps for moving closer to EU environment legislation; and would also launch a flagship project on environmental governance. The Panel would also provide a forum for sharing experience with emissions trading; support partners in preparations for the implementation of a post-2012 global agreement on climate change mitigation.	During the first Platform meeting a broad consensus was reached regarding the involvement of private sector and business in this process. Hence in order to distinguish between effective enterprise policies and the promotion of a conducive business climate, the European Commission launched the flagship initiative of "SME Facility". The flagship initiative would support the needs of SMEs providing external stimulus to growth and employment through the provision of technical assistance to SMEs, its support networks and financial intermediaries and the establishment of funding facility.

	Panel on Trade and Trade related Regulatory Approximation linked to DCFTAs	Panel on Environment and Climate Change	Panel on "SME Policy"
2012-2013	The core objectives remained the same during this period and activities promoting participation of business community were undertaken. Follow-up action on the priority areas were organised by specialised services: • Customs cooperation and trade facilitation • Sanitary, phytosanitary measures (SPS) and animal welfare • Technical regulations and standards	The focus remained the same as before. The flagship project would start activities to build capacity for improving other aspects of environmental governance. The Panel would emphasise on the possibilities of introducing green economy principles in the partner countries. It will support the partners' efforts to foster technical development, launch eco-innovation actions and improve market conditions, promote green economy in public procurement, raise public awareness, promoting a multi-sectoral approach to green economy. The ENPI regional programme would finance this activity.Regarding the climate change it would provide a forum on reducing carbon emissions by increasing energy efficiency and employing low carbon technologies.	The Panel addressed the issues of: • finalisation and presentation of results a common project on enterprise policy performance, based on country specific assessments; • consultation of Eastern Partners on implementation of the SME Flagship Initiative, promoting a demand driven approach; • promotion of business to business contacts. It encouraged consistency of measures taken by Eastern Partner countries at national, bilateral and regional level and offered a space for exchanges and discussions on specific aspects on the negotiations of DCFTAs related to SMEs.The Panel would also offer a Platform for discussion and reporton the implementation of the SME Flagship Initiative – East-Invest, TAM-BAS and SMEs Funding Facility. The Panel would cooperate closely with the Panel on "Environment and Climate Change" with regard to the promotion of green technologies and eco – innovation.

	Panel on Trade and Trade related Regulatory Approximation linked to DCFTAs	Panel on Environment and Climate Change	Panel on "SME Policy"
2014-2017	The Work Programme for Platform 2 will be adapted to reflect the priorities of the ENI Regional East multi-annual indicative programme (2014-2017) – which is still to be approved. The Work Programme provides for an increased information and communication component for each of the Panels and Working Areas. The Platform will also provide a forum to share experience and information on the partner countries' steps towards implementation of DCFTAs and provide Partner Countries with practical information on cooperation between Commission services and Partner Countries in this regard.	The Panel on Environment and Climate Change would focus on cooperation enforcing Association Agreements and the gradual approximation with the EU *acquis* in this area. It will hold regional dialogue on climate change policies in order to strengthen and negotiation capacity of partner countries and cooperate with EU member states in global climate negotiations. Activities under this Panel include: • Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) • Green Project • Clima East Package	The objectives during this phase were: • Improvement of business environment • Alignment with the principles and spirit of theSmall Business Act for Europe(SBA) • Implementation of DCFTAs with a focus on SMEs Issues to be discussed would include all ten principles of the SBA such as women entrepreneurship, regulatory impact assessment, the "Think Small First" Principle, SME internationalisation, business infrastructure, access to finance and innovation in the SME sector. Some of the targets to be achieved are: to enhance economic relations and improve the business environment which is conducive to further SME development and national, regional and international investment and trade.

Source: The Table is compiled by Author usingEuropean External Action Service (2009), Eastern Partnership: Platform 2 "Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies- Core Objectives and proposed Work Programme 2009-2011"; European External Action Service (2012), Eastern Partnership: Platform 2 "Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies- Core Objectives and proposed Work Programme 2012-2013; European External Action Service (2014), Eastern Partnership: Platform 2 "Economic Integration and Convergence with EU Policies- Core Objectives and proposed Work Programme 2015-2017.

2.3.1.3 Platform 3: Energy Security

The first meeting of Eastern Partnership Platform 3 was held on 17 June 2009. One of the main tasks of Eastern Partnership was to support reform in the energy sector anddeepen cooperation in this field which wouldeventually help increase energy security in both the partner countries and the European Union. There were four core objectives under Platform 3 which included, 1) Enhancing framework conditions and solidarity i.e. encourage the development and implementation of mutual energy support and security mechanisms. The objective was to strengthen energy security contacts and enhance the energy crisis preparedness, with the possibility of formalizing the Eastern Partnership countries' interaction, with the EU's NESCO (Network of Energy Security Correspondents), Gas Coordination Group and the Oil Supply Group; 2) Support for infrastructure development, interconnection and diversification of supply i.e. rehabilitation of existing and the development of new energy infrastructures where appropriate, and investigating the means to improve conditions for long-term supply and purchase commitments, transit guarantees; 3) Promotion of increased energy efficiency and use of renewable resources through identification of and support for actions in partner countries aimed at increasing their energy efficiency and use of renewable energy resources; and 4) Regulatory framework and approximation of energy policies by convening seminars, workshops and training sessions on the EU energy *acquis* and strengthening of energy dialogue with participation of EU and partners' industry, in particular on the basis of the on -going Baku Initiative.[138] The Warsaw Summit of 2011 further reviewed the progress in the energy sector aiming towards full integration of European energy markets "through approximation of regulatory framework; ensuring stable and secure energy supply and transit; high level of nuclear safety in countries operating nuclear installations; sufficient transparency towards their own citizens as well as towards neighbouring countries, with respect to relevant international Conventions and agreements; and establishment of a legal and regulatory framework facilitating energy

[138] European External Action Service (2009), "Eastern Partnership- Platform 3: Energy Security, Core objectives and Work Programme 2009-2011", 5 November 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 21 March 2017, URL: http://ua-energy.org/upload/files/platform3_051109_en.pdf.

efficiency and the use of renewable energy".[139] Four activities included under this Work Programme included: 1) Approximation of the regulatory framework; 2) Development of electricity, gas and oil interconnections and diversification of supply; 3) Stakeholders dialogue in energy efficiency and renewable energy; and 4) Cooperation in establishment and strengthening of a regulatory framework in nuclear safety.

The work programme for the period 2014-2017 built upon the objectives of the bilateral Action plans and Association Agendas and takes into consideration the priorities stated in the ENI Regional East multiannual indicative programme (2014-2017).[140] It also took into account the changes that took place in the region and in the energy sector. The activities during this period also remained the same as previous time frame.

The Eastern Partnership countries lie in a region strategically important because of the energy resource transit route from Russia and Central Asia to Europe. These countries have out-dated energy infrastructure and an energy intensive economy dependent on raw materials. Thus, energy cooperation and interconnectedness would enable the countries to deal in case of any energy crisis. The Eastern Partnership stresses on the diversification of supplies of energy resources, energy efficiency, increased use of renewable energy, and emphasises that investments should be made in the partner countries for them to benefit from the financial and technological support of the Union. A strong energy sector in Eastern Europe would ensure stable supplies and transit and create a mutually beneficial and diverse energy market, thus building a close and long-term cooperation with the European Union.[141]

2.3.1.4 Platform 4: Contact between People

It is a forum for discussion, networking and exchange of good practices in fields including education, training, research, youth, culture, media and information society. It

[139] European External Action Service (2012), "Eastern Partnership- Platform 3: Energy Security, Approved Work Programme 2012-2013", [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 May 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/work_programme_2012_13_platform3_en.pdf.
[140] European External Action Service (2014), "Eastern Partnership- Platform 3: Energy Security, Core objectives and Work Programme 2014-2017", [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 May 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/platform_3_work_programme_2014-2017.pdf.
[141] Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland, "Eastern Partnership", [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 December 2016, URL: http://fundacjanowydom.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Partnerstwo-Wschodnie_MSZ-PW-EN.pdf.

included issues that were common to a large number of citizens, instrumental for the prosperity and stability of our societies, which contributed to growth, development and job creation and those which supported civil society development. It offered a balance of reinforced policy dialogue and strengthened participation in EU programmes. The members i.e. representatives of the EU Member States and Institutions, the six Eastern Partnership countries, the Council of Europe, and UNESCO, meet twice a year.[142] The key aims under this Platform were 1) boost partner countries' participation in EU international cooperation programmes; 2) improve their capacity to reform; 3) boost cooperation; 4) share good practice between education and training authorities, higher education and research institutions, and the youth or arts organisations of the EU and its partners; 5) bilateral agreements and actionand various EU international cooperation programmes on education and youth (Erasmus+), culture and the media (Creative Europe) and research and innovation (Horizon 2020 and Marie Skłodowska-Curie).

The 16th meeting under this Platform was held on 15 December 2016 in Brussels and discussed issues related to education, research, youth, culture and innovation. It reviewed the activities of the previous meetings and provided updates on important EU programmes i.e. Erasmus+, Eastern Partnership EU4Youth, Horizon2020, Creative Europe. The focus during this meeting was on youth where it came up with youth initiatives andexchange of good practices in the field of young people's non-formal learning, mobility, civic engagement and employability.[143]

[142] European Commission, "Contacts between People- "Platform 4" of the Eastern Partnership", [Online: Web] Accessed on 12 December 2016, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/education/policy/international-cooperation/eastern-partnership_en.

[143] European External Action Service (2016), "The Eastern Partnership Platform 4 "Contacts between people" focuses on youth", 15 December 2016, [Online: Web] Accessed on 12 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/18603/The%20Eastern%20Partnership%20Platform%204%20%22Contacts%20between%20people%22%20focuses%20on%20youth.

Table 2.4:Platform 4- Contact between People

Year	Education and Training	Youth	Culture	Information Society	Research
2009-2011	Modernisation issues including learning mobility (of students, teachers, researchers, young people); language learning as a key tool to promote mobility; possibility to open up the E-twinning programme for schools to the Eastern Partners.	Support concrete initiatives and projects to the benefit of young people and youth workers, notably by highlighting and adding value to the existing opportunities offered by the Youth in Action Programme	Establish a policy dialogue in culture, using existing tools; increase the participation of Eastern Partners in EU cultural programmes	Establish a regional policy dialogue on the development of the Information Society	Increase the participation of Eastern Partners in the opportunities for cooperative research, capacity building and researcher mobility, offered by the Seventh Framework Programme

2012-2013	Education and Training	Youth	Culture	Information Society	Research
	Significantly increasing the budget for Tempus, an international academic cooperation programme which promotes the modernisation of higher education in the countries surrounding the EU, and their close collaboration with EU. universities; Erasmus Mundus aims to enhance quality in higher education through scholarships; e Twinning programme offers a portal which takes advantage of the possibilities offered by the Internet and digital media to promote European school cooperation.	The programme would provide a holistic coverage of the youth sphere - from capacity-building in the policy domain, to the support to practical projects, which would be channelled through "Eastern Partnership Youth in Action Window". The Commission would continue to support initiatives and projects to the benefit young people and youth workers from the Eastern Partnership countries through the available opportunities offered by the Youth in Action Programme, notably youth exchanges, European Voluntary Sevice.	Implementing the regional Eastern Partnership Culture Programme which aims at assisting Eastern Partnership countries in their cultural policy reform at government level, as well as capacitybuilding and improving the professionalism of cultural operators in the region. It contributes to exchange of information and experience among cultural operators at regional level and with the EU and supports regional initiatives which demonstrate positive cultural contributions to economic development, social inclusion, conflict resolution and intercultural dialogue.	The Eastern Partnership network of regulators for electronic communications will be set up, as a follow-up of the workshops organised in Vienna in 2010, Vilnius and Barcelona in 2011. The European Commission has launched an action for the provision of technical assistance for electronic communications regulators of the Eastern Partnership (Eastern Partnership) countries. The action aims to support partners in gaining a better understanding and making better decisions regarding various complex regulatory issues in the area of electronic communications and information society.	Awareness raising actions on the opportunities available through the 2012 and 2013 work programmes of the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) will continue to be promoted, in particular thoughinformation sessions on the calls in the Cooperation, Capacities and People programmes; via information session and video conferences, to allow exchanges of ideas with local universities, research centres, companies and individual researchers. The Commission will continue to provide support to all legal and financial Contact Pointsfrom the Eastern Partnership countries to attend the regular information meetings organised for Member State.

	Education and Training	Youth	Culture	Information Society	Research
2014-2017	Objective is to improve the skills of students and researchers from the Eastern Partnership countries, as well as the quality of the higher education systems in the region. Increase the participation (in quality and quantity) of universities from Eastern Partnership countries in the new Erasmus+ programme, awareness of the cooperation opportunities between schools supported Through e-Twinning, support for reform of Vocational education and training systems.	Provide Eastern Partnership countries with the opportunity to participate in all youth related Actions of Erasmus+. A visibility event for Eastern Partnership youth cooperation to share strategies, tools and experiences on how to strengthen youth work and non-formal learning in Eastern Partnership countries.	Participation of Eastern Partnership countries in Creative Europe with the aim of fostering cooperation of artists and culture professionals; capacity building in the field of public policies. This would be done through cooperation in the field of cultural heritage; Organisation of an Eastern Partnership Regional Information Day: "Practical and financial aspects in the EU Creative Europe Programme" etc.	Raise awareness on the new Horizon 2020programme and support enhanced involvement of electronic infrastructures for education and research. Connecting Eastern Partnership countries to GÉANT – an advanced feasibility study. Specific objectives would be to identify the various possible architectures ensuring regional aggregation and high reliability, conduct a cost/benefits analysis, identify associated risks etc.	Increase the participation of Eastern Partnership countries in EU research projects and Programmes. Organisation of events for raising awareness on the Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions under Horizon 2020: at least one regional conference. Panel on research and Innovation will facilitate coordination between EU and Eastern Partnership countries' policies and programmes by sharing information and experiences, and will develop joint activities: 2 meetings a year, etc.

Source: The Table is compiled by Author using European External Action Service (2009), "Eastern Partnership- Platform 4: Contacts between People, Core objectives and Work Programme 2009-2011"; European External Action Service (2011), "Eastern Partnership- Platform 4: Contacts between People, Core objectives and Work Programme 2012-2013", 29 September 2011; European External Action Service (2014), "Eastern Partnership- Platform 4: Contacts between People, Core objectives and Work Programme 2014-2017", 15 January 2014.

2.3.2Civil Society Forum

The proposal to establish a Civil Society Forum was put forward at the Joint Declaration of the Prague Summit in May 2009. The first Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum was organised in November 2009 by the European Commission and was attended by 200 organisations, including 140 from partner countries. Since then it has been convened annually. Institutionally the CSF consists of- the Annual Assembly, the Steering Committee with its Secretariat, five Working Groups with their respective sub-groups and six National Platforms.It also participates in all the four Platforms of the Eastern Partnership. The Eighth Eastern Partnership CSF Annual Assembly was held in Brussels on 28-29 November 2016 under the title "Building a Common Secure and Democratic Future" and brought together around 200 representatives of CSOs, the EU Institutions and Eastern Partnership governments.

The aim of the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EaP CSF) was to strengthen civil society in the six partner countries and promote cooperation and exchange of experiences between civil society organisations from partner countries and the EU.It further aimedat participatory governance and accountable policy making in the democratic transition and European integration of the Eastern Partnership countries, including their prospective EU membership.At the national level, it aimed to strengthen the diversity and plurality of public discourse and policy making in the Eastern Partnership countries by holding governments accountable and promoting fundamental freedoms, participatory democracy and human rights. The objective was to assist and support the active and expert engagement of civil society in the Eastern Partnership and in the Eastern dimension of EU external relations policies. These would be achieved through:

- implementing flagship projects that monitor and facilitate democratic transition in the Eastern Partnership region;
- providing direct input and submission of written opinions and recommendations in the early stages of policy making both in the Eastern partners and the EU;
- conducting advocacy campaigns at critical junctures;

- monitoring the implementation of commitments and agreements made between the EU and the Partner countries within the framework of the Eastern Partnership.[144]

HrantKostanyanput forward an assessment of the Forum's Annual Assembly, the Steering Committee and its Secretariat, the Working Groups and National Platforms in a 2014 report and singled out "institutionalisation of CSF and socialization among its members" as the Forum's greatest accomplishment.[145]

The 8th Annual Assembly of Civil Society Forum was held in Brussels on 28-29 November 2016 under the theme *Building a Common Secure and Democratic Future,* with emphasis on reforms in partner countries and the contribution of civil society towards it. The participants of this meeting discussed the role of the countries in this region (Eastern Neighbourhood) in EU policies, the sectoral issues such as energy security and youth development, transparency of EU funding in the region, and preparations for the Eastern Partnership Summit in 2017.[146]

2.3.3EU-Neighbourhood East Parliamentary Assembly (EuroNest)

The EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly was constituted on 3 May 2011 in Brussels as a parliamentary forum to promote political association and further economic integration between the European Union and the Eastern European Partners. EuroNest contributes to the strengthening, development and visibility of the Eastern Partnership, as the institution responsible for parliamentary consultation, supervision and monitoring. The participants include European Parliament delegation and delegates from the partner countries. Belarus, however, does not participate in the Assembly's doings due to political reasons. EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly meets once a year

[144] European Union (2009), "Eastern Partnership- Civil Society Forum", [Online:Web] Accessed on 2 February 2017, URL: http://eap-csf.eu/index.php/civil-society-forum/.
[145]HrantKostanyan (2014), "The Civil Society Forum of Eastern Partnership, Four years on- Progress, Challenges and Prospects", *CEPS Special Report Commissioned by Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 25 January 2016, URL: http://aei.pitt.edu/47317/1/HK_EaP_Civil_Society_Forum_(1).pdf.
[146] European External Action Service (2016), "The 8th Annual Assembly of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum took place in Brussels", [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/16689/8th-annual-assembly-eastern-partnership-civil-society-forum-took-place-brussels_en.

alternatively in Eastern Partner country or on the premises of European Parliament i.e. Brussels, Luxembourg or Strasbourg.[147]

2.3.4Flagship Projects

The participants at the Prague Summit supported the launch of Flagship Initiatives to give a further impetus, concrete substance and visibility to the Eastern Partnership to an early discussion of the platforms in this regard. As part of the Eastern Partnership, six Flagship Initiatives were created to support the specific priority of cooperation between the European Union and its Eastern European partner countries:

2.3.4.1 Integrated Border Management (IBM)

Integrated border management (IBM) was defined as 'national and international coordination and cooperation among all the relevant authorities and agencies involved in border security and trade facilitation to establish effective, efficient and coordinated border management, in order to reach the objective of open, but well controlled and secure borders'.[148] Integrated Border Management was a priority area for cooperation with third countries in the European Commission's (EC) Global Approach to Migration, where partner countries were encouraged to upgrade their border management systems. The IBM concept for the Commission's external cooperation was first mentioned in the EC 2002-2006 planning programme for the Western Balkans by pointing out that "a more integrated and all-encompassing approach to border management is the only way forward because the problems are so interlinked that they cannot be effectively tackled separately".[149]

It was created in 2010 with the objective to, i) improve security, reduce smuggling and human trafficking, facilitate mobility of people across non EU borders; ii) help partners develop IBM strategies, align border management rules and adopt best practices in line with EU standards; iii) enhance multilateral cooperation and networking among partners, candidate countries and EU Member States; and iv) contribute to the fulfilment of border management benchmarks of bilateral Visa

[147] European Parliament (2011), *EuroNest Parliamentary Assembly*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 25 January 2016, URL: http://www.euronest.europarl.europa.eu/euronest/.
[148] European Commission (2015), *Integrated Border Management Flagship Initiative*, Eastern Partnership, [Online:Web] Accessed on 25 January 2017, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/neighbourhood/pdf/riga/20150518_flagship_ibm.pdf.
[149] European Commission (2010), "Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in European Commission External Cooperation", *EuropeAid Cooperation Office*, November 2010.

Dialogues between the EU and partner countries.[150]The IBM is supported by the Eastern Partnership Expert Panel, which was established in 2010 to act as a policy forum and coordination platform for the EU support to IBM in the region.

2.3.4.2 Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs)

The SME Flagship was a regional initiative of the EU launched in 2009. It aimed to provide support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in the Eastern Partnership countries to tackle the common challenges hampering their growth: for example, limited access to finance, difficulty to conquer new markets, lack of business skills, or a difficult business climate. SMEs in the Eastern Partnership contributed to economic growth thus, making national economies accustomed to the global market. Small businesses provide an important source for jobs and play an important role towards a green economy creating new opportunities in innovative and profitable sectors. In 2015, the SME Flagship consisted of a range of active projects of more than € 100 million, of which € 75 million were provided through European Financial Institutions (EFIs) – channelling more than ten times investment into SMEs in the region. The SME Flagship complemented EU's bilateral cooperation with Eastern Partnership countries on economic development through a framework for issues of regional interest, by building upon international organisations' expertise, and ensuring coherence in the EU to support SMEs in the region. The Flagship extended support on three levels: i) policy level, where the EU worked with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to assist the partner countries in drawing up effective SME policies through the Small Business Act (SBA) Assessment and the implementation of related recommendations. The EU also co-finances a project of the World Bank (STAREP) aimed to improve financial reporting in partner countries; ii) business support organisations, where the EU has initiated a vast pan-European networking programme - East Invest, aimed at promoting trade and investment through networking and capacity building of business associations in the Eastern Partnership region; iii) business level, the EU supports SMEs facilitating their access to finance through a wide range of programmes involving EFIs, such as the SME Finance Facility (implemented by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development - EBRD, the European Investment Bank – EIB, and the German

[150] European Commission (2015), *Integrated Border Management Flagship Initiative,* Eastern Partnership, [Online:Web] Accessed on 25 January 2017, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/neighbourhood/pdf/riga/20150518_flagship_ibm.pdf.

Development Bank - KfW) under the umbrella of the Neighbourhood Investment Facility. The EU has also been co-funding business development services to SMEs through the Small Business Support programme, implemented by the EBRD.[151]

2.3.4.3 Energy

The Energy Flagship Initiative was launched in 2010 and has three main goals: i) to facilitate the trade of gas and electricity between the EU and the six Eastern European partner countries, ii) to improve energy efficiency and iii) to expand the use of renewable energy sources. This Flagship Initiative was supported by the Eastern Partnership Platform 3 on Energy Security, a policy dialogue forum. The Energy Flagship has implemented through various programmes, which were part of the EU regional energy strategy covering the six partner countries: i) the INOGATE programme, which targetedEastern Partnership countries' national authorities, supported the economic convergence of energy markets and the enhancement of energy security within the Eastern Partnership region, implementation of national energy efficiency and renewable energy action plans, and encouraged private investment in energy projects; ii) At municipal level, regional support was provided through the Covenant of Mayors and Sustainable Urban Demonstration Energy projects (SUDEP), as well as through the reinforcement of the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environmental Partnership (E5P). These activities were also part of the newly created Sustainable Municipal Development Flagship Initiative; iii) encourage private sector and SMEs to move towards more energy efficient production systems, the Energy Efficiency Facilities were financed through the Neighbourhood Instrument Facility (NIF) with the European Bank of Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). The initiative has also encouraged energy ministries in partner countries to evaluate and implement effective sustainable energy policies and action plans.[152]

2.3.4.4 Sustainable Municipal Development

The Flagship on Sustainable Municipal Development was created in 2015 to encourage local authorities to cooperate with civil society organisations in order to enhance accountability, exchange best practices and strengthen the municipality's

[151] European Commission (2015), *Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Flagship Initiative*, Eastern Partnership, [Online:Web] Accessed on 25 January 2017, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/pdf/riga/20150518_flagship_sme.pdf.

[152] European Commission (2015), *Energy Flagship Initiative* Eastern Partnership, [Online:Web] Accessed on 25 January 2017, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/pdf/riga/20150518_flagship_energy.pdf.

capacities for efficient and effective administrations and local development. This flagship initiative had three objectives: i) to strengthen capacities and technical skills of local authorities to design and implement local policies and strategies. Dialogue between the local and national authorities would be promoted and local consultation mechanisms established between key stakeholders (public, private and civil society actors) and citizens to improve planning processes and the division of responsibilities; ii) Promote good governance and good administrative practices in policy implementation and reform that would be pursued through activities directed towards the development of modern and transparent administrations, supporting active and responsive citizenship and a healthy investment climate; iii) Increase the financial accountability of local authorities thus improving their capacity to develop and implement projects that were financially feasible and sustainable and in support of the local development policy. This would include activities to increase the access of municipalities to funds through banks and investors.[153]

2.3.4.5 Good Environmental Governance and Climate Change Prevention

The Flagship Initiative was launched in 2009 to promote environmental protection and tackle climate change through strengthened environmental governance. Through this initiative, the EU helped its neighbours get reliable environmental information, improve laws and their implementation, and raise environmental awareness. Regular meetings have been held between the EU and the six neighbour countries to facilitate the exchange of information and experience in these areas. The EU also funds projects supporting the Flagship Initiative. Climate change prevention has also been a key focus of the environmental governance flagship initiative that provides support to improve relevant policies.[154]

The European Commission put forward a Declaration on Cooperation on Environment and Climate Change in the Eastern Partnership on 18 October 2016. It stressed on various environmental and climate challenges, and urged for a consolidated approach and cooperation among the governments, the local authorities, civil society

[153] European Commission (2015), *Sustainable Municipal Development Flagship Initiative,* Eastern Partnership, [Online:Web] Accessed on 25 January 2017, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/neighbourhood/pdf/riga/20150518_flagship_smd.pdf.

[154] European Commission (2015), *Environmental Governance and Climate Change Prevention Flagship Initiative,* Eastern Partnership, [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December 2016, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/neighbourhood/pdf/riga/20150518_flagship_env.pdf.

organisations and private stakeholders. The participants declared to pursue regional cooperation on environment and sustainable development within the framework of Eastern Partnership and reinforce the implementation of chapters on environment in bilateral agreements between EU and Eastern Partnership countries. It further insisted that countries should cooperate on the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change along with ratification and implementation of Multilateral Environmental Agreements.[155]

2.3.4.6 Prevention, Preparedness and Response to Natural and Man-Made Disasters

The Eastern Partnership Flagship Initiative on Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made disasters (PPRD East) was launched in 2010 by the European Union to strengthen the countries' resilience, preparedness and response in addressing these challenges. Through this initiative the EU provided the six partner countries assistance to improve legislative, administrative and operational civil protection capacities and increase access to information on risk exposure and involvement of stakeholders. Electronic Regional Risk Atlas was a major instrument developed to monitor hazards and assess risks in the six partner countries. Through the PPRD East programme, improvements are being made in national legal frameworks and awareness is being spread with reference to disasters.[156]

These initiatives are priority areas for EU support that would give more visibility to the Eastern Partnership, and result in concrete actions to the benefits of the populations of the partner countries. The implementation of projects under the flagship initiatives would provide the partner countries with a good basis for further dynamic growth in key areas. Therefore, the European Union puts a lot of effort into the smooth implementation of these initiatives.

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[155] European Commission (2016), *Declaration on Cooperation on Environment and Climate Change in the Eastern Partnership*, Luxembourg, 18 October 2016, [Online: Web] Accessed on 28 January 2017, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/environment/international_issues/pdf/declaration_on_cooperation_eastern_partnership.pdf.

[156] European Commission (2015*), Prevention, Preparedness and Response to natural and man-made Disasters (PPRD East) Flagship Initiative*, Eastern Partnership, [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December 2016, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/neighbourhood/pdf/riga/20150518_flagship_pprd.pdf.

As President Donald Tusk during a Press conference, at third Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga, said:

> Over the past six years the multilateral dimension of the Eastern Partnership has established a dense network of contacts, e.g. through Informal Partnership Dialogues. We have taken the Eastern Partnership beyond governments, to parliaments, local authorities, civil society and businesses. And today we confirmed our intention to make energy and transport cooperation distinct priorities for the coming years.[157]

2.3.2 Enhancing Bilateral Cooperation

The main objective of the Eastern Partnership was to strengthen bilateral cooperation between the EU and partner countries, both at political and economic levels. The participants at the Prague Summit wished to deepen and strengthen bilateral relations between the EU and the partner countries, taking into account the situation and ambition of each partner country and respecting the existing bilateral relations between them. While some partners were only interested in economic cooperation, others desired full integration within the EU. The Eastern Partnership provided a platform to these countries to select the level of integration. Bilateral cooperation under the Eastern Partnership would provide the foundation for Association Agreements between the EU and those partner countries willing and able to comply with the resulting commitments.[158] Bilateral cooperation comprised of a wide range of areas covering good governance; rule of law and fundamental freedoms; and sustainable economic and social development, trade and investment.

[157] Council of European Union (2015), Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the press conference of the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga, 22 May 2015, [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December 2016, URL: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/05/22-final-remarks-tusk-eastern-partnership-summit/.

[158] European Union (2009), "Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit", *Council of European Union*, 8435/09 (Presse 78), 7 May 2009, Prague.

Table 2.5: The Bilateral Dimension of Eastern Partnership

Long-term objectives of the bilateral dimension		
Association Agreements • Political dialogue and foreign and security policy • Justice, freedom and security • Economic and sectoral cooperation – mainly energy, transport infrastructure, and environment • Deep and comprehensive free trade area	**DCFTA** • Lifting customs barriers • Harmonization of the partner countries' trade-related legislation with EU standards and the acquis communautaire • WTO membership as precondition	**Visa liberalization** Steps include 1 Visa facilitation and readmission agreements 2 'Visa dialogue' 3 Total lifting of the visa requirement for partner countries
Programmes initiated under the EaP		
Comprehensive Institution Building (CIB) • Aim: Strengthening of selected core institutions to implement the AAs • Belarus not participating		**Pilot Regional Development Programmes (PRDPs)** • Aim: Cohesion and the reduction of socio-economic disparities among regions • Belarus not participating
Eastern Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility • Introduced in 2011 • Support to projects led by civil society, relevant in the context of the Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership • Aim: Capacity strengthening, involvement in sector-policy dialogues	**Eastern Partnership Culture Programme** • Introduced in 2011 • Regional cultural links and dialogue within the Eastern Partnership region and between the EU and ENP Eastern countries' cultural networks and actors	**EaP Integration and Cooperation Programme** • "More for more" principle introduced in 2012 • First round of allocations for Armenia, Georgia and Moldova

Source: Ferrari,Heidrun (2014), "Partnership for all? Measuring the impact of Eastern Partnership on Minorities", *Policy Paper- Minority Rights Group*, Europe, p.11, [Online:Web] Accessed on 11 June 2017, URL: http://minorityrights.org/wp-content/uploads/old-site-downloads/download-1373-Policy-paper-English.pdf.

2.3.2.1 Association Agreements

The Association Agreements were the new instruments towards building stronger cooperation between the partner countries and the European Union, by replacing the existing partnership and cooperation agreements (PCAs). The Agreements, which included many new areas of cooperation and created strong political ties, became the basis for further implementation of EU legislation and standards in the partner countries. They endowed the partner countries with a privileged position in relations with the European Union. Such agreements were to be signed only with those partners willing to make far-reaching commitments to the European Union. The precondition

of the commencement of negotiations and the subsequent strengthening of relations was a good progress in the field of democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights.[159]

These agreements would lead to further deepening of relations by establishing Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area, beyond the existing opportunities for trade and investment. Trade and investment liberalisation would be strengthened by regulatory approximation leading to convergence with EU laws and standards.[160]

2.3.2.2 Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area

The Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) was conceived as a tangible tool to deepen economic integration between the EU and the ENP/Eastern Partnership countries. A DCFTA, which was part of bilateral association agreements, included all trade in goods and services and 'behind-the- border' issues, as well. Consequently, DCFTAs could be negotiated only with those ENP countries that were members of the WTO. It also required the "partners' capacity to approximate the EU *acquis*" and grant them three of the four freedoms – free movement of 'substantially all' goods, many services and of capital.[161]

Association agreements, apart from building closer political ties, also included provisions relating to the creation of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) on the condition that partner countries meet the relevant criteria and commit themselves to introducing free market principles. According to the European Union, open markets and economic integration contributed to the rapid economic development and increased prosperity, and the creation of stronger trade ties would increase the probability of a lasting political stability. The free market was one of the greatest achievements of the European Union. Customs controls have been abolished, and procedures and regulations have been simplified and standardised. People, goods, services and money move freely, like in the same state. The common market has helped create several million jobs in the EU and generated an additional income of

[159] Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland, "Eastern Partnership", [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 December 2016, URL: http://fundacjanowydom.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Partnerstwo-Wschodnie_MSZ-PW-EN.pdf, p.16.
[160]European Union (2009), "Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit", *Council of European Union,* 8435/09 (Presse 78), 7 May 2009, Prague.
[161]Drăgan, Gabriela (2015), "Deepening the Economic Integration in the Eastern Partnership: from a Free Trade Area to a Neighbourhood Economic Community?", *Eastern Journal Of European Studies*, 6(2): 9-26).

hundreds of billions of Euros. Hence the abolition of trade barriers and opening up of national markets has enabled more enterprises to compete with each other. The Eastern Partnership countries through agreements on DCFTAs would be able to integrate in the European market, benefit from the rapid and constant development similar to that of Western economies, would gain from EU investment and capital as well as access to modern technology necessary for conducting modernisation processes.[162]

2.3.2.3 Visa Liberalisation

The 2008 Communication stated that mobility and visa liberalisation was a priority area to enhance bilateral cooperation between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries. The EU offered partners "Mobility and Security" pacts, based on tailor-made country by country approach, that would support mobility of citizens and ensure a secure environment. Key policy areas covered by such pacts would include fighting illegal migration, upgrading the asylum systems to EU standards, setting up integrated border management structures aligned to the EU *acquis*, as well as enhancing the abilities of police and judiciary in particular in the fight against corruption and organised crime. The pacts would improve the mobility of people, while contributing to the partners' own stability and security, as well as to the security of the EU borders.[163]

Visa liberalisation on the other hand was to be a phased approach. As put forward in the Communication, the first step was to initiate talks on visa facilitation with partners followed by readmission agreements and, where necessary, by technical assistance under overall assistance budgets to help partners meet the obligations stemming from these agreements. Once visa facilitation and readmission agreements have been effectively implemented, open dialogues would take place on visa-free travel with all cooperating partners. These dialogues would further establish roadmaps leading to visa waiver, covering four main issues: document security; fight against irregular

[162] Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Poland, "Eastern Partnership", [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 December 2016, URL: http://fundacjanowydom.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Partnerstwo-Wschodnie_MSZ-PW-EN.pdf, p.17-18.

[163] European Commission (2008), Eastern Partnership, *Joint Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council,*COM(2008) 823 final, Brussels, 3 December 2008.

migration, including readmission; public order issues; and external relation issues, including human rights of migrants and other vulnerable groups.[164]

2.3.3 Comprehensive Institution-Building Programmes (CIB)

The Comprehensive Institution Building (CIB) Programmes were institutional reforms necessary for the negotiation and implementation of Association Agreements, DCFTAs, and visa liberalisation.They were initiated individually with each partner country in order to improve their administrative capacity, including through training, technical assistance and any appropriate innovative measures.[165] The Eastern Partnership included the implementation of CIB, a new initiative missing in the ENP, and emphasised on strengthening institutions in partner countries. The CIB specifically intended to help partner countries towards the goal of enhanced relations under the Eastern Partnership framework, including, in meeting the preconditions for concluding an Association Agreement, and within the same framework, for starting and concluding negotiations on establishing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area. This instrument aimed to ensure effective institution-building for key institutions that were crucial in preparing the ground for enhanced relations. The CIB Programme was jointly developed and implemented by the EU and partner countries under the Eastern Partnership, and would be open to co-financing from interested EU Member States and other international donors.[166]

The CIB Programme was divided into two phases. The first phase listed the institutions jointly agreed by the partner countries to be strengthened, taking into account the current situation and needs with regard to Association Agreements. The challenges being faced by these countries were further set out in a Framework Document. The second phase included the Institutional Reform Plans (IRPs), the

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[164] European Commission (2008), Eastern Partnership, *Joint Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council*,COM(2008) 823 final, Brussels, 3 December 2008.

[165] European Union (2009), "Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit", *Council of European Union*, 8435/09 (Presse 78), 7 May 2009, Prague;
European Commission (2012), *EU Cooperation for a successful Eastern Partnership*, European Union, [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December 2016, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/eastern_partnership_flyer_final_en.pdf.

[166]European Commission (2010), "Framework Document-Comprehensive Institution Building Programme (2011-2013)" Georgia, *External Relations Directorate General*, European Union.

multi-annual documents that outlined the priorities to be pursued, the measures to be taken, the input to be provided and the sources of support.[167]

2.4 Summits

The EU-Eastern Partnership countries summits are held once every two years. The Partnershipwas based on a community of values and principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law. All countries participating in the Eastern Partnership are committed to these values through the relevant international instruments, and the European Union Member Statesare committed to them through the Treaty on European Union.

2.4.1 Second Eastern Partnership Summit, Warsaw, September 2011

The Prague Summit in May 2009 (the first Summit) launched a strategic and ambitious Eastern Partnership as a part of the European Neighbourhood Policy, to further support Eastern European countries' sustainable reform processes with a view to accelerate their political association and economic integration with the European Union. The agenda agreed in Prague laid down the guiding principles of the Eastern Partnership and the participants at Warsaw Summit reaffirmed their commitment to implement it. The second summit was held in Warsaw in 2011 where the heads of governments and states reviewed the progress made in the last two years and discussed the future agendas of the Eastern Partnership. The participants acknowledged the political and economic reforms implemented by some partners to build deep and sustainable democracy. Progress was made in trade interactions between the EU and the partner countries in the last two years. The EU initiated Association Agreements with some of the countries that would lead up to Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas (DCFTAs) once the requirements and conditions have been achieved. Visa-free regimes were launched with Ukraine and Republic of Moldova. Visa-facilitation agreement and readmission agreements were implemented with Georgia and similar agreements were sought with the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Republic of Belarus. A Euronest Parliamentary Assembly and an Eastern Partnership Business Forum (on 30 September 2011) was

[167] European Commission (2012), *EU Cooperation for a successful Eastern Partnership*, European Union, [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December 2016, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/eastern_partnership_flyer_final_en.pdf.

established at the Warsaw Summit. Also, Micro Financial Assistance was provided by the EU to some partner countries to assist the short-term balance of payments difficulties once the pre-conditions are met. With regard to Association Agreements and DCFTAs, the participants looked forward to finalisation of negotiations by the time of the EU-Ukraine Summit in December 2011. They further envisaged that negotiations on DCFTAs with Georgia and Republic of Moldova would start by the end of 2011 provided sufficient progress was made in the remaining recommendations.[168]

Also, Poland announced that it would participate and contribute €1 million to the Eastern Partnership Assistance Trust Fund (EPTATF)[169]. At the Eastern Partnership Summit, European Investment Bank (EIB) Vice-President WilhemMolterer, responsible for lending coordination in the Eastern Partnership countries, commented:

> In times of economic hardship, we are particularly grateful for Poland's initiative: establishing closer political association and building deeper economic integration between the EU and the Eastern Partnership region is indeed our shared priority. This contribution will directly contribute to funding critically needed projects. [170]

Nothing substantial came out in this Summit, but it indicated the efforts being made on both sides for this new policy to work, in terms of moving forward with economic integration and better financial allocations.

2.4.2 Third Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, November 2013

The Heads of State or Government and the representatives of the Republic of Armenia, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Republic of Belarus, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, the representatives of the European Union and the Heads of State or Government and representatives of its Member States met in Vilnius on 28-29

[168]European Union (2011), "Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit," *Council of the European Union,* 29-30 September 2011, Warsaw.

[169] EPTATF was a fund launched by European Investment Bank in December 2010. It focuses on increasing the quality and development impact of Eastern Partnership operations by making available much-needed technical assistance with an aim to speed up and ensure more successful project implementation in Eastern Partnership Countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova and Ukraine).

[170] European Union (2011), "At Warsaw Eastern Partnership Summit, Poland announces contribution to Eastern Partnership Technical Assistance Trust Fund", *European Investment Bank*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 December 2016, URL: http://www.eib.org/infocentre/press/releases/all/2011/2011-139-at-warsaw-eastern-partnership-summit-poland-announces-contribution-to-eastern-partnership-technical-assistance-trust-fund.htm.

November 2013 for the thirdEastern Partnership Summit. This Summit marked the beginning of major changes in the geopolitics of the region due to growing competition between the EU and Russia,bringing about a paradigm shift in the Eastern Neighbourhood. The Joint Declaration emphasised on the guiding principles of Eastern Partnership agreed at the Prague and Warsaw Summits highlighting the progress made in the past four years, vis-à-vis political association and economic integration. The participants stressed on the necessity to implement commitments particularly in political, economic and social reforms. The Partnership is based on commitment to principles of international law and fundamental freedoms, including rule of law, democracy, respect for human rights as well as market economy, sustainable development and good governance. They recognised the measures being taken "to strengthen the Eastern Partnership initiative in order to create a common area of shared democracy, prosperity, stability and increased interactions and exchanges".[171] They unanimously agreed that achieving closer cooperation, building trust and good neighbourly relations would ensure stability and prosperity of the European continent. President Dalia Grybauskaitė, President of Lithuania, together with the leaders of the EU and Eastern Partnership countries issued a declaration on 29 November 2013 specifying the progress achieved in the past two years and setting further guidelines for the programme.[172]

Some of the significant steps taken at the Vilnius Summit were initialling the Associations Agreements and the DCFTAs with Georgia and Republic of Moldova, along with signing of few minor agreements with other eastern partners. The Summit had aimed at signing Association Agreement with Ukraine and Armenia that would have demonstrated significant progress in EU's relations with the eastern partners. However, the decision of the Ukrainian government to suspend the signing of Association Agreement under Russian pressure came as a setback. Despite the suspension of agreement, the EU and Ukraine reiterated their "commitment towards signing this agreement, on the basis of determined action and tangible progress in the three areas emphasised at the 2013 EU-Ukraine Summit", i.e. 1) follow-up on the

[171]European Union (2013), "Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 28-29 November 2013: Eastern Partnership- The Way Ahead", *Council of the European Union*, 17130/13 (OR. en) PRESSE 516.

[172] European Union (2013), "Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 28-29 November 2013: Eastern Partnership- The Way Ahead", *Council of the European Union*, 17130/13 (OR. en) PRESSE 516.

election proceedings of 28 October 2012; 2) addressing the issue of selective justice and preventing its recurrence; and 3) implementing the reforms set out in the jointly agreed association agenda.[173] Armenia, which had negotiated with the EU for three years, too, rejected signing the agreement with EU and joined the Eurasian Union instead. The events brought to the fore lack of EU's incentives and influence in the region.

The Vilnius Summit was to present a foundation for new Association Agreements and Free Trade Agreements with the EU which would begin the process of evolution of the Partnership. However, failure to sign the agreement with Ukraine and Armenia, and the resulting pro-EU protests in Ukraine, led to the uncertainty about the future of Eastern Partnership.[174]

2.4.3 Fourth Eastern Partnership Summit, Riga, May 2015

The Riga Summit followed the 2013 Vilnius Summit that triggered a host of events,and led to crisis in Ukraine. The representatives of the European Union, its member states, and the six eastern partner countries met in Riga for the fourth Summit on 21-22 May 2015. In a Joint Declaration, they reiterated their commitment to the EU values of democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms along with the principles of international law which was the core foundation of the Eastern Partnership. The four priorities set out at the Riga Summit included:

- market opportunities and economic development;
- strengthening institutions and good governance;
- connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change; and
- mobility and people-to-people contacts.

The Summit took place amidst various problems facing Europe which included the migration crisis, the instability in Georgia, the Russia-Ukraine war, and the occupation of Crimea by Russia. The participants evaluated the major achievements of the

[173] European Union (2013), "Joint Declaration of the Eastern Partnership Summit, Vilnius, 28-29 November 2013: Eastern Partnership- The Way Ahead", *Council of the European Union*, 17130/13 PRESSE 516; European Commission (2013), "EU-Ukraine Summit", *Press Release IP/13/152,* Brussels, 22 February 2013.

[174] Larsson Caroline (2013), "The Eastern Partnership Vilnius-Summit and the Battle for Ukraine", *The European Institute,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 2 December 2016, URL: https://www.europeaninstitute.org/index.php/ei-blog/187-november-2013/1815-the-eastern-partnership-vilnius-summit-and-the-battle-for-ukraine-1120.

Vilnius Summit, particularly signing of the Association Agreements with Georgia, Moldova, and later on with Ukraine (March 2014), and stressed that their implementation would be a priority of the EU. This would boost trade between EU and Georgia and Moldova once DCFTAs were approved and implemented. In case of Ukraine however, 1 January 2016 was chosen to put forward the DCFTA.[175] Azerbaijan showed no interest in signing the Association Agreement and instead sought for a 'Strategic Dialogue'. At the Summit, the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan submitted a position paper for such a partnership with the EU. Also, there was no representation from Belarus, where President Lukashenko was not a participant in the Summit, on the pretext of four political prisoners in the country. EU's inconsistency was demonstrated at the Summit where on one hand it made an effort towards developing bilateral relations with Azerbaijan despite the country's repressive regime, and on the other it sanctioned Belarus.[176]

A Business Forum was held in Riga on 21 May, along with the Summit where they agreed to strengthen the business dimension of the Eastern Partnership. The European Commission along with European Investment Bank (EIB) and European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) launched a DCFTA Facility for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Countries that had signed Association Agreements (Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia) with the EU would benefit from the increased financing through SMEs. They further emphasised that enhanced mobility of citizens in a secure environment was a core objective of the Eastern Partnership. In this regard, a visa liberalisation action plan was initiated for Moldova on 28 April 2014 where its citizens holding a biometric passport travelling to Schengen area for short period were let off from any visa obligation. Progress has been made to initiate similar action plans with Georgia and Ukraine by end of 2015. However, any action plan with reference to visa free travel for countries like Belarus, Armenia and Azerbaijan remains distant. A major clause missing from the declaration was that of EU membership, a setback for countries like Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, seeking a much deeper cooperation

[175] European Union (2015), "Joint Declaration of Eastern Partnership, 21-22 May 2015, Riga", [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December 2016, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/eastern/docs/riga-declaration-220515-final_en.pdf.

[176]Kostanyan, Hrant (2015), "The Eastern Partnership after Riga-Review and Reconfirm", *CEPS Commentary,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 2 December 2016, URL: https://www.ceps.eu/system/files/HK%20Riga%20summit_0.pdf.

with the Union.[177] President of the Council Donald Tusk stated at a the press conference of 22 May that "…our partnership, as well as the Riga Summit itself, are not about dramatic decisions or taking giant steps forward. No, our relationship is built on free will, respect and equality. And our partnership will go forward step-by-step, just as the European Union has been built".[178]

2.4.4 Agenda for the 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit

The next Eastern Partnership Summit would take place in Brussels in November 2017. The draft paper said that the next Summit "will review the results" since the last summit held in Riga in 2015 and "discuss the way forward in further strengthening cooperation between the partner countries and the EU as well as among the partners".[179]Head of the EU Delegation to Armenia, Ambassador PiotrSwitalskisaid at the *Civil Society Perspectives on EU-Armenia Relations* in Yeravanthat the action plan for beginning the visa liberalization with Armenia would be on the agenda of the next EasternPartnership summit in 2017.[180]

Developments that are anticipated by the next Eastern Partnership Summit to be held in November 2017 include:

- Progress made in the implementation of the Association Agreements and DCFTAs with Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova,
- New frameworks of EU's relations with Armenia and Azerbaijan,
- Increased cooperation with Belarus under the newly created EU-Belarus Coordination Group, and

[177] European Union (2015), "Joint Declaration of Eastern Partnership, 21-22 May 2015, Riga", [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December 2016, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/eastern/docs/riga-declaration-220515-final_en.pdf.
[178] Council of European Union (2015), Remarks by President Donald Tusk at the press conference of the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga, 22 May 2015, [Online: Web] Accessed on 20 December 2016, URL: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/05/22-final-remarks-tusk-eastern-partnership-summit/.
[179] Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (2016), "Report: Eastern Partnership Summit Scheduled For Brussels in November 2017", 11 November 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 June 2017, URL: https://www.rferl.org/a/eu-eastern-partnership-summit-november-2017/28110604.html.
[180] Armenian National Committee of America (2016), "Visa Liberalization with Armenia on 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit Agenda", 15 July 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 June 2017, URL: https://anca.org/visa-liberalization-with-armenia-on-2017-eastern-partnership-summit-agenda/.

- Adoption or progress on Partnership Priorities/revised Association Agendas and new Single Support Frameworks / Multi-Annual Indicative Programme in line with the ENP Review.[181]

The various targets to be achieved by the next Summit and the milestones to be reached by 2020 have been elaborated in the next section on Deliverables.

2.5 December 2016 Paper on 20 Deliverables by 2020

The European Commission and the European External Action Service released a joint working document with an intention to point out 20 important deliverables by the year 2020. These deliverables were based within the framework of priorities agreed at the 2015 Riga Summit. Each of these deliverables had set target objectives to be achieved by the 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit and the milestones to be achieved by 2020. The four priority areas included:

- economic development and market opportunities - to support Eastern Partnership Countries move towards diversified and vibrant economies, to create jobs in new sectors, attract investments and foster employability;

- strengthening institutions and good governance - to fight against corruption, reinforce public administration and assist efficient governance of reforms for an improved business environment, economic growth and societal developments, to support security cooperation, notably for conflict resolution, crisis prevention, civil protection against new threats: all key for ensuring citizens' security and an investment-safe climate;

- connectivity, energy efficiency, environment and climate change - to facilitate transport interconnections between EU and the Eastern Partners and within the countries in the region, facilitating economic development, regional economic integration and people's mobility; energy and climate action, to make Eastern Partnership Countries less exposed to external risks and helping them develop sustainable and low-carbon economies attracting investment and promoting sustainable development; and

[181] European Commission (2016), "Eastern Partnership - Focusing on key Priorities and Deliverables", *Joint Staff Working Document*,SWD(2016) 467 final, Brussels, 15 December 2016.

- mobility and people-to-people contacts - to target entrepreneurship and skills development key for adjustment and modernisation process, employability and development; foster, in particular, youth employability, facilitate exchanges between people, and promote research and innovation collaboration.[182]

Through this working document the EU outlined the potential of civil society within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. The engagement of all the partner countries in civil society sector is important for development, social innovation and economic growth and reforms can be attained only through technical expertise and strong leadership of Civil Society organisations. Another proposed deliverable was that of gender equality and empowerment of girls and women following the provisions of EU Gender Action Plan (GAP II). The Eastern Partnership has supported the goals set by UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which laid down the course towards a modern and low-carbon economy, providing opportunities for economic transformation, jobs and growth.

Thus, to deliver substantial results under each of the four priority areas agreed at Riga, a more focused approach is required. For this purpose there should be increased engagement between member states and partner countries, supported by political dialogue and coordination at bilateral level and also through Platforms and Panels. Also a better and clearer strategic communication would increase the credibility of the EU among the citizens of Eastern Partnership countries. As a result, 20 deliverables were identified within the framework of four priorities agreed at Riga Summit on the basis of already existing commitments to be fulfilled by the EU and the partner countries. The following table has briefly covered the main deliverables under each of the four priority areas stating the targets to be achieved by the 2017 Eastern Partnership Summit and the milestones to be accomplished by 2020 along with the main actors involved.[183]

[182] European Commission (2016), "Eastern Partnership - Focusing on key Priorities and Deliverables", *Joint Staff Working Document*,SWD(2016) 467 final, Brussels, 15 December 2016.
[183] European Commission (2016), "Eastern Partnership - Focusing on key Priorities and Deliverables", *Joint Staff Working Document*,SWD(2016) 467 final, Brussels, 15 December 2016.

Table 2.6: Priority I: Economic Development and Market Opportunities

Milestone by 2017 Summit	Implementation	Main actor	Target by 2020
Potential of SMEs			
SME strategies and action plans/roadmaps adopted in at least one more country. *[To date three countries, Armenia, Moldova and Georgia have SME Strategies in place]*	Bilateral and regional programmes. New OECD programme on SMEs competitiveness.	Eastern Partnership Ministries of Economy European Commission OECD, IFIs	Eastern Partnership countries to improve score on a 2019 OECD Small Business Act assessment by 10% on the regulatory framework, the operational environment and support to SMEs (as compared to 2015). Eastern Partnership countries provide for more transparent and efficient SME taxation system, as verified in the World Bank Paying Taxes report.

Gaps in Access to Finance and Financial Infrastructure Gaps in access to finance related to missing financial sector infrastructure identified in at least three countries.	Regional and bilateral programmes	Eastern Partnership relevant Ministries European Commission IFIs	Efficient credit registries developed in three countries, assuring a wider coverage and a more efficient flow of information among financial intermediaries, so to facilitate collateral based lending. *[To date registers not in place/not fully functional]* Set up and development of alternative sources of financing for SMEs supported. This should include: instruments to facilitate investments (i.e. leasing, factoring) and instruments to increase export (i.e. export guarantee mechanisms, insurance schemes).
Mayors for Economic Growth (M4EG) New M4EG initiative launched and at least 10 LAs committed to submit a plan for local economic development. *[M4EG launched in October 2016]*	M4EG initiative	Local and Regional Authorities European Commission CORLEaP	At least 30 LAs implement plan for local economic development, and at least 10 urban demonstration projects kick started.
Harmonisation of Digital Markets Commitment to establish an independent regulatory authority for electronic communications, by partners not having one in place. Feasibility study on unified roaming tariffs in the Eastern Partnership completed. Commitment by partners	EU4Digital Alignment of funding approach with IFIs HDM Panel	Relevant Eastern Partnership ministries and regulatory bodies Telecom network European Commission IFIs	Independent national regulatory authority for electronic communications in place in at least four countries. Significant progress in spectrum coordination and in unifying roaming tariffs in the Eastern Partnership10.

to coordinate on spectrum of issues.			
DCFTAs implementation Joining the Pan-Euro-Mediterranean Convention on Preferential Rules of Origin by DCFTA countries	Gradual and reciprocal market access opening for goods, public procurement and services in accordance with the staging foreseen in the DCFTAs. Gradual update by private operators of their production facilities towards compliance with EU standards, notably thanks to the DCFTA Facility for SMEs and other state-sponsored programmes.	Ministries of Economy/Trade in DCFTA countries European Commission EU companies exporting and investing in the Eastern Partnership Companies of Partner Countries	Growth in volume of Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) in the DCFTA countries.

Table 2.7: Priority II: Strengthening Institutions and Good Governance

Milestone by 2017 Summit	Implementation	Main actors	Target by 2020
Rule of Law and Anti-Corruption Mechanisms Effective progress towards a system of declarations of assets and conflicts of interest, to increase public scrutiny on unjustified wealth: adoption of the required legislative framework (including verification mechanisms and dissuasive sanctions against false declarations) as well as the launch, publication and verification of easily searchable public registries of interests and assets in at least three countries.	Bilateral and regional programmes "Programmatic Cooperation Framework" (PCF, EU+CoE) SIGMA15	Eastern Partnership Ministries of Justice and anti-corruption bodies European Commission EEAS Council of Europe (CoE) OECD, IFIs	Easily-searchable electronic public registries of interests and assets for Members of Parliament (MPs), politicians and high ranking officials developed and implemented in at least four countries. Public registries of beneficial ownership of legal entities and legal arrangements developed in at least 3 countries. Steps taken to implement GRECO16 recommendations on political party funding, based on the outcome of the GRECO third round of evaluations.
Implementation of Key Judicial Reforms A transparent and merit-based recruitment of judges and prosecutors	Bilateral and regional programmes PCF TAIEX Peer review missions to assess	Eastern Partnership Governments and Presidential Administrations Eastern Partnership Ministries of Justice	Track record of transparent and merit-based recruitment and promotion system disaggregated by gender in place in at least three countries. Independent training

adopted in at least two countries via an independent single entry point and selection procedures in line with European standards, confirmed through an expert review mission.	judicial recruitment/ appointment processes in place and to formulate recommendations	Eastern Partnership Judiciaries European Commission EEAS CoE	institutions delivering initial and continuous training to the judiciary, in line with the EU standards and best practices. Track record of judges' and prosecutors' performance, as per their career development, in place in at least three countries.
Implementation of Public Administration Reform in Line with the Principles of Public Administration Principles of Public Administration presented across the Eastern Partnership region.	Support through regional platforms and bilateral meetings, including for baseline assessments. OECD/SIGMA	Eastern Partnership Governments/ administrations European Commission EEAS OECD/SIGMA CSOs/other non-state actors	At least two-three Eastern Partnership countries upgraded or adopted their PAR strategies in line with the Principles of Public Administration.
Resilience and Civilian Security Action Plans to address cybercrime adopted by Partner Countries. Operational contact points for international police-to-police and judicial cooperation on cybercrime and e-evidence designated.	Bilateral and regional programmes PCF	Eastern Partnership Ministries of Justice and Interior European Commission EUROPOL CoE	Budapest Convention fully implemented, particularly as per procedural law for the purpose of domestic investigations, public-private cooperation and international cooperation. Fully-fledged, operational cybercrime units in law enforcement authorities created.

Table 2.8: Priority III: Connectivity, Energy Efficiency, Environment and Climate Change

Milestone by 2017 Summit	Implementation	Main actors	Target by 2020
Extension of TEN-T Core Networks Agreement reached on highest priority projects to be incorporated into the single coordinated pipeline, feeding into NIF (e.g. East –West Highway; reconstruction of interchanges on TEN-T -corridor roads, including M1 and M5 (E95), M6 (E40), M7 (E373)). *[Discussion currently ongoing in the context of the Eastern Partnership Platform and Panels; first analysis provided in dedicated study]*	Focussing IFI-financing on core TEN-T network.	European Commission IFIs Eastern Partnership Ministries of Transports	Implementation under way on SIX missing links on the extended core TEN-T network with agreed pipeline of projects in place.
Energy Supply EU4Energy national work plans are developed for the newly established programme.	Regional programme EU4Energy (follow-up of INOGATE) started in July 2016. EU4Energy to develop methodology for project pipeline.	European Commission, International Energy Agency Energy Community Secretariat and Energy Charter Secretariat Eastern Partnership relevant Ministries IFIs	Defining projects involving Eastern Partners outside Energy Community framework.

Improve Energy Efficiency and the Use of Renewable Energy, and to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions CoM East II is launched (Yerevan, October 2016). At least 20 Local Authorities (LAs) committed to CoM-East 2030 objectives. *[Currently at the beginning of the implementation process; no commitment expressed yet]*	Design and implementation of local SECAP (including energy efficiency measures, i.e. better-performing district heating systems, energy efficient public transportation/lighting).	Eastern Partnership cities/city networks, LAs Eastern Partnership Ministries Energy/ Climate European Commission IFIs	At least 100 LAs reduced urban CO2 emissions of 20%. At least 50 LAs committed to more ambitious objectives.
Environment and Adaptation To Climate Change National and regional work plans to improve water management ready. River Basin Management Plans adopted. Water quality surveys, including Joint Black Sea survey carried out.	EU Water Initiative+ Environmental Monitoring of the Black Sea project CBC programmes	Eastern Partnership relevant Ministries OECD, UNECE European Commission	Management of 50% of river basins based on the EU Water Framework Directive. Risk for Black Sea degradation identified and marine litter clean-up actions launched.

Table 2.9: Priority IV: Mobility and People-To-People Contacts

Milestone by 2017 Summit	Implementation	Main actors	Target by 2020
Visa Liberalisation Dialogues and Mobility Partnerships Visa free regime for Ukraine and Georgia, once adopted by co-legislators. Possible launch of a Visa Liberalisation Dialogue with Armenia, if conditions allow. Re-launch and finalisation of the Visa Facilitation and Readmission negotiations with Belarus. Holding of first High Level meeting under Mobility Partnership with Belarus. Holding of the first High Level meeting under Mobility Partnership with Azerbaijan.	Increased people to people contacts between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries as a consequence of considerably eased travel conditions. TAIEX peer review Improved migration management in the Eastern Partnership countries.	Eastern Partnership Ministries of Foreign Affairs/ Home Affairs European Commission EEAS European Border and Coast Guard Agency European Training Foundation	Continued implementation of VLAP benchmarks for Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine. Effective implementation of all Mobility Partnerships, with balance between the 4 pillars (legal migration, irregular migration, migration and development, international protection). (Possibly) Conclusion of VLAP with Armenia and subsequent visa-free travel for its citizens, if all benchmarks are met. Possible launch of a Visa Liberalisation Dialogue with Azerbaijan, if conditions allow.
Youth Leadership and Entrepreneurship 1st group of multilateral partnerships supporting entrepreneurship education and social entrepreneurship established. *[EU4Youth implementation starting in 2017]*	EU4Youth.	European Commission Youth organisations in EU and Eastern Partnership countries	Along Civil Society Fellowships for youth, partnerships for Entrepreneurship and transnational cooperation projects implemented, with 100 youth organisations supported and reduced mismatch between skills and labour market demands.

Eastern Partnership European School Study on setting up the school finalised and plan for establishment developed. Proposed didactic programme, governance and funding arrangements developed.	Study EU funded programme	International schools Governors Board of International Baccalaureate European Commission Eastern Partnership Ministries of Education/Foreign Affairs	Eastern Partnership European school set up.
Integration of Eastern Partnership and EU Research and Innovation Systems Fully functional associations of at least four countries to Horizon 2020. *[Currently all Eastern Partnership countries participate to H2020]*	Horizon 2020 support actions and projects Horizon 2020 Programme Committees Joint Horizon 2020 Association Committees	Eastern Partnership Ministries of Education and Science National Academies of Science; research and business communities European Commission	Associated countries' R&I stakeholders integrated in relevant EU networks/ fora, and alignment of associated countries' and EU's strategies for R&I. Full access of Eastern Partnership countries to all Horizon 2020 funding schemes for individual researchers/innovators.

Successful implementation of the association of Ukraine to the Euratom Research programme. [Association Agreement entered into force in October 2016; implementation already started]	Ukraine-Euratom Research and Innovation Committee EuratomProgramme Committee	National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (NASU) and its research institutes Ukrainian Ministries of Education and Science; Energy and Coal State Enterprise“National Nuclear Energy GeneratingCompany “Energoatom” State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine European Commission	Reinforced cooperation in nuclear research (fission and fusion).
New coordination and support project of H2020, Eastern Partnership Plus promoted: coordination platform fully operational [*Platform launched in September 2016*]	Networking and brokerage events, training, promotion of Horizon 2020 calls. Study visits to relevant EU national ministries/agencies.	EU and Eastern Partnership research and business communities Eastern Partnership ministries of Education and Science European Commission	Substantially increased participation of Eastern Partnership countries in Horizon 2020. Science Technology and Innovation (STI) Policy Recommendation. “EU-Eastern Partnership beyond 2020” based on fact finding reports for Eastern Partnership countries.

Source: The Tables are compiled by the Author using *Joint Staff Working Document on Eastern Partnership - Focusing on Key Priorities and Deliverables*, European Commission, Brussels, 15 December 2016.

2.6 Successes and Failures of Eastern Partnership

The Eastern Partnership was created as an eastern dimension of European Neighbourhood Policy that proposed political association and economic integration with the six partner countries. The Council Conclusions on Eastern Partnership of November 2016 highlighted the importance of and progress made in the reform process (notably in the judiciary, the fight against corruption and public administration), the implementation of Association Agreements and DCFTAs, deepening the economic policy framework, along with cooperation between EU and Eastern Partnership countries in the field of security, including security sector reform, hybrid threats, border management, fighting cybercrime. The progress made towards signing of Association Agreements and DCFTAs with Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine was one of the major successes of the Eastern Partnership initiative which accelerated political association and economic integration with the EU. In case of Armenia, a new framework agreement was initiated after it rejected signing the Association Agreement with the EU. In Azerbaijan, the Council authorised to open negotiations on a new comprehensive agreement that would provide the basis of long term relations with these countries.[184] There has also been an improvement in the EU-Belarus relations. The Council Conclusion on Belarus of 15 February 2016 recognised the progress made by the country such as, participation of Belarus in the Eastern Partnership and in the Interim Phase on Modernisation Issues, the resumption of the EU-Belarus Human Rights Dialogue, the start of negotiations on Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements and on a Mobility Partnership, the active cooperation in harmonisation of digital markets, and the signature of a Cooperation Arrangement on an Early Warning Mechanism in the energy sector. The EU's demand of releasing political prisoners was met on 22 August 2015 and the October presidential elections were conducted peacefully. Considering all these efforts the EU Council suspended the most

[184] Council of the European Union (2016), *Eastern Partnership Council Conclusions,* European Union, 14244/16, Brussels, 14 November 2016.

restrictive measures on Belarus for four months and took this opportunity to widen and enhance relations with the country.[185]

Apart from the above stated successes at the bilateral level, the EU managed to achieve some success at the multilateral level too. New institutions, such as the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly, the Civil Society Forum, the Business Forum, and the Assembly of local and regional authorities, and their regular meetings indicate a positive influence of the Eastern Partnership at the multilateral level. In terms of people to people contact, the EU introduced various initiatives that promoted students exchange programmes, youth programmes, as well as school cooperation between the EU and Eastern Partnership countries.[186]

There have been several criticisms of the Eastern Partnership Initiative. One of the most important criticisms is the lack of membership offer. The EU has a more technical approach towards its partners with emphasis on association agreements and economic reforms. Countries like Georgia and Moldova, which expressed their desire for deeper ties were not given enough incentives to undertake costly reforms. In a Wikileaks cable dated 1 December 2008, both EU members and the eastern partners raised concerns about the Eastern Partnership. Ukraine criticised the offer of Association Agreements in the absence of membership, (which would also have provided access to structural funds related to membership), an offer that was otherwise extended to the Balkans with long-term political commitment and resources. "A Nordic diplomat working for the EU conceded privately that an Association Agreement without accession as the end goal would be a dubious incentive for the Eastern neighbouring countries to undertake the tough reforms required and make the effort to absorb the "*acquis*"". The Eastern Partnership was a "domestic political football for Moldova, who's President (keen to sort

[185] Council of European Union (2016),*Council conclusions on Belarus*, Press release 61/16, Brussels, 15 February 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 11 June 2017, URL: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/02/15-fac-belarus-conclusions/.
[186] Wiśniewski, Paweł Dariusz (2013), "The Eastern Partnership- Its High Time to Start a 'Real Partnership'", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Moscow Center*, November 2013, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 February 2017, URL: http://carnegieendowment.org/files/CP_Wisniewski_Eng_web.pdf.

a deal in future with Moscow on Transnistria) was wary of embracing the Eastern Partnership, even while the Prime Minister supported the initiative".[187]

The Eastern Partnership has been criticised for its one-size-fits-all approach. The requirements of different countries may vary depending on their geographical size and demography. Ukraine is demographically the largest country in the region compared to other five partners. This difference is also visible in EU's exports to the Eastern Partnership region, where Ukraine receives almost half of the all the EU exports to the region. Promoting democratic governance in the partner countries is one of the major goals of the Initiative. However, the progress varies with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine being pro-European and pursuing reforms whereas Azerbaijan and Belarus remain distant from the EU with authoritarian regime.[188]

As argued by MarcinŁapczyński,the Eastern Partnership initiative was an overlapping policy to the already existing European Neighbourhood Policy and that there was duplicity in the already existing mechanisms such as trade agreements, assistance for civil society or energy deals. The Eastern Partnership was more of a power struggle between "Old Europe and New Europe" and was viewed as Polish answer to the Sarkozy led Union for Mediterranean towards Southern neighbourhood. Bulgaria and Romania also criticised the Eastern Partnership on the pretext that it would undermine their efforts in the Black Sea Synergy.[189]

Rosa Balfour pointed out that the Eastern Partnership provided a path of integration and association for countries aspiring to accede to the EU (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova), though without extending any concessions on eventual membership, and secondly to try and engage countries most impermeable to EU influence (Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan). There has been an emphasis on long term framework developed through the ENP to step up EU's engagement with Eastern Europe. However, the initiative has been criticized as

[187]Wikileaks (2008), "EU's Eastern Partnership Hopes to Recognise "European Aspirations" without Promising Membership", Canonical ID: 08BRUSSELS1808_a, 1 December 2008, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 May 2017, URL: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08BRUSSELS1808_a.html.

[188] Park, Jeanne(2014), "The European Union's Eastern Partnership" *Council on Foreign Relations,* [Online: Web] Accessed on 5 October 2016, URL:http://www.cfr.org/europe/european-unions-eastern-partnership/p32577.

[189]Łapczyński, Marcin (2009), "The European Union's Eastern Partnership: Chances and Perspectives", Caucasian Review of International Affairs,p.143-155.

"it offers too little to the frontrunners and too much to the laggards". Incentives like Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, visa liberalisation, accession gave an option to the countries to pick and offer solely according to their interest in a certain area. For example, EU is soft towards Azerbaijan, as it is an energy supplier, vis-a-vis Belarus where EU is not involved in much trade. Also, the EU should involve itself into political issues concerning these six countries and address the security related problems by creating environments conducive to managing security challenges and focus on economic development and governance reform. The EU's unwillingness to step in Russia's zone of influence, and the absence of links between Eastern Partnership and security and foreign policy issues, has remained a fundamental obstacle for the EU to address the political tensions which hinder the development of the region.[190]

2.7 Conclusion

One of the main challenges facing the Eastern Partnershipinitiative has been the confrontation with Russia which, since its inception, has been sceptical towards the European Union. The subsequent chapters would elaborate on EU-Russia relationship. Another challenge has been the prospect of membership for the eastern partner countries. The EU's stance towards the neighbours changed with the change in its development policy, with the Communications using the language like "everything but institutions", "integration without membership", "less than integration, but more than cooperation" etc. Thus Eastern Partnership was a result of the EU expanding its regulation limits without extending the institutional boundaries.[191] The Member States should try to strengthen the Eastern Partnership through collective action, both in strategic and operational terms.[192] The Partnership has also been facing challenges to bring about reforms in the region. Belarus and Azerbaijan never fully participated in the reform process of the Initiative because of the authoritarian governments. Armenia was supposed to sign the Association Agreement in 2013 but opted out of it in favour of Russia-led Eurasian Union. Of the

[190] Balfour, Rosa (2011), "Debating the Eastern Partnership: Perspectives from the European Union", *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung,* IPG 3: p 29-40.
[191]Kasčiūnas, L and D. Šukytė (2013), "The future of the EU's Eastern Partnership – challenges and opportunities for Lithuania's foreign policy", *Eastern Europe Studies Centre,* 3(48), p.1-7.
[192]Blockmans,S (2014), "Seven Challenges to the Eastern Partnership", *CEPS,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 January 2017, URL: https://www.ceps.eu/blog-posts/seven-challenges-eastern-partnership.

remaining three countries, Ukraine is undergoing a civil war since November 2013 leading to slow pace of reforms whereas Georgia and Moldova are going through stagnation. As a result the whole purpose of launching the Eastern Partnership is being questioned.

The Eastern Partnership was proposed by Poland and Sweden which should promote and implement the Initiative and should advocate the EU policies toward the eastern neighbours within the EU. It is a political and economic instrument that seeks to promote ties between the European Union and its neighbours to the East and in no way is directed against Russia. In a Wikileaks cable dated 28 November 2008, Johan Frisell, the then deputy of Swedish MFA's Eastern Europe desk, pointed out that "the Eastern Partnership was not a security policy instrument per se, although its "effects could have benefits for security in the long term" adding that "profound EU integration is every bit as important as Article 5". Moscow is "agnostic" on European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), in part because it has seriously underestimated the impact of soft power. To the extent that the Eastern Partnership's related security cooperation remains "under the Russian radar," it will be successful. The joint-exercises and staff-to-staff talks envisioned would be "on par" with what the EU offered to Russia prior to the Georgia conflict".[193]

[193]Wikileaks (2008), "Sweden on the EU Eastern Partnership and Nordstream", Canonical ID: 08STOCKHOLM792_a, 28 November 2008, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 May 2017, URL: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/08STOCKHOLM792_a.html.

Chapter 3

The Eastern Partnership and Democracy Promotion

In the post-Cold War period the western European countries took over the task of promoting democracy by bringing about a shift in their foreign policy priorities. Post Maastricht Treaty,the EU established itself as a dominant actor in the realm of democracy promotion with provisions of political conditionality, funding democracy related initiatives and dialogues, especially to its neighbours and developing countries. The aim was not only to propagate values but also assist and strengthen reforms in these countries. Hence the focus of this chapter would be to deal with the EU's democracy promotion policies in the Eastern European and South Caucasus region which encompasses six countries including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia and, Ukraine.

To understand the democracy promotion aspect of the Eastern Partnership, the chapter is divided into various sections. The chapter begins with an analysis of the concept of democracy promotion and normative power of Europe. It analyses how this is used as a tool to bring about reforms in the neighbourhood, along with various other instruments that have been adopted by the Union to promote democracy, and how far has the EU been successful in implementing these among the partner countries. The following section would elaborate on the role of civil society in promoting values of democratic reforms and market economy in the region and further discuss its contribution to the objectives of Eastern Partnership. It also analyse different perspectives of the EU and partner country with regard to the changes brought through this initiative. The chapter would further try to answer questions like what has been the impact of this Eastern Partnership initiative on the six countries in transforming them into stable democratic societies with functioning economy.

3.1 EU as a Normative Power

The past two decades have seen rapid and radical transformations of global economy, society, environment, conflict, and politics. Three events in particular dominated this period and led to global transformation – the 1989 collapse of communism, the 9/11

terrorist attacks, and the 2008 global financial crisis. Various scholars came up with different definitions and terms regarding the role played by the EU in world politics, as a global player. F. Duchêne coined the term civilian power in the 1970s to advocate Europe as a distinct international actor and emphasised on democratic control and soft power over force and hard power.HannsMaull on the other hand argued that Europe is not a civilian power because it has not power, but a 'force'.[1] Headley Bull argued that "Europe is not an actor in international affairs, and does not seem like to become one". Ian Manners elaborated on the concept of normative and civilian power and refuted this claim of Bull, which formed the basis of his discussion on EU's role as a promoter of norms. The concept of normative power is conceived in its ideal or purest form, but in practical terms it is often used together with material incentives and/or physical force. The European Union has always played a distinctive role in global politics where it has promoted values of democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedom.[2]The normative power is incorporated in EU's external relations with regard to the world and also the internal policies including enlargement, trade and development policies.[3] The Union is often referred to as a civilian or a normative power because of the way it approaches the foreign and security policies. As Romano Prodi said "We must aim to become a global civil power at the service of sustainable global development. After all, only by ensuring sustainable global development can Europe guarantee its own strategic security".[4]

Manners asserts that the notion of normative power Europe is located in a discussion of the 'power over opinion' … and the desire to move beyond the debate over state-like features through and understanding of the EU's identity. He identified five core norms comprising *acquiscommunitaire*and *acquispolitique.* The first is centrality of peace found in the Schuman Declaration, the preambles to Economic and Steel treaty (1951) and TEC

[1]Maull, H (2005), "Europe and the New Balance of Global Order", *International Affairs,* 81(4): 775-799, p.779.
[2]Manners (2002), "Normative Power Europe- A Contradiction in Terms?",*Journal of Common Market Studies,* 40(2):235-258.
[3]Manners (2009), "The Concept of Normative Power in World Politics", *Danish Institute for International Studies,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 3 February 2017, URL: http://pure.diis.dk/ws/files/68745/B09_maj_Concept_Normative_Power_World_Politics.pdf.
[4]Prodi, R (2000), "2000-2005: Shaping the New Europe- Presentation to the European Parliament by President Romano Prodi", *European Commission,* Strasbourg, 15 February 2000, p.7.

of 1957. The second is the idea of liberty found in the preamble of TEC and TEU of 1991 and Article 6 of TEU which forms the basis of four foundational principles of the Union. The third, fourth and fifth norms are democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and, fundamental freedoms, all of which are the founding principles of TEU and are stated in the preambles of TEU, development and cooperation policy of the Community (TEC Article 177), the common foreign and security policy (TEC Article 11) and the membership criteria adopted by Copenhagen European Council of 1993.[5]

Normative power is an important aspect of Europe and is directly related to promoting democratisation in the neighbourhood and beyond. As Ian Manners puts it, "the essence of EU's normative power resides in what the EU is instead of what the EU says or does".[6]

3.2 EU and Democracy Promotion

Democracy promotion was broadly defined as a process by which an external actor intervened in a target state with an objective to improve basic conditions, assist democratic institutions and create a favourable environment (either peacefully or by force) for transition to democracy. According to Dahl,

> Democracy helps prevent rule by cruel and vicious autocrats, guarantees citizens a set of fundamental rights, ensures a broader range of personal freedoms, helps people protect their own fundamental interests, provides the maximum opportunity for self-determination—the freedom to live under laws of one's own choosing —provides the maximum opportunity for the exercise of moral responsibility, encourages human development, fosters a relatively high degree of political equality, promotes peace—as modern representative democracies do not fight one another—and generates prosperity.[7]

International organisations and governments around the world have come up with various strategies promoting transition to democracy which included diplomacy, dialogue, foreign aid, trade policy and military intervention. These strategies could be promoted

[5]Manners (2002), "Normative Power Europe- A Contradiction in Terms?",*Journal of Common Market Studies,* 40(2):235-58.
[6]Manners (2002), "Normative Power Europe- A Contradiction in Terms?", *Journal of Common Market Studies,* 40(2): p.239
[7]McFaul, Michael (2004), "Democracy Promotion as a World Value", *The Washington Quarterly,* 28(1):p. 148-149.

through two approaches, i) top-down approach i.e. through state and government, and ii) bottom-up approach i.e. through civil society and individuals. Diane Ethier has put forward three strategies of democracy promotion i.e. control, conditionality and incentives. *Control* implied that international actors would impose democracy on a country unilaterally (or by force), by occupying it politically and militarily. Examples include that of West Germany or former British colonies, example India. *Conditionality* on the other hand implied that a sovereign country or a state would be required to install democracy in order to gain (mostly aid) from foreign countries. This strategy was based on more of a carrot and sticks policy where a country was rewarded for adopting democracy and faced sanctions if it failed to comply with the demands of an external actor. The countries of Eastern Europe were a perfect example for they adopted democratic reforms, a requirement for accession to the European Union. *Incentives* referred to the advantages, such as financial aid, extended to countries in order to encourage them to implement democratic reforms, for example countries belonging to Central Eastern Europe.[8] The values of democracy, good governance, and respect for human rights are the basis of peace and human development. Not many countries in the EU neighbourhood follows the norms of democracy and good governance, leading to concerns like migration, refugees, terrorism and unstable or failed states. Therefore to promote these values in the near abroad was more a matter of self-interest for EU than moral reasons.

EU's democracy promotion has been a complex policy. LavenexandSchimmelfennig proposed three models of democracy promotion, of which two reflected the main approaches to external democracy promotion and the third demonstrated EU as a framework of regional integration. The first was the linkage model where democracy promotion takes place by supporting civil society and political opposition groups in target countries. The second model was leverage where political conditionality played an important role in bringing about democratic reforms. The third model was that of governance where democracy was promoted through policy-specific and functional cooperation. These models were further distinguished on four grounds:

[8] Ethier, Diane (2003), "Is Democracy Promotion Effective? Comparing Conditionality and Incentives", *Democratisation,* 10 (1): 99-120.

i) The target system of democracy promotion wheredemocracy promotion can be targeted at the polity to include the electoral regime, the division of powers between state organs, and respect for individual rights and civil liberties. It may operate at the level of society and target the socio-economic preconditions for democratization, including economic growth, education, the spread of liberal values, and the organization of civil society and the public sphere. Finally, democracy promotion may also target sectors of the policy-specific governance regimes – such as environmental policy, market regulation, welfare regimes, or internal security.

ii) The envisaged outcome of a successful democracy promotion thatwould differ depending on the target. If it is targeted at the polity level, the outcome should be democratic institutions guaranteeing vertical (electoral) and horizontal accountability as well as the rule of law. When the target is society, the envisaged result is a democratic, 'civic' culture and meso-level institutions such as civic associations, parties, and a democratic public sphere. In the case of sectoral democracy promotion, the goal should be 'democratic governance', i.e. procedural principles of democratically legitimate political-administrative behaviour, including sectoral transparency, accountability, and societal participation.

iii) Channels of democracy promotion where governments, societal actors, or administrations/agencies are the actors addressed by the international democracy promotion.This may include intergovernmental, transnational, and trans-governmental channel of democracy promotion and a top-down, a bottom-up, or a horizontal direction of external democracy promotion.

iv) Instruments of democracy promotion where the most basic distinction between the instruments or mechanisms of international democracy promotion is'conditionality vs. socialization'. Conditionality implies a bargaining process in which an international actor uses selective incentives in order to change the behaviour of actors in the target country. Socialization on the other hand is a learning process in which an international actor teaches domestic actors democratic norms and practices in order to persuade them of their

> superiority. Democratic change then results from a change in normative and causal beliefs.[9]

Gillespie and Youngs have classified EU's democracy promotion efforts into three large thematic groups: support for civil society; economic liberalisation; and sponsorship of the good governance agenda. Therefore, the actual content of the EU's democracy promotion policies is rather wide, and not limited merely to supporting the building blocks of democracy in an institutional sense i.e. through elections, respect for civil and human rights, strong civil society, effective public administration, judiciaries, etc.[10]

Irene Hahn has discussed four approaches concerning EU's role in promoting democracy in, and its relations with post-Socialist Europe. The approaches include i) Integration – where through democracy promotion a country can gain eventual membership of the EU. This approach was followed in case of Central and Eastern Europe; ii) Stabilisation – in order to stabilise a region effective government should be promoted rather than strict democratic principles. This has resulted in smooth transition in South Eastern Europe along with stable institutions; iii) Association – this too is similar to the accession model though with a missing membership perspective. This approach relates to the ENP where the partner countries are offered everything but institutions. With the missing incentive of membership, conditionality through Association does not seem lucrative to the ENP partner countries;and iv) Building a partnership – this model was related mostly with Russia which declined to be part of the ENP demanding special relationship with the EU. Thus, in 2004 negotiations were initiated on four Common Spaces and focus shifted from conditionality and democracy to good governance.[11]

Hence these are some of the different approaches vis-a-vis democracy promotion as stated by some scholars. The next section would cover the concept with EU's external policy.

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[9]Lavenex and Schimmelfennig (2011), "EU Democracy Promotion in the Neighbourhood: From Leverage to Governance?",*Democratization*, 18(4): 885-909.

[10] Gillespie and Youngs (2002), "Themes in European Democracy Promotion", *Democratization*, 9(1): p.12.

[11] Hahn, Irene (2011), "Democratising Power Europe? EU Democracy Promotion Policies in Post-Socialist Europe", *Paper prepared for the 6th ECPR General Conference held at the University of Iceland, 24-27 August 2011.*

3.3 Democracy Promotion in EU External Policy

The European Union was founded on the values of peace, democracy, rule of law, human dignity, principles of liberty, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and sustainable development and has been committed to promote democracy in other parts of the world for more than two decades. Democracy promotion and human rights have been integrated within the Union's external policy and have been mention in different EU institutions. Before the Maastricht Treaty, EU's development policy was confined to financial aid and preferential trade with little significance to democracy. The Treaty on European Union (1992) states that EU is "founded on indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity; it is based on the principles of democracy and rule of law".[12]In the Maastricht Treaty Article 130u, the EU declared that developing and consolidating democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms would be the goal of development cooperation.[13]Article 6 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) reasserted that the "European Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law, principles that are common to the Member States", and further emphasised in Article 7 "a mechanism to sanction serious and persistent breaches of human rights by the EU Member States".[14]It was the Cotonou Agreement (2000) which finally included "essential elements regarding human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, and fundamental element regarding good governance" in Article 9 of the Agreement.[15]

The EU has defined its concept of democracy in its 2006 Programming Guide for Strategy Papers: Democracy and Human Rights. It defines it as:

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[12] European Commission (2008), *Handbook for European Union Election Observation*, Brussels: European Commission.

[13]Council of European Communities (1992), *Treaty on European Union*, Maastricht, 7 February 1992.

[14] European Commission (2001), European Union, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, The European Union's Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratization in Third Countries*, COM(2001) 252 final*:* Brussels, p.3.

[15] European Commission (2000), "Article 9 – The Cotonou Agreement", 23 June 2000, p.23, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 June 2017, URL: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/03_01/pdf/mn3012634_en.pdf.

> [...]the understanding of democracy should be that of a system of political governance whose decision-making power is subject to the controlling influence of citizens who are considered political equals. [...] It is a question of the degree to which citizens exercise control over political decision-making and are treated as equals. These values of democracy are realized through political institutions and practices. There is no universal model of democracy. Democratisation is not a linear process that moves from an authoritarian to a democratic regime. It is a multi- faceted, multi-disciplinary process that moves back and forth, where some institutions are more developed than others. A functioning democracy therefore requires many interdependent elements and processes that are based on a culture of citizen participation in public affairs.[16]

The *Communication on the EU's Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratization in Third Countries (2001)* has identified three areas where the Commission can act effectively: (i) by promoting coherent and consistent policies in support of human rights and democratisation, especially through development and other official assistance, (ii) through giving more importance to human rights and democratization in EU's relations with the third countries and developing a more proactive approach by using opportunities offered by political dialogue, trade and external assistance; and (iii) by adopting a more strategic approach to European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).[17]Thus democracy promotion and respect for human rights, along with the right to participate in the formation of governments through free and fair elections were the determining factors in building sustainable human development, preventing conflicts, and maintain lasting peace. It was one of the priorities of EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) along with developing and consolidating human rights, democratic institutions, and rule of law, and promoting international cooperation.[18]The Community activities were given legal basis under the two Regulations 975/99 and 976/99, of 29 April 1999, which led to the development and consolidation of democracy, the rule of

[16]European Commission (2006), "Programming Guide for Strategy Papers: Democracy and Human Rights", p.6, [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 June 2017, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/programming-guide-strategy-papers-democracy-human-rights-200607_en_2.pdf

[17] European Commission (2001), European Union, *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament: The European Union's Role in Promoting Human Rights and Democratization in Third Countries*, COM (2001) 252 final: Brussels, p.5.

[18]Council of European Communities (1992), *Treaty on European Union*, Maastricht, 7 February 1992.

law, and respect for human rights.[19]The Commission's 2001 Communication put forward a strategic approach in external relations to re-focus on human rights and democracy promotion strategies. The 2003 European Security Strategy also mentioned that in today's globalised and interdependent world "spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening the international order".[20]

Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty states that:

> The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.[21]

Supporting democracy is one of the European Union's priorities. It is a system of governance that encompasses and fully realises human rights, development and stability. It has become one of the most successful examples of democratization globally by making accession into the Union conditional based on democratic principles. In 2009, the Council adopted conclusions on *Democracy Support in the EU's External Relations*, and outlined that the main aim was "to improve the coherence and the effectiveness of EU democracy support, not to introduce new conditionality for EU development aid".[22] The EU has assisted and strengthened the efforts of the Governments, Parliaments and other state institutions, political actors, civil society organisations and other actors, contributing

[19]European Commission (2000), European Union, European Commission,*Communication from the Commission on EU Election Assistance and Observation,* COM 2000 191 final: Brussels.
[20]European Council (2003), *A Secure Europe in a Better World, European Security Strategy,* Brussels, 12 December 2003.
[21]Lisbon Treaty (2007), "Article 21- Chapter 1 General Provisions on the Union's External Action", *European Union,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 May 2017, URL: http://www.lisbon-treaty.org/wcm/the-lisbon-treaty/treaty-on-european-union-and-comments/title-5-general-provisions-on-the-unions-external-action-and-specific-provisions/chapter-1-general-provisions-on-the-unions-external-action/101-article-21.html.
[22]Council of the European Union (2009), "Council Conclusions on Democracy Support in the EU's External Relations", 2974th External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 17 November 2009.

to sustainable development, respect for human rights, democratic governance, security, poverty reduction and gender equality. It has adopted various instruments including dialogues, policies, financial instruments, and election observation missions to support democracy. Some of the norms, values and principles that formed the basis of the EU Agenda for Action on Democracy Support in EU External Relationsincluded:

- Human rights and democracy are inextricably connected. Only in a democracy can individuals fully realize their human rights.
- Progress in the protection of human rights, good governance and democratization is fundamental for poverty reduction and sustainable development.
- Democracy ensures the rights of all, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, of indigenous peoples and other vulnerable groups as everyone is entitled to enjoyment of all human rights without discrimination as to race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth or other status.
- Democracy, democratic governance, development and respect for all human rights – civil, cultural, economic, political and social – are interdependent and mutually reinforcing.
- The EU democracy support should include a special focus on the role of elected representatives and political parties and institutions, independent media and civil society. It should take into account the full electoral cycle and not focus on ad hoc electoral support only.
- A holistic approach on governance entails mainstreaming of human rights and fundamental freedoms, democratic governance and rule of law to all policy sectors, i.e. by implementing the EU guidelines for human rights dialogues, and by including human rights, democracy and the rule of law in discussions with third countries, in programming discussions and in country strategy papers.[23]

The European Union has a practise of supporting countries undergoing transition and reforms. The *Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity*(2011) was an approach

[23]Council of the European Union (2009), "Council Conclusions on Democracy Support in the EU's External Relations", 2974th External Relations Council Meeting, Brussels, 17 November 2009.

adopted to support the Southern neighbours committed to democratic reforms, human rights, social justice and good governance. It was an incentive-based approach where the EU's support would depend on how fast a country moves with reforms. The European Commission came up with a joint Communication in 2011 in this regard as a response to the events in southern neighbourhood. The Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity is built on three elements: "(i) democratic transformation and institution building, with a particular focus on fundamental freedoms, constitutional reforms, reform of the judiciary and the fight against corruption, (ii) a stronger partnership with the people, with specific emphasis on support to civil society and on enhanced opportunities for exchanges and people to people contact with a particular focus on the young, and (iii) sustainable and inclusive growth and economic development especially support to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), vocational and educational training, improving health and education systems and development of poorer regions".[24]

The Commission in its 2011 Agenda for Change highlighted that in order to support governance among partners, the EU should focus on human rights, democracy, and rule of law.[25] It also proposed a Communication- *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood*- in 2011 indicating the need for a new approach "to strengthen the partnership between the EU and the countries and societies of the neighbourhood: to build and consolidate healthy and deep democracies, pursue sustainable economic growth and manage cross-border links". Reforms would also include commitment towards, free and fair elections, freedom of association, expression and assembly along with free media, rule of law governed by an independent judiciary, fight against corruption, and law enforcement sector reforms.[26]

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[24] European Commission (2011), European Union, *Joint Communication to the European Council, the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the South Mediterranean,* COM (2011) 200 final, Brussels.

[25]European Commission (2011), "Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change", *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions,*COM(2011) 637 final, Brussels, 13 October 2011.

[26]European Commission (2011), *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A review of European Neighbourhood Policy*, Joint Communication by the High Representative of The Union For Foreign Affairs And Security Policy and the European Commission, 25 May 2011, p.1.

The*European Endowment for Democracy* was established as an international non-profit organization in 2011 whenthe foreign ministers approved the *Declaration on the Establishment of a European Endowment for Democracy*, a political document which listed the elements of a mandate to create a private legal entity with an aim to encourage and promote democracy in the European neighbourhood. The Declaration was adopted under the Polish Presidency of the European Council. It was created in the aftermath of the Arab Spring and was based on the partnership between the EU institutions, the Commission, the Parliament and the Member States. The Commission allocated €6 million from the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) whereas Poland and Sweden agreed on €5 million each with several other countries making small contributions.Assistance would be extended to countries that adhered to the democratic values, respect human rights and believe in the principle of non-violence. It was established with an aim to extend democratic support to the countries in EU's immediate neighbourhood and stands to promote the European values of democracy and freedom in the spirit of solidarity and partnership. The objective was to foster deep and sustainable democracy in countries undergoing political transition, though with exclusive focus on European Neighbourhood Policy.[27]

3.3.1 European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights

European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights(EIDHR) was an independent EU financial tool which was launched in 2006. Its objective was to support democracy, rule of law along with promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms globally intended to balance EU assistance through bilateral development cooperation.It was a key external instrument that promoted and supported democracy and human rights in non- EU countries. Its budget for the period 2014-2020 is €1,332,752,000whichwould be mainly channeled through civil society organisations, whose projects would be selected following calls for proposals. The EIDHR is complementary to the other EU external assistance instruments. The key objectives included, supporting, developing and consolidating democracy in third countries through participatory and representative

[27] European Union (2011), Declaration on the establishment of a European Endowment for Democracy, *Council of European Union*, 18764/11, Brussels, 20 December 2011.

democracy, and by improving the reliability of electoral processes, particularly by means of EU Electoral Observation Missions; enhancing respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; strengthening the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democratic reforms; supporting and strengthening the international and regional framework for the protection of human rights in accordance with the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, justice, rule of law and democracy.[28] The 2009 Annual Report elaborated on the working of EIDHR with, for, and through civil society and that the EIDHR provided an effective force to the civil society for supporting reforms and dialogues. EIDHR's strong point was that it did not depend on host government's consent and functioned independently of the public authorities and was thus able to concentrate on issues and cooperate directly with local civil society organisations. It covers a wide range of priorities including political participation and conciliation of interests groups, promoting governance, fight against racism, xenophobia and discrimination, domestic violence, combat against death penalty, torture etc. Simultaneously it is also involved in funding the EU election observation missions.[29]

The EIDHR for the period 2014-2020 has been attuned to the new challenges and is more strategic in its focus. Importance has been given to countries where people are being deprived of their human rights and fundamental freedoms. Its objectives have been outlined in the Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy adopted by the Council on 25 June 2012 and its new Action Plan for 2015-2019. More emphasis has been laid on the development of civil societies and their role in supporting human rights and democracy. Also the economic and social rights of the vulnerable groups (national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities etc.) have been highlighted.[30]

3.3.2 EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy

[28] European Union, European Instrument for Human Rights, *European Commission,* [Online: Web] Accessed on 28 January 2017, URL: http://www.eidhr.eu/whatis-eidhr.
[29]European External Action Service (2010), "Human Rights and Democracy in the World", *Report on EU Action,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2009_human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.
[30] European Union, European Instrument for Human Rights, *European Commission,* [Online: Web] Accessed on 28 January 2017, URL: http://www.eidhr.eu/whatis-eidhr.

The Joint Communication of the European Commission and EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy *'Human Rights and Democracy at the heart of EU external action – Towards a more effective approach'* (12 December 2011)was a framework which contributed towards the development of EU human rights strategy and has promoted its goals through external actions.The Council of European Union came up with a *Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy* on 25 June 2012. It was one of the latest commitments of the European Union towards protecting and promoting human rights and democracy. "Human rights are universally applicable legal norms and democracy is a universal aspiration".[31]The EU views human rights to be universal and indivisible and defends them both within and beyond its borders. It has strengthened its efforts and is committed to promotion and protection of human rights, liberty and democracy. There were seven major areas covered in this Action Plan: 1) Human Rights throughout EU policy – EU has been founded on the principles of human rights, democracy and the rule of law with an objective to promote peace and stability. These principles form the basis of all the internal and external policies of the Union. Sustainable peace, development and prosperity can only be sustained through democracy, rule of law, and human rights. The EU is reinforcing its efforts to make sure that human rights are being realised for all; 2) Promoting the universality of human rights – the EU has reiterated its commitment towards promotion and protection of human rights whether civil and political, economic, social and cultural, implement provisions of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), international human rights treaties, conventions, and regional instruments on human rights; 3) Pursuing coherent objectives – Article 21 of Treaty on European Union reaffirms these three core principles. The EU tries to prevent violation of human rights throughout the world, ensuring access to justice for victims, strengthens its capability and mechanisms for early warning and prevention of crises, and work with partner countries to support democracy and development; 4) Human rights in all EU external policies – the EU puts together human rights promotion in external policies including trade, investment, technology, energy, corporate social responsibility and development policy, security and justice, etc; 5) Implementing EU priorities on

[31] European Union (2012), "The EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy Promotion", *Council of European Union,* 11855/12, Luxembourg, 25 June 2012.

human rights – democracy cannot exist without right to freedom of expression, opinion, assembly and association. The EU strengthens its efforts to ensure universal and non-discriminatory access to basic services, with a particular focus on poor and vulnerable groups, and encourages and contributes to the implementation of UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights; 6) Working with bilateral partners – the EU works with partner countries to identify areas where EU's geographic funding instruments are used to support projects which strengthens human rights, including support for human rights education and training. However, when faced with violations of human rights it uses full range of instruments at its disposal, including sanctions or condemnation; 7) Working through multilateral institutions – through which the EU can monitor impartial implementation of human rights norms and call all States to account.[32] The purpose of this 2012 Action Plan was to execute the EU Strategic Framework with sufficient flexibility in order to respond to new challenges, build upon the existing EU policies and guidelines on human rights and democracy, and financial instruments, particularly the EIDHR. The action plan dealt with the period up till 31 December 2014.

3.4 European Union and Human Rights

Human rights and democracy are two important aspects of the EU's relations with countries within and beyond its borders. Peace and stability, development, and prosperity cannot exist without democratic institutions and respect for human rights. The Council of Europe, founded in 1949, was formed to protect human rights, parliamentary democracy and rule of law, develop continent-wide agreements to standardise member countries' social and legal practices, and promote awareness of a European identity based on shared values and cutting across different cultures.[33] The two principles, of human rights and democracy, were further integrated within the Treaty on European Union in 1993 declaring them to be the main objectives of the Common Foreign and Security Policy

[32]Council of the European Union (2012), *EU Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy*, 11855/12, Luxembourg, 25 June 2012.

[33]European Commission (2007), "Furthering Human Rights and Democracy across the Globe",*European Union*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 January 2017, URL: http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/ardb/evt/1_avrupa_birligi/1_6_raporlar/1_3_diger/commision_report_furthering_human_rights_and_democracy_across_the_globe.pdf.

(CFSP).[34] They were further enshrined in the Article 21 of the Lisbon Treaty which stipulated that the Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles of democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.[35]

Over the years, EU has adopted different documents on promotion and protection of human rights. In June 2012, the Strategic Framework for Human Rights and Democracy along with the first Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy was adopted. There are various financial instruments that support human rights and democracy including EIDHR and Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). With the budget of €1.249 billion for 2014-2020, the EIDHR's key objectives as discussed earlier,include:-to enhance respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms in countries and regions where they are most at risk, and to strengthen the role of civil society in promoting human rights and democracy.[36] On the other hand, IcSP is the EU's main instrument supporting security initiatives and peace-building activities in partner countries. It came into force in 2014, replacing the Instrument for Stability (IfS) and several earlier instruments. It has a budget of €2.4 billion for the period 2014-20 financial.[37]

As European Union is known for its commitment for promotion of human rights and democracy, it has published annual reports detailing its various approaches to achieve its aims and objectives and how it would put these to practice. The first report was published

[34]European Commission (2007), "Furthering Human Rights and Democracy across the Globe",*European Union*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 January 2017, URL: http://www.ab.gov.tr/files/ardb/evt/1_avrupa_birligi/1_6_raporlar/1_3_diger/commision_report_furthering_human_rights_and_democracy_across_the_globe.pdf.

[35]European External Action Service (2016), *Human Rights and Democracy*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 January 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/414/human-rights-democracy_en.

[36] European External Action Service (2016), *EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 January 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/4083/eu-action-plan-human-rights-and-democracy-2015-2019_en.

[37] European External Action Service (2016), *EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-2019*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 January 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/4083/eu-action-plan-human-rights-and-democracy-2015-2019_en.

in 1999, however, as the time frame of the present study is from 2009-2015, an analysis of the said timeline reports is presented in the following section.

3.4.1 EU Annual Reports on Human Rights and Democracy, 2009-2016

The focal point of these reports was on human rights and democracy within and beyond EU. It throws light on EU activities and discusses the difference made, if any. According to the July 2008 to December 2009 report, the EU extended support to other countries through democratic process endorsing recommendations based on dialogue and partnership. There were eight guidelines mentioned in this report that formed the backbone of EU human rights policy. These guidelines, although not legally binding, have been adopted by the Council of the EU, and strengthen the coherence and consistency of EU human rights policy. The guidelines included: 1) Abolition of death penalty (adopted in 1998,updated in 2008); 2) To stop torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment (adopted in 2001, updated on 2008); 3) Establish Human Rights dialogues (adopted in 2001, updated in 2009); 4) Saving Children from armed conflict (CAAC) (adopted in 2003, updated in 2008); 5) Protecting Human Rights Defenders (adopted in 2004, updated in 2008); 6) Promotion and Protection of the Rights of the Child (adopted in 2007); 7) Combating violence against women and girls and all forms of discrimination against them (adopted in 2008); 8) Promoting compliance with International Humanitarian Law (adopted in 2005, updated in 2009).

The Council on 17 November 2009 adopted conclusions on Democracy Support in the EU's External Relations, setting out an 'Agenda for Action'thus constituting the first strategic, concrete orientation for a broader and more coherent democracy support policy.Elections are an example of human rights in practice. During the review period the EU extended an assistance of €45 million to electoral projects so as to promote political stabilisation and national reconciliation and also reinforce democratic institutions. EIDHR provided over €235 million for human rights and democracy in order to fund 900 projects in around 100 countries. Of this around €101.7 million was channelled to local initiatives from civil society organisations in 77 countries to bring about reforms, dialogue and political participation in these countries. EU's strategy therefore is to propagate its universal values to those parts of the world that lack freedom, equality,

democracy, rule of law, and human rights. Moreover, it was believed that under the Lisbon treaty, which came into force in December 2009, the effectiveness, coherence and transparency of EU human rights policy would further increase. Also under the Union's initiative of the ENP, many countries have Action Plans in force with the EU which aimed towards bringing about reforms, democratisation, enhancing the role of civil society etc. During the period mentioned, numerous human rights dialogues and subcommittees were held with Southern as well as Eastern partners. One of the achievements was an increase in assistance under the ENPI from € 1.67 billion in 2007 to € 1.71 billion in 2008.[38] Also the Eastern Partnership, which was an extension of the ENP, was launched in May 2009 with an aim to promote good governance, democracy, respect for human rights and other reforms. Regular dialogues on human rights took place with three countries including Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

The year 2010 was an important one, for the EU began to function and work fully under the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty and defined the principles of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) as:

> The Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law.[39]

The importance of these remarks echoed in the High Representative Ashton's address to the European Parliament on 16 June 2010 where broad outlines were set for approach towards human rights and towards a consultation process on the review of EU policy. Catherine Ashton delivered clear messages on human rights, democracy and rule of law: "These will run like a silver thread through everything we do externally… In the EU, we

[38]European External Action Service (2010), "Human Rights and Democracy in the World", *Report on EU Action,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2009_human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.

[39] European Union (2011), "EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World- 2010", *European External Action Service,* p.6, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2010_human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.

have many tools to help make the world a better place. We need to mobilise and connect them better".[40]

A follow up of Council conclusions welcoming the progress report of 2009 Agenda for Action was adopted in December 2010. The EU is one of the leading global actors to support elections and this approach was first mentioned in the 2000 Commission's Communication on Election Assistance and Observation. This support continued through international and regional treaties during the period under review. The EU continued deploying election observation missions in countries beyond its borders in order to promote democracy and human rights along with universal values and reforms in its neighbourhood. In 2010 the six Eastern Partnership countries continued to support initiatives related to rule of law, democracy, good governance and human rights.[41]

In the year 2011 the EEAS completed one year of service and the vision was reflected in the Joint Communication from the High Representative and the European Commission of 12 December, titled "*Human Rights and Democracy at the Heart of EU External Action - Towards a more Effective Approach*".[42] The year was full of challenges for the EU in terms of human rights violations and democracy promotion. The rise of Arab Spring in the European neighbourhood brought to the fore many existing loopholes that led to a new wave of transition. This demonstrated the significance of social network and internet in bringing about reforms. In March 2011, as discussed above, the Commission came up with a Communication on "*A Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean*" as a response to the events in the Southern neighbourhood. Another Communication, "*A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood*" was launched on 25 May 2011based on mutual accountability and a shared commitment to the universal values. The EU's aim was to convey a clear message of unity and support to the people of the Southern Mediterranean and also to respond to EU Eastern Neighbours'

[40] European Union (2011), "EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World- 2010", *European External Action Service,* p.6, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2010_human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.
[41] European Union (2011), "EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World- 2010", *European External Action Service,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2010_human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.
[42]European External Action Service (2012), "Human Rights and Democracy in the World - Report on EU Action in 2011", *European Union,* p.7, [Online:Web] Accessed on 14 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2011_human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.

demands for closer political association and deeper economic integration. Also a new proposal for financial instrument was adopted by the Commission in December 2011, the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), which would replace the existing European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) in 2014. The EU has propagated the ideas of freedom of expression and access to internet and hence initiated a "No Disconnect Strategy" in December 2011 to build up instruments to assist civil society organisations or individual citizens to avoid arbitrary disruptions to access electronic communications technologies, including the internet. The year also witnessed an increase in religious intolerance and discrimination across the world. The Union carried on playing an important role in the UN human rights system in 2011. Further, the EU raised concerns regarding the human rights situation in Syria in the UNHRC and in the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly several times during 2011, and built an alliance of countries from all regions, including the Arab world. In Belarus too the EU succeeded in adopting the HRC resolution after the Presidential elections of 2010. Efforts were made to provide assistance to human rights defenders and civil society and also pressurise the government to release the political prisoners. At the Eastern Partnership Warsaw Summit (2011) the EU expressed apprehension at the weakening democracy and human rights situation in Belarus along with repression of media freedom and civil society.[43]

The year 2012 was a milestone for human rights in EU's external relations. The European Union adopted a Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy on 25 June illustrating the first ever set of principles and objectives to promote human rights across the world. It outlined the EU's main priorities, objectives and methods, to improve the efficiency and reliability of the EU's human rights policy over the next ten years. It also emphasisedthat the Member States, the European Parliament, the European Commission and the Council should work together to promote human rights. The Framework also laid importance on continuing dialogues with independent civil society actors, both inside and outside the EU. The same year EU also received a Nobel Peace Prize for its work towards maintaining peace, democracy, reconciliation and human rights in Europe. Another

[43]European External Action Service (2012), "Human Rights and Democracy in the World - Report on EU Action in 2011", *European Union,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 14 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2011_human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.

achievement of 2012 was that countries in the Southern neighbourhood held elections in accordance with the democratic standards. However they faced various obstacles like mass demonstrations, heavy - handed policing, rising unemployment, etc. The principle of "more for more", through which support was provided to partner countries involved in establishing deep and sustainable democracy, was also applied to the Eastern neighbourhood by creating the Eastern Partnership Integration and Cooperation programme in June 2012 for which financial support was extended to these countries.[44]

The EU held consultations and human rights dialogues with 30 partner countries and regional organizations in 2013. The Annual report covered EU's tasks and success during the year along with the progress attained on the implementation of the 97 specific tasks in the Action Plan. Defending human rights in today's time has become a major challenge, especially since the Arab Spring started in North Africa. This led to an increase in instability in the EU's neighbourhood with the most recent being in the Ukraine after it refused to sign the Association Agreement leading to 'maidan' protests. The Eastern Partnership Summit of November 2013 at Vilnius marked a significant progress in the Partnership.The EU, its Member States and partner countries restated their commitment to the principles of international law and to fundamental values. The launch of Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum was a good example to strengthen role in the ENP. The EU continued to extend support to civil society through a range of funding instruments. The EU brought up human rights issues during high level official visits from the EU and Azerbaijan. It also intensified its regular dialogue with CSOs so as to share their views in a secure and comprehensive format. In April 2013, Azerbaijan went through its second Universal Period Review under the United Nations Human Rights Council, where 162 recommendations were prepared, including from EU Member States.The EU spent €2 million on human rights and democracy related projects in the country. With Georgia, the association agreement was concluded in November 2013 whereas the sixth EU-Georgia Human Rights Dialogue was held in Brussels in June 2013. Belarus too remained a cause of concern with deterioration in human rights violations. The EU assistance to Belarus

[44]Council of the European Union (2013), "EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012 (Thematic Reports)", 9431/13, Brussels, 13 May 2013, [Online:Web] Accessed on 14 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2012_human-rights-annual_report_thematic_en_0.pdf.

was limited with support to civil society being raised since the start of 2011, with a total of €19 million for 2011-2013 (of which € 7.9 million in 2013).[45]

The EU's continued its commitment towards human rights promotion across the world in 2014. The EU's Strategic Framework and Action Plan on human rights (2012) remained the reference document for all the EU external policies intended towards improving the efficiency and stability of EU's human rights policy. The EU held formal discussions with 37 partner countries on human rights dialogues and consultations, including the first time ever with Myanmar/Burma in 2014. However, the human rights dialogue with Russia was suspended because of Crimea annexation, whereas dialogue with Azerbaijan was postponed. The EU continued its efforts to improve the impact and effectiveness of the dialoguesby establishing links between them and other policy instruments, developing followup mechanisms and covering individual cases in the discussions. Regular training sessions on human rights were organised by the EEAS. In an effort to ensure that human rights issues were an integral part of EU delegations' work, all delegations and CSDP missions and operations had designated human rights and/or gender focal points by the end of 2014. Efforts were reinforced to address issues of coherence and steadiness between the EU's internal and external human rights policies. Also the European Commission remained committed to incorporating human rights in its impact assessments for proposals in the field of EU external action for which specific guidelines were developed.[46]

The EU adopted a new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy in 2015 for a period of five year (2015-19). It was a continuation of the 2012 Strategic Framework and aimed to better address issues through focused actions and the systematic and coordinated use of all EU instruments. At multilateral level it continued to support universal promotion and protection of human rights particularly through the Third Committee of the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations Human Rights Council,

[45]Council of the European Union (2014), "EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2013", 11107/14, Brussels, 23 June 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2013_human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.
[46]European External Action Service (2015), "EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2014", *European Union*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2014-human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.

andUnited Nations (UN) specialised agencies such as the International Labour Organisation (ILO).The EU also supported the conventionality of human rights across the work of the UN more broadly, and promoted a human rights-based approach to the sustainable development goals, adopted through the 2030 Agenda in September 2015.[47]

3.4.1.1 Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015-19

The Council for European Union adopted an *Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy* for the period 2015-19, on 20 July 2015, with an aim to promote and protect human rights and democracy around the world and respond to the new challenges ahead. It was an based on and an improvement of the 2012-14 Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy, that brought "coherence and consistency in the actions of human rights and democracy, enhanced the effectiveness and successfully promoted action at the bilateral and multilateral level, and improved the mainstreaming of human rights across the EU's external action".[48] Today the world is facing multifaceted crises, violations and abuse of fundamental freedoms and human rights. This Action Plan was thus seen as a more focused approach of the EU to meet these challenges through systematic and coordinated tools available at its disposal. It is built upon the existing EU policies that support human rights and democracy in the external action, particularly EU guidelines, toolkits and other agreed positions, and the various external financing instruments, in particular the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. One of the focuses was on ways to promote dialogue and capacity building initiatives between regional human rights and democratic mechanism in cooperation with the United Nations.[49]Some of the objectives include, supporting the National Human Rights Institutions and strengthening their involvement at consultation level; supporting the integrity of electoral processes and the strengthening of Election Management Bodies to organise inclusive and transparent elections and promote the integrity of the electoral process; supporting the capacity of parliamentary institutions and assisting them in organising public debates

[47]Council of the European Union (2016), "EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2015 – Thematic Part", 10255/16, Brussels, 20 June 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 June 2017, URL: http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-10255-2016-INIT/en/pdf.
[48]Council of the European Union (2015*), Council Conclusions on the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015 – 2019,* European Union, Brussels, 20 July 2015.
[49]Council of the European Union (2015*), Council Conclusions on the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015 – 2019,* European Union, Brussels, 20 July 2015.

on key reform issues; strengthening cooperation with UN and other regional organisations on aspects of human rights and democracy; promoting partnership with civil society organisations and empowering them in defending the rights of women and girls. [50] The Action Plan would cover the period until 31 December 2019.

3.5 EU Election Observation

Elections are a necessary step towards the democratization process and also an important component for full enjoyment of human rights, as through elections people are able to put forth their political will along with their right to vote."The right to take part in the government directly or through representatives has been enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (Article 21.1) and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Article 25). The Article 21 of the UDHR forms the basic international criteria for the validation of observed election which requires the election to be free, fair, secret, held periodical and genuine".[51]A communication was initiated by the European Union in the year 2000 which introduced the Commission's role in Election Observation worldwide. High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Vice-President of the CommissionFederica Mogheriniin the third edition of the *Handbook for European Union Election Observation*stated that:

> The support to democracy worldwide is not just consistent with the European Union's fundamental principles: it is our clear interest, and a crucial tool for our foreign policy. Only a functioning democracy can address its citizen's needs, meet their demands, and fulfil their aspirations. Strong democratic institutions are vital to improve a country's resilience: they can help prevent the next crisis, stabilise a war-torn area or defuse tensions before they erupt into armed conflict.An effective democratic system needs regular, inclusive, transparent and credible elections. This is why the European Union's election observation missions and the election assistance programmes are a fundamental

[50]Council of the European Union (2015*), Council Conclusions on the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2015 – 2019,* European Union, Brussels, 20 July 2015.
[51]European Commission (2000), European Union, European Commission, *Communication from the Commission on EU Election Assistance and Observation,* COM 2000 191 final: Brussels, p.4.

part of our action to promote democracies, human rights and civil society participation worldwide.[52]

"Election observation is defined as the purposeful gathering of information regarding an electoral process, the making of informed judgments on the conduct of such a process and on the basis of the information collected, by persons who are not inherently authorized to intervene in the process".[53] "International election observation is based on the principles of full coverage, impartiality, transparency, and professionalism, and the ultimate objective is to become superfluous by entrenching democracy deep within each nation through development of national capacities".[54] Elections are one of the institutional instruments of democracy and form the central part of a democratic system. It is one of the important steps through which the European Union is promoting democracy, rule of law and human rights around the globe. Election Observation is a civilian activity which can take place in a post conflict situation, characterized by fragile institutional setting, and instability, and emphasises on the preventive mediation efforts that lead to dialogue as a part of electoral support, in the context of electoral violence and failed elections.[55] It is an important tool of the EU with an aim to promote democracy, human rights and rule of law globally and thus strengthen democratic institutions, prevent fraud and discourage violence.

The European Commission adopted a Communication on EU Election Assistance and Observation in 2000. Some of the main objectives were to strengthen respect for fundamental freedoms and human rights and hold elections based on democracy and rule of law, undertake a comprehensive assessment of the electoral process based on

[52]Mogherini, Federica (2016), *Handbook for European Union Election Observation*, European Union, Election Observation and Democratic Support (EODS), Luxembourg.
[53]European Commission (2000), Communication from the Commission on EU Election Assistance and Observation, 11 April 2000, *COM 2000 191 final*, p.4.
[54]European Commission (2000), Communication from the Commission on EU Election Assistance and Observation, 11 April 2000, *COM 2000 191 final*, p.5.
[55]European External Action (2012), Mediation and dialogue in the Electoral Processes to Prevent and Mitigate Electoral related Violence, *EEAS Mediation Support Project*, [Online: Web] Accessed on 3 July 2013, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/cfsp/conflict_prevention/docs/2013_eeas_mediation_support_factsheet_electoral_process_en.pdf.

international standards, and prevent any kind of fraud during elections.[56] The EU is one of the leading forces in supporting Election Observation Missions (EOMs) worldwide and has deployed over 120 missions since the year 2000 in various countries across the world. The EU's EOMs assist the partner countries and helps them maintain high standards of reliability and independence. The EOMs have been used to improve future electoral processes, political dialogues with partner countries, and election assistance to be provided by the EU.[57]

The 2015 EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015-19) also highlighted the need to consolidate best practices, ensure and make effective follow-ups to EU election observation missions (EUEOMs). The Action Plan further emphasised on maximizing the impact of election observation by supporting the implementation of the Declaration of Principles (DoP) for International Election Observation, and strengthen the long term planning of the EU and Member States to support the electoral cyclethrough innovative aid delivery mechanisms.[58]

The third edition of *Handbook for European Union Election Observation*(2016) also assessed that a fair and democratic electoral process would contribute to the peace and stability of a region, thus leading to peaceful transition of political power. The election observation by the EU provides for peace building initiatives along with an inclusive, independent and impartial assessment of an electoral process in the partner countries, thus encouraging public confidence and participation of people.[59]

3.6 EU Instruments for Democracy Promotion

Democracy has been a fundamental idea in the European political thought. It goes together with open market economies including open trade and investment, societies

[56]European Commission (2000), Communication from the Commission on EU Election Assistance and Observation, 11 April 2000, *COM 2000 191 final.*

[57] European External Action Service (2016), Election observation missions, *European Union,* [Online: Web] Accessed on 2 February 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/421/election-observation-missions-eueoms_en.

[58]Council of European Union (2016), EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2015, *European Union,* Brussels.

[59] European Commission (2016) *Handbook for European Union Election Observation*, European Union, Election Observation and Democratic Support (EODS), Luxembourg.

where fundamental freedoms and rights are encouraged and defended in accordance with rule of law and where the governments uphold and advocate social justice and harmony. In a 2008 speech José ManuelBarroso, President of the European Commission, elaborated on the concepts of democracy, development and political dialogue. He pointed out that democracy has progressed in the last 30 years in regions of Central and Eastern Europe, Southern Europe, Latin America but it still needs to evolve in regions like Middle East, parts of Asia and Africa. He added,

> Even where democracy has made gains, building democracy and consolidation democracy is a complex business, very complex – holding free and fair elections, developing institutional and legislative reform, establishing human rights, ensuring an independent judiciary and independent media, carrying the fight against corruption. The European Union continues to exert a major force for democratic and economic change in neighbouring countries, not only the candidate countries but also in Eastern Europe and in the Mediterranean area. [60]

The European Commission provides for a number of instruments to support and endorse democracy in neighbouring and third world countries. The European Council Resolution on Human Rights, Democracy and Development of 28 November 1991 mentioned the approach, activities and instruments towards human rights, democracy and development in their cooperation with the developing countries. These included:

1) Political Dialogue: It was considered a positive approach through which a productive and beneficial dialogue was encouraged with partner governments to integrate democracy and human rights into their development plans and recognise opportunities for EU assistance to contribute to those objectives. For this purpose a range of projects can be undertaken by providing support to countries willing to introduce democracy and improve human rights record, by holding elections and reinforce rule of law, by making the judiciary stronger, by promoting NGOs role of civil society, and ensure equal opportunity for all.

[60]Barrosa, Jose (2008), "Political Foundations in Democracy Promotion, Development cooperation and Political Dialogue", *Speech/08/708,* Brussels, 13 November 2008,p.3.

2) Good governance - Mainstream democratic values like political participation, representation, transparency, accountability, and equality can be achieved by adhering to the general principles of the government. Development of societies would be possible with effective and sustainable implementation of economic and social policies, democratic decision making, creation of a market friendly environment, measures to fight corruption, along with the principles of rule of law, human rights and freedom of press and expression.

3) Financial and Technical Assistance Programmes - The emphasis was on four areas i.e. "promoting fair, free and transparent electoral processes through strengthening the electoral legislative framework on the basis of the recommendations of the 2008 European Union Election Observation Mission; strengthening the institutional and organisational capacities of parliaments for improved performance in law making, oversight and representation; promoting access to justice for the poor and vulnerable by enabling them to claim their legal rights, and strengthening the capacities of the civilian law enforcement agencies and the judicial system".[61] Jose Barroso argued,

> By financing democracy beyond our borders we are not only defending our values and promoting these values but we are also defending our interests. By investing in democracy of our neighbours, we are investing in their openness. Their development.Their long term stability. And from a European perspective, we reduce the costs of social problems, the risk of wars, the risk of political or religious radicalisation. The return on investing in democracy comes in the form of a peace dividend.[62]

Apart from the above stated instruments of democracy promotion, Political Conditionality was also used by the EU in the neighbourhood. It was one of the most important developments in 1995 EU's standard democracy and human rights clause that was incorporated in all new contractual agreements with third countries, and also

[61]European External Action Service (2016), "Governance, Democratisation Human Rights", [Online:web] Accessed on 14 June 2017, URL: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/delegations/pakistan/eu_pakistan/tech_financial_cooperation/gov_dem_hum_rghts/index_en.htm.

[62]Barrosa, Jose (2008), "Political Foundations in Democracy Promotion, Development cooperation and Political Dialogue", *Speech/08/708,* Brussels, 13 November 2008,p.4; European Council (1991), "Resolution on Human Rights, Democracy and Development", *Dialogue for Democratic Development: Renewing the ACP-EU Partnership for the 21st Century,* 28 November 1991, [Online:web] Accessed on 14 June 2016, URL: http://archive.idea.int/lome/bgr_docs/resolution.html.

provided for suspension of ties in case democratic principles were not upheld. As Carolyn Baylies puts it, political conditionality in its broadest sense - with its concerns for human rights, pluralist politics and efficient government - focused directly on the state in its relationship to society and, more importantly, to the economy.[63]The donor country urged the partner country to adopt the principles of democracy, good governance, rule of law, and respect for human rights and the international agreements were thus dependent political and economic reforms. Dipama and Parlar Dal have distinguished between two types of conditionality: i) conditionality "ex-ante", which means that specific conditions with regard to human rights, democracy and/or good governance have to be fulfilled before the conclusion of an agreement or the establishment of a special relationship and ii) conditionality "ex-post", which means that a political actor imposes conditions within the framework of an existing contractual relationship, thereby, the relationship becomes dependent on the fulfilment of these conditions.[64] Conditionality ex-post is considered to be more efficient than ex-ante, because ex-ante is not supported by a legal instrument and secondly it limits the flexibility and ability of the donor country to act.

Political conditionality in the post-Cold War period has become synonymous with aid. Extending foreign aid to countries became more dependent on the degree of political advancement and progress made by the recipient country. With reference to this conditionality was divided into two - positive and negative. Positive conditionality ascertained a positive link between aid allotted and the country's progress towards democratic reforms and human rights. Enlargement strategy of the Union has been a successful example of positive conditionality to promote democratic reforms in Eastern European countries. Negative conditionality on the other hand is inversely proportional to the benefits offered by the donor country, i.e. the aid or benefits extended to the recipient country would cease to exist in case of any violation of the conditions attached to it. This approach has been criticised because it would no longer provide any incentive to the targeted country to pursue reforms.

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[63]Baylies, Carolyn (1995), "'Political Conditionality' and Democratisation", *Review of African Political Economy*, 22 (65): 321-337.

[64]Dipama, S and E. Parlar Dal (2015), "The Effectiveness of Political Conditionality as an Instrument of Democracy Promotion by the EU- Case Studies of Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast and Niger", *Perceptions*, 20(1): 109-132.

"Aid conditionality, as referred by SamiratouDipama and EmelParlar Dal, has not helped to make politicians adopt growthpromoting policies. It relies on a flawed mechanism of non-credible threats. Despite the tough stance towardsgovernments not complying with donor conditions, aid is usually disbursed regardless of broken promises".[65]

3.7 European Neighbourhood Policy and Democracy Promotion

The European Union's enlargement policy is considered to be the most important tool of the Union towards democracy promotion. Article 49 of the Treaty on European Union lays down that any European country can apply for membership if it fulfils the political and economic criteria, which requires the country to achieve "stability of the institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities; a functioning market economy as well as the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the Union; the ability to take on the obligations of membership, including the adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union".[66] TheEU has been credited as having a significant impact on the democratisation process, economic recovery, as well as maintaining peace and stability in Eastern Europe, after the disintegration of Soviet Union. This political conditionality, which ultimately leads to full membership, creates a picture of the "EU which offers and withholds carrots but does not carry a big stick".[67]

As Ian Manners puts it:

> The enlargement of the European Union will have far-reaching consequences. We all hope that a larger union will also be a stronger union that will make an even more decisive contribution to global progress and stability. That contribution will be badly needed because in this century, so many of the threats to our peace and security are global from international terrorism ... to ... climate change ... [T]he EU is a beacon of hope for peace and reconciliation, not only for Europe, but for the whole world.[68]

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[65]Dipama, S and E. Parlar Dal (2015), "The Effectiveness of Political Conditionality as an Instrument of Democracy Promotion by the EU- Case Studies of Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast and Niger", *Perceptions,* 20(1): 109-132.

[66]Archick. K (2013), European Union Enlargement, *Congressional Research Service,* [Online: Web] Accessed on 22 June 2016, URL: http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21344.pdf,p. 3.

[67]Schimmelfenning and Scholtz (2008), "EU Democracy Promotion in European Neighbourhood", *European Union Politics,* 9(2): 187-215, p.190.

[68]Manners, Ian (2006), "European Union Normative Power and the Security Challenge", *European Security,* 15(4): 405- 421, p. 406.

Another important mechanism that contributed towards democratisationwas the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)that was based on the European values of democracy, respect for human rights, good governance, sustainable development, market economy principles, and rule of law. The main aim was to avoid the new dividing lines between the enlarged Europe and its neighbours, and to strengthen the prosperity, stability and security of all. It is a bilateral policy between the EU and the partner country and is enriched by various other regional and multilateral instruments.[69]The ENP was extended to 16 neighbours of the EU including Armenia, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, and Ukraine. Today the EU has Action Plans in force with almost all its partner countries and with some it has even signed Association Agreements. Through these bilateral relations the EU aims to focus on economic as well as political reforms including democracy (eg. electoral laws, decentralisation, strengthening of administrative capacity), rule of law (eg. reform of penal and civil codes, codes of criminal procedure, strengthening the efficiency of judicial administrations, elaboration of strategies in the fight against corruption), and human rights (eg. legislation protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, enforcement of international human rights conventions, fight against racial hatred and xenophobia, human rights training and enforcement of international conventions on core labour rights along with short and medium term priorities).[70]

The European Union has taken various partnership initiatives towards different regions. The Union for the Mediterranean was launched in Paris on 13 July 2008, based on the values of "full respect of democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms".[71] The Eastern Partnership was established on 7 May 2009, in Prague, which emphasised on "the commitments to the principles of international law and to fundamental laws. Another initiative,the Black Sea Synergy, was launched on 14

[69] European Union, *European Neighbourhood Policy*, European Union External Action, [Online: Web] Accessed on 28 December 2016, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/enp/.
[70]European External Action Service (2010), "Human Rights and Democracy in the World", *Report on EU Action*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2009_human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.
[71] European Union (2010), *Human rights and democracy in the world: Report on EU Action July 2008 to December 2009*, European Commission, Brussels.

February 2008 with the aim "to strengthen the democracy and respect for human rights and to foster civil society".[72] However, this study concentrates on the Eastern Partnership and therefore, the following section would analyse the EU's democracy promotion particularly through this initiative.

3.8 Eastern Partnership and Democracy Promotion in the Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Region

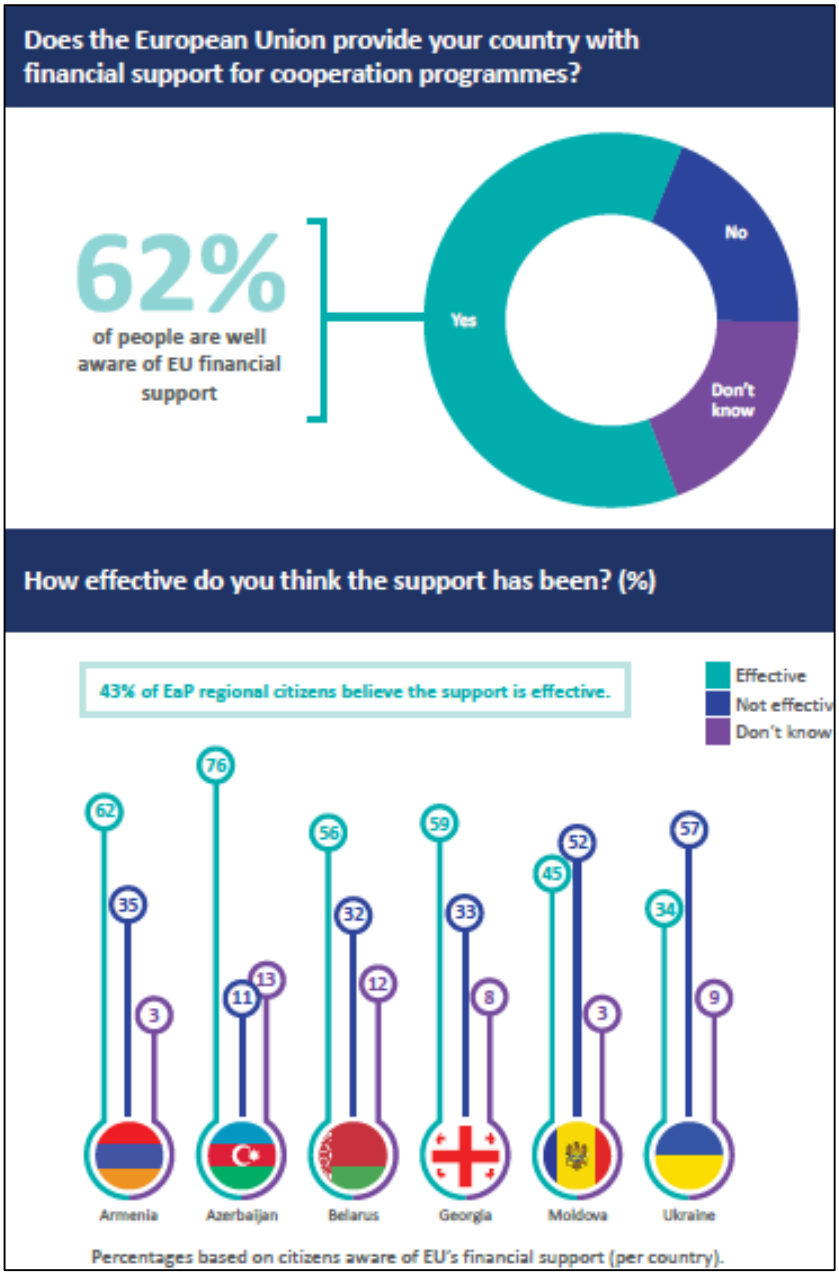
During the 1990s and early 2000s, the EU was the largest multilateral donor to the Eastern Europe and South Caucasus post-Soviet countries. The EU, at the time, was more confined to state reforms, technical assistance and economic transformation. The main focus was on stability and market reforms. A number of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA),primarily concerning trade and economic cooperation, were signed with post-Soviet states in the 1990s. The key instrument for financial assistance to these states was Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) which focused on promoting investment and trade, not on democratisation. Belarus was the only exception where EU did not sign the PCA because of the political conditions under the authoritarian regime of President Lukashenka.

A number of events in the early 2000s changed the European Union's democracy promotion strategy. The Rose revolution in Georgia and the Orange revolution in Ukraine were the key factors that led the EU to become an important player in promoting democracy in the Eastern neighbourhood. The political transition in these countries had a significant impact on other authoritarian regimes in the region and the EU was instantly viewed as a custodian of democratic values and civil society promotion. The change continued with the 2004 eastern enlargement and the introduction of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The eastern enlargement was a success whereby erstwhile socialist countries adopted the EU's *acquiscommunitaire* and fulfilled the provisions of political conditionality. The EU moved further with this experience and went ahead with democratic transformation in the East Europe and South Caucasus states. The financial instrument TACIS was replaced by European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument

[72] European Union (2010), *Human rights and democracy in the world: Report on EU Action July 2008 to December 2009,* European Commission, Brussels.

(ENPI) in 2007 with its core priorities being that of good governance and democracy promotion. As shown in Figure 3.1, 62 per cent people of this region were aware of the EU financial support and 43 per cent believed that this financial support was effective for the Eastern Partnership countries. It also highlights the awareness on country basis with Azerbaijan being at the top where 76 per cent of the citizens were aware of the EU financial assistance with lowest being 34 per cent in Ukraine.

Figure 3.1: Effectiveness of Financial Support



Source: Perceptions of the European Union in the Eastern Partnership Countries (2016), EU Neighbours East,

URL:

http://www.3dcftas.eu/system/tdf/EU%20Neighbours%20East_Factsheets_2016_REGIONAL%20OVERVIEW_0.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=286.

Some of the countries of Eastern Europe and South Caucasus lacked any previous experience of democracy, rule of law and, good governance but were willing to adopt the western style governance. Azerbaijan and Belarus had authoritarian governments, Ukraine adopted a pro-west government in the aftermath of the 2004 colour revolution, whereas Georgia and Moldova too assumed democratic form of government but were struggling to sustain it. Armenia on the other hand was somewhere between authoritarian and democratic form of government. Thus it became difficult for the EU to promote democracy in this region because one policy proved insufficient to cater to the problems of all the six countries. Also, the stakes in internal market and visa facilitation with no provision of accession proved to be weak incentives for the rulers to initiate reforms.[73]

Eastern Europe witnessed deep popular disappointment with democracy, where the former communist bloc saw dramatic regression, stagnation, and weakening of electoral processes in several countries. However, countries within the "hybrid regimes" experienced the sharpest regressions in the region. The Eastern Europe region was characterised by low levels of popular support for democracy. Not a single country in the region evinces a high level of popular support for democracy. The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2016 provided a snapshot of the state of democracy worldwide for 165 independent states and two territories. The Democracy Index was based on five categories: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. Based on their scores on a range of indicators within these categories, each country was then classified as one of four types of regime: "full democracy"; "flawed democracy"; "hybrid regime"; and "authoritarian regime".Table 3.1 illustrates the rankings of the Eastern European countries, in particular, based on the five categories. Moldova was the only country to fall in the category of *Flawed Democracy.* Georgia and Ukraine qualified in the category of *Hybrid Democracy* where Ukraine got a negative ranking because of the on-going protests and instability in

[73]Shapovalova, N. and R. Youngs (2012), "EU Democracy Promotion in the Eastern Neighbourhood: A turn to Civil Society?",*FRIDE,* Working Paper No 115.

the country. The remaining three countries i.e. Armenia, Belarus and Azerbaijan came in the category of *Authoritarian regimes.*[74]

Table 3.1: Democracy Index 2016

Countries	Rank	Overall Score	Electoral Process and Pluralism	Functioning of Government	Political Participation	Political Culture	Civil Liberties
Moldova	76	6.01	7.92	4.29	6.11	4.38	7.35
Georgia	78	5.93	8.67	4.29	6.11	5.00	5.59
Ukraine	-86	5.70	5.83	3.93	6.67	5.00	7.06
Armenia	120	3.88	4.33	2.86	4.44	1.88	5.88
Belarus	127	3.54	1.33	3.57	3.89	6.25	2.65
Azerbaijan	148	2.65	0.50	2.14	3.33	3.75	3.53

Source: The Economist Intelligence Unit (2017), *Democracy Index 2016: Revenge of the "Deplorables"* Report, p.9-11, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 May 2017, URL: http://felipesahagun.es/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/Democracy-Index-2016.pdf.

3.9 Eastern Partnership: Profile of Countries

The Eastern Partnership is based on the principle of "more for more", i.e. the more a partner country would deepen, strengthen, and intensify its reform process, the more it will benefit from the Union. In other words, the more the Eastern Partnership countries would progress towards democratisation and market economy, the more benefits and incentives like visa liberalisation, integration into the economy, and youth exchange programmes, they would receive. However, the Initiative has not been very successful in promoting democracy in the region, particularly because of the dominance of Russia in

[74]The Economist Intelligence Unit (2017), *Democracy Index 2016: Revenge of the "Deplorables",* Report, [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 March 2017, URL: http://pages.eiu.com/rs/783-XMC-194/images/Democracy_Index_2016.pdf.

the region. Most of these countries are dependent on Russia for trade and energy imports and do not want to risk it with close cooperation with the EU. Also not all the partner countries have adopted EU norms and values to bring about reforms. Of the six partner countries, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have signed the Association Agreements with EU, whereas Belarus, Azerbaijan and Armenia have expressed the desire to join the Russia led Eurasian Union. Below is the progress made by individual countries in promoting various reforms and their extent of integration into the European Union.

3.9.1 Armenia

Armenia has witnessed a weak economy and an armed conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region, which broke away from Azerbaijan, since the 1990s. The European Union and Armenian relationship dates back to 1996 when the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed and which came into force in 1999. The main aim was to promote democracy and market economy, along with extending political, social and financial cooperation, on which the EU-Armenia partnership was based. These are the main tenets of EU's values through which the Union is able to maintain stability, prosperity, and security. The areas of cooperation between the EU and Armenia mostly encompassed trade and economic relations prior to the launch of the 2004 European Neighbourhood Policy.[75] The EU-Armenia Action Plan was a non-binding document for a period of five years and laid down the strategic objectives of the cooperation between the two. One of the priority areas of cooperation was to strengthen democratic structure, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, judicial reforms and combat corruption.[76] The ENP tried to establish a link to promote and support democracy in the country but was not successful because of the lack of incentives and the ultimate offer of membership.[77] The Eastern Partnership was created in 2009 within which the partners

[75]European External Action Service (2014), *Programming of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) - 2014-2020 - Single Support Framework for EU support to Armenia (2014-2017),* European Commission.

[76]European External Action Service (2006), *EU-Armenia Action Plan,* European Union, [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 January 2017, URL:https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/armenia_enp_ap_final_en.pdf.

[77]Armenia received benefits as part of European Neighbourhood Policy under the Single Support Framework 2014-2017 of European Neighbourhood Instrument ranging from €140 million to a maximum of €170 million. European External Action Service (2016), *Armenia and the EU,*Online:Web] Accessed on 31 January 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp/896/armenia-and-eu_en.

agreed to complete negotiations on Association Agreements, Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) and visa liberalisation. The negotiations on Association Agreements and DCFTA were completed on 24 July 2013. However, before the Vilnius Summit, President Sargsyan announced that Armenia would join the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU) along with Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, because of the Russian pressure. The country is dependent on the energy resources from Russia to a great extent along with economic and security issues. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict with Azerbaijan has also been a crucial issue with Russia supplying arms to Azerbaijan. Hence Russia demonstrated its influence in Armenia by flexing its muscles.[78]

It eventually joined the EEU in January 2015.[79]The u-turn and the rejection of Association Agreement by Armenia prompted a new perception of the Armenian government as "insincere and incompetent, that weakened the course of reform, and undermined the credibility of reformers within the Armenian government".[80]On the other hand, the visa facilitation and readmission agreements (the minimum requirement to start negotiations for a visa-free regime) between the EU and Armenia came into force on 1 January 2014. These two completely opposite stands demonstrated President Sargsyan approach was adopted to strike a balance between Russia and the EU.

The EU has been a medium of promoting dialogue in Armenia through civil society organisations. In December 2012 a non-paper was brought forward to strengthen the role of Eastern Partnership Civil Society National Platform in Armenia (ANP). It stressed on ANP's role in increasing government's accountability, engaging citizens in policy making and giving more visibility to the Eastern Partnership. Also, steps were taken by the EU Delegation to reinforce the civil society involvement in pursuing the Eastern

[78]Gromadzki, Grzegorz(2015), "The Eastern Partnership After Five Years- Time for Deep Rethinking", *European Parliament, Directorate General for External Policies of the Union,* Belgium, [Online:Web] Accessed on 28 February 2017, URL: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/536438/EXPO_STU(2015)536438_EN.pdf.
[79]European External Service Action (2016), *Armenia and the EU,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 January 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp/896/armenia-and-eu_en.
[80]Wilson, Andrew (2014), "Protecting the European Choice", *European Council on Foreign Relations,* London [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 March 2017, URL: http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/ECFR109_EASTERN_PARTNERSHIP_AW.pdf.

Partnershipgoals in Armenia and promotedialogue with the government. Armenia also benefits from the Neighbourhood Civil Society Facility (ENPI).[81]

The year 2015 brought about many reforms in the political system, following the path of other post-Soviet countries like Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova, for transition from presidential to parliamentary government and from mixed electoral system to proportional representation system. The new constitution proposed would reduce the powers of the President. These reforms fulfilled the international standards and were praised by the European Union. The new constitution was adopted on 6 December by a national referendum two months after the Parliament voted in favour of the reform.[82] The EU continued to assist structural dialogue between civil society and authorities along with financial support to the projects implemented by CSOs. Armenia received an aid of EUR 12 million under ENI towards human rights programme, and from EIDHR towards progress in democracy and fundamental freedoms by encouraging support to women rights, refugees etc.[83] Also, in March 2015, the EU and Armenia completed the 'scoping exercise' to identify the legal ground for a future agreement.[84]

3.9.2 Azerbaijan

The EU-Azerbaijan relations have been governed by the 1999 Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA), and based on this PCA a joint Action Plan was adopted by the EU-Azerbaijan Cooperation Council to provide a comprehensive and ambitious framework with the country in key areas of reforms. Further, the mobility partnership was signed in December 2013 and in September 2014, the Visa Facilitation agreement and Readmission Agreement entered into force. The country has been provided assistance

[81]European External Action Service (2014), *Armenia- EU Country Roadmap for engagement with Civil Society (2014-2017),* European Union, [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 January 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/20141027_eu_armenia_cs_roadmap_en_0.pdf.
[82]Freedom House (2016), *Armenia-Nations in Transit,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 January 2017, URL: https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2016/armenia.
[83]Council of European Union (2016), "EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2015 – Country and Regional Issues", 12299/16, Brussels, 20 September 2016.
[84]Kostanyan, H (2015), "The Eastern Partnership after Riga: Review and Reconfirm", *Centre for European Policy Studies,* 29 May 2015, p.1-3.

through the European Neighbourhood Instrument since 2014.[85]The EU is Azerbaijan's biggest export and import market with a 53 per cent and 34 per centshare in Azerbaijan's total exports and imports respectively and also a key foreign investor.[86]

Since the beginning of cooperation the EU has been providing development assistance to Azerbaijan, however, it has constantly experienced negative human rights record and gloomy picture of domestic reforms. Despite the negative progress the EU was keen on boosting ties with the country. Azerbaijan was made a part of ENP in 2004 and of Eastern Partnership in 2009.[87] It is the EU's important energy partner, currently supplying around 5 per cent of the EU's oil demand and also provides transit between the Caspian gas resources and the Union through the Southern Gas Corridor. Elections were held with no opposition, restrictive measures, and massive demonstrations. The 2005 and 2008 elections were won by President IlhamAliyev unopposed.

Azerbaijan remained a deeply authoritarian state, and the year 2015 saw further aggressive steps from the executive to eliminate all criticism and dissent against mounting economic crisis. There has been deterioration of the country's civil society, media, economic situation with continuous low oil prices, the standards of human rights and democracy. The government has been criticised by many international organisations and other states for corrosion of the rights of the citizens.[88] The European Parliament in a resolution of 10 September 2015 emphasised on the deteriorating human rights conditions over last few years through intimidation and repression, and prosecution of journalists and human rights defenders. The Parliament declined to send Election Observation Mission to Azerbaijan during its November 2015 elections on the pretext of limitations on freedoms of expression, assembly and association which would make it impossible to create a level playing field for candidates and to organise a genuinely

[85]European External Action Service, EU-Azerbaijan, Eastern Partnership: Supporting Reforms, Promoting Change, *European Union,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 February 2017, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/eastern/docs/eu-azerbaijan_en.pdf.
[86]European External Action Service (2016), Factsheet: EU-Azerbaijan Relations, *European Union,* Brussels, 29 February 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 February 2017, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/factsheets/docs/eu-azerbaijan_factsheet_en.pdf.
[87]Zukowska, E (2016), "The EU Democracy Promotion under Scrutiny: The Double Standards in the Case of Belarus and Azerbaijan", *EURINT Proceedings 2016,* p.79-95.
[88] Freedom House (2016), *Azerbaijan-Nations in Transit,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 31 January 2017, URL: https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2016/azerbaijan.

competitive vote.[89] Instead it was the Election Observation Mission of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) that was invited by the Azerbaijan authorities to monitor the parliamentary elections on 1 November 2015.The elections were held in accordance with the Election Code of Azerbaijan, and provided a legal framework for the democratic conduct of elections. The PACE EOM also called on the authorities to check on human rights violation and continue the democratic development of the country after the elections. The Mission encouraged the authorities to work towards the recommendations made by the Commissioner for Human Rights of the Council of Europe, the Venice Commission and, Resolution 2062 on the Functioning of Democratic Institutions in Azerbaijan approved by the Assembly on 23 June 2015.[90] Also, many human rights activists were imprisoned and the role of civil society reduced. The EU criticised the government urging it to stand by the international commitments.

As EwaZukowska puts it, the EU-Azerbaijan relations represent a story of missed desires and ambitions. Azerbaijan has followed its own way in dealing withthe domestic situation without any external interference. It strongly opposed any normative convergence in the human rights dimension, and the EU remained silent in this respect. This showed that Azerbaijan was given leverage because of the EU's energy security concerns, which prevailed over the normative principles.[91]

3.9.3 Belarus

The EU has taken substantial measures to boost relations with Belarus in political, economic and trade related fields and similar steps are being taken by Belarus which include, respect for universal freedoms, rule of law and human rights that would shape the EU's future policy towards Belarus. The EU-Belarus signed the PCA in 1995 but has not been ratified by the EU member states up till now. The PCA was suspended in 1997

[89]European Parliament (2015), *Azerbaijan- European Parliament resolution of 10 September 2015 on Azerbaijan (2015/2840(RSP))*, European Union, P8_TA(2015)0316, [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 February 2017, URL: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+TA+P8-TA-2015-0316+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN.

[90]Parliamentary Assembly (2015), Statement by PACE Election Observation Mission on the parliamentary elections in Azerbaijan on 1 November 2015, *Council of Europe*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 February 2017, URL: http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/News/News-View-EN.asp?newsid=5856&cat=31.

[91]Zukowska, E (2016), "The EU Democracy Promotion under Scrutiny: The Double Standards in the Case of Belarus and Azerbaijan", *EURINT Proceedings 2016*, p.79-95.

because of the deteriorating human rights record. It is the only country in the region which does not have close relations with the EU. Efforts were made to bring Belarus closer to the EU under the European Neighbourhood Policy (2004) and the Eastern Partnership (2009). However, the involvement remained partial or almost negligible with Belarus becoming part of the Russian Economic Customs Union (ECU) in 2010.

The electoral framework had serious shortcomings in termsof OSCE commitments and international standards, regardless of January 2010 amendments to the Electoral Code in order to deal with long-standing OSCE / ODIHR recommendations. However the 19 December 2010 presidential elections were a violation of electoral standards following a crackdown on opposition and civil society. The OIDHR electoral mission observed that there was lack of transparency, independence and impartiality during these elections.[92]

The Council Conclusions dated 15 February 2016 recognised the efforts being made to improve relations between the two, by participation in the Eastern Partnership, resumption of EU-Belarus Human Rights Dialogue, negotiations on Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreements and on Mobility Partnership. Ahead of the 2016 parliamentary elections in Belarus, the Council urged the Belarusian authorities to take forward the recommendations of OSCE/OIDHR final report on the presidential elections held on 11 October 2015. The EU had also offered to assist and support the country towards democratisation and respect for human rights.[93]

A question was raised in the European Parliament regarding the financial support that would be extended to Belarus in 2016 and what amount would be parted for supporting civil society organisations. Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, on 30 March 2016, responded giving details on behalf of the Commission. He said that funds would be extended to Belarus both through multilateral framework of the Eastern Partnership and through bilateral assistance from the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI). “Subject to continued positive trends in

[92] European Union (2011), “EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World- 2010”, *European External Action Service,* p.6, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2010_human-rights-annual_report_en.pdf.
[93]Council of the European Union (2016), Council Conclusions on Belarus, *European Union,* Brussels, 15 February 2016.

the EU-Belarus relations, the Commission will be able to double the 2016 ENI bilateral envelope to Belarus to €29 million from €14.5 million in 2015. Belarus also benefits from multi-country programmes and cross-border cooperation programmes with neighbouring EU countries". In case of civil society, €3.5 million was allocated in 2015. The EU Delegation in Minsk has close relations with civil society in accordance with the EU Roadmap for Engagement with Civil Society adopted in 2014 to strengthen civil society as legitimate and accountable actors.[94]

3.9.4 Georgia

EU is Georgia's largest trading partner providing over €100 million to Georgia annually in technical and financial assistance. The EU-Georgia Association Agreement was signed on 27 June 2014 and came into force on 1 July 2016. The signing of Association Agreement and the DCFTA has deepened its ties and brought Georgia closer to the Union integrating it both politically and economically. The Georgian authorities under consecutive governments have pledged their allegiance towards integration with the EU. In 2015, the EU imports from Georgia increased by 12 per cent and amounted to €741 million.[95]

Democracy, rule of law, and respect for human rights have been important aspects of EU-Georgia relations. The Georgian constitution was established in 1995 and laid the foundations of a democratic system, a transformation from a totalitarian state to democracy. It is one of the Eastern Partnership countries to have achieved progress in democratic reforms, along with reforms in area of justice, freedom of media and a good human rights record since the Rose Revolution. The 2013 Presidential election was held in a free and fair manner in the presence of international observers. According to OSCE/OIDHR, the election was "competitive, transparent and well administered".[96]

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[94] European Parliament (2016), Financial Support for Eastern Partnership countries, P-000668-16, 28 January 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 24 March 2017, URL: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-%2f%2fEP%2f%2fTEXT%2bWQ%2bP-2016-000668%2b0%2bDOC%2bXML%2bV0%2f%2fEN&language=EN.

[95]European External Action Service (2016),Factsheet- EU-Georgia Relations,*European Union*, Brussels, July 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 February 2017, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/factsheets/docs/eu-georgia_factsheet_en.pdf.

[96]Government of Georgia (2015), Reform in Georgia, [Online:Web] Accessed on 10 February 2017, URL: http://gov.ge/files/288_52140_166496_20151026ReformsinGeorgia.pdf.

The Council of Europe came up with an Action Plan for the period 2016-2019 to support reforms in Georgia and the priority areas included:

1) Protecting and promoting human rights and dignity, ensuring social rights,
2) Ensuring Justice,
3) Strengthening democratic governance,
4) Countering threats to the rule of law: corruption, money-laundering, cybercrime, manipulations of sports competitions, and
5) Confidence-building measures.[97]

Georgia's civil society has been at the forefront of change since the 2003 Rose revolution. It has been supported by the EU and has been engaged in the role of a pressure group vis-à-vis the government. Around 5 per cent of the EU's budget to Georgia has been allocated to support civil society organisations for the period 2014–17. However, the lack of funding at the local level is one of the weaknesses of the civil society for there is too much dependence on foreign funding and the agendas are often donor driven.[98]

3.9.5 Moldova

Relations between the EU and Moldova have grown since 1994 with the signing of Partnership and Cooperation Agreement which was ratified in 1998. The objectives of this PCA included:

– to support efforts of the Republic of Moldova to consolidate its democracy and the rule of law and respect for human rights and the rights of minorities by ensuring an adequate framework for political dialogue

– to provide an appropriate framework for the political dialogue between the Parties allowing the development of political relations

[97]Rapporteur Group of Democracy (2016), *Council of Europe Action Plan for Georgia 2016-2019-Document prepared by the Office of the Directorate General for Programmes,* Council of Europe, GR-DEM(2016), 4 February 2016.
[98]Emerson, M and Kovziridze T (2016), Deepening EU–Georgian Relations What, why and how?,*Centre for European Policy Studies*, Brussels.

– to promote economic reform, improve living conditions and to foster sustainable economic development, as well as to develop its economy and to complete the transition into a market economy

– to provide a basis for legislative, economic, social, financial, and cultural cooperation and

–to support efforts to achieve a lasting resolution of the Transnistria problem.[99]

Parliamentary elections in Moldova were held on 30 November 2014. In a joint statement on the parliamentary elections issued on 1 December 2014, Federica Mogherini, HR/VP of European Commission, and Johannes Hahn, Commissioner for ENP and Enlargement Negotiations said that the EU would be willing for a close cooperation with a more transparent, inclusive and accountable government in Moldova, moving towards a path of rule of law and a stronger market economy. The EU also committed to work towards peaceful settlement of Transnistrian conflict.[100]

The Association agreement signed during the Vilnius Summit entered into force on 1 July 2016 that strengthened Moldova's political and economic ties with the EU. Mobility Partnership was signed in May 2008 and since 28 April 2014, Moldovan citizens with biometric passports were allowed to travel the Schengen area without a visa. The trade between the EU and Moldova decreased by 6 per cent in 2015, due to the sharp decline of EU exports to Moldova.[101] Bilateral assistance to Moldova under the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) sharply increased from €40 million in 2007 to €131 million in 2014. Moldova is the largest recipient of EU aid per capita in the European neighbourhood,[102] mostly directed towards strengthening democratic development, good

[99] European Partnership for Democracy, *Moldova- Democracy Assistance Resources,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 13 May 2017, URL: http://www.epd.eu/eu-democracy-assistance-in-moldova/.
[100]European External Action Service (2014), *Joint Statement on the Parliamentary Elections in the Republic of Moldova,* Brussels, 1 December 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 March 2017, URL: http://eeas.europa.eu/statements-eeas/2014/141201_01_en.htm.
[101] European External Action Service (2017), *EU-Moldova Relations,*[Online:Web] Accessed on 15 March 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage_en/4011/EU-Moldova%20relations.
[102]European External Action Service (2016), *The Republic of Moldova and the EU,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 March 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/european-neighbourhood-policy-enp/1538/moldova-and-eu_en.

governance, rule of law, trade and reducing poverty. For the period 2004-2020 the EU support may amount to approximately €746 million.[103]

3.9.6 Ukraine

Ukraine is a priority partner for the EU. The EU-Ukraine relations date back to 1998 when the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed. A pro-European government came to power post-2004 Orange Revolution which further bought Ukraine closer to the EU. It became part of the ENP in 2004 and the Eastern Partnership in 2009. The pace of reforms in the country was slow in the initial years and the talks on Association Agreement began only in March 2012. Ukraine's most prolonged and deadly crisis since its post-Soviet independence began as a protest against the government when President Yanukovych back-tracked on a trade deal with the European Union in favour of closer ties with Russia. The move caused diplomatic spats between Russia and the West with both sides accusing each other of manipulation. Weak governance, an unbalanced economy dominated by oligarchs, heavy reliance on Russia, and sharp differences between Ukraine's linguistically, religiously, and ethnically distinct eastern and western regions was a result of more than twenty years of crisis.The Euromaidan crisis led to the fall of Viktor Yanukovych in February 2014, the Russian annexation of Crimea, port city of Sevastopol and parts of eastern Ukraine.[104] The Association Agreement was later signed in two stages: the political content in March 2014 by Prime Minister ArseniyYatsenyuk and the economic content in June 2014 by President Petro Poroshenko.[105] It finally entered into force provisionally in January 2016.

Democracy promotion has been an important aspect in EU-Ukraine relations. The EU-Ukraine Action Plan of 2005 pointed out 12 key areas towards promoting democracy, rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms. These included: 1) strengthening the stability and effectiveness of institutions guaranteeing democracy and the rule of law; 2) judicial and legal reform, so as to ensure the independence of the judiciary and

[103]Kostanyan, Hrant (2016), "Why Moldova's European Integration is failing", *Centre for European Policy Studies Commentary,* p.1-4.
[104]McMahon, Robert (2014), "Ukraine in Crisis", *Council on Foreign Relations*, 25 August 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 February 2017, URL: http://www.cfr.org/ukraine/ukraine-crisis/p32540.
[105]Emerson, Michael and Movchan, Veronika (2016), "Ukraine and Europe -A short guide", *CEPS and IER,* p 1-36.

strengthen its administrative capacity, and to ensure impartiality and effectiveness of prosecution; 3) Ensure the effectiveness of the fight against corruption; 4) Ensure respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in line with international and European standards; 5) encourage the development of civil society; 6) Ensure respect for the freedom of the media and expression; 7) Ensure respect for rights of persons belonging to national minorities; 8) Prevention of ill-treatment and torture; 9) Ensure equal treatment; 10) Ensure respect of Children's rights; 11) Ensure respect for trade unions' rights and core labour standards; 12) Ensure international justice.[106]

The Action Plan for Ukraine 2015-2017, a joint initiative of the Council for Europe and Ukrainian authorities, was initiated to support and address fundamental issues of human rights, democracy, and rule of law. The Council of Europe contributed to the development of effective governance in Ukraine with an objective to improve the quality of democracy in Ukraine "by strengthening local self-governance, advancing education for democratic citizenship and supporting local democratic processes for strategic revitalisation".[107]

As Michael Emerson puts it, civil society in Ukraine has long been at the forefront of change, from the Orange Revolution (2004) to the Maidan uprising (2013-14), and has consistently been a source of unity and determination in its quest for democracy.According to the EU- Ukraine Association Agenda, the EU provided €10 million support to civil society in 2014.The EU-Ukraine Civil Society Platform was officially launched on 16 April 2015.[108] Civil society has remained the strongest factor in the country's democratic transition bringing about reforms aimed at establishing functional democracy and rule of law. Despite Russian violence and occupation of territories, Ukraine remained resilient.[109]

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[106]European External Action Service (2005), EU-Ukraine Action Plan, *European Union.*

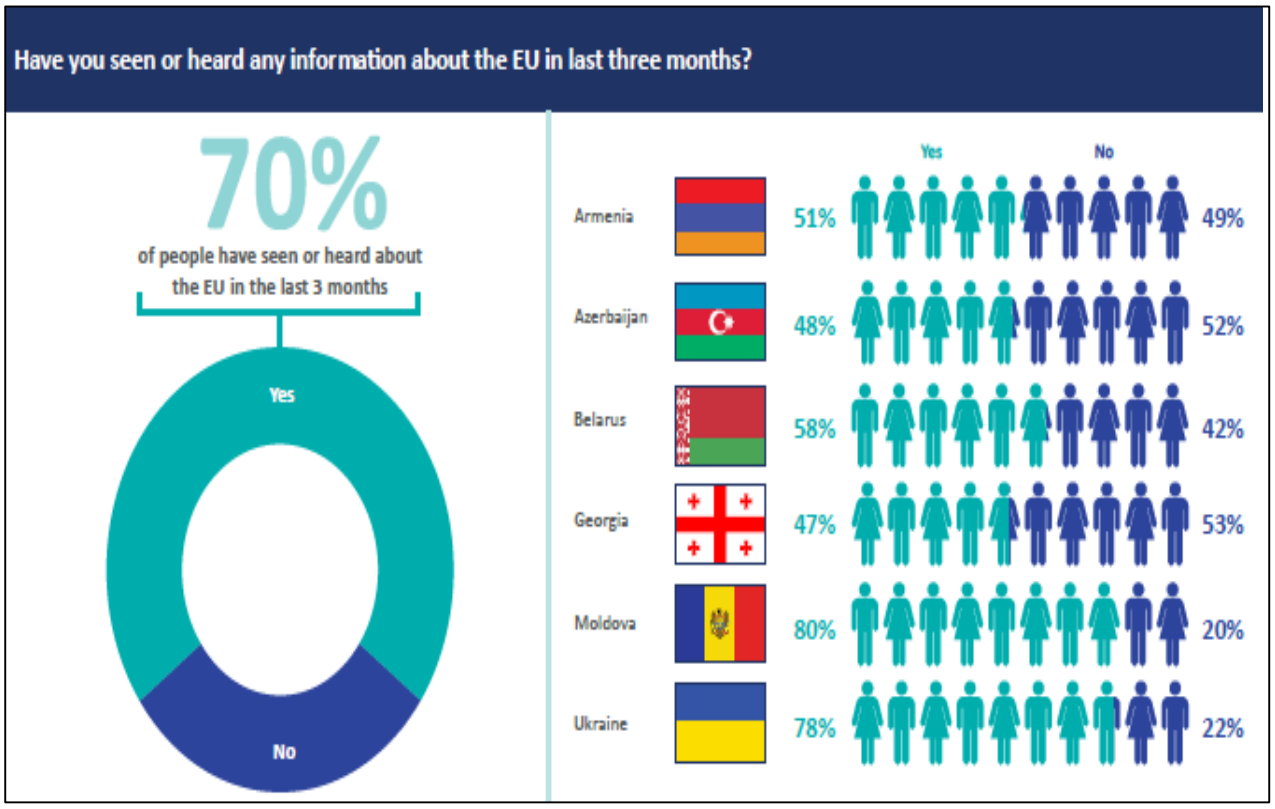
[107]Council of Europe (2015), *Action Plan for Ukraine 2015 – 2017*, European Union, [CM/Del/Dec(2015)1217], [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 February 2017, URL: https://rm.coe.int/CoERMPublicCommonSearchServices/DisplayDCTMContent?documentId=09000016802ed0b6.

[108] Emerson, Michael and Movchan, Veronika (2016), "Deepening EU-Ukraine Relations: What, Why and How",*Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS)*, Brussels.

[109] Freedom House (2016), *Ukraine-Nations in Transit*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 February 2017, URL: https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2016/ukraine.

The figure below shows the public opinion and the knowledge of the partner countries vis-à-vis the EU. As illustrated in Figure 3.b, although a total of 70 per cent people in this region have awareness regarding the EU, the individual total in each country varies. Countries like Moldova and Ukraine have a large population that is aware of the EU activities with 80 per cent and 78 per cent respectively. Belarus comes at third position with 58 per cent people knowing about the EU despite the country not adhering to the core principles of the EU. This is followed by Azerbaijan with 48 per cent. However, Georgia which considers itself to be close to the European Union has only a 47 per cent and Armenia has a total of 51 per cent.

Figure 3.2: Awareness of EU among the Citizens of Eastern Partnership Countries



Source: Perceptions of the European Union in the Eastern Partnership Countries, EU Neighbours East (2016), URL: http://www.3dcftas.eu/system/tdf/EU%20Neighbours%20East_Factsheets_2016_REGIONAL%20OVERVIEW_0.pdf?file=1&type=node&id=286.

3.10 Eastern Partnership and Civil Society

Civil Society was established as a new actor in EU's relations with Eastern Europe. The idea of Civil Society Forum (CSF) was proposed by European Commission in 2008 so as to improve EU's support of civil society organisations in the six Eastern Partner countries. Hence CSF was created in 2009 which would meet annually with representatives from EU, Eastern Partner countries as well as NGOs and would be given assistance under the European Neighbourhood Policy. The CSF comprises of: i) An annual Assembly, ii) the Steering Committee with its Secretariat, iii) five Working Groups with their respective sub-groups, and iv) six National Platforms. It was the Eastern Partnership initiative under which civil society was given attention and which encompassed non-governmental organizations from both the partner countries as well as the EU. There are five working groups of the CSF of which four are associated with the four thematic platforms of the Eastern Partnership i.e. contacts between people; environment, climate change and energy security; economic integration and convergence with EU policies;and democracy, human rights, good governance and stability. The fifth working group was the Social Dialogue that was set up in 2012 and is not related to any thematic platform.

HrantKostanyan has described Civil Society Forum as a platform that shares best practices of European integration and holds regular dialogues on endorsing the multilateral track of the Eastern Partnership. Institutionally the CSF intends to contribute towards capacity building of the civil society organisations (CSO) of Eastern Partnership countries by holding discussions and dialogues with the EU CSOs, social partners, think tanks, and international organisations. The first annual meeting of the CSF took place on 16-17 November 2009 in Brussels with more than 200 CSOs participating in it, where the CSF also adopted four recommendations - one from each existing Working Groups. Kostanyan also pointed out that the CSF ought to pursue "three goals, i.e. 1) socialisation aiming to achieve normative suasion, 2) influencing government policies at both the agenda-setting (at the EU and Eastern Partnership partner level) and implementation (e.g., through monitoring) stages and 3) influencing the societies in the Eastern Partnership countries through raising public awareness and encouraging active civic

participation". He further adds that the institutional architecture and the development of extensive socialisation among its members has been one of the major achievements of the CSF.[110]

For LoredanaJitaru civil society forms the fundamental part of the Eastern Partnership policy aimed towards transparency and responsibilities that further encourages reforms and democratisation. The support for the civil society differs in diverse stages of democratisation which includes pre-transition, transition, and consolidation phase. Thus, civil society despite being an important aspect in the reform process, which can also influence government strategies, has a limited job when it comes to developing national and regional policies and cannot function in the absence of democracy.[111]

The EU's objective in the Eastern neighbourhood has been to promote democratic transition in the partner countries through political and economic reform and to attain this objective civil society was an important instrument. Charniakovich has discussed this relationship between the EU and civil society emphasising on the perceptions of local actors of the EU's support to democratic reform and security in Eastern Partnership countries. Civil society actors look forward to the EU's assistance towards government of the partner countries that are willing to adopt reforms, including democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, and at the same time pressurise the countries that were hesitant. However, the EU can extend support and conditionality to a country only when there is involvement at the local level and demand from within. Similarly the security sector reforms need high level political participation and assurance of individual governments and commitment from local civil societies.[112]

3.11 Civil Society and Democracy Promotion

One of the most important Eastern Partnership innovations has been a greater involvement of non-governmental actors in the EU's cooperation with neighbouring

[110]Kostanyan, Hrant (2014), "The Civil Society Forum of the Eastern Partnership: Four Years on Progress, Challenges and Prospects", *Centre for European Policy Studies, Report commissioned by the Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum,* Brussels, January 2014, p.3.
[111]Jitaru, Loredana (2016), "The Implications of the Civil Society in the Eastern Partnership", *CES Working Papers,* 19(1): 10-27.
[112]Charniakovich, A (2013), "Levers for Change: The EU and civil Society in the Eastern Neighbourhood", *FRIDE Policy Brief,* No 154, April 2013.

countries. The European Commission proposed supporting the further development of civil society organisations (CSOs) and establishing an Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum 'to promote contacts among CSOs and facilitate their dialogue with public authorities'. The promise to increase civil society participation was also made in the context of reforming democratic institutions. In addition, the Commission suggested increasing contact between parliamentarians, local and regional authorities and business circles by establishing fora for multilateral cooperation. A major shortcoming of EU aid to civil society remained the means of provision. Receiving funds from the EU is a complicated and time consuming for civil society, along with long-standing and familiar gripes of the bureaucratic reporting process. There is a lack of efficiency in the working of these organisations where often there is a year-long lag between submitting an application and funding being granted, resulting in the project concept either becomingoutdatedor be overtaken by events. Another issue is that of language. The application process is managed only in English, providing another obstacle for many NGOs based outside country capitals and key regional centres or those smaller organisations lacking well established links with partners abroad. Re-granting, that can partially solve the problem of accessibility to funds, has been limited. In September 2012, the European Commission published a communication outlining its vision of Europe's engagement with civil society in external relations which was endorsed by the EU Council in October 2012. The document offered the first systematic overview of the EU's goals and priorities for cooperation with civil society organisations in relations with third countries. The Commission viewed civil society as 'a crucial component of any democratic system and [...] an asset in itself'. The document defined civil society organisations as: "all non-State, not-for-profit structures, non-partisan and non-violent, through which people organise to pursue shared objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, social or economic". It also recognised agents of change in 'new and more fluid forms of citizens and youth actions' such as the Arab Spring and the Occupy movements.[113]

[113]Shapovalova, N. and R. Youngs (2012), "EU Democracy Promotion in the Eastern Neighbourhood: A turn to Civil Society?",*FRIDE,* Working Paper No 115, p.11.

In a press release, of September 2012, on *"The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations"* the European Commission announced that it would extend more "support to the civil society organizations in its partner countries and also promote a more conducive environment for such organizations so that they play a more important role in the delivery of social services, transparency, good governance advocacy, and also contribute to advocacy".[114]

EU Commissioner for Development AndrisPiebalgs commented:

> The Arab Spring, as well as other recent events over the world, has confirmed that civil society organizations can be powerful actors of change. The EU has drawn lessons from this, and we commit to help develop a dynamic, pluralistic and competent civil society in our partner countries. The renewed EU response aims to empower local CSOs in their actions for democratic governance and equitable development.[115]

ŠtefanFüle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, added: "Civil society organizations have a crucial role to play in the transformation process and in holding governments to account. Working with civil society organizations and supporting them is at the centre of our new neighbourhood policy. We have had a civil society facility in the enlargement countries for many years and have established a neighbourhood civil society facility last year. As a testimony of our commitment, the Commission intends to allocate more than €65 million to the neighbourhood civil society in 2011-2013. Also, we are keen to consult CSOs more systematically on our policy initiatives and cooperation programmes".[116]

A Joint Communication on "A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A review of European Neighbourhood Policy" stated that there would be partnership with societies in order to:

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[114] European Union (2012), Commission, *Enhancing Democracy and Fighting Poverty: European Commission commits to further support Civil Society in Partner Countries,* IP/12/ 963, [Online: Web] accessed on 1 July 2013, URL: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-963_en.htm.

[115] European Union (2012), Commission, *Enhancing Democracy and Fighting Poverty: European Commission commits to further support Civil Society in Partner Countries,* IP/12/ 963, [Online: Web] accessed on 1 July 2013, URL: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-963_en.htm.

[116] European Commission (2012), *Enhancing Democracy and Fighting Poverty: European Commission commits to further support Civil Society in Partner Countries,* IP/12/ 963, [Online: Web] accessed on 1 July 2013, URL: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-963_en.htm.

• establish partnerships in each neighbouring country and make EU support more accessible to civil society organisations through a dedicated Civil Society Facility;

• support the establishment of a European Endowment for Democracy to help political parties, non-registered NGOs and trade unions and other social partners;

• promote media freedom by supporting civil society organisations' (CSOs') unhindered access to the internet and the use of electronic communications technologies;and

• reinforce human rights dialogues.[117]

The Communication further elaborated that a thriving civil society would empower the citizens to express their concerns, contribute to policy-making and hold governments to account, thus making economic growth more inclusive. Another challenge was to facilitate the emergence of democratic political parties that represent the broad spectrum of the views and approaches present in society so that they can compete for power and popular support. This challenge of fostering civil society and pluralism was felt throughout the neighbourhood though specifically in those countries that were engaged in fast political change or where repressive political regimes continued to stifle pluralism and diversity. In order to address this situation the High Representative and the Commission establishedthe European Endowment for Democracy to support political actors striving for democratic change in their countries. Civil society played a pivotal role in advancing women's rights, greater social justice and respect for minorities as well as environmental protection and resource efficiency. The EU supported this greater political role for non-state actors through a partnership with societies, helping CSOs to develop their advocacy capacity, their ability to monitor reform and their role in implementing and evaluating EU programmes. EU delegations brought the partner countries' governments and civil society together in a structured dialogue on key areas of co-

[117] European Commission (2011), A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A review of European Neighbourhood Policy, Joint Communication by the High Representative of The Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission, 25 May 2011, p.4.

operation and for the funding of their actions, the EU established a Civil Society Facility for the neighbourhood.[118]

Media freedom and free access to information were key elements of functioning democracies. Social networks and new technologies played a significant role in promoting democratic change. EU extended its support through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) whereas additional tools were developed to allow the EU, to assist civil society organisations or individual citizens to have unhindered access to the internet and other forms of electronic communications technologies, as well as independent media in print, radio and television. The Lisbon Treaty provided the EU with a unique opportunity to become a more effective actor. However, it required the EU and Member States policies to be much more closely aligned than in the past, in order to deliver the common message and the coherence that would make the actions effective. EU instruments and policies would be effective only if properly backed by Member States policies.[119]

As stated in the Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy, the year 2012 witnessed a decline in the space of civil society especially as a result of the Arab Spring. There was control over freedom of expression and association, with many of these organisations facing restrictions in terms of funding from abroad, holding any political activities, along with ban on the operations of NGOs. The EU continued to encourage growth of active and independent civil society across the globe in 2012, particularly through EIDHR by extending financial support (which even continued in 2013) to human rights defenders and civil society activists in around 100 countries. The European Commission adopted a Communication on *The Roots of Democracy and Sustainable Development: Europe's Engagement with Civil Society in External Relations*elaborating on the EU's role in supporting civil society organisations in partner countries extending

[118] European Commission (2011), A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A review of European Neighbourhood Policy, Joint Communication by the High Representative of The Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission, 25 May 2011, p.4.
[119] European Commission (2011), A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood: A review of European Neighbourhood Policy, Joint Communication by the High Representative of The Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Commission, 25 May 2011, p.5.

support in order to make possible delivery of good governance and advocacy, transparency, social service and policy making.[120]

The recent Eastern Partnership Civil Society Conference took place in Riga on 21-22 May 2015 that witnessed a participation of around 300 representatives from different countries. The aim of the conference was to make civil society stronger and engage it in the planning and implementation of the Eastern Partnership policy. Ales Bialiatski, a Belarusian political activist,said that "civil society is a 'locomotive' that pulls the Eastern Partnership countries towards the EU and its values, and acts as an advocate for the people". He emphasised that it is crucial to make sure that this 'locomotive' is strongto move "towards a democratic society and does not become a political weapon of authoritarian regimes".[121]

3.12 Conclusion

For decades now, the EU has devoted itself to endorse and support democracy in different parts of the world. With the recent events in the Middle East and in the neighbourhood, the EU has launched a concept of building deep democracy in order to tackle with authoritarian regimes. Wetzel and Orbie argue that "more 'formal' descriptions focusing on rules and rights can be contrasted with more 'substantial' understandings that take into account the level of maturity of democratic practice. While there seems to be a core of common elements in the formal notions, there are also some notable differences, such as with respect to the right to form political parties or freedom of religion".[122] As Youngs discusses, "European democracy promotion policy was about 'giving people a voice' in social development work and not about 'replicating institutional patterns'".[123] Governments that benefited from economic reforms became open to cooperation on

[120]Council of the European Union (2013), "EU Annual Report on Human Rights and Democracy in the World in 2012 (Thematic Reports)", 9431/13, Brussels, 13 May 2013, [Online:Web] Accessed on 14 June 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/2012_human-rights-annual_report_thematic_en_0.pdf.
[121]Latvian Presidency of the Council of European Union (2015), *Civil society – the locomotive that drives reform in Eastern Partnership countries,* European Union, [Online:Web] Accessed on 16 June 2017, URL: https://eu2015.lv/news/media-releases/1829-civil-society-the-locomotive-that-drives-reform-in-eastern-partnership-countries.
[122]Wetzel and Orbie (2012), "The EU's Promotion of External Democracy: In search of the plot", *CEPS Policy Brief,* p.1-6.
[123]Youngs, R (2001), "Democracy Promotion: The Case of European Union Strategy", *Centre for European Policy Studies,* Working Document No. 167, October 2001.

human rights projects, though remained antagonistic to democracy assistance aimed at political institutions. In the conventional sense, the EU has been promoting democracy via holding elections and through socio-economic development i.e. supporting neoliberal market model. EU's external policies have been criticised for being too narrow in their approach, focusing mostly on elections and not on the larger picture. Another issue concerning democracy promotion is the way EU deals with democracy and human rights. Most of the EU documents co-relate the two concepts.

Wetzel and Orbie identifies three major challenges for EU in their quest for democracy promotion: have also discussed the challenges which include, i) the relationship between human rights and democracy promotion where the two are often mentioned in the same breath without paying attention to their relationship; ii) the promotion of horizontal accountability. Since it refers to the horizontal separation of powers and to an independent judiciary, horizontal accountability is closely related to the notion of democracy. However, the actual support for this area may target foreign policy goals other than democratisation, such as the support of business and, eventually, the smooth working of the free market; iii) the EU puts emphasis on elements that are not directly related to democracy but may support a democratic development and may protect democracy from shocks and destabilising tendencies. These are socio-economic development, stateness, and civil society, which do not always support democratisation. Often socio-economic development is given priority over democratisation.[124]

The EU has also been trying to support and increase its involvement in the neighbourhood by implementing its policies through civil society actors, by making arrangements for civil society, political society and state authorities to work together, and by extending financial assistance to the governments willing to reform. However, civil society has not always been instrumental in promoting democracy in countries for there are certain barriers in its functioning. Today the EU is facing multiple challenges and has to come up with different ways to deal with societies that are willing to follow and adopt the EU values and norms.

[124]Wetzel and Orbie (2012), "The EU's Promotion of External Democracy: In search of the plot", *CEPS Policy Brief*, p.1-6.

Chapter 4

The European Union, Russia and the Eastern Partnership

The relationship between the EU and Russia has witnessed many ups and downs. There have been phases of optimism and distrust. The EU-Russia relations have been built upon the practice of communication and dealings between European Community and Soviet Union which has evolved in the post-Cold War period both at international and European level. The Cold War period witnessed tensions between the two power blocs, the Western Bloc and Soviet Bloc, until the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement that was signed with former Soviet Union in 1989, proved to be inadequate for closer economic and cultural cooperation. The new challenge was to establish harmonious relations between the EU and post-Soviet Russia and extend economic assistance to ensure systematic transition. During the 1990s there was asymmetry between the European Community and Russia where Brussels had freedom and liberty to determine the European external environment and simultaneously become the core entity to set the new European architecture. Post-disintegration, Russia adopted a soft power approach in the post-Soviet countries through access to labour market (as most of these countries had a visa-free regime), common cultural and language proximity, and abundant energy resources (Russia has some of the largest natural gas reserves). Energy acted as a source of incentive for the post-Soviet countries that were dependent on cheap energy resources. This chapter would explore the EU-Russia relationship post-Cold War and how did it deteriorate in the mid- twenty first century. It would also deal with the Russian insecurities, highlighting its views and perceptions of Eastern Partnership and the counter measures undertaken to tackle the EU and the countries in the shared neighbourhood, for example the creation of Eurasian Union and the energy dominance Russia has in the region. The chapter would further elaborate on the Ukrainian crisis and how did it impact EU-Russia relations.

4.1 EU- Russia Relations

The European Economic Community (EEC) recognised Russia as the successor of Soviet Union on 23 December 1991. The disintegration led to an increase of Western influence

in the post-Soviet space which further deepened through economic, political and military assistance, and enlargement of NATO and the EU. The expansion was perceived as a strong manifestation of Western influence in the region.Gabriella Meloni pointed out in a working paper that since the Soviet disintegration, the EU has used both coercive and persuasive approach with regard to Russia by trying to influence and offer incentives, technical support, financial assistance, along with stakes in internal market to the country.[1] The enlargement of NATO to the east including Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland, the US actions in the Balkans, the 1999 war in Kosovo[2], and the involvement of western oil companies in the Caspian Sea region ending the Russian monopoly on oil transit, all indicated that Russia was no longer a super power, a position it enjoyed until the end of Cold War. These factors led to the growing influence of the West in the region.

A Partnership and Cooperation Agreement was signed in 1994 to enhance relations in political, humanitarian and economic spheres. President Yeltsin put forward a "vision of Russia that would reform, democratise and integrate with Europe and promised to do everything possible towards European integration".[3] As a result, a detailed composition of steps towards cooperation and integration was set up. However, there were two main difficulties in the negotiation process: 1) Russia went hard on the EU, especially bargaining on the economic front seeking trade concessions, more than what the European Commission had initially offered, and also did not comply with the EU's political conditionality; and 2) the Commission was less than forthcoming in meeting the Russian demands and the member states were slow to respond to Russian requests. The European Commission was also apprehensive about Russia making a u-turn on Russian democracy and economic reforms and hence wanted to maintain such an institutional

[1]Meloni, Gabriella (2008), "Convergence, best practice and Europeanization: A valuable way to rethink EU-Russian Relations?", *Istituto Per GliStudi di PoliticaInternazionale,* Working Paper Issue 33, [Online: Web] Accessed on 2 March 2017, URL: http://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/wp_33_2008_2.pdf.

[2] Even though the war in Kosovo was led by NATO under the aegis of the US, it had major implications on Russia-West relations. First, that US led NATO waged a war to bring about a regime change, and secondly, it was a unilateral military intervention without the UN Security Council mandate and despite Russian objection.

[3]Bildt, Carl (2014), "Russia, the European Union and the Eastern Partnership", *ECFR Riga Series,* p.1, [Online:Web] Accessed on 22 March 2017, URL: http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Riga_papers_Carl_Bildt.pdf.

framework that political and economic changes in the country becomes irreversible.[4] The European Council, in June 1999, adopted a common European Union strategy with regard to Russia, with the aim of strengthening the strategic partnership between the EU and Russia.[5] The leaders at the EU-Russia Summit of 31 May 2003 agreed to strengthen cooperation and create four common spaces including a common economic space; a common space of freedom, security and justice; external security; research and education, and cultural aspects within the framework of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA). This process would be approached in a systematic way.[6]

During the 1990s, the EU's involvement in the Caucasus region and Eastern Europe was not much significant. It had signed Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) with these post-Soviet countries and the relationship was confined only to economic front. However, the EU's approach towards the region changed after the 2004 enlargement and the subsequent launch of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) which brought these countries to the immediate neighbourhood. As stated in the European Security Strategy (2003), "The best protection for our security is a world of well-governed democratic states. Spreading good governance, supporting social and political reform, dealing with corruption and abuse of power, establishing the rule of law and protecting human rights are the best means of strengthening the international order".[7] The main objective of the ENP was to maintain stability and security in the neighbourhood and beyond. Hence peace and security were the two important rationales which formed the basis of EU's policies in the neighbourhood. The ENP was viewed by Russia as a flawed policy in concept. Vladimir Putin had assumed Presidency by that time and Russia rejected the offer of being a part of the ENP demanding to be treated on an equal footing with the EU. This approach was quite contrary to that of President Yeltsin who believed in reforms and

[4]Haukkala, Hiski (2015), "From Cooperative to Contested Europe? The Conflict in Ukraine as a Culmination of a Long-Term Crisis in EU –Russia Relations", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies,* 23 (1): p. 27.

[5] Greek Gazeta (2003), "The overall strategy of the European Union towards Russia", *Work Plan of the EU Greek Presidency*,No.7, February-March 2003, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 April 2017, URL: http://www.greekgazeta.ru/archives/nomer07/articles/16.shtml.

[6] Council of European Union (2003), "EU-Russia Summit Joint Statement - 300th anniversary of St.-Petersburg ñ celebrating three centuries of common European history and culture", *European Union,* 9937/03 (Presse 154), St. Petersburg, 31 May 2003.

[7]European Council (2003), "A Secure Europe in a Better World", *European Security Strategy,* 12 December 2003, Brussels, p.10.

integration with the EU. Russia's vision had changed for it wanted to negotiate the principles of the Union first before integration. According to the then Deputy Foreign Minister Chizhov (2004) -

> this [the ENP] is an attempt to reduce to the least common denominator groups of countries and individual states that are entirely different in their level of development and that, in addition to this, have different objectives with respect to the EU itself – objectives that are oftentimes incompatible with one another.[8]

The ENP Action Plans, that were the center of the neighbourhood policy, came up with tangible reforms in ENP countries in order to achieve a stable and secure neighbourhood. Ukraine was the first country to conclude an ENP Action Plan in 2005 followed by Moldova (2005), Armenia (2006), Azerbaijan (2006) and Georgia (2006). Ukraine was also the first country to initiate consultations with the Union on association agreement that would reflect deepened relationship between the two. Russia was offered to join the ENP, which it declined stating that it cannot be given the same position as that to Morocco or Moldova. It has been of the view that the EU-Russia relations should be based on a mutually beneficial strategic partnership. As Vladimir Chizhov argues-

> Russia is a large self-sufficient country with its own views on European and Euro-Atlantic integration. In contrast to some smaller Eastern European or South Caucasus countries striving for EU-membership Russia is neither a subject nor an object of the European Neighbourhood Policy.[9]

EU-Russia relations deteriorated with the launch of ENP which Russia viewed as "encroachment in its backyard".[10] With the expiration of the PCA in 2007, the EU and Russia started negotiations on a new bilateral treaty which would give access Russia to the EU's single market in return of the Energy Charter Treaty. However, progress was stalled due to Russia's inability to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO), basic

[8]Haukkala, H (2009), "From Zero-Sum to Win-Win? The Russian Challenge to the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood Policies", *Swedish Inistitute for European Policy Studies,* November Issue, p. 1-12.
[9]Haukkala, H (2009), "From Zero-Sum to Win-Win? The Russian Challenge to the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood Policies", *Swedish Inistitute for European Policy Studies,* November Issue, p.3.
[10]Barysch et al (2011), "EU-Russia Relations-Time for a Realistic Turnaround", *Centre for European Studies,* [Online: Web] Accessed on 2 March 2017, URL: https://www.martenscentre.eu/sites/default/files/publication-files/eu-russia.pdf.

requirement for a free trade area, and Russia's withdrawal of signing the Energy Charter Treaty.[11] Another low-point in the bilateral relationship was the Russia-Georgia war of August 2008 which eventually led to the launch of the Eastern Partnership in 2009.

4.1.1 Putin Era

During the latter half of the 1990s, oil prices increased and so did the prices of other goods which eventually led to the devaluation of rouble in 1998. Despite this, Russia managed to maintain its economic growth to around 7 per cent between 2000 and 2007. The initial years of Putin era were that of optimism with internal economic growth and political stability, and efforts were made towards Russia's Europeanisation. Russia adopted a medium-term EU strategy (2000-2010) in 1999 (when Vladimir Putin was the Prime Minister) aimed towards future relations with the EU, and another milestone in relations was the formation of four Common Spaces at the St. Petersburg Summit in 2003. During a visit to Germany in 2001, President Putin during a speech at Bundestag, "underlined the unity of European culture and declared that what came to "European integration, we not just support these processes, but we are looking to them with hope".[12] In November 2003, before the St. Petersburg Summit, President Putin stated, "for us Europe is a major trade and economic partner and our natural, most important partner, including in the political sphere. Russia is not located on the American continent, after all, but in Europe. Russia is interested in developing relations with our partners in the US and the American continent as a whole and in Asia, but, of course, above all with Europe."[13] However, the years 2004-2008 were manifest with distrust and doubts. The Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004) was viewed as orchestrated by the West to bring about a change in the regime. The Chechen wars were seen as a threat to internal stability which gave rise to terrorism and separatism. These two instances led Putin to consolidate power as President and deal with rising separatism and terrorism in the country. The financial crisis of 2008 and the fall in oil prices weakened Russia's economy compelling

[11] The PCA has been renewed annually ever since 2007, but recently in 2014 the talks were suspended because of the Ukrainian crisis.

[12]Haukkala, Hiski (2015), "From Cooperative to Contested Europe? The Conflict in Ukraine as a Culmination of a Long-Term Crisis in EU –Russia Relations", *Journal of Contemporary European Studies,* 23 (1): p. 30.

[13] Lynch, Dov (2004), "Russia's Strategic Partnership with Europe", *The Washington Quarterly,* 27(2): 99-118, p.99.

it towards modernisation and reforms. The recognition of an independent Kosovo and the expansion of NATO were viewed with suspicion.

4.1.2 Medvedev Era

President Medvedev became the new incumbent (2008) which toned down the aggressive behaviour of Russia towards the EU, but only to a certain extent. The Russia-Georgia war of August 2008 brought the relationship to an all-time low. It was the first time that Russia intervened in a country militarily on the pretext of protecting and defending Russian minorities and Russian interests in the country. The recognition of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent nations further aggravated the situation. All these events had brought a dip in EU-Russia relationship, the talks to renew the PCA that expired in 2007 were postponed. However, negotiations on a new agreement, Partnership for Modernisation, between the EU and Russia began during Stockholm Summit in November 2009 and the initiative was formally launched in June 2010.[14] Dmitry Medvedev's Presidency was thus marked by economic cooperation and an improvement in EU-Russia relationship. This stance changed again with Vladimir Putin assuming Presidency in 2012.

The EU is Russia's main trading and investment partner, while Russia is EU's fourth. In 2014, the EU exports to Russia totalled €103.3 billion, while EU imports from Russia amounted to €181.3 billion. The EU trade deficit with Russia was therefore €78 billion in 2014. The current crisis in Ukraine and the illegal annexation of Crimea by Russia has hampered the EU-Russia relations, has frozen their ties and cooperation, and imposed sanctions. To counter this Russia also imposed restrictions on agricultural and food products imported from the EU. This decline in their economic relations has impacted Russian trade with the EU in particular and the world.[15]

Post 2004, 2007, and 2013 enlargements the EU and Russia have come to share a common neighbourhood in Eastern Europe and South Caucasus region. Russia viewed

[14]Bildt, Carl (2014), "Russia, the European Union and the Eastern Partnership", *ECFR Riga Series*, p.1, [Online:Web] Accessed on 22 March 2017, URL: http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Riga_papers_Carl_Bildt.pdf.
[15] Delegation of European Union to Russia (2016), *The Russian Federation and the European Union,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 April 2017, URL: https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/russia/720/russian-federation-and-european-union-eu_en.

the increasing EU proximity in the region as a threat to its sphere of influence as the neighbourhood was strategically important to both the EU and Russia. This has been discussed in detail in the previous chapters.

4.2 Russian Perceptions and Response to the Eastern Partnership

In the mid-1990s, western Europeans were unaware of the perspective on the future positioning of Eastern Europe. There was a debate in response to the fall of communism particularly that of Zbigniew Brzezinski andSamuel Huntington. Huntington, in his article *The Clash of Civilisations (1993),* pointed out the existing divide between western Christianity (hence Western civilization) and Orthodoxy that was prevalent in Ukraine and Belarus. John Lowenhardt writes "Many policymakers drew the conclusion that due to this dangerous fault line, these new states- especially Ukraine- could not play a role in guaranteeing stability in the Eastern part of the European continent."[16] Ukraine being a strategically located country holds importance for both the EU and Russia. However, the European Union was of the view that Ukraine should not become part of NATO or the EU for this would mean jeopardising relations with Russia. Brzezinski in his book *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* stressed that an independent Ukraine would prevent Russia from becoming a dominant power and block Russia's post-Soviet ambitions, thus maintaining a balance in the region and also safeguarding European Security.[17] Events like disintegration of Soviet Union, NATO expansion, and the EU's eastward expansion, resulted in changing geopolitics and extension of European borders up till Russia.

The ENP was launched in 2004 which included the six eastern European countries and the ten countries in the Mediterranean region. The main purpose was to encourage stable government and contain the risks of illegal migration, terrorism, transnational crimes, having potential to disrupt harmony in Europe. The Eastern and South Caucasus region has been embroiled in many ethnic and secessionist crises ever since the fall of Soviet Union. The frozen conflicts of Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Nagorno-

[16]Lowenhardt, John (2005), "Stuck in the Middle: The Shared Neighbourhood of the EU and Russia, 2000-2005", *Netherlands Institute of International Relations- Clingendael,* Paper no.2, p. 5.
[17] Brzezinski, Zbigniew (1997), *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives,* New York, p. 122.

Karabakh had the potential to aggravate tensions in the region on a wider scale. The area thus posed security threat to both the EU and Russia. The Orange Revolution in Ukraine in 2004 brought to power a pro-Western government of Viktor Yushchenko, and the Rose Revolution in Georgia brought further democratic reforms in the country. The Eastern Partnership initiative that included six countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, was launched in 2009. These events led to the concept of shared neighbourhood with Russia accusing the EU of encroaching in its sphere of influence. As Lowenhardt puts it, "The EU and Russia's shared neighbourhood has been developing into an economic and diplomatic battlefield".[18] However, the tussle among the countries in this region was either to become pro-West and get access to aid, trade and investment, technical assistance, and eventual integration into the Single Market, (though not membership), or collaborate with Russia because of their dependence on energy supplies and, cultural and historical affiliation.

Polish Foreign Minister Sikorski argued:

> If we see Russia's future as being in partnership with the European Union, we cannot deny the same prospect to the people of the countries that make up the joint neighbourhoods of both. It would be a poor solution for the EU and Russia to be separated by a region whose contacts with Europe are less substantial than those it has with Russia. That is why I am convinced that the faster we integrate the states of Eastern Europe and the south Caucasus with the EU, the more likely it will be that Russia itself adopts a pro-European orientation.[19]

The creation of Eastern Partnership was the main impetus for Russia to rethink its strategy in the near abroad. The initiative was an extension of ENP towards the Eastern Europe with an aim to bring the region under the EU foreign policy purview. It was launched in 2009 in order to promote socio-economic reforms along with the European values as stated in the *acquiscommunitaire*. Another aim was to strengthen economic and

[18]Lowenhardt, John (2005), "Stuck in the Middle: The Shared Neighbourhood of the EU and Russia, 2000-2005", *Netherlands Institute of International Relations- Clingendael*, Paper no.2, p.7.
[19]Sikorski, Radoslaw (2009), "The EU's "Eastern Partnership" with former Soviet states holds the key to relations with Russia", *Security Europe,* 1 June 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 29 March 2017, URL: http://europesworld.org/2009/06/01/the-eus-eastern-partnership-with-former-soviet-states-holds-the-key-to-relations-with-russia/#.WO-70tKGPIU.

trade relations with the six countries in the region. The Eastern Partnership was different from ENP as it included a component of multilateral cooperation with the partner countries encouraging them to adopt the norms and practices of the Union. In return they were offered deep economic integration in form of Association Agreements or DCFTAs and political association with the Union. Russia viewed this initiative negatively for it considered Eastern Partnership as nothing but the EU's attempt to expand its sphere of influence in the former Soviet space. Secondly, the 2008 Georgian war was seen as a catalyst to launch this policy. The European Council in September 2008 stated that the war was one of the major reasons for the initiative.

> The European Council notes with concern the impact which the current crisis is having on the whole of the region. The European Union considers that it is more necessary than ever to support regional cooperation and step up its relations with its eastern neighbours, in particular through its neighbourhood policy, the development of the "Black Sea Synergy" initiative and an "Eastern Partnership" which the European Council wishes to adopt in March 2009; to this end it invites the Commission to submit proposals in December 2008.[20] (European Council, para 7)

The European Union firmly states that the initiative is not anti-Russia.

> This is not at all an anti-Russian initiative. We are responding to a desire expressed throughout the countries in our Eastern neighbourhood who want to substantially deepen and widen their relations with the EU. Russia remains a crucial partner for the EU, with whom we are currently negotiating a new comprehensive agreement. We always stress that the members of the Eastern Partnership will need good working relations with all their neighbours, including the Russian Federation.[21]

However, Russia considered this policy as "the EU's divide and rule tactic for the eastern neighbourhood, a policy spearheaded and advocated by a group of EU members with a

[20] Council of European Union (2008), *Extraordinary European Council, Presidency Conclusions*, 12594/2/08 REV 2, 1 September 2008, Brussels, [Online:Web] Accessed on 22 March 2017, URL: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/102545.pdf.

[21] European Union Delegation to the United Nations, *Eastern Partnership-Frequently Asked Questions*, [Online:Web], Accessed on 12 March 2017, URL:http://eu-un.europa.eu/eastern-partnership-%C2%96-frequently-asked-questions/.

negative agenda towards Russia and its role in the region".[22] During the EU-Russia Summit on 22 May 2009, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev warned that the Eastern Partnership would fan political tensions in the region and said: "I'll put it succinctly. We tried to convince ourselves [that the EU project is harmless] but in the end we couldn't. What worries us is that in some countries attempts are being made to exploit this structure as a partnership against Russia".[23]

The EU has been trying to cater Russian concerns but has not been completely successful. Russia did not become part of this initiative but an understanding was reached that it would participate as a third country on case-to-case basis and on certain issues. Its adverse stand towards the Eastern Partnership has been a reaction to two aspects. One that Russia believes the initiative to be a source of establishing better ties with Belarus, which is one of Russia's closest allies. Second was the declaration on the modernisation of Ukraine's gas transit network, adopted by EU and Ukraine on 23 March 2009, which foresees no explicit role for Russia in the project.[24] Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov asserted that the initiative was an attempt to "expand the EU's sphere of influence" forcing the partner countries to either side with the EU or Russia. He said that Russia had special relations with eastern European countries because of "hundreds of years of common history" and Russia's open labour market. In response to this Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt at the Brussels Forum said that "The Eastern Partnership is not about spheres of influence. The difference is that these countries themselves opted to join. The EU's position on Georgia is not 'blackmail' but "is about upholding the principles of the EU and international law, which Russia should also be respecting".[25]

The recent initiatives by the EU and Russia with the partner countries in Eastern Europe, the Eastern Partnership and the Eurasian Custom's Union (ECU), have been responsible for shaping developments in the Black Sea Region. Russia considered the Eastern

[22]Haukkala, H (2009), "From Zero-Sum to Win-Win? The Russian Challenge to the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood Policies", *Swedish Inistitute for European Policy Studies,* November Issue, p.6.
[23]Rettman, Andrew (2009), "EU-Russia summit ends with prickly exchange over energy", *EU Observer,* 23 May 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 March 2017, URL: https://euobserver.com/foreign/28173**.**
[24]Stewart, Susan (2009), "Russia and the Eastern Partnership- Loud Criticism, Quiet interest in Cooperation", *StiftungWissenschaft and Politik- German Institute for International and Security Affairs,* p.1-4.
[25] Pop, Valentina (2009), "EU expanding its 'sphere of influence,' Russia says", *EUobserver,* Brussels, 21 March 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 14 May 2017, URL: https://euobserver.com/foreign/27827**.**

Partnership initiative to be an 'empty project' and was not in favour of these countries integrating with the EU. Its stance and approach changed especially after the negotiations and progress in Association Agreements with four countries, namely Armenia, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in 2012. Russia was thus provoked to augment pressure on partner countries in order to counter the EU's rising influence in the post-Soviet space. It resulted in Russia forcing the countries to alter their decisions. Russia exerted pressure by inflicting trade restrictions and cuts in gas supplies to countries that were pro-EU and providing cheap gas supplies, access to market, and assistance to countries that refused to sign the Association Agreements with the Union.[26] Economic pressure was mounted on Armenia which, despite completing negotiations for Association Agreement and DCFTA with the European Union, altered its decision and joined the ECU after President Putin's visit to Yeravan in September 2013. In case of Moldova, Russia put an embargo on the Moldovan wine and also threatened to cut off energy supplies during winters as the country is completely dependent on the Russian gas. Similarly, Russia imposed economic sanctions on Ukraine including ban on various products and customs operations. This led President Yanukovych of Ukraine to suspend the signing of Association Agreement during the Vilnius Summit in favour of the ECU. These events led to protests in the country with the Union criticizing Russia of open confrontation and the war waged in eastern Ukraine. The bargain offered by Russia was to supply gas at low price and also offer trade and loan concessions of around US$ 17 billion. Catherine Ashton, former High Representative, in a statement referred to this as "a disappointment not just for the EU butalso for the people of Ukraine."[27] Laure Delcour describes these events saying, "Paradoxically, at a time when it was moving toward implementation, the EU's Eastern

[26]Gromadzki, Grzegorz (2015), "The Eastern Partnership After Five Years- Time for Deep Rethinking", *European Parliament, Directorate General for External Policies of the Union,* Belgium, [Online:Web] Accessed on 28 February 2017, URL:http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2015/536438/EXPO_STU(2015)536438_EN.pdf.

[27]Gotev, Georgi (2013), "Ukraine stuns EU by putting association deal on ice", *Euractiv,* 21 November 2013, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 June 2017, URL: http://www.euractiv.com/section/global-europe/news/ukraine-stuns-eu-by-putting-association-deal-on-ice/.

policy has thus been caught in a geopolitical trap as a result of Russia's countervailing actions".[28]

This became apparent with the European Union being viewed as a security actor in the region. The EU became involved in various conflicts going on in the region where it was drawn in the peace negotiations on Moldova-Transnistria conflict as an observer in 2005, the Abkhazia-South Ossetia conflict where it has been co-chairing the Geneva Talks since 2008.[29]

4.3 Russia Interests in the East Europe and South Caucasus Region

The Eastern Partnership was launched by the EU towards the eastern European countries that were part of the former Soviet Union. They were offered financial and technical assistance to facilitate political and economic reforms and in return were offered free trade agreements, visa-free travel, and political assistance with the Union. These reforms included respect for human rights, democracy, rule of law, fundamental freedoms and market economy. Countries like Georgia and Moldova showed a positive response to these reforms for they regarded it as an initial step towards EU membership. Belarus and Azerbaijan on the other hand lacked interest in these reforms and considered themselves more inclined towards Russia if not independent of both sides. Governments in Armenia and Ukraine were more opportunistic for on one hand they were keen on pursuing reforms and cooperate with the EU, but on the other hand disrupted measures that could jeopardise their hold on power. [30]

The question that arises here is why suddenly Russia started viewing Eastern Partnership with scepticism when it had a neutral reaction at the time European Neighbourhood Policy was launched in 2004? The Eastern European region is a zone of strategic importance for Russia and this became apparent especially after two events: 1) NATO enlargement and involvement in the war in Kosovo in 1999 despite Russian opposition;

[28]Delcour, Laure (2015), "Escaping Geopolitical Entrapment: the EU's Eastern Policy in Light of EU-Russia Rivalry", in eds. AnahitShirinyan and Louisa Slavkova, *Unrewarding Crossroads? The Black Sea Region amidst the European Union and Russia,* June 2015, p.92-105.
[29] Fischer, Sabine (2012), "The European Union and the Insiders/Outsiders of Europe: Russia and the Post-Soviet Space", *Review of European Studies,*Vol 4(3), p.35.
[30]Kobsova, Jana, "Eastern Partnership after Riga: Rethink, Reforms, Resilience", *ECFR Riga Series,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 April 2017, URL: http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Riga_Series_Jana_change.pdf.

and 2) the 2004 Orange revolution in Ukraine which was interpreted to be a coup launched by the West to threaten Russian interests in the region.[31] These two events led Russia to strengthen its presence in its neighbourhood. Russia's military involvement in Georgia in 2008 was seen as an example of Russia's assertiveness in the region and had negative effect on EU-Russia relations to a certain extent. However, the relationship continued to be that of "competition as well as of an indispensable partner".[32] Dmitri Trenin has argued that Russia's involvement in the "common neighbourhood" is more about interests rather than influence. He points out three areas of interests that include 1) politico-military interests, where Russia has deployed its forces in the neighbourhood and also had military bases in countries so as to maintain a security system and shield Russia from the future challenges coming from west, south, and south east. One of the main aims was to stop any CIS state from joining the NATO or providing bases to US military. This was one of the core issues for the 2008 Georgian war because Georgia wanted to join NATO; 2) economic and financial interests - Russian economy was more powerful than other CIS nations and had provided employment to many people until the 2008 financial crisis. It used this advantage as a soft power over its neighbours. Russia also being a major energy exporter saw the region as a transit for its oil and gas exports across the territories of new states as well as to gain access to important resources and energy from them. Russia's Gazprom[33] has a monopoly as it is the only source which transfers Central Asian gas to the world market; 3) societal and cultural interests - being part of former Soviet Union, many countries in the neighbourhood are culturally more affiliated to Russia. Also there are many Russian minorities living in countries like Belarus, Ukraine, and Azerbaijan which make up a considerable percentage of these countries population.[34]

[31]Cadier, David (2014), "Eastern Partnership vs Eurasian Union? The EU–Russia Competition in the Shared Neighbourhood and the Ukraine Crisis", *Global Policy*, 5(1), p. 79.
[32]Cadier, David (2014), "Eastern Partnership vs Eurasian Union? The EU–Russia Competition in the Shared Neighbourhood and the Ukraine Crisis", *Global Policy*, 5(1), p. 79.
[33] The Russian gas giant has monopoly over the internal pipeline transportation network, it is the only company allowed to sell Russian gas outside the country and also bought several small players such as Itera, Sibneftegaz or TNK – BP. Kremlin's main instrument in its energy policy where the Russian state is the main shareholder with 51%, remaining shares being owned by legal Russian entities (29%), Russian privates (13%) and foreign shareholders (7%).
[34]Trenin, Dmitri (2009), "Russia's Sphere of Interest, not Influence", *The Washington Quarterly*, October 2009, p. 3-22.

Russia's involvement in all the Eastern Partnership countries in some form or the other has depicted its hostile nature as well as the weaknesses of Eastern European countries. The country's support to the separatists in eastern Ukraine and annexation of Crimea has destabilised Ukraine, resulted in many casualties and internally displaced people, and has further intensified the economic crisis. Despite the EU's economic and political assistance, Ukraine has been unable to provide internal stability and security in the country. Moldova on the other hand, a pro-EU country, was successful in implementing various reforms including signing of the free trade agreement and improvements in energy efficiency. However, the country has been struggling to cope with the impact embargoes inflicted on the agricultural produce by Russia. Moldova is also dependent on the remittances from its citizens living abroad, especially in Russia, and the losses suffered because of the Russian embargoes would not be compensated by trade liberalisation with the EU. Russia has also been using separatists to instigate the Transnistria conflict and pressurise Moldova. Georgia, under a pro-West government, has been able to carry out reforms and enhance security as per EU standards. However, here too Russia has been using the separatist region of Abkhazia and South Ossetia to put pressure on the country. It has been supporting and sponsoring actors to enter Georgia's political and media-space and encourage alignment to the Eurasian Union instead of the EU. Armenia, which had initially agreed to sign the Association Agreements and DCFTA with the EU, rejected the offer later due to Russian pressure and instead joined the Eurasian Economic Union. Russia was also involved in the country's sovereign decisions. President Lukashenko of Belarus was one of the staunch supporters of Russia and was a signatory to the Eurasian Union. He feared Russia for it had the capacity to weaken his position and power and topple his government. Azerbaijan was indifferent towards both the EU and Russia because it is an energy rich nation though has been apprehensive about Russia's ability to pressurise through the unresolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.[35]

Russia in recent times has become more assertive in defending its interests in the region. Two main reasons for Russia's active involvement are 1) theweak economies of the

[35]Kobsova, Jana, "Eastern Partnership after Riga: Rethink, Reforms, Resilience", *ECFR Riga Series,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 April 2017, URL: http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Riga_Series_Jana_change.pdf.

Eastern Partnershipcountries have made the Russian markets crucial and vital permittingit to control several strategic sectors in all Eastern Partnership states but Azerbaijan; and 2) political corruption and authoritarianism in these countries has led toRussia to influencing politics in the Eastern Partnership countries.[36]

4.3.1 Russia's Energy Diplomacy towards Eastern Partnership Countries

Energy has been an important aspect of Russian foreign policy that has enabled the country to maintain its power position globally. To give a quick background, Russia has the world's largest natural gas reserves, the second largest coal reserves and seventh largest oil reserves. It is also the largest exporter of natural gas, and since 2009 has occasionally overtaken Saudi Arabia as the world's largest oil producer.[37]The EU imports a significant amount of oil, natural gas, uranium, and coal from Russia and also serves as an important energy market for Russia. An EU-Russia Dialogue was launched in 2000 to boost the close energy partnership. Various energy dialogues have been launched since. However, they have been unproductive because of Russia's monopolistic and heavy handed approach towards the EU whereas the EU is involved in unnecessary bureaucracy and has been unyielding to Russia.[38] A 2006 New York Times report mentioned that NATO should play a greater role towards energy security in Europe. Poland took an initiative to gather support from the EU and NATO and protect countries that were dependent on Russia for energy supplies. This measure was taken following the cut in deliveries by Russia, in January 2006, to Ukraine over price dispute. Senator Richard Lugar, the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said that NATO must defend member state that is attacked using energy as a weapon by invoking Article 5, which should not be confined to conflicts.[39]

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[36]Kobsova, Jana, "Eastern Partnership after Riga: Rethink, Reforms, Resilience", *ECFR Riga Series,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 4 April 2017, URL: http://www.ecfr.eu/page/-/Riga_Series_Jana_change.pdf.

[37] Lough, John (2011), "Russia's Energy Diplomacy", *The Royal Institute of International Affairs,* REP RSP BP 2011/01, p.1-16, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 April 2017, URL: https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/files/chathamhouse/19352_0511bp_lough.pdf.

[38]Trenin, D et.al. (2013), "The End of an Era in EU-Russia Relations", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* Moscow, p. 1-22.

[39]Demsey, Judy (2006), *U.S. senator urges use of NATO defense clause for energy - Europe - International Herald Tribune,* The New York Times, 28 November 2006, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 April 2017, URL: http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/28/world/europe/28iht-nato.3702073.html.

The European Security Strategy of 2009 pointed out the need for Europe to have a more unified energy market with greater inter-connection, more attention to the most isolated countries and crisis mechanisms to deal with temporary disruption to supply. It further emphasised on greater diversification of fuels, sources of supply, and transit routes, which would beas essential as is good governance, respect for rule of law and investment in source countries. The EU policy has been supporting these objectives through engagement with Central Asia, the Caucasus and Africa, as well as through initiatives like the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean. Energy has been a major factor in EU-Russia relations and henceEurope'senergy policy should address transit routes, including through Turkey, Ukraine and along with thepartners(China, India, Japan and the US) should promote renewable energy, low carbon technologies and energy efficiency, alongside transparent and well-regulated global markets.[40]

The Eastern Partnership initiative has also dealt with the energy security aspect giving it due importance. The Joint Declaration of Prague Eastern Partnership Summit 2009 stated that:

> The Eastern Partnership aims to strengthen energy security through cooperation with regard to long-term stable and secure energy supply and transit, including through better regulation, energy efficiency and more use of renewable energy sources. Provisions on energy interdependence could be included in the new Association Agreements or other bilateral arrangements between the EU and the partner countries. Energy cooperation should take into account the EU's Second Strategic Energy Review and each partner country's energy policy.[41]

The European Union is an important market for Russian energy sales. Much of EU-Russia relationship revolves around energy and has been a source of controversy too. Russia exports gas to Europe through three main routes discussed below, whereas Finland and the Baltic countries have their own direct pipeline connections to Russia.

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[40] Council of the European Union (2009), A Secure Europe in a Better World, *European Security Strategy*, p. 1-50.

[41] European Union (2009), "Joint Declaration of the Prague Eastern Partnership Summit", *Council of the European Union*, 8435/09 (Presse 78), Prague, 7 May 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 13 October 2016, URL: http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/107589.pdf.

1) The Ukrainian pipeline network (built during the Cold War) -The Brotherhood pipeline built in 1967 (then Soviet Union) has been a major source for Russian gas delivery. This pipeline runs through Ukraine to Slovakia, and further splits into two branches to supply deliveries in northern and southern European countries. However, there has been a decline in the gas supplies through Ukraine, with only 39 per cent in 2015. Ukraine depends on Russia for up to 60 per cent of its domestic gas demands and has been warned of complete suspension of gas deliveries once the contract between Russian Gazprom and Ukrainian Naftogaz ends in 2019. The rift between Ukraine and Russia has also been a result of a series of disputes (2005, 2008, and 2009) between the two countries, especially the 2009 gas crisis where most of the European countries face gas shortages during peak winter season.

2) The Yamal-Europe pipeline (via Belarus and Poland, built in the 1990s) –a 4,200-kilometer-long conduit with a capacity of 33 billion cubic meters a year, first delivered gas to Germany via the Belarus-Polish corridor in 1997. In 2015, the pipeline carried 22 per cent of Russian gas imports.

3) The Nord Stream pipeline – The pipeline was inaugurated in 2011, stretches 1,220 kilometers under the Baltic Sea, has an annual capacity of 55 billion cubic meters and transports an ever-increasing volume of gas (23% of imports in 2015). Another project, the Nordstream 2, is currently being developed, which would involve laying a second conduit with the same capacity, also under the Baltic Sea. The project has, however, met with some reticence, notably from Poland and its Eastern European neighbours, who fear becoming dependent on Russia for energy.[42]

Russian giant Gazprom, together with Italian partner Eni, built a 1,200 km long pipeline underneath the Black Sea called Blue Stream (inaugurated in 2005) with an annual capacity of 16 billion cubic meters, which runs from Russia to Turkey and across Europe through Bulgaria. To provide more transit routes Russia planned to build a southern corridor creating a second link as a substitute to Ukrainian transit. The 3,600 km

[42]Planete Energies (2015), "Energy and Geopolitics: Russian Gas Transit", 20 July 2015, [Online:Web] Accessed on 2 May 2017, URL: http://www.planete-energies.com/en/medias/close/energy-and-geopolitics-russian-gas-transit.

South Stream project would have delivered Russian gas to Bulgaria, via the Black Sea, and then across the Balkans to Europe. However, in December 2014, President Vladimir Putin abandoned the project due to EU's rules where it urged Gazprom to allow other producers to use the future pipeline. Gazprom rejected the proposal citing its huge investments in the project. Another proposal, Turkish Stream, was put forward by Russia which would transfer Russian gas to a new major energy hub located on the Turkish-Greek border. In September 2016, Turkey and Russia signed an agreement to build Turkish Stream despite geostrategic disagreements on several regional issues. Provided the EU agrees, the project would see two pipelines laid under the Black Sea – one serving Turkey, the other Europe.[43]

Ukraine provides a base as a transit country for almost half of Russian gas exported to Europe through the Druzhba pipeline that crosses Ukraine. Post-Orange Revolution, Ukraine changed its political orientation and moved towards a pro-EU and pro-NATO stance. Ukraine was dependent on Russian energy to large extent and often availed discounts and other perks towards import of Russian gas. Russia used this vulnerable position to put a stop to Ukraine's foreign policy orientation. The two gas wars of 2006 and 2009 were started with an aim to increase Ukraine's energy dependence on Russia and also urged Europe to look for alternatives and start on its own projects in order to avoid such crisis. These wars not only disrupted the flow of Russian energy but also affected the economy of Eastern and Southern European countries. The most recent crisis took place in 2014, after the 'Maidan protests' when Russia launched a gas blockade against Ukraine that led to shortages of anthracite coal and power. Despite this, Russia exported approximately 42 per cent of EU's energy demands. However, other routes of providing gas are being explored by Russia which is now using the Nord Stream route and the Belarusian transit corridor as an alternative to Ukraine. Another reason for this shift is that Russian giant Gazprom holds major stakes in Nord Stream and Yamal pipelines whereas in Ukraine, the state-owned Naftogaz controls the Ukrainian pipelines. Hence to avoid any kind of dependence on Ukraine, Russia has been looking for

[43]Planete Energies (2015), "Energy and Geopolitics: Russian Gas Transit", 20 July 2015, [Online:Web] Accessed on 2 May 2017, URL: http://www.planete-energies.com/en/medias/close/energy-and-geopolitics-russian-gas-transit.

alternatives. Irrespective of Russia's interests and alternatives, Ukraine remains an important country as well as a transit route for two reasons: 1) the other two pipelines, the Nord Stream and Yamal, lack the ability to transfer the total amount of gas imported by Europe even when used in full capacity; and 2) many Southern and Eastern European countries are dependent on Ukrainian corridor for Russian gas imports.[44] The recent conflict further escalated tensions between Ukraine and Russia where Russian giant Gazprom suspended gas supplies in summer of 2014 and 2015 due to the pending Ukrainian debts, though not impacting the supplies to the EU.[45]

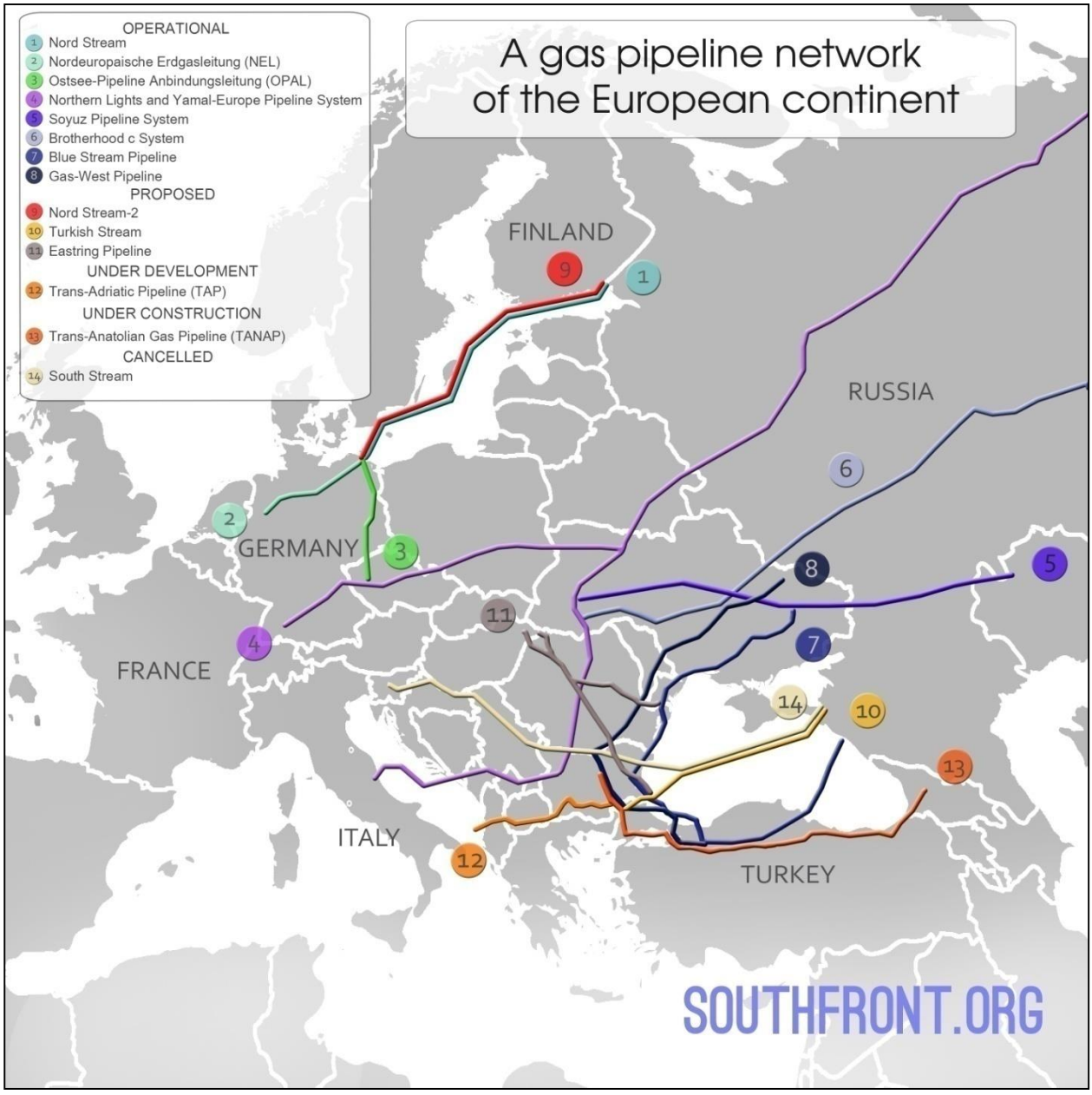
The European Commission *Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets*pointed out that since 25 November 2015, Ukraine has not purchased gas from Russia, citing the uncompetitive terms offered by Gazprom. The country hasrelied on indigenous production and imports coming from the EU. The transit of Russian gas to Europe continued uninterrupted but during the summer of 2016 Ukraine repeatedly pointed to pressure drops on the Russian-Ukrainian border. The Commission, as a result, offered to organise a monitoring mission to Russia and Ukraine. Until the finalisation of this report and despite trilateral talks which took place on 9 December 2016, no agreement was reached between Russia and Ukraine on the terms for the purchase of Russian gas in the coming winter.[46]

[44]Siddi, Marco (2015), "The EU-Russia Gas Relationship: New Projects, New Disputes?",*The Finnish Institute of International Affairs*, Briefing Paper 183, October 2015.

[45] Countries like Austria, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Hungary are dependent on Ukrainian transit for supply of Russian gas.

[46] European Commission (2016), *Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets*, Market Observatory for Energy, DG Energy, Vol 9, Issue 2 and 3, second and third quarter of 2016, p.13, [Online:Web] Accessed on 20 April 2017, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/quarterly_report_on_european_gas_markets_q2-q3_2016.pdf.

Figure 4.1: Gas Pipelines of the European Continent



Source: https://southfront.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/A-gas-pipeline-network-of-the-European-continent.jpg.

Figure 4.2: Europe's Alternative to Russian Gas

Source: Chyong, Chi-Kong et. al. (2015), "Europe's Alternatives to Russian Gas", *European Council on Foreign Relations Commentary*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 May 2017, URL: http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_europes_alternatives_to_russian_gas311666.

4.3.1.1 Facts and Figures

The EU is largely dependent on importing energy, particularly oil and gas from neighbouring countries. Russia has been the main supplier of crude oil and natural gas, followed by Norway. In the first semester of 2016, Russia's share in EU imports of natural gas and petroleum oil stood at 38.9 per cent (38.5 per cent in 2015) and 32.6 per cent (28.6 per cent in 2015) respectively.[47]

More than half of the EU-28's energy comes from countries outside the EU and it has been rising over the years. Major part of the energy imported into the EU comes from Russia, which is involved in disputes with transit countries and has often resulted in disruption of supplies in recent years. The crisis in Ukraine post 2013 has further worsened raising the security concerns of supplies from Russia. EU-28 dependency on energy imports increased from less than 40 per cent of *gross energy consumption*[48] in the 1980s to reach 53.5 per cent by 2014.[49]

[47] Eurostat (2017), *EU Imports of Energy Products- Recent Developments*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 May 2017, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/EU_imports_of_energy_products_-_recent_developments.

[48] Gross energy consumption or Gross inland energy consumption, sometimes abbreviated as gross inland consumption, is the total energy demand of a country or region. It represents the quantity of energy necessary to satisfy inland consumption of the geographical entity under consideration.

[49] Eurostat (2016), *Energy Production and Imports*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 May 2017, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/Energy_production_and_imports#Main_statistical_findings.

Table4.1: Main Origin of Primary Energy Imports, EU-28, 2004–14

	Solid fuels										
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Russia	18.0	23.7	24.9	24.7	26.1	30.0	26.9	26.2	25.7	29.0	29.0
Colombia	12.0	11.7	11.3	12.7	12.3	17.4	19.9	23.5	24.2	22.0	21.2
United States	7.2	7.6	7.8	9.1	14.0	13.5	16.8	17.8	22.9	21.8	20.5
South Africa	25.2	25.0	23.1	20.1	16.5	15.8	9.6	7.7	6.3	6.7	9.9
Australia	14.5	13.1	12.0	13.0	11.7	7.5	10.5	8.7	7.2	7.4	6.2
Indonesia	6.6	7.2	9.3	7.8	7.3	7.0	5.5	5.0	4.5	3.1	3.4
Canada	2.4	3.2	2.8	3.0	2.6	1.4	2.0	2.2	1.6	1.8	2.5
Ukraine	2.3	2.2	1.6	1.8	2.3	1.7	1.9	2.3	1.6	1.5	1.5
Norway	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.3	0.6	0.7
Others	11.3	5.9	7.0	7.3	6.7	5.0	6.1	6.1	5.8	6.1	5.1
	Crude oil										
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Russia	32.5	32.9	33.8	33.7	31.8	33.6	34.7	34.8	33.7	33.7	30.4
Norway	18.7	16.8	15.4	15.0	15.0	15.1	13.7	12.5	11.2	11.8	13.1
Nigeria	2.6	3.2	3.6	2.7	4.0	4.5	4.1	6.1	8.2	8.1	9.1
Saudi Arabia	11.3	10.5	9.0	7.2	6.8	5.7	5.9	8.0	8.8	8.7	8.9
Kazakhstan	3.3	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.8	5.3	5.5	5.7	5.1	5.7	6.4
Iraq	2.2	2.1	2.9	3.4	3.3	3.8	3.2	3.6	4.1	3.6	4.6
Azerbaijan	0.9	1.3	2.2	3.0	3.2	4.0	4.4	4.9	3.9	4.8	4.4
Algeria	3.3	3.5	2.5	1.9	2.5	1.6	1.2	2.6	2.9	3.9	4.2
Angola	0.6	1.2	0.7	2.0	2.6	2.7	1.6	2.1	2.0	2.9	3.3
Others	24.5	24.0	25.2	26.6	26.0	23.8	25.6	19.8	20.1	16.7	15.5
	Natural gas										
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Russia	43.6	40.7	39.3	38.7	37.6	33.1	32.1	34.9	34.9	41.2	37.5
Norway	24.3	23.8	25.9	28.1	28.4	29.4	27.5	27.3	31.2	30.0	31.6
Algeria	17.9	17.6	16.3	15.3	14.7	14.3	14.0	13.2	13.6	12.8	12.3
Qatar	1.4	1.5	1.8	2.2	2.3	5.5	9.7	11.8	8.5	6.6	6.9
Libya	0.4	1.6	2.5	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.7	0.7	1.9	1.7	2.1
Nigeria	3.6	3.4	4.3	4.6	4.0	2.4	4.1	4.4	3.6	1.8	1.5
Trinidad and Tobago	0.0	0.2	1.2	0.8	1.7	2.3	1.5	1.1	0.9	0.7	0.9
Peru	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.8	0.5	0.4
Turkey	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Others	8.7	11.0	8.8	7.3	8.2	9.9	8.2	6.3	4.5	4.5	6.5

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: nrg_122a, nrg_123a and nrg_124a)

Source: European Commission (2016), "Main origin of primary energy imports, EU-28, 2004–14", *Eurostat Statistics*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 April 2017, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php/File:Main_origin_of_primary_energy_imports,_EU-28,_2004%E2%80%9314_(%25_of_extra_EU-28_imports)_YB16.png.

An ECFR Commentary pointed out, the EU today faces two problems vis-a-vis energy security, 1) gaps in the integration of the European energy market particularly in the Central and Eastern Europe, and 2) disruption of imports. In February 2015 a proposal to establish a European Energy Union was put forward in a European Commission

Communication aimed towards creating alternative to Russian gas supplies which had proved unreliable during the 2006 and 2009 crisis.[50]

According to the European Commission *Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets*, in 2016, the share of the main supply routes of Russian gas imports was relatively stable. Ukraine continued to be the main supply route, covering 41 per cent of total EU imports from Russia in the second quarter and 43 per cent in the third quarter. Volumes arriving through Ukraine (which includes the Brotherhood Pipeline and the Balkan route), traditionally the main supply route of Russian gas to the EU, were 24 per cent higher in the first nine months of 2016 than in the same period of 2015. Volumes surged in August when Nord Stream and the Yamal pipeline were temporarily shut down for maintenance. Gas flows on the Nord Stream pipelines represented 31 per cent of total EU imports from Russia in the second quarter of 2016 but this share decreased to 27 per cent in the third quarter as a result of scheduled annual maintenance between 9 and 17 August. In the first 9 months of 2016, Nord Stream carried 13 per cent more gas than in the same period of the previous year. Gas supplies transiting Belarus covered 26 per cent of total EU imports from Russia in both the second and the third quarters of 2016. Volumes dropped on the Yamal pipeline between 21 and 27 August because of maintenance. Compared to 2015, volumes were 2 per cent higher in the first nine months of 2016. On 28 October 2016, the Commission has adopted revised exemption conditions for the operation of the OPAL gas pipeline which connects Nord Stream in Northern Germany with the gas infrastructure in the Czech Republic. The decision is expected to improve the utilisation of both the OPAL and the Nord Stream pipeline; the latter stood at 70 per cent in the first nine months of 2016.[51]

However, Russia accused the EU's Eastern Partnership initiative as an attempt to increase its influence in post-Soviet space in "quest" for hydrocarbons. The region holds

[50]Chyong, Chi-Kong et. al. (2015), "Europe's Alternatives to Russian Gas", *European Council on Foreign Relations Commentary*, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 May 2017, URL: http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_europes_alternatives_to_russian_gas311666.

[51] European Commission (2016), *Quarterly Report on European Gas Markets*, Market Observatory for Energy, DG Energy, Vol 9, Issue 2 and 3, second and third quarter of 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 20 April 2017, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/energy/sites/ener/files/documents/quarterly_report_on_european_gas_markets_q2-q3_2016.pdf.

importance for the EU as countries like Azerbaijan and Georgia provide alternative routes for gas and oil imports from the Caspian Sea region. Belarus too has an important gas pipeline system.[52]

4.4 Russia and the Eurasian Economic Union

The Eurasian Customs Union was not the first initiative launched by Russia towards integration of post-Soviet states. One of the first was the Commonwealth of Independent States which was set up in 1991. It was more of a medium to direct the process of disintegration of Soviet Union than to introduce a new framework or an initiative. In 1993, Russia came up with an Economic Union focusing on economic relations with the 12 newly independent states. It was similar to the European Union model and an agreement to set up a free trade area was signed in 1994. Despite this, the member states were unwilling to be part of the multilateral projects. The agreements on various initiatives were signed and ratified on the premise convenient to the member countries. Russia on the other hand was sceptical to move further with such projects as they were economically burdensome with no mechanisms to safeguard the obligations undertaken by the partner countries. The Economic Court of CIS was set up to ensure compliance to such obligations and was also authorised to resolve inter-state disputes. However, in reality the judgments passed were mere recommendations for countries to either accept or reject them. Multilateral frameworks were dependent more on the political will of the member states and hence it was convenient to deal with countries on bilateral basis. As Vladimir Putin stated in 2005, "the CIS never had any super-tasks of an economic nature, any integration tasks in the sphere of economics".[53] The origins of ECU can be traced back to 1995 when Russia signed a customs union treaty with Belarus and Kazakhstan, and was followed by Kyrgyzstan in 1996 and Tajikistan in 1997. It gained momentum with Vladimir Putin assuming Presidency and in October 2000 the customs union was transformed into an international organisation, the Eurasian Economic Community. It was an improvement on the CIS framework and aimed to bind all the signatories to its

[52] Pop, Valentina (2009), "EU expanding its 'sphere of Influence', Russia says", *EUObserver*, Brussels, 21 March 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 April 2017, URL: https://euobserver.com/foreign/27827.
[53]Dragneva and Wolczuk (2012), "Russia, the Eurasian Customs Union and the EU: Cooperation, Stagnation or Rivalry?",*The Royal institute of International Affairs,* Briefing Paper, p.3.

agreements by seeking to coordinate ratification and prohibit reservations.[54]A permanent executive, the Integration Council, was created. A special court was set up to provide for improved mechanism to resolve disputes. Though there was institutional development, the legal framework remained fragmented.

By mid-2000s, the leaders of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan were more committed towards setting up a customs union. In 2003, Russia came up with the idea of establishing a Single Economic Space and forms an economic union with three former Soviet republics. A decision to this effect was taken at the Minsk Summit of Eurasian Economic Community in June 2006 and in October 2007 a treaty was signed to set up a Customs Union, which would include the three countries. On 1 January 2010, a common customs tariff was launched and in July 2010, the customs union code, the key regulatory document, entered into force whereas in July 2011, the internal physical border controls was eliminated. The Eurasian Economic Union was finally launched on 1 January 2015. The Eastern Partnership initiative (2009) was viewed as a threat to Russian influence. It was viewed with suspicion because unlike the ENP, it was a more targeted approach which offered more substantial incentives that were legally binding. Such incentives included Association Agreements, DCFTAs, and visa liberalization processes that were legally associated with the *acquiscommunitaire* and international standards. Thus the partner countries were legally bound by the EU framework, norms and practices, especially the ones that had signed the Association Agreements with the Union including Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. As a response, Russia launched its own integration process in this post-Soviet space in the form of Eurasian Customs Union. Russia's relations with these countries were initially bilateral revolving around political and economic relations. With the launch of Eurasian Customs Union, Russia offered various benefits to the countries willing to become part of the project with access to Russian market, providing low-priced loans, and low prices for energy resources. The idea was to come up with its own project which would not be combined with EU's offer for a DCFTA and thus putting pressure on partner countries on either integrating them into the Custom's Union or cautioning them for association with the EU. Thus the "common

[54]Dragneva and Wolczuk (2012), "Russia, the Eurasian Customs Union and the EU: Cooperation, Stagnation or Rivalry?",*The Royal institute of International Affairs,* Briefing Paper, p.4.

neighbourhood was not only contested and divided, but also fragmented since Moscow had been (re)activating the secessionist card".[55]

The Eurasian Customs Union was a platform used by Russia to counter the European Union's normative power strategy in the 'shared neighbourhood'. The EU promoted its norms and values of democracy, rule of law, human rights, good governance, and market economy in the neighbourhood through initiatives like European Neighbourhood Policy and the Eastern Partnership. These initiatives were directed towards integrating the post-Soviet states (Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Belarus) into the EU by offering them incentives of the Association Agreements, DCFTAs, Visa Facilitation Agreements and full visa liberalization in the long run, but not membership. Russia, through the Customs Union tried to influence these countries in the 'contested neighbourhood' not only by using soft power, energy conditionality, and military force, but also by asserting the rule-based and institutional regime in the region. The competition thus started between the two powers where until now the EU had dominating position. Vladimir Putin during a speech in Brussels (2014) said that Russia would be interested in cooperation with the EU especially through "the combination of European and Eurasian integration process that would result in a common economic and humanitarian space stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean". He proposed the possibility of a free trade area between the EU and Eurasian Economic Union by 2020 as an initial step.[56]

On 11 September 2013, Commissioner Stefan Füle expressed his concerns before the European Parliament acknowledging "enormous pressure being brought to bear" on some of the EU's Eastern partners. The Commissioner declared: "Let me be clear: the development of the Eurasian Economic Union project must respect our partners' sovereign decisions. Any threats from Russia linked to the possible signing of agreements

[55]Delcour, Laure (2015), "Escaping Geopolitical Entrapment: the EU's Eastern Policy in Light of EU-Russia Rivalry", in eds. AnahitShirinyan and Louisa Slavkova, *Unrewarding Crossroads? The Black Sea Region amidst the European Union and Russia,* June 2015, p. 98.

[56] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (2014), *Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, at the 50th Munich Security Conference*, Munich, 1 February 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 January 2017, URL: http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/obsie-voprosy-mezdunarodnoj-bezopasnosti-i-kontrola-nad-vooruzeniami/-/asset_publisher/6sN03cZTYZOC/content/id/78502.

with the European Union are unacceptable."[57] The threats included misuse of energy prices, artificial trade obstacles, military cooperation and security guarantees, and the instrumentalisation of protracted conflicts as unacceptable.

4.5 TheUkrainian Crisis

The Vilnius Summit brought about a host of changes in the EU including violent incidents on the European borders. Ukraine's prolonged and deadly crisis inthe post-Soviet independence period started as a protest against the government that refused to sign the Association Agreement[58] with the European Union during the 2013 Vilnius Summit thus jeopardising trade ties with the Union. It has since escalated tensions between Russia and the Western powers. President Yanukovych backed off on a trade deal with the European Union in favour of the Eurasian Economic Union forging closer ties with Russia. The crisis was also a result of more than twenty years of weak governance, a lopsided economy dominated by oligarchs with rising unemployment and high taxes and recession, dependence on Russia, and stark differences between Ukraine's linguistically, religiously, and ethnically diverse eastern and western regions.[59] The Maidan protests in Ukraine intensified forcing President Yanukovych flee to Russia and President Putin's declaration to annex the Crimean region of Ukraine. A public referendum was held on 16 March 2014, where an overwhelming majority of Crimeans voted to secede from Ukraine and join Russia. The New York Times reported a White House statement where "President Obama emphasised that the Crimean 'referendum', which violates the Ukrainian constitution and occurred under the duress of Russian military intervention, would not be recognized by the United States and the international community". The President warned of "additional costs" to be imposed on Russia and urgedPresident Putin to take "a clear path for resolving this crisis

[57]Füle, Štefan (2013), "Statement on the pressure exercised by Russia on countries of the Eastern Partnership" *European Union,* 11 September 2013, Strasbourg, [Online:Web] Accessed on 2 March 2016, URL: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_SPEECH-13-687_en.htm.

[58]The political chapter of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was signed at the EU Summit of 21 March 2014, while the remaining sections were signed on 27 June 2014. The Agreement would enter into force once ratified by all the Member States of the EU and Ukraine.

[59] Andreev, Pavel (2014), "The Crisis In Ukraine: Root Causes and Scenarios for the Future", *Valdai Discussion Club Report,* Moscow, [Online:Web] Accessed on 21 March 2017, URL: http://vid-1.rian.ru/ig/valdai/ukraine_eng.pdf.

diplomatically."However, President Putin called the referendum "fully consistent with international law and the U.N. Charter".[60]

Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov also rejected the accusations with regard to "annexation" of Crimea. In a speech he strongly pointed out that the Crimean people "made their choice using the right to free will and the right to self-determination which fully corresponds with and is formalized in the UN Charter, *"Declaration on the Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States*". On 17 March 2014, the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea declared Crimea an independent and sovereign state and turned to Russia, proposing it should accept Crimea including Sevastopol into Russia".[61] President Putin on 18 March 2014 signed a treaty with Ukraine's breakaway region of Crimea thus becoming part of Russia. It was the first time that Russia had expanded its territory after the disintegration of Soviet Union. After the fall of Crimea, many uprisings took place in eastern Ukraine that further destabilised the country. Petro Poroshenko, a pro-European, was sworn in as the fifth President of Ukraine on 7 June 2014 who promised to put an end to the separatist rebellion in the east.Post- Crimean secession, a number of Western countries led by the United States imposed sanctions on Russia targeting leadership, banks, oil and defence companies, individual businesses, as well as for funding rebels who shot down the Malaysian Boeing flight MH17. The West accused Russia of deliberately trying to destabilise Ukraine by sending arms and fighters to Ukraine.[62]

During the 69th session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in September 2014, President Obama in his address accused Russia of "challenging the post-war order" by annexing Crimea, extending arms and deploying troops into Eastern Ukraine.In

[60]Herszenhorn, David (2014), Crimea votes to secede from Ukraine as Russian Troops keep Watch, *The New York Times*, 16 March 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 3 December 2016, URL: https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/17/world/europe/crimea-ukraine-secession-vote-referendum.html.

[61] Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2014), *Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his answers to questions from deputies during the 349th extraordinary session of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation*, Moscow, 21 March 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 3 April 2017, URL: http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/69394.

[62]Khlebnikov, Alexey (2014), Everythingyou need to know about Western sanctions against Russia, *Russia Direct*, 21 October 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 March 2017, URL: http://www.russia-direct.org/things-you-need-know-about-western-sanctions-against-russia#explanation-1.

response, Russia accused the US of promoting 'colour revolutions' and regime change in post-Soviet states thereby provoking chaos and instability. Moscow alleged that Ukraine was a victim of such a policy of the West.[63]

Ukraine was one of the frontrunner in the race for integration into the EU and Russia on the other hand was dissuading it from signing the Association Agreement with the EU. The DCFTA between the EU and Ukraine was one of the most comprehensive agreements agreed with a partner country. It was aimed towards economic integration and reforms in the country. Despite of years of negotiations Ukraine refused to sign the Association Agreement with the EU. Some of the reasons include 1) Ukraine was undergoing economic crisis where it needed a loan of $10 billion and low gas prices and President Yanukovych was aware of the fact that it was Russia and not the EU that would be able to extend such an offer; 2) There was a contrast between what the citizens thought of Europe and what the leadership/elites thought. The President was more interested in maintaining the status quo whereas the citizens and civil society wished for improved living conditions and political change; 3) The cost of restructuring the Ukrainian economy after the signing of free trade agreement would be too high, and the costs of adjustments would be massive leading to a dramatic increase in unemployment.[64] The trade agreement between EU and Ukraine would have been a drawback for Russia and the Customs Union as Ukraine is the largest country in the region, an important partner in Russian automobile and defence sector, and a vital consumer of Russian gas. Ukraine becoming part of the EU trade agreement would have weakened Russian economy and its position in the neighbourhood. From the Russian perspective, fall of Viktor Yanukovych presidency in Ukraine and coming to power of a pro-European government, which would eventually result in NATO membership and probably accession to the EU, were viewed as threats in the neighbourhood. Thus Russia resorted to measures to threaten Ukraine against the same by carrying out a blockade in August 2013 warning the country of further consequences in case of further integration with the Union. These events were

[63]Khlebnikov, Alexey (2014), Everythingyou need to know about Western sanctions against Russia, *Russia Direct,* 21 October 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 March 2017, URL: http://www.russia-direct.org/things-you-need-know-about-western-sanctions-against-russia#explanation-1.

[64] Meister, Stefan (2013), "After Vilnius: Why the EU needs to rethink its Eastern Partnership", *European Council on Foreign Relations,* Commentary, 20 December 2013, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 April 2017, URL: http://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_after_vilnius_why_the_eu_needs_to_rethink_234.

considered to be defensive measures rather than offensive and expansionist as accused by West, with the intention to counter NATO and EU influence in the region that had increased with initiatives like the ENP and Eastern Partnership.[65] Amidst all this, the European Union found itself locked in geopolitical conflict with Russia which has led the EU into a more contested and vulnerable neighbourhood.

The Ukrainian crisis witnessed the lowest point in US-Russia relations in the post-Cold War period. The Crimean crisis led to a change in government, overthrowing the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovych supported by the EU and US. According to Russia, the events in Ukraine were not meant towards creating a democratic and law-based society, but were attempts to make Ukraine anti-Russia, suppress and violate the rights of Russian speaking majority. Russia's involvement in Crimea was not directed towards expanding its territory but to oppose the immense power of West. Sergei Markov, the director of the Institute of Political Studies, in a *Moscow Times* report suggested that: Ukraine must become a neutral state with a democratic government granting equality to both its Ukrainian and Russian-speaking citizens, and making both Ukrainian and Russian official state languages.[66]

4.5.1 50th Munich Conference-2014

During the 50th Munich Conference, on 1 February 2014, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov touched upon the issues of the Eastern Partnership, the Ukrainian Crisis, and how the Russians view the Ukrainian choice of siding with the EU as being imposed by the West. According to him, the Eastern Partnership was considered as a contentious issue between the EU and Russia since its inception for there was lack of dialogue, transparency and consideration of interests of Russia, EU and the neighbours. On the Ukrainian crisis, he raised the question as to why the European Union did not condemn the attacks on police, loss of public property, anti-racist, and anti-semitic slogans raised. He criticised the EU of double standards where on one hand the President of the

[65]Rumer, Eugene (2016), "Russia and the Security of Europe", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* 30 June 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 13 April 2017, URL: http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/30/russia-and-security-of-europe-pub-63990.

[66] Markov, Sergei (2014), "Russia Must Stop U.S. Expansion in Ukraine", *The Moscow Times,* 19 March 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 23 April 2017, URL: https://themoscowtimes.com/articles/russia-must-stop-us-expansion-in-ukraine-32961.

European Union, Herman Van Rompuy stated that the Ukrainian people should be given the freedom to choose between Russia and the EU, and subsequently added that the future of Ukraine was in the EU. Foreign Minister Lavrov went on to say that "this choice was predetermined for Ukraine at the NATO summit of 2007". According to US Department of State spokesperson, "The US hopes that a government will be formed in Ukraine that will ensure political unity and economic prosperity backed by the IMF and meeting the aspiration of the Ukrainian people for a European future". Russian Foreign Minister also referred to Russian President Vladimir Putin's speech at EU-Russia Summit on 28 January 2014 in Brussels where the President recommended cooperation with the EU that would be based on large and mutually beneficial projects and tasks and proposed the formation of a free trade zone between the EU and Eurasian Economic Union by 2020 as an initial step towards such a cooperation.[67]

4.6 Conclusion

A survey was conducted by the members of the European Leadership Network between February-March 2016 in order to prepare a new EU Global Strategy on foreign and security policy. The survey offered views on EU-Russia relations including other issues. Russia had expressed resistance to the EU's Eastern Partnership and its influence in the region. The EU does not offer the countries in this common neighbourhood membership but extends the option of visa-free travel and free trade area with the Union. Hence countries like Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have inclination towards the EU, whereas Armenia and Belarus have their loyalties towards Russia, and Azerbaijan's interests' lies in both.[68]

The European Union largely has failed to build up a coherent position on its policy towards the eastern neighbours. The regionholds only a secondary role in the EU's political agenda, especially in the context of the Union's internal problems like the

[67] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (2014), *Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, at the 50th Munich Security Conference*, Munich, 1 February 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 April 2017, URL: http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/obsie-voprosy-mezdunarodnoj-bezopasnosti-i-kontrola-nad-vooruzeniami/-/asset_publisher/6sN03cZTYZOC/content/id/78502.

[68]Kulesa, Łukasz (2016), "What is the future for EU–Russia relations? A survey of European Leadership Network members for the EU's Global Strategy on foreign and security policy", *European Leadership Network*, European External Action Service.

decision making process, reforms etc. However, the Eastern Partnership is an important framework for the development of mutual relations.Russia on the other hand remains a challenge to the EU's policy in the eastern neighbourhood. The confrontation continues with each trying to maintain their influence. Russian insecurity has increased in the last few years mostly because of the economic advantages and the trade agreements that EU has with countries. It was this reason that Russia resorted to power play position by threatening countries that were pro-Europe, Ukraine being a primary example. Ukraine is an important region for Russia because, 1) it is a resource rich region, is strategically located bordering the Black Sea, and providing access to Europe; 2) it is also a base to the Russian Fleet in Sevastopol; and 3) it provides as a transit for export of Russian energy to Europe. Thus when Ukraine decided to sign the DCFTA with the EU, Russia felt losing its grip in the country which further led to protests and civil war in the country. Also the Russian Eurasian Union was a counter to EU's Eastern Partnership initiative.The Eurasian Union was modelled on the EU and aimed towards deeper integration with countries in the neighourhood. Russia continues to exploit the existing political and economic dependencies of these countries, often by force and without any incentives.[69]

[69]Sadowski, Rafal (2013), "Partnership in Times of Crisis Challenges for the Eastern European Countries' Integration with Europe", *OśrodekStudiówWschodnich, Centre for Eastern Studies,* No 36, Warsaw, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 March 2017, URL: https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/pw_36_en_partnership_net.pdf.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The European Union has always believed in upholding and ensuring stability on its borders. It has adopted different approaches to better integrate countries in the Union. In March 2003, the Commission came up with a Communication *Wider Europe-Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours*, which affirmed that the EU would create a 'zone of prosperity' and 'a ring of friends' on its periphery in order to maintain stability in the region. The lynchpin here was that these countries would not be extended the offer of EU membership. Instead, the EU proposed improved relations on the basis of shared values between the EU and its neighbours. This led to the launch of European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), an instrument envisaged to maintain security and stability around the Member States of the EU that had been exposed to the vulnerabilities of permeable borders, internal as well as external threats. The ENP was established to spread values of democracy, market economy, human rights so as to create a circle of states that were well administered and, were able to maintain stability and security around the Union. The neighbourhood policy was crafted as an alternative to enlargement to establish privileged relations with countries of Eastern and Southern Europe and, that of Southern Caucasus. The countries of Southern Caucasus do not intend to accede to the EU but establish special affiliation through gradual economic integration.

The rising instability resulting from multiple factors like, Colour Revolution in Ukraine and Georgia, Russia-Georgia War in 2008 etc. led to a realization within the Union regarding the further need to promote peace, stability and security. For this, the EU in 2009 launched a new initiative called 'The Eastern Partnership' which was based on shared interests/values and commitment towards democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, along with market economy, sustainable development and good governance. The Partnership was different from the ENP particularly in one aspect, through the former the EU had both multilateral and bilateral relations with the countries involved and through the latter the EU was involved with partner countries bilaterally only. The Eastern Partnership was an extension of ENP

targeted towards six countries of Eastern Europe and South Caucasus, i.e. Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. It furthered the incentives offered under the ENP Action Plans in order to speed up the integration process with the EU. Ukraine was the first country to conclude the ENP Action Plan (2005), followed by Moldova (2005), and the three Caucasus countries (2006). Ukraine was also the first country to initiate new agreement with the EU in order to deepen the relationship. It was a strengthened adaptation of the ENP based on the principle of conditionality, offering political cooperation and economic integration to partner countries depending on the extent of reforms adopted. The main aim of the Eastern Partnership was to upgrade and expand their relationship, enhance cooperation, strengthen political association and deepen economic integration between EU and its neighbours by strengthening existing bilateral relations, multilateral and regional initiatives. On the bilateral front, the commitment was through Association Agreements with Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) as an integral part whereas on the multilateral front, the EU was involved at the intergovernmental, economic, civil society level as well as other institutional level.

The problem the EU faced was that it could not apply the same conditions on all the six countries. Hence, the EU came up with the principle of 'more for more' i.e. the more a partner country would deepen, strengthen, and intensify its reform process, the more it will benefit from the Union. This was intended to improve relations between the EU and partner countries depending upon the progress achieved by each country. Economic integration and increasing mobility through visa facilitation were the two most important incentives for the partner countries to participate in the initiative.

However, one of the key findings of the study is that not much progress has been made in implementing reforms in these countries. There has hardly been any improvement in the areas of democratisation, market economy, political stability, and security, to the extent the EU expected. The initiative has been marred by various shortcomings with lack of consensus among the member states vis-à-vis the Eastern Europe region. West European countries were more interested in building up relations with Southern neighbours compared to Member States of Central and Eastern Europe. As pointed out by Rafal

Sadowski, the Eastern Partnership initiative was aimed towards promoting integration in the Eastern European and Southern Caucasus countries with the EU but turned out to be predominantly a bureaucratic instrument with limited political significance, which hardly matched the European Union's ambitions and the challenges it faced in the eastern neighbourhood.[1]

Another setback was the implementation of democratic reforms and free market. Countries like Azerbaijan and Belarus had authoritarian governments; Ukraine had a pro-west semi-Presidential government where the power-holders were unwilling to give away the authority; Moldova was able to bring about reforms in its governance; whereas Georgia was successful in implementing economic reforms but not in bringing about required democratic reforms. Armenia was somewhere in between the two extremes of authoritarian and democratic governance model. The countries of the eastern neighbourhood were reluctant in bringing about reforms for it meant the ruling elites compromising their power positions and also changing the models of governance.

The study has sought to explore and answer questions raised at the beginning which can be clubbed into certain sets. The next section elucidates questions like: what is the European Neighbourhood Policy, what are the origins of the Eastern Partnership, whether EU has been successful in implementing the Initiative, if yes then to what extent.

5.1 European Neighbourhood Policy

The European Neighbourhood Policy was launched to encompass 16 diverse countries in the neighbourhood within a framework of the EU's shared values of rule of law, democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. The ENP was a result of the 2004 enlargement where ten Central and Eastern European countries became members of the EU. The question the EU faced at that point was where the borders of the EU end as enlargement cannot go on forever. This resulted in the launch of the ENP in 2004 which aimed towards building a stable neighbourhood by promoting EU norms and values to countries beyond its borders. It was a policy instrument to deal with the internal

[1]Sadowski, Rafal (2013), "Partnership in times of crisis challenges for the Eastern European countries' integration with Europe", *Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, Centre for Eastern Studies,* No 36, Warsaw, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 March 2017, URL: https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/pw_36_en_partnership_net.pdf.

transformations and outcomes of the 'big-bang' enlargement that would change the geopolitical landscape of the Union's borders in the east and lead to new security challenges. It was considered an alternative to enlargement where the partner countries were offered "everything but institutions", i.e. they could be associated with EU but would not be granted membership. The aim was to prevent new dividing lines between the EU and its neighbours but at the same time included proposals on regional cooperation and assimilation through integration.

5.2 Eastern Partnership

The ENP was further extended eastwards with Eastern Partnership being launched in May 2009 to strengthen relations with its six Eastern partner states. It was a Polish-Swedish initiative which laid down a new structure for tightening cooperation with these eastern partners. It added a missing dimension to the emerging architecture of the EU's relations with neighbouring regions and states, which until then had consisted of the Union for the Mediterranean, the Strategic Partnership with Russia, Black Sea Synergy and the EU's strategy on Central Asia. The Eastern Partnership was established as a multilateral political framework for six countries to strengthen political association and economic integration of these countries. It was perceived as a step to build on the ENP and further develop EU's engagement in the region. The origins of the Eastern Partnership can be traced back to the 2004 big-bang enlargement which led to the creation of ENP. Even before this, Poland had advocated the concept of eastern dimension in 2003 to deepen relations with countries on the eastern borders, especially Ukraine. It was rejected because the EU followed the 'Russia First' principle and any ties with countries in the eastern region would mean souring of relations with Russia. The Eastern Partnership was also a response to the French proposal of establishing a Union for Mediterranean to provide a policy framework for the 15 Mediterranean partners including countries from North Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Europe. However, the French initiative was treated by the Germans with reserve. Germany as the leading donor to the EU budget and the only big country of the "old" Europe prioritised the Union's orientation towards the East than towards the South of the continent, which gave impetus to the Polish-Swedish initiative. The 2008 Communication on Eastern

Partnership emphasised the need and urgency for the EU to bring about reforms in these countries for a stable, secure and prosperous EU.

The two events that gave momentum to the Eastern Partnership were, the Georgia-Russia war (August 2008), and the gas crisis between Ukraine and Russia (January 2009). The main goal of the Eastern Partnership was to create the conditions to accelerate and deepen political and economic association between the EU and the East European countries of Eastern Partnership. To create the necessary conditions for further integration, the Eastern Partnership supports and advocates political and socio-economic reforms in the partner countries. Its reform agenda were guided by European core values and attempts to bring these countries closer to such European values. However, the EU has been partially successful in implementing these reforms, especially on the economic front. At the political level, the EU has not been able to successfully promote its values of democracy, rule of law and human rights in all the partner countries. The signing of Association Agreements by Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine were positive outcomes of this initiative.

The next section elaborates on questions like what has been the impact of Eastern Partnership on the six partner countries, whether it has been successful in transforming them into democratic societies and, how has the EU dealt with the security challenges in the Eastern and Southern Caucasus region.

5.3 Eastern Partnership and Democracy Promotion

The European Union was founded on the values of peace, democracy, rule of law, human dignity, principles of liberty, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and sustainable development and has been committed to promote democracy in other parts of the world for more than two decades. Supporting democracy is one of the European Union's priorities. It is a system of governance that encompasses and fully realises human rights, development and stability. It has become one of the most successful examples of democratisation globally by making accession into the Union conditional based on democratic principles. Democracy promotion and human rights have been integrated within the Union's external policy and have mention in different EU institutions.

During the 1990s and early 2000s, the EU was the largest multilateral donor to Eastern Europe and South Caucasus post-Soviet countries. The EU, at the time, was more confined to state reforms, technical assistance and economic transformation. The main focus was on stability and market reforms. A number of Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA) were signed with post-Soviet states in the 1990s, primarily concerning trade and economic cooperation. However, events like the 9/11 terrorists attacks, colour revolutions in Ukraine and Georgia, in the early 2000s changed the European Union's strategy in this region as it realized the importance of a stable and secure neighbourhood. These were the key factors that led the EU to become an important player in promoting democracy in the Eastern neighbourhood. The political transition in these countries had a significant impact on other authoritarian regimes in the region and the EU was instantly viewed as a custodian of democratic values and civil society promotion. The change continued with the 2004 eastern enlargement and the introduction of the European Neighbourhood Policy. The eastern enlargement was a success whereby erstwhile socialist countries had adopted the EU's *acquis communitaire* and fulfilled the provisions of political conditionality. The EU moved further with this experience and went ahead with democratic transformation in the East Europe and South Caucasus states. The Eastern Partnership was based on the principle of "more for more", i.e. the more a partner country would deepen, strengthen, and intensify its reform process, the more it would benefit from the Union. In other words, the more the Eastern Partnership countries would progress towards democratisation and market economy, the more benefits and incentives like visa liberalisation, integration into the economy, and youth exchange programmes, they would receive. However, the Eastern Partnership has not been very successful in promoting democracy in the region, particularly because of the dominance of Russia in the region. Most of these countries are dependent on Russia for trade and energy imports and do not want to jeopardise it with close cooperation with the EU. Also not all the partner countries have adopted EU norms and values to bring about reforms.

Some of the countries of Eastern Europe and South Caucasus lacked any previous experience of democracy, rule of law and, good governance while some were willing to adopt the western style governance. Azerbaijan and Belarus have authoritarian

governments, Ukraine adopted a pro-west government in the aftermath of the 2004 Colour Revolution but its pace towards democratisation slowed with the change of government in 2010 when Viktor Yanukovych came to power. Georgia was able to achieve economic growth and liberalisation after the Rose Revolution but not enough reforms towards democracy promotion. Moldova was the only country with a democratic form of government but has been struggling to sustain it. Armenia, as stated earlier, was somewhere between authoritarian and democratic form of government and the progress towards reforms slowed down after the country's decision to turn in favour of joining the Russia-led Eurasian Economic Union. The lack of any previous experience of democratic rule in these countries was a drawback to democracy promotion in this region. The stakes in internal market and visa facilitation with no provision of accession proved to be weak incentives for the officials to initiate reforms in their home countries. Although promoting democracy in this region has proven to be a challenge, the Eastern Partnership did have a positive impact on the six countries in terms of increasing the level of economic cooperation and trade, visa liberalisation and, civil society organizations.

One of the key finding of the study is that the most important Eastern Partnership innovations has been a greater involvement of non-governmental actors (especially civil society) in the EU's cooperation with neighbouring countries. The EU's objective in the Eastern neighbourhood was to promote democratic transition in the partner countries through political and economic reform and to attain this objective civil society was an important instrument. Charniakovich has discussed relationship between the EU and civil society emphasising on the perceptions of local actors of the EU's support to democratic reform and security in Eastern Partnership countries. Civil society actors look forward to the EU's assistance towards government of the partner countries that are willing to adopt reforms, including democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights, and at the same time pressurised the countries that were hesitant. However, the EU can extend support and conditionality to a country only when there is involvement at the local level and demand

from within. Similarly, the security sector reforms need high level political participation and assurance of individual governments and commitment from local civil societies.[2]

The thesis further discusses questions like: how has the Eastern Partnership affected the relationship between the EU and Russia, what are Russia's criticisms of the initiative and, what has been the impact of Ukrainian crisis on the Eastern Partnership.

5.4 Impact of Eastern Partnership on EU-Russia Relations

The relationship between the EU and Russia has witnessed many ups and downs. The Cold War period witnessed tensions between the two power blocs, the Western Bloc and Soviet Bloc, until the disintegration of the Soviet Union. The Trade and Cooperation Agreement that was signed with former Soviet Union in 1989, proved to be inadequate for closer economic and cultural cooperation. The disintegration led to an increase of Western influence in the post-Soviet space which further deepened through economic, political and military assistance, and enlargement of NATO and the EU. The expansion was perceived as a strong manifestation of Western influence in the region. The enlargement of NATO to the east including Czech Republic, Hungary, and Poland; the US actions in the Balkans; the 1999 war in Kosovo[3]; and the involvement of western oil companies in the Caspian Sea region ending the Russian monopoly on oil transit; all indicated that Russia was no longer a super power, a position it enjoyed until the end of Cold War. These factors led to the growing influence of the West in the region.

The Eastern Partnership came into being at the time of the global financial crisis, which had a severe impact on Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States. As a result, the Russian economy lost its capability to attract Eastern European and South Caucasus countries which were looking for solution to overcome the financial collapse. This led to the reorientation of the Eastern economies towards the EU. The Russian reaction to the Prague Summit was very hostile, with Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov calling the Partnership "totally unacceptable" and accusing the EU of trying to extend its "sphere of

[2] Charniakovich, A (2013), "Levers for Change: The EU and civil Society in the Eastern Neighbourhood", *FRIDE Policy Brief*, No 154, April 2013.

[3] Even though the war in Kosovo was led by NATO under the aegis of the US, it had major implications on Russia-West relations. First, that US led NATO waged a war to bring about a regime change, and secondly, it was a unilateral military intervention without the UN Security Council mandate and despite Russian objection.

influence" through this new EU instrument. Russia considered this policy as "the EU's divide and rule tactic for the eastern neighbourhood, a policy spearheaded and advocated by a group of EU members with a negative agenda towards Russia and its role in the region".[4] During the EU-Russia Summit (22 May 2009), Russian President Dmitry Medvedev warned that the Eastern Partnership would fan political tensions in the region and said: "I'll put it succinctly. We tried to convince ourselves [that the EU project is harmless] but in the end we couldn't. What worries us is that in some countries attempts are being made to exploit this structure as a partnership against Russia".[5]

Another key finding is that Russia's adverse stand towards the Eastern Partnership is a result of two aspects. One, that Russia believed the Partnership to be a source of establishing better ties with Belarus, which was one of Russia's closest allies. Second, was the declaration on the modernisation of Ukraine's gas transit network, adopted by EU and Ukraine on 23 March 2009, which foresaw no explicit role for Russia in the project.[6] Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov asserted that the Eastern Partnership was an attempt to expand the EU's sphere of influence, forcing the partner countries to either side with the EU or Russia. He said that Russia had special relations with Eastern European countries because of "hundreds of years of common history" and Russia's open labour market. In response to this, Swedish Foreign Minister Carl Bildt at the Brussels Forum remarked: "The Eastern Partnership is not about spheres of influence. The difference is that these countries themselves opted to join. The EU's position on Georgia is not 'blackmail' but "is about upholding the principles of the EU and international law, which Russia should also be respecting".[7]

However, Russia considered the Eastern Partnership initiative to be an 'empty project' and was not in favour of these countries integrating with the EU. Its stance and approach changed especially after the negotiations and progress in Association Agreements with

[4] Haukkala, H (2009), "From Zero-Sum to Win-Win? The Russian Challenge to the EU's Eastern Neighbourhood Policies", *Swedish Inistitute for European Policy Studies,* November Issue, p.6.
[5] Rettman, Andrew (2009), "EU-Russia summit ends with prickly exchange over energy", *EU Observer,* 23 May 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 March 2017, URL: https://euobserver.com/foreign/28173.
[6] Stewart, Susan (2009), "Russia and the Eastern Partnership- Loud Criticism, Quiet interest in Cooperation", *Stiftung Wissenschaft and Politik- German Institute for International and Security Affairs,* p.1-4.
[7] Pop, Valentina (2009), "EU expanding its 'sphere of influence,' Russia says", *EUobserver,* Brussels, 21 March 2009, [Online:Web] Accessed on 14 May 2017, URL: https://euobserver.com/foreign/27827.

four countries, namely Armenia, Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in 2012. Russia was thus provoked to augment pressure on partner countries in order to counter the EU's rising influence in the post-Soviet space.

Another key finding of the study is that Russia coerced the countries to alter their decisions against forging closer relations with the EU. The Russia's Eurasian Economic Union, which was launched on 1 January 2015, offered various benefits to the countries willing to become part of the project with access to Russian market, providing low-priced loans, and low prices for energy resources. The idea was to come up with its own project which would not be combined with EU's offer for a DCFTA and put pressure on partner countries on either integrating them into the Custom's Union or cautioning them against association with the EU.

An important finding of the study is that the Ukrainian crisis created a situation of a virtual stand-off between the EU and Russia. Ukraine is important because of its strategic location and also because it serves as a gas transit from Russia to Western Europe. Ukraine's prolonged crisis started as a protest against the government that refused to sign the Association Agreement with the European Union during the 2013 Vilnius Summit, thus jeopardising trade ties with the Union. It has since escalated tensions between Russia and the Western powers. President Yanukovych backed off on a trade deal with the European Union in favour of the Eurasian Economic Union forging closer ties with Russia. If Ukraine became part of the EU trade agreement, it would have weakened the Russian economy and its position in the neighbourhood. From the Russian perspective, the fall of Viktor Yanukovych Presidency in Ukraine and coming to power of a pro-European government, which would eventually result in EU and NATO membership, were viewed as threats. Thus, Russia resorted to measures to threaten Ukraine by carrying out a blockade in August 2013, warning the country of severe consequences in case of further integration with the Union. These events were considered to be defensive measures rather than offensive and expansionist as accused by West, with the intention to counter NATO and EU influence in the region that had increased with initiatives like

ENP and Eastern Partnership.[8] Amidst all this, the European Union found itself locked in geopolitical conflict with Russia which has led the EU into a more contested and vulnerable neighbourhood.

The Ukrainian crisis was also a result of more than twenty years of weak governance, a lopsided economy dominated by oligarchs with rising unemployment and high taxes and recession, dependence on Russia, and stark differences between Ukraine's linguistically, religiously, and ethnically diverse eastern and western regions.[9] The Maidan protests in Ukraine intensified, forcing President Yanukovych to flee to Russia and President Putin's declaration to annex the Crimean region of Ukraine. A public referendum was held on 16 March 2014, where an overwhelming majority of Crimeans voted to secede from Ukraine and join Russia.

5.5 Eastern Partnership and the Promotion of EU Values

The first hypotheses of this dissertation was: the EU's promotion of values (such as democracy, human rights, rule of law and, a functioning market economy) through the Eastern Partnership in the absence of eventual membership has not been a strong incentive for six countries to adopt these values.

Any country seeking EU membership must conform to the conditions set out in Article 49 and the principles laid out in Article 6(1) of the Treaty on European Union. Relevant criteria were established by the Copenhagen European Council in 1993 and strengthened by the Madrid European Council in 1995. To join the EU, a new member state must meet three criteria: (1) political – stability of institutions guaranteeing democracy, the rule of law, human rights and respect for and protection of minorities–; (2) economic – existence of a functioning market economy and the capacity to cope with competitive pressure and market forces within the EU; and (3) acceptance of the Community *acquis* – ability to take on the obligations of membership, including adherence to the aims of political, economic and monetary union. For this purpose, enlargement was one of the most

[8] Rumer, Eugene (2016), "Russia and the Security of Europe", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace,* 30 June 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 13 April 2017, URL: http://carnegieendowment.org/2016/06/30/russia-and-security-of-europe-pub-63990

[9] Andreev, Pavel (2014), "The Crisis In Ukraine: Root Causes and Scenarios for the Future", *Valdai Discussion Club Report,* Moscow, [Online:Web] Accessed on 21 March 2017, URL: http://vid-1.rian.ru/ig/valdai/ukraine_eng.pdf.

important foreign policy tools of the European Union in the post-Second World War period. It was targeted towards bringing about peace, stability, and prosperity in Europe and enhancing its security. This foreign policy instrument was not only about drawing new geographical boundaries but also about establishing an order in Europe through norms, values, rules, and regulations offering eventual membership to countries. It has had a positive impact on the countries concerned, thus encouraging democratic reforms. The ENP was launched to encompass 16 diverse countries in the neighbourhood within a framework of the EU's shared values of rule of law, democracy, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. It was similar to the enlargement policy for it aims towards building a stable neighbourhood by promoting EU's norms and values, but it was more of a bilateral policy. The Eastern Partnership was a more targeted approach towards the east because the ENP, which was originally set-up as a special policy towards the EU's neighbours, appeared to be ineffective.

The main goal of the Eastern Partnership was to create the conditions to accelerate political association and deepen economic integration between the EU and the Eastern European partner countries. To create the necessary conditions for further integration, the Eastern Partnership supported and advocated political and socio-economic reforms in the partner countries. Its reform agenda were guided by European values like democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights and fundamental freedom sand attempts to bring these countries closer to Europe. Economic integration and increasing mobility through visa facilitation were the two most important incentives for the partner countries to participate in the initiative. The main aim of the Eastern Partnership was to upgrade and expand their relationship, enhance cooperation, strengthen political association and deepen economic integration between EU and its neighbours by strengthening existing bilateral relations, multilateral and regional initiatives.

One of the most important criticisms of the Eastern Partnership is the absence of membership prospect. The EU tends to have a more technical approach towards its partners with emphasis on Association Agreements and economic reforms. Countries like Georgia and Moldova, which expressed their desire for deeper ties, were not given enough incentives to undertake costly reforms. Due to this, the Eastern Partnership has

been criticised for its one-size-fits-all approach. Promoting democratic governance in the partner countries was one of the major goals of the Partnership. However, the progress varied with Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine being pro-European and pursuing reforms whereas Azerbaijan and Belarus remained distant from the EU with authoritarian regime. Rosa Balfour pointed out that the Eastern Partnership provided a path of integration and association for countries aspiring to accede to the EU (Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova), though without extending any concessions on eventual membership, and secondly to try and engage countries most impermeable to EU influence (Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan).[10]

As observed in the previous chapters and the above explanation, this hypothesis stands validated as the initiative has not been entirely successful in promoting EU's core values. There has been an emphasis on a long-term framework developed through the ENP to step up EU's engagement with Eastern Europe. However, the initiative has been criticised as "it offers too little to the frontrunners and too much to the laggards". Incentives like Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, visa liberalisation, give an option to the countries to pick an offer solely according to their interest in a certain area. For example, the EU is soft towards Azerbaijan, as it is an energy supplier. However, vis-a-vis Belarus the EU is not involved in much trade. Also, the EU should involve itself into political issues concerning these six countries and address the security related problems by creating environments conducive to managing security challenges and focus on economic development and governance reform.[11]

5.6 The Eastern Partnership and Russian Influence in the Eastern Europe and South Caucasus Region

The second hypotheses of the study was that the Eastern Partnership has led to the contestation of Russian influence in the region.

The Eastern and South Caucasus region has been embroiled in many ethnic and secessionist crises ever since the fall of Soviet Union. The frozen conflicts of

[10] Balfour, Rosa (2011), "Debating the Eastern Partnership: Perspectives from the European Union", *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, IPG 3: p 29-40.
[11] Balfour, Rosa (2011), "Debating the Eastern Partnership: Perspectives from the European Union", *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*, IPG 3: p 29-40.

Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh had the potential to aggravate tensions in the region on a wider scale. The area, thus, posed a security threat to both the EU and Russia. The Orange Revolution in Ukraine (2004) brought to power a pro-Western government of Viktor Yushchenko, and the Rose Revolution (2003) in Georgia brought further democratic reforms in the country. These events led to the concept of shared neighbourhood with Russia accusing the EU of encroaching in its sphere of influence. As Lowenhardt puts it, "The EU and Russia's shared neighbourhood has been developing into an economic and diplomatic battlefield".[12]

The Eastern Partnership initiative that included six countries, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Moldova, Georgia and Ukraine, was launched in 2009 and was viewed as a threat to Russian influence. It was viewed with suspicion because unlike the ENP, it was a more targeted approach which offered more substantial incentives that were legally binding. Such incentives included Association Agreements, Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs), and visa liberalisation processes that were legally associated with the *acquis communitaire* and international standards. Thus, the partner countries were bound by the EU framework, norms and practices, especially the ones that had signed or were about to sign the Association Agreements with the Union including Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. As a response, Russia launched its own integration process in this post-Soviet space in the form of Eurasian Customs Union. Russia's relations with these countries were initially bilateral revolving around political and economic relations. With the launch of the Eurasian Customs Union, Russia offered various benefits to the countries willing to become part of the project with access to Russian market, providing low-priced loans, and low prices for energy resources. The idea was to come up with its own project that would not be combined with EU's offer for a DCFTA, thus putting pressure on partner countries on either integrating into the Custom's Union or cautioning them for association with the EU. The "common neighbourhood was not only contested and divided, but also fragmented since Moscow

[12] Lowenhardt, John (2005), "Stuck in the Middle: The Shared Neighbourhood of the EU and Russia, 2000-2005", *Netherlands Institute of International Relations- Clingendael*, Paper no.2, p.7.

had been (re)activating the secessionist card" (with regard to conflicts of Transnistria, Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and Nagorno-Karabakh).[13]

Through initiatives, like the European Neighbourhood Policy and Eastern Partnership, the EU tried to integrate the post-Soviet states (Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Belarus) by offering them incentives of the Association Agreements, DCFTAs, Visa Facilitation Agreements and full visa liberalisation in the long run, but not membership. On the other hand, Russia, through the Customs Union tried to influence these countries in the 'contested neighbourhood' not only by using soft power, and asserting rule based and institutional regime in the region, but also through energy conditionality, and military force. The competition, thus, started between the two powers where until now the EU had dominating position. Vladimir Putin during a speech in Brussels (2014) said that Russia would be interested in cooperation with the EU especially through "the combination of European and Eurasian integration process that would result in a common economic and humanitarian space stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean". He proposed the possibility of a free trade area between the EU and Eurasian Economic Union by 2020 as an initial step.[14]

The EU does not offer the countries in this common neighbourhood membership but extends the option of visa-free travel and free trade area with the Union. Whereas Russia, which shares ethnic, cultural and historical ties with these countries, acts as a big brother offering just the economic cooperation. Hence, countries like Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia have inclination towards the EU, whereas Armenia and Belarus have their loyalties towards Russia, and Azerbaijan's interests' lies in both.[15]

The above discussion validates the hypotheses because the confrontation between EU and Russia continues with each trying to maintain their influence. Russian insecurity has

[13] Delcour, Laure (2015), "Escaping Geopolitical Entrapment: the EU's Eastern Policy in Light of EU-Russia Rivalry", in eds. Anahit Shirinyan and Louisa Slavkova, *Unrewarding Crossroads? The Black Sea Region amidst the European Union and Russia,* June 2015, p. 98.
[14] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation (2014), *Speech by the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, at the 50th Munich Security Conference*, Munich, 1 February 2014, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 January 2017, URL: http://www.mid.ru/en/web/guest/obsie-voprosy-mezdunarodnoj-bezopasnosti-i-kontrola-nad-vooruzeniami/-/asset_publisher/6sN03cZTYZOC/content/id/78502.
[15] Kulesa, Łukasz (2016), "What is the future for EU–Russia relations? A survey of European Leadership Network members for the EU's Global Strategy on foreign and security policy", *European Leadership Network*, European External Action Service.

increased in the last few years mostly because of the economic advantages and the trade agreements that EU has with countries of the region under study. It was this reason that Russia resorted to power play position by threatening countries that were pro-Europe, Ukraine being a primary example. Ukraine is an important region for Russia because, 1) it is a resource rich region, is strategically located bordering the Black Sea, and provides access to Europe; 2) it is also a base to the Russian Fleet in Sevastopol; and 3) it provides as a transit for export of Russian energy to Europe. Thus, when Ukraine decided to sign the DCFTA with the EU, Russia felt losing its grip in the country which further led to protests and civil war. Also, the Russian Eurasian Union was a counter to EU's Eastern Partnership initiative. The Eurasian Union was modelled on the EU and aimed towards deeper integration with countries in the neighourhood. Russia continues to exploit the existing political and economic dependencies of these countries, often by force and without any incentives.[16]

5.7 The EU-Ukraine Association Agreement (2017)

The EU finally approved the Association Agreement with Ukraine on 11 July 2017 ahead of the 19th EU-Ukraine Summit, which would come into force on 1 September 2017. A Press Release by the European Commission stated, "The Association Agreement provides the blueprint for Ukraine's ambitious reform path and fosters trade and investment between the European Union and Ukraine. After more than one year of provisional application of the DCFTA, trade has grown by 10%, cementing the EU as Ukraine's first trading partner. The political agreement grants autonomous trade measures for Ukraine, which would further boost bilateral trade through the elimination of additional tariffs and customs duties on agricultural and industrial products".[17]

President Poroshenko said "Ukraine's future lies with the West, not with its Soviet-era master, and that the strategically placed country should join the EU and NATO, like most

[16] Sadowski, Rafal (2013), "Partnership in Times of Crisis Challenges for the Eastern European Countries' Integration with Europe", *Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, Centre for Eastern Studies,* No 36, Warsaw, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 March 2017, URL: https://www.osw.waw.pl/sites/default/files/pw_36_en_partnership_net.pdf.

[17] European Commission (2017), *EU – Ukraine Summit: Ukrainian reforms combined with European Union support delivering positive results,* European Union, Press Release, Kyiv, 13 July 2017, [Online:Web] Accessed on 15 July 2017, URL: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-17-1989_en.htm.

of the former Communist states of Central and Eastern Europe".[18] According to a June poll by Democratic Initiatives Foundation around 68 per cent of Ukrainian were in favour of NATO membership, compared to 28 per cent during the Yanukovych regime in 2012.[19]

The ratification of the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement was delayed because the government in the Netherlands decided to hold a referendum (April 2016) regarding the pact, which was rejected by the voters. This move was made at the behest of the Eurosceptic groups. It was only on 30 May 2017 that the country ratified the amended EU-Ukraine pact, granting the Ukrainian citizens visa-free travel to the Schengen Area from June 2017. However, the Dutch made it clear that such an association with the EU will not be a guarantee to Ukraine's full membership into the Union.

Russia criticised the move stating that the EU's presence in the region has been an interference in its sphere of influence. According to a Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova:- "Kiev will continue to pretend not to foresee the rapid transformation of Ukraine from a developed industrial state into an agrarian appendage and a source of raw materials for the EU".[20] Russia has objected the EU-Ukraine trade ties as the pact worsened trade relations between Russia and Ukraine. A Russian WTO representative remarked that "Russia's share of Ukrainian imports had fallen significantly since Ukraine began implementing its Association Agreement with the EU, while the EU's share had grown".[21]

[18]Gotev, Georgi (2017), "Ukraine Association Agreement deal sealed ahead of Kyiv summit", *Euractiv*, 12 July 2017, [Online:Web] URL: https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/news/eu-finally-seals-ukraine-association-agreement-ahead-of-kyiv-summit/.
[19]Ibid.
[20]Euractiv (2017), *Dutch senators approve compromise on EU-Ukraine pact*, 31 May 2017, [Online:Web] Accessed on 14 July 2017, URL: http://www.euractiv.com/section/elections/news/dutch-senators-approve-compromise-on-eu-ukraine-pact/.
[21]Radio Free Europe Radio Liberty (2017), EU Formally Approves Ukraine Association Agreement, 11 July 2017, [Online:Web] Accessed on 14 July 2017, URL: https://www.rferl.org/a/eu-ukraine-association-agreement-formally-approved/28610083.html.

5.8 Prospects

The Eastern Partnership was launched as an eastern dimension of the ENP, aimed at filling the gaps of the ENP and building a stronger policy towards the eastern partners. The main aim was to upgrade and expand their relationship, enhance cooperation, strengthen political association, and deepen economic integration between EU and its neighbours by strengthening existing bilateral relations, multilateral and regional initiatives. However, today after eight years of existence, the Eastern Partnership has been able to achieve only limited success. One of the major successes include the signing of the Association Agreements and the DCFTAs. Of the six partners, three (Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) have signed the Association Agreements with the EU. The Agreements signed with Georgia and Moldova came into force on 1 July 2016, whereas the agreement with Ukraine was ratified by all the member states recently on 11 July 2017 and would come into force on 1 September 2017. These agreements have boosted trade and economic growth, and have facilitated integration into the EU's single market. Through these agreements, the countries have committed to structural reforms in areas of democracy, rule of law, human rights, fundamental freedoms, and good governance. There has been an inclination to bring about reforms in areas of security policy, growth, trade, along with enhanced cooperation in social development and education.

One of the core objectives of the Eastern Partnership was an increase in mobility of citizens in a secure and well-managed environment. Thus, visa liberalisation was another achievement of the Eastern Partnership which offered visa free travel to citizens. The EU has conducted the visa liberalisation dialogues with three countries in the region namely, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. Through these dialogues, the EU made efforts towards the long-term goal of visa-free travel on a case-by-case basis, provided that conditions for well-managed and secure mobility were in place.[22]

A major drawback of the Eastern Partnership initiative was the lack of membership offer. The EU intended to expand its regulation limits without extending the institutional boundaries. Hence, the partner countries do not find enough incentives to undertake

[22] European Commission, Visa liberalisation with Moldova, Ukraine and Georgia, Migration and Home Affairs, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 July 2017, URL: https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/international-affairs/eastern-partnership/visa-liberalisation-moldova-ukraine-and-georgia_en.

reforms. The financial allocation towards these countries has not been adequate. The funds being extended to the Southern neighbourhood are twice as much as compared to the Eastern neighbours. Stability was another shortcoming of the Eastern Partnership. Despite the launch of Eastern Partnership, there has not been any solution or improvement in these conflict areas. The region today has four separatist regions- Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia in Georgia; the Armenia-controlled Nagorno-Karabakh on Azerbaijani territory; and Transnistria within the Moldovan border. Both Russia and the EU lack the will to come up with a resolution of these conflicts. Russia views these continuing conflicts in separatist areas as a way to maintain its influence in the region, hence, coming up with solutions and resolving these disputes has not been a concern for Russia. The EU, on the other hand, lacks the political will and instruments to deal with such conflicts, even though it aims for a stable and secure neighbourhood. The Eastern Partnership aimed at fostering links among partner countries and introduced thematic platforms in order to provide a more target-oriented approach in the areas of cooperation. Energy security was one of the thematic platform and a flagship initiative was also launched to give it further impetus. Providing energy security was one of the purposes of Eastern Partnership, directed towards building an alternate gas pipeline to that of Russia. Whereas, Russia has already started building pipeline to Southern Europe, bypassing Ukraine, the EU's Nabucco pipeline is surrounded with uncertainty.

The Eastern Partnership region has been crucial for both the EU and Russia. The tussle between the two in maintaining their influence in the region has often jeopardised the interests of the partner countries. Although the timeline of the study was defined, from 2009-2015, however, in the past two years the geopolitical realities of the world and especially of the European Union has shifted. The recent years have witnessed rising number of international crisis- the Syrian War, annexation of Crimea etc. These have resulted in multiple complexities, like rising migration from the crisis-ridden areas to Europe, increasing number of terrorist incident, rise in xenophobic sentiments, and questions regarding the efficiency of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in safeguarding borders. The European Union is undoubtedly an outcome of crisis and has been successful in handling every situation that has come its way. However, considering

the present scenario, the EU appears to be out of its sorts. Moreover, the Eastern Partnership seems to be stagnant and struggling to stay relevant.

The driving force behind the launch of the Eastern Partnership were the aspirations of the post-Soviet countries and, corruption and lack of socio-economic development that posed a threat to the political stability and regional security in post-Soviet Europe. Ambitious goals which were set out by the Association Agreements to be concluded between individual Eastern Partnership countries and the EU were based on good governance, rule of law and market economy. The key element of the agreement was the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) along with visa liberalisation, which offered far-reaching economic integration into the European common market. The success of the benefits offered by the Eastern Partnership depended on the assumptions that it would interest the local and political elites to reap its benefits and that the integration offered by the initiative would enjoy popular support of political forces within the countries. The challenge that the Eastern Partnership now faces is that not only has it failed to achieve the transformation it was supposed to bring but has also ignited a conflict with Russia, for which it was unprepared. All this has resulted into a more divided Eastern Partnership region. Out of six countries, viz. Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Ukraine, Georgia and Moldova, the first three did not fully participate in the Partnership's offers. Whereas, the latter three were embroiled in their own socio-economic troubles: Ukraine facing a civil war, Georgia suffering a political stagnation, and Moldova struggling with development towards democracy.

Russia today has a dominant role in this region compared to the EU because of the cultural and ethnic similarity. It has been putting in efforts to maintain its influence in the Caucasus region since the disintegration of Soviet Union by setting up Collective Security Treaty Organization (1992), Shanghai Cooperation Organization (1996) and Eurasian Economic Union (2015). The Russia-Georgia War changed the perceived image of the Western powers for not defending Georgia against Russian aggression. Taking advantage of this, Russia constructed new military bases in the region apart from the

existing ones, hence, expanding its military footprint. Russia also continued to control Azerbaijan by using the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan.[23]

Apart from Russia, other major countries have also been vying the attention of this resource rich region, in which Iran has emerged to be a key player. It has not only approached the Caucasus region but has also been trying to seize opportunities with the European countries that are keen on diversifying their energy imports thereby reducing their dependence on Russia. But it needs access to the South Caucasus first to provide alternate gas transit routes and building infrastructure. According to an assessment done by *Stratfor*, Iran recently expressed interest in using existing infrastructure such as the Trans-Anatolian Gas Pipeline and the Trans-Adriatic Pipeline, which connect the Caspian and Mediterranean seas. It highlighted that another option would be reaching Georgia's Black Sea ports of Batumi and Poti through Armenia. Exporting energy through Turkey would be more convenient for Iran, but difficult relations between the countries on issues including how to end the Syrian civil war ultimately make the Armenian route more viable. So far, there has been talk of building a $3.7 billion railway and of extending a natural gas pipeline between Armenia and Iran. However, that plan, too, is complicated for Tehran, because Moscow has repeatedly tried to stall or become a shareholder in major infrastructure projects so as not to lose its influence in Armenia. The Russia factor also weighs heavily as these two countries have traditionally been geopolitical rivals. Russia has been obstructing any Iranian moves which could threaten Russian-influence in Armenia and Georgia. However, Iran and Russia cooperate in areas where their economic interests are involved, like in the North-South corridor where Moscow and Tehran cooperate alongside Azerbaijan. These countries' have also shown willingness to obstruct NATO/US/EU's presence in the region.[24]

Another two countries that have been involved in the region include, Turkey, which provides as a transit route for hydrocarbons from the Caspian Sea, and China, through its

[23] Aliyev, Bayram (2016), 'Russia's Increasing Role in the South Caucasus', *The Jerusalem Post,* [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 June 2017, URL: http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Russias-increasing-role-in-the-South-Caucasus-474985.
[24] 'After Sanctions, Iran's Growing Role in the Caucasus', *Stratfor Worldview*, 1 February 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 30 June 2017, URL: https://worldview.stratfor.com/analysis/after-sanctions-irans-growing-role-caucasus.

One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative. China has also been promoting economic and infrastructure projects through its OBOR initiative in the region. The two important projects include, the Anaklia Deep Water Port on the Black Sea, and the Baku-Tbilisi-Kars railway. This region holds strategic importance and China has been trying to increase its investments through both private as well as state-owned companies. Projects have been undertaken in Azerbaijan and Georgia and have been profit-based. Azerbaijan has shown a positive response vis-a-vis these projects as it gave the country an opportunity to diversify their economy. In Georgia, China has been involved economically with access to market, agricultural products, and Georgian wine export to China. This was possible only because of the institutional reforms, which made business transactions easy.

Turkey has been a western ally and has maintained its relations with EU and US in the past. During the Cold War period, Turkey provided a base for NATO outpost because of its borders with Soviet Union. Post disintegration of Soviet Union (1991), the Caucasus region was given importance because of religious, ethnic, linguistic ties. There is a sufficient representation of Caucasian diaspora in Turkey that are part of various organisations, government, military NGOs, etc. Turkey's relations with Azerbaijan have been strong because of linguistic ties, extending support to the country in Nagorno-Karabakh conflict where Turkey has condemned Armenia's actions. The two countries are also involved in various energy and infrastructure projects aimed towards constructing alternative routes to supply gas and oil to the EU member states for example, Baku – Tbilisi – Ceyhan pipeline, Trans-Anatolian and Trans-Adriatic natural gas pipelines. Infrastructure project, Baku – Akhalkalaki – Tbilisi – Kars railway, is directed towards isolating Armenia which is not part of the project. In case of Georgia, Turkey is involved in energy pipeline projects, infrastructure – like reconstruction of Tbilisi and Batumi airports.[25]

The Caucasus region is of strategic importance and is constantly involved in power struggles as it provides passage to East-West energy pipelines. The Russia-Georgia War

[25] Markedonov, Sergey (2016), 'Russia-Turkey Relations and Security Issues in the Caucasus', *Russia in Global Affairs,* 30 May 2016, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 July 2017, URL: http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/valday/Russia-Turkey-Relations-and-Security-Issues-in-the-Caucasus-18189.

created a lot of stir in the region and triggered security risks, with Russia being one of the largest exporters of energy and South Caucasus being an important transit region. The annexation of Crimea and Russia's stand in Syria heightened the security concerns of neighbouring countries especially Turkey. The violence in Syria had spill over effects in Iraq with ISIS spreading its footprints in the region leading to rise in terrorism. It also requires US assistance to deal with the increasing threat from ISIS and other terrorist groups operating on its borders and setting up extremist proto-states across the border in Syria and Iraq. The hostility has also resulted in massive refugee flows into Turkey which has crossed over two million, and to Europe via Turkish territory or sea. Turkey is one country that has continued to take in take in refuges, but is now demanding international assistance for this burden-sharing.

Apart from the above explained strategic opportunities and challenges, EU and Eastern partner countries need to overcome their internal loopholes. First and foremost the EU should involve the civil society stakeholders in a bottoms-up approach. The role of civil society needs be enhanced in order to better implement the reforms in the partner countries. The countries of this region have little experience of including civil society in the policy dialogue. The Union should take steps to facilitate the involvement of CSOs through preparing specific handbooks, and promoting bilateral dialogues with the governments of Eastern partner countries. The EU should provide funding to enable the CSOs to function effectively; should appoint civil society Steering Committees in order to support and examine the assistance from the European Neighbourhood Instrument; and should promote a trilateral dialogue between the CSOs, the partner governments and the EU. Secondly, in order to promote democracy in the region and bring about reforms, the EU should offer lucrative measures like closer association and economic integration, if not membership, and must not differentiate between the partner countries by being opportunistic. The EU is often accused of following the policy of differentiation where countries like Azerbaijan, despite human rights violations and authoritarian government is given special treatment and leverage because it is resource rich region. Belarus on the other hand has no trade ties with the EU as it does not fulfil the required reforms. Georgia and Moldova, despite adopting the reforms, do not get enough acknowledgements, or any

privilege. Thus, these countries often do not feel the need to pursue reforms because of the lack of incentives.

The future of the Eastern Partnership is uncertain and bleak because there is lack of effective instruments and measures towards this region. The EU must review its one-size-fits-all approach and highlight its goals explicitly encompassing strategic, political and institutional aspects. It should differentiate among the countries that are willing to reform and move closer to the EU and those that want to stay away. As Johannnes Hann pointed out in the European Parliament Questionnaire, "Our neighbouring countries are too diverse to apply a one-size-fits-all approach. Thus the EU policies need to work not just country by country but field by field, to ensure that we have the right tools to deliver on al key issues, including energy, free trade, migration, and with particular emphasis on good governance".[26]

The Eastern Partnership will have to deliver on its transformational agenda to succeed in the long run. The reason for EU's unpreparedness for the conflict partly lies in its general nature of policy making which tends to focus more on bringing about reforms and transformation in the countries under study, rather than a strategic action plan. Most European leaders and politicians were hesitant about entering into a conflict with Russia. Therefore, as the Eastern Partnership remained ambiguous the integration it offered continues to be far reaching. Also, for the partner countries, lack of political will and institutional capacity to implement reforms has been the main reason for the slow progress. The crises on the EU's borders and the political uncertainty have exposed the shortcomings of the Eastern Partnership initiative as well as other mechanisms of the EU vis-à-vis its neighbourhood. The European Union has failed in bringing about democratic transformation in neighbouring countries, control unregulated migrations, instability on the borders. In an attempt to deal with these problems, the EU is reviewing its policy towards the neighbourhood. The focus is now on stabilising the neighbourhood first and then move ahead with reforms.

[26] Answers to the European Parliament Questionnaire to the Commissioner-Designate Johannes Hahn, European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, [Online:Web] Accessed on 12 July 2016, URL: http://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/cwt/files/commissioner_ep_hearings/hahn-reply_en.pdf.

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Annexure I
Luxembourg European Council
12 and 13 December 1997
Presidency Conclusions

Introduction

The European Council meeting in Luxembourg on 12 and 13 December 1997 marks a moment of historic significance for the future of the Union and of Europe as a whole. With the launch of the enlargement process we see the dawn of a new era, finally putting an end to the divisions of the past. Extending the European integration model to encompass the whole of the continent is a pledge of future stability and prosperity.

At the same time as launching the enlargement process, the European Council has embarked upon a comprehensive study of the development of the Union and its policies so that it can make a fitting response to the challenges coming up after the year 2000. The Union will thus have a clear and coherent vision with which to take on the next century and face up to enlargement.

The European Council adopted a Resolution on economic policy coordination which will complete preparations for the third stage of Economic and Monetary Union. It was also pleased to note that the arrangements for Union action on employment are now in place.

The European Council began its proceedings by an exchange of views with Mr José María GIL-ROBLES, President of the European Parliament, on the main subjects for discussion.

A meeting was also held with the Heads of State and Government and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe and Cyprus. The meeting was devoted to the launch of the overall process for enlargement of the Union.

European Union Enlargement

1. The Luxembourg European Council has taken the decisions necessary to launch the overall enlargement process.
2. The task in the years ahead will be to prepare the applicant States for accession to the Union and to see that the Union is properly prepared for enlargement. This enlargement is a comprehensive, inclusive and ongoing process, which will take place in stages; each of the applicant States will proceed at its own rate, depending on its degree of preparedness.
3. As a prerequisite for enlargement of the Union, the operation of the institutions must be strengthened and improved in keeping with the institutional provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty.

The European Conference

4. The European Council decided to set up a European Conference which will bring together the Member States of the European Union and the European States aspiring to accede to it and sharing its values and internal and external objectives.

5. The members of the Conference must share a common commitment to peace, security and good neighbourliness, respect for other countries' sovereignty, the principles upon which the European Union is founded, the integrity and inviolability of external borders and the principles of international law and a commitment to the settlement of territorial disputes by peaceful means, in particular through the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice in the Hague. Countries which endorse these principles and respect the right of any European country fulfilling the required criteria to accede to the European Union and sharing the Union's commitment to building a Europe free of the divisions and difficulties of the past will be invited to take part in the Conference.

6. The States which accept these criteria and subscribe to the above principles will be invited to take part in the Conference. Initially, the EU offer will be addressed to Cyprus, the applicant States of Central and Eastern Europe and Turkey.

7. The European Conference will be a multilateral forum for political consultation, intended to address questions of general concern to the participants and to broaden and deepen their cooperation on foreign and security policy, justice and home affairs, and other areas of common concern, particularly economic matters and regional cooperation.

8. The Conference will be chaired by the State holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union. At the Presidency's invitation, Heads of State and Government and the President of the Commission will meet at the Conference once a year, as will the Ministers for Foreign Affairs.

9. The first meeting of the Conference will be in London in March 1998.

The process of accession and negotiation

10. The European Council has considered the current situation in each of the eleven applicant States on the basis of the Commission's opinions and thePresidency's report to the Council. In the light of its discussions, it has decided to launch an accession process comprising the ten Central and East European applicant States and Cyprus. This accession process will form part of the implementation of Article 0 ofthe Treaty on European Union. The European Council points out that all these States are destined to join the European Union on the basis of the same criteria and that they are participating in the accession process on an equal footing. This process, which will be evolutive and inclusive, will comprise the following elements.

a. The framework

11. The accession process will be launched on 30 March 1998 by a meeting of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the fifteen Member States of the European Union, the ten Central and East European applicant States and Cyprus. A single framework for these applicant countries will be established.

12. The Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the fifteen members of the European Union will meet their opposite numbers from the ten Central and East European applicant States and

Cyprus as the need arises. Technical ministerial meetings could also be envisaged, bearing in mind experience with the structured dialogue.

b. The enhanced pre-accession strategy

13. The enhanced pre-accession strategy is intended to enable all the applicant States of Central and Eastern Europe eventually to become members of the European Union and, to that end, to align themselves as far as possible on the Union acquis prior to accession. With the Europe Agreements, which remain the basis of the Union's relations with these States, the strategy centres on accession partnerships and increased pre-accession aid. It will be accompanied by an analytical study of the Union acquis for each applicant State taken individually.

(i) Accession partnerships

14. Accession partnership is a new instrument, the key feature of the enhanced pre-accession strategy; it will mobilize all forms of assistance to the applicant countries of Central and Eastern Europe within a single framework.

15. This single framework will cover in detail for each applicant the priorities to be observed in adopting the Union acquis and also the financial resources available for that purpose, in particular the PHARE programme. In that context financial assistance would be linked to the applicants' progress and, more specifically, to compliance with the programme for adoption of the acquis.

16. The Council will decide unanimously on the establishment of the partnerships as the key element in the pre-accession strategy. On that basis it will then decide, by a qualified majority and by 15 March 1998 at the latest, on the principles, priorities, intermediate objectives, significant adjustments and conditions applicable to each individual partnership. When an element essential to the continuation of pre-accession assistance is missing in an applicant State, the Council will take appropriate measures by the same procedure.

(ii) Increased pre-accession aid

17. Pre-accession aid will be increased substantially; alongside the PHARE programme, which will already have been refocused on accession priorities, it will, as from the year 2000, comprise aid for agriculture and a structural instrument which will give priority to measures similar to those of the Cohesion Fund.

Financial support to the countries involved in the enlargement process will be based on the principle of equal treatment, independently of time of accession, with particular attention being paid to countries with the greatest need. The European Council welcomes in this connection the catch-up facility envisaged by the Commission.

18. Without prejudice to decisions on the financial perspective for 2000-2006, the PHARE programme will focus on accession by setting two priority aims: the reinforcement of administrative and judicial capacity (about 30% of the overall amount) and investments related to the adoption and application of the acquis (about 70%).

19. Some Community programmes (e.g. education, training and research) will be open to applicant States and this will enable them to familiarize themselves with the Union's policies and working methods. Such participation will have to be determined case-by-case, with each applicant State making a steadily increasing financial contribution of its own. PHARE will, if necessary, be able to continue part-financing the applicant States' national contributions. Such financing should remain at around 10% of the PHARE appropriation, not including participation in the research and development framework programme.

20. The applicant States should be allowed to take part, as observers and for the points which concern them, in the management committees responsible for monitoring the programmes to which they contribute financially, under specific arrangements adapted to the case in question.

21. The Community agencies in which applicant countries will be able to participate will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

22. A specific pre-accession strategy for Cyprus will be based on:

— participation in certain targeted projects, in particular to boost judicial and administrative capacity and projects in the field of justice and home affairs;

— participation in certain Community programmes and agencies (as in the approach followed for the other applicant States);

— use of technical assistance provided by TAIEX (Technical Assistance Information Exchange Office).

c. Commission opinions and accession negotiations

23. The Commission's opinions on the applicant States constitute a sound overall analysis of each applicant State's situation in the light of the membership criteria set by the Copenhagen European Council. The prospect of membership is a unique incentive to the applicants to speed up the implementation of policies which comply with the Union acquis. Incorporation of the acquis into legislation is necessary, but is not in itself sufficient; it will also be necessary to ensure that it is actually applied.

24. The European Council noted the link between the applicant States' ongoing efforts in that direction in sectoral policies, in particular the internal market and related policies, and the harmonious operation of Community policies after accession.

25. Compliance with the Copenhagen political criteria is a prerequisite for the opening of any accession negotiations. Economic criteria and the ability to fulfil the obligations arising from membership have been and must be assessed in a forward-looking, dynamic way.

26. The decision to enter into negotiations does not imply that they will be successfully concluded at the same time. Their conclusion and the subsequent accession of the different applicant States will depend on the extent to which each complies with the Copenhagen criteria and on the Union's ability to assimilate new members.

27. The European Council has decided to convene bilateral intergovernmental conferences in the spring of 1998 to begin negotiations with Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia on the conditions for their entry into the Union and the ensuing Treaty adjustments. These negotiations will be based on the general negotiating framework acknowledged by the Council on 8 December 1997.

At the same time as the above, the preparation of negotiations with Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania and Bulgaria will be speeded up in particular through an analytical examination of the Union acquis. This preparation may also be discussed at ministerial-level bilateral meetings with the Member States of the Union.

28. The accession of Cyprus should benefit all communities and help to bring about civil peace and reconciliation. The accession negotiations will contribute positively to the search for a political solution to the Cyprus problem through the talks under the aegis of the United Nations which must continue with a view to creating a bi-community, bi-zonal federation. In this context, the European Council requests that the willingness of the Government of Cyprus to include representatives of the Turkish Cypriot community in the accession negotiating delegation be acted upon. In order for this request to be acted upon, the necessary contacts will be undertaken by the Presidency and the Commission.

d. Review procedure

29. From the end of 1998, the Commission will make regular reports to the Council, together with any necessary recommendations for opening bilateral intergovernmental conferences, reviewing the progress of each Central and East European applicant State towards accession in the light of the Copenhagen criteria, in particular the rate at which it is adopting the Union acquis. Prior to those reports, implementation of the accession partnerships and progress in adopting the acquis will be examined with each applicant State in the Europe Agreement bodies. The Commission's reports will serve as a basis for taking, in the Council context, the necessary decisions on the conduct of the accession negotiations or their extension to other applicants. In that context, the Commission will

continue to follow the method adopted by Agenda 2000 in evaluating applicant States' ability to meet the economic criteria and fulfil the obligations deriving from accession.

30. A dynamic approach should be maintained in assessing the progress made by applicant States in the regular reports which the Commission will submit to the Council.

Source: European Parliament (1997),Luxembourg European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 12-13 December 1997, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 December 2016, URL: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lux1_en.htm.

Annexure II
Helsinki European Council 10 and 11 December 1999
Presidency Conclusions

Introduction

1. The European Council met in Helsinki on 10 and 11 December 1999. It adopted the Millennium Declaration. It has taken a number of decisions marking a new stage in the enlargement process. Steps have also been taken to ensure that the Union itself will have effective, reformed institutions, a strengthened common security and defence policy and a competitive, job-generating, sustainable economy.

2. At the start of proceedings, the European Council and the President of the European Parliament, Mrs Nicole Fontaine, exchanged views on the main items under discussion, in particular enlargement, institutional reform and employment.

I. Preparing for Enlargement

The enlargement process

3. The European Council confirms the importance of the enlargement process launched in Luxembourg in December 1997 for the stability and prosperity for the entire European continent. An efficient and credible enlargement process must be sustained.

4. The European Council reaffirms the inclusive nature of the accession process, which now comprises 13 candidate States within a single framework. The candidate States are participating in the accession process on an equal footing. They must share the values and objectives of the European Union as set out in the Treaties. In this respect the European Council stresses the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes in accordance with the United Nations Charter and urges candidate States to make every effort to resolve any outstanding border disputes and other related issues. Failing this they should within a reasonable time bring the dispute to the International Court of Justice. The European Council will review the situation relating to any outstanding disputes, in particular concerning the repercussions on the accession process and in order to promote their

settlement through the International Court of Justice, at the latest by the end of 2004. Moreover, the European Council recalls that compliance with the political criteria laid down at the Copenhagen European Council is a prerequisite for the opening of accession negotiations and that compliance with all the Copenhagen criteria is the basis for accession to the Union.

5. The Union has made a firm political commitment to make every effort to complete the Intergovernmental Conference on institutional reform by December 2000, to be followed by ratification. After ratification of the results of that Conference the Union should be in a position to welcome new Member States from the end of 2002 as soon as they have demonstrated their ability to assume the obligations of membership and once the negotiating process has been successfully completed.

6. The Commission has made a new detailed assessment of progress in the candidate States. This assessment shows progress towards fulfilling the accession criteria. At the same time, given that difficulties remain in certain sectors, candidate States are encouraged to continue and step up their efforts to comply with the accession criteria. It emerges that some candidates will not be in a position to meet all the Copenhagen criteria in the medium term. The Commission's intention is to report in early 2000 to the Council on progress by certain candidate States on fulfilling the Copenhagen economic criteria. The next regular progress reports will be presented in good time before the European Council in December 2000.

7. The European Council recalls the importance of high standards of nuclear safety in Central and Eastern Europe. It calls on the Council to consider how to address the issue of nuclear safety in the framework of the enlargement process in accordance with the relevant Council conclusions.

8. The European Council notes with satisfaction the substantive work undertaken and progress which has been achieved in accession negotiations with Cyprus, Hungary, Poland, Estonia, the Czech Republic and Slovenia.

9. (a) The European Council welcomes the launch of the talks aiming at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem on 3 December in New York and expresses its strong support for the UN Secretary-General's efforts to bring the process to a successful conclusion.

(b) The European Council underlines that a political settlement will facilitate the accession of Cyprus to the European Union. If no settlement has been reached by the completion of accession negotiations, the Council's decision on accession will be made without the above being a precondition. In this the Council will take account of all relevant factors.

10. Determined to lend a positive contribution to security and stability on the European continent and in the light of recent developments as well as the Commission's reports, the European Council has decided to convene bilateral intergovernmental conferences in February 2000 to begin negotiations with Romania, Slovakia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria and Malta on the conditions for their entry into the Union and the ensuing Treaty adjustments.

11. In the negotiations, each candidate State will be judged on its own merits. This principle will apply both to opening of the various negotiating chapters and to the conduct of the negotiations. In order to maintain momentum in the negotiations, cumbersome procedures should be avoided. Candidate States which have now been brought into the negotiating process will have the possibility to catch up within a reasonable period of time with those already in negotiations if they have made sufficient progress in their preparations. Progress in negotiations must go hand in hand with progress in incorporating the *acquis* into legislation and actually implementing and enforcing it.

12. The European Council welcomes recent positive developments in Turkey as noted in the Commission's progress report, as well as its intention to continue its reforms towards complying with the Copenhagen criteria. Turkey is a candidate State destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate States. Building

on the existing European strategy, Turkey, like other candidate States, will benefit from a pre-accession strategy to stimulate and support its reforms. This will include enhanced political dialogue, with emphasis on progressing towards fulfilling the political criteria for accession with particular reference to the issue of human rights, as well as on the issues referred to in paragraphs 4 and 9(a). Turkey will also have the opportunity to participate in Community programmes and agencies and in meetings between candidate States and the Union in the context of the accession process. An accession partnership will be drawn up on the basis of previous European Council conclusions while containing priorities on which accession preparations must concentrate in the light of the political and economic criteria and the obligations of a Member State, combined with a national programme for the adoption of the acquis. Appropriate monitoring mechanisms will be established. With a view to intensifying the harmonisation of Turkey's legislation and practice with the acquis, the Commission is invited to prepare a process of analytical examination of the acquis. The European Council asks the Commission to present a single framework for coordinating all sources of European Union financial assistance for pre-accession.

13. The future of the European Conference will be reviewed in the light of the evolving situation and the decisions on the accession process taken at Helsinki. The forthcoming French Presidency has announced its intention to convene a meeting of the conference in the second half of 2000.

Source: European Parliament (1999), Helsinki European Council, *Presidency Conclusions*, 10-11 December 1999, [Online:Web] Accessed on 1 December 2016, URL: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/hel1_en.htm.