

*International Conference “Autocratical challenge
for the European project - what to do and not to do”*

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Pragmatism to promote European values, not to substitute them



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Have the ENP and the EaP been effective?

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was launched in 2004, to support and foster **stability, security** and **prosperity** in the countries closest to the EU.

What we actually see in the EU neighbourhood now:

- **absence of stability,**
- **absence of security,**
- **and the lack of prosperity.**

Since the start of the ENP, **the situation has obviously deteriorated** both in the Southern and Eastern EU neighbourhood:

 **ISIL**  **terrorism**  **refugee flows**  **Russian aggressive policy**

Thus, the ENP has failed to build a secure and stable neighbourhood for the EU.

Have the ENP and the EaP been effective?

The number of the AA and FTA signed:

In **twelve** years of the ENP, the EU managed to sign and ratify Association and FTA with **three** Mediterranean countries – Egypt (2004), Algeria (2005) and Lebanon (2006).

The EU also signed, **but still not completed ratified** the AA and DCFTA with **three** Eastern European countries – Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (2014).

***TO COMPARE:** in seven years prior the ENP, the EU signed and ratified the AA and FTA with five partners: Palestinian Authority (1997), Tunisia (1998), Morocco (2000), Israel (2000) and Jordan (2002).*

The ENP Strategy Paper of 2004 set a clear goal on Belarus:

“The EU's long-term goal is for Belarus to be a democratic, stable, reliable, and increasingly prosperous partner with which the enlarged EU will share not only common borders, but also a common agenda driven by shared values.”

It is absolutely clear that this goal has not been met.

Why the ENP and the EaP have not been a success?

Actually, the ENP hardly could succeed due to the following **EU miscalculations**:

- **Firstly**, the EU combined in the framework of one neighbourhood policy sixteen countries from **different regions**, with different political, economic and cultural **conditions**, and most importantly – with different **levels of their ambitions** on cooperation / integration with the EU.

Thus, the EU initially deprived the ENP of the flexibility.

*It was nonsense to propose the same framework of cooperation for the non-European and authoritarian **Mubarak's Egypt and Qaddafi's Libya**, and for the **European post-revolution Georgia** with Mikheil Saakashvili already being elected as president, for **European Ukraine**, in which democrat Viktor Yushchenko was the most likely next president, as well as for **Moldova and Belarus as the European nations**, despite the quality of the authorities.*

The EaP improved the situation, but yet was limited by the frameworks of the ENP.

Why the ENP and the EaP have not been a success?

- **Secondly, the EU initially limited the instruments of its policy towards the Eastern European countries by excluding the major incentive, namely the prospect of membership.**

In the ENP Strategy Paper of 2004, “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 EU.”

Due to this provision, Ukraine initially was very sceptical about the ENP, believing that it is a substitution to the membership prospects. Thus, the ENP became not an instrument of facilitating the EU-Ukraine cooperation, but rather an obstacle.

If not the ENP with its membership restriction nature, the AA and DCFTA with Ukraine might be signed much earlier.

Stressing the non-membership nature of the ENP and the EaP, **the EU provided perfect grounds for the Kremlin’s propaganda**, which continuously repeated that the Russia-lead integration initiative is the only realistic option for the EaP countries, since the EU will never propose membership to them.

Why the ENP and the EaP have not been a success?

➤ **Thirdly, the EU did not promptly consider the Russia's factor.**

The EU was to act more quickly and decisively in the first decade of the XXI century, when it was already clear that Moscow was seeking to restore control over the former USSR, but Russia was not strong enough to openly launch aggressions against its neighbours.

In 2004 Russian occupation troops maintained control over the parts of Moldovan and Georgian territories; top Russian politicians openly claimed for 'return' of the Crimea; and the Kremlin was interfering into Ukraine's domestic affairs by supporting then-prime-minister Victor Yanukovych and waging a dirty-tricks campaign against his opponent, pro-European Viktor Yushchenko.

In 2013, due to the Russia's strong pressure against the EU weak support, Armenian and Ukrainian authorities abandoned signing of the AA and DCFTA agreements.

Thus, the people of Ukraine had nothing but to start a revolution fighting for their European perspective. **Only after the revolution, signing of the AA and DCFTA with Ukraine became possible, but its ratification has been blocked by pro-Russian political forces in the Netherlands.**

What the EU proposes to make the ENP effective?

The *Joint Communication on Review of the ENP*, submitted by Federica Mogherini and Johannes Hahn on November 18, 2015:

- ✓ Set **stabilisation** “as its main political priority”;
- ✓ Set **differentiation** as “the hallmark of the new ENP, recognising that not all partners aspire to EU rules and standards, and reflecting the wishes of each country concerning the nature and focus of its partnership with the EU”;

(Does the EU actually recognise reluctance of its partners to aspire to the rules and standards of democracy, human rights, liberal and market economy?)

- ✓ “**Human rights and democracy** will continue to be an agenda item in our political dialogue with all partners **in mutually agreed formats**”.

(If the limits of dialogue on human rights and democracy are to be set by the authoritarian regimes in Minsk and Baku, then what’s the use of such dialogues?)

New approach: Is democracy mandatory? As you wish!

Just to compare:

In 2004, the ENP Strategy Paper set that any differentiation in relations with the partners **“should be based on a clear commitment to shared values.”**

In 2015, the Review of the ENP set that work will develop on the existing basis **“where a partner wishes to pursue deeper relations with the EU based on shared values.”** (p.4)

What about those who do not wish to work based on shared values? “The EU is ready to discuss the possibility **to jointly set new partnership priorities**, which would focus each relationship more clearly **on commonly identified shared interests.”** (p.4)

Thus, the Reviewed ENP actually opens way for compromises over the core European values.

*Alexander Lukashenka has already expressed his view of priorities, and proposed Johannes Hahn to refocus Belarus dialogue with the EU from political issues (that means democracy and human rights) to the economic cooperation.**

*April 17, 2015: http://president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-evrokomissarom-po-evropejskoj-politike-sosedstva-i-peregovoram-o-rasshirenii-es-joxannesom-xanom-11215

The pseudo-pragmatism and imaginary stability

So, what the EU seeks to get in exchange for actual abandoning of the value-based approach? It seeks **stabilisation** as the “main political priority”.

The question is what exactly European officials mean speaking about “stability” and “pragmatism”?

- Is it about the **conservation of the authoritarian regimes**, and **turning a blind eye to violations** of human rights, with the hope that local regimes will forestall new democratic revolutions with subsequent instability?
- Is it about the **hope that Lukashenka will resist possible Putin’s intentions** to invade Ukraine or the EU / NATO countries from the territory of Belarus?

But the truth is that the stability of authoritarian regimes is difficult to predict – it was indicated by the Arab Spring and Ukraine's EuroMaidan. The regimes of Hosni Mubarak, Muammar Gaddafi and Viktor Yanukovych seemed unshakable to the EU politicians, even just before their collapse.

The pseudo-pragmatism and imaginary stability

- Do the EU leaders have the same **illusions about the stability of authoritarian regime in Belarus** as they had about Mubarak, Gaddafi and Yanukovich ?
- Do they **really believe that Putin will seek for Lukashenka's consent**, if he decides to use the Belarusian territory for his aggressive plans, especially given the existence of the Regional Force Grouping (RFG) of Belarus and Russia?
- Isn't it **more pragmatic to stimulate the democratic reforms, rather than to invest in the authoritarian regimes** with their unpredictable stability?

No need to oppose Values with Pragmatism

Actually, **being pragmatic doesn't necessary mean abandoning values**. It means dealing with problems *in a reasonable, logical and effective way*.

There is no need for the EU to oppose values with pragmatism. Moreover, **abandoning European values is counter-pragmatic and counterproductive for the EU, which is based on those values**.

Abandoning values in foreign policy would result in their devaluation at home, undermining stability inside the EU member states. Thus, the EU countries might find themselves in the conditions of the first half of the XX century, being driven with aggressive national egoism. That would be the end of the EU.

Instead of abandoning values, the EU should effectively promote them through pragmatic policy, based on sober assessment of the situation and choosing the right instruments to achieve set goals.

Under current conditions, being pragmatic means:

- To admit that **stability is anyway impossible in the nearest several years**. Such are the implications of recent mistakes made by the world's major powers.

*But the EU still can choose, **with what outcome it will come out of the present instability strip** – will it find itself divided and deprived of its value basis, or will it be strong in its value-based solidarity.*

- To admit that **the policy of appeasement** Putin, Lukashenka and other post-Soviet authoritarian regimes **would not bring stability and security**;
- To find the appropriate instrument **to force the authoritarian regimes to implement democratic reforms** (strong sanctions is one the most relevant tools);
- To find the appropriate **instrument to increase motivations** for the ENP and the EaP countries to implement reforms, including more effective use of the “more for more” incentive.

Membership prospect and Mobility for the EaP

It's not the European values that are really slowing down the implementation of the ENP and the EaP policy, but the limited motivation.

The ENP and EaP should not be proposed as an alternative to membership when it regards to the European countries.

Depriving the EaP countries of the membership prospects is not only **violating the Article 49 of the Treaty on EU**, but **threaten the EaP nations with perspective to stall in the gray zone** between the EU and Russia.

A membership prospect as the best possible motivator should be open for all the European countries, as envisaged in the Article 49 of the Treaty on EU.

Mobility has been declared as **one of the priorities of the EaP**, but it is still **artificially limited by visas**, though hardly anyone seriously believes that citizens of Ukraine, Georgia or Belarus pose a threat to the European security, *especially if to compare with almost uncontrolled refugee flows from Africa, Middle East and Asia.*

Individual programs; Focus on people; StratCom

Individual programs, not individual requirements

- ✓ Differentiation should mean an individual approach to every country, including individual schedule and pace of cooperation, **BUT not the individual set of requirements with regard to democracy and human rights.**

Focus on people

- ✓ If the EU really intends to make the Neighbourhood Policy effective, it needs to focus more on people rather than the ruling regimes. Supporting **civil societies, NGOs** (not GONGOs) and **independent media** is crucial for the ultimate success.

Actual strategic communications are needed

- ✓ The current EU pro-forma policy in the sphere of strategic communications would help neither to counter Russian propaganda, nor to promote the European values.
- ✓ A comprehensive, proactive communication policy is needed.
- ✓ Instead of reinventing a wheel by creating new Russian-language media, the EU should better **more actively support the existent independent media** with proven track record.

V-4 as a natural driving force for the EaP

- ✓ The Visegrad Group is **the most illustrative example** for the EaP countries to modernise society and economy, and to succeed with European integration.
- ✓ The Slovaks, the Czechs and the Poles **as successful stories of democratic and market transformations of the Slavic nations, crashing the Russian propaganda cliché** as though democracy and liberal economy do not match to the Slavic nature.

*The V-4 countries do not possess a powerful financial leverage, but they can provide the **political, institutional, advisory support for transformations** in the EaP countries. Including **the transfer of the experience in reforming** the public administration, security sector, healthcare, education; fighting corruption, economical transition, attraction of investments, developing independent media and civil society.*

- In previous decades, the “old” Europe assisted the Visegrad countries in their “return to Europe”. Now assisting the EaP countries, **making the EaP a success is a kind of European Mission of the Visegrad countries**; their substantial **contribution to the common European goal** of creating sustainable and prosperous environment; **their maturity test and a chance to prove themselves as influential players in Europe.**

Employing the capacities of the OSCE

OSCE is the only organization, in which all the EU and the EaP countries take part as the member states.

- ✓ The **successful experience of the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine** may be used in the other EaP countries to promote good governance; legal reform; human rights education; the fight against human trafficking; arms control and military reform; policing and border security; media freedom; free and transparent elections; and gender equality.

Actually, all these issues are related to promotion of the European values, security and stability.

- ✓ **Resumption of the OSCE mission in Belarus is needed**, perhaps as the OSCE Project Co-ordinator. Its work should cover the full range of issues related to the OSCE competence, not only those chosen by Minsk.

To summarise:

- Abandoning values is NOT pragmatic.
- There is NO NEED to oppose Values with Pragmatism.
- Pragmatic policy is needed **to promote** the European values, **not to substitute** them.

Thank You for Your Time!

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