



Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network  
Réseau Euro-méditerranéen des droits de l'Homme  
الشبكة الأوروبية-المتوسطية لحقوق الإنسان

## **EuroMed Rights 2<sup>nd</sup> Submission to the ENP Consultation**

In the framework of its 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly held in Brussels on 12-14 June 2015, EuroMed Rights – the Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Network - organised a workshop on the ENP revision. Echoing the publication of EuroMed Rights' White Book "[For a Human Rights-friendly European Neighbourhood Policy](#)", this second submission reflects the workshop discussions, and aims at providing some answers to the questions raised in the joint consultation paper "Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy", as well as additional lines of thought addressed to the EU stakeholders involved in the ENP revision process.

Participants in the workshop included various representatives of European and South Mediterranean civil society organisations, members of the Network. The structure of this document follows the four priority areas identified as requiring "*further consultation and reflection*" in the joint consultation paper. In addition to those four principles, which EuroMed Rights may agree upon provided that they are looked at through a human rights lens, a fifth principle is added, the key principle of 'coherence', since various strategies having an impact on the Southern neighbourhood are currently being discussed at EU level.

### **1. Differentiation**

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Participants acknowledged the need for differentiation within the ENP framework. However, differentiation cannot serve as an excuse to turn a blind eye on the human rights situation in a given country. The EU should unconditionally maintain the human rights dimension in its relations with partner countries, especially with those willing to further engage with the EU only in certain fields. This is key for the stability of the region, which means the EU must ensure it doesn't support nor encourage those responsible for human rights violations.

The differentiation principle has to include human rights conditionality. If some degree of differentiation between countries is required, the "more for more" principle should be applied in order to avoid double standards. Otherwise the EU would send a wrong signal to the countries that are on the right track. Negative conditionality principle should also be considered in the revised ENP. This principle must also be understood in an incentive-based way, i.e. reducing political and financial support to governments, while reaching out and increasing support to the right holders and local civil society organisations.

### **2. Focus**

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The 2015 revised ENP should ensure that human rights and democracy, as guarantors for regional stability, are the cornerstone of EU cooperation with ENP partner countries. With regard to this key

priority, participants stressed the need to establish a broader, more regular human rights dialogue with the authorities, that is, a mechanism that will allow to raise human rights issues outside the limited framework of the sub-committees on human rights held under the Association Agreements.

In order to be successful in addressing human rights issues, the EU should be politically vocal in its communication. In that regard, it emerged from the workshop that the ENP Progress Reports should convey a political message. A greater attention must be paid to the political aspects and the human rights dimension of the cooperation. For countries that haven't signed any Action Plan, a systematic and public reporting mechanism is needed.

### **3. Flexibility**

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Flexibility is required to adapt to fast-changing developments in the region. However, having regard to the numerous partner countries affected by conflict situations, it is also essential to look at the root causes of conflicts. Migration and security issues are linked to the lack of freedom, and social and economic perspectives for the peoples in the region. From that point of view, regional integration can deliver added value to the ENP.

With regard to the South Mediterranean region, participants agreed on a need for developing regional or sub-regional cooperation, and stressed the role the EU can play as a facilitator. The regional dimension of the ENP should not be limited to the Union for the Mediterranean, which mainly focuses on economic and trade issues, but should also contribute to the effective enjoyment of human rights across the region by the setting-up of an inclusive regional platform for CSOs, where issues like the shrinking space for CSOs would be addressed and where the EU would come with concrete political commitments to support CSOs directly at risk. In order to promote that dimension, the EU should also create a funding mechanism for CSOs working on cross-cutting issues at the EuroMed level.

### **4. Ownership and Visibility**

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Only a few references to civil society organisations and right holders are made in the joint consultation paper and the term 'partners' clearly refers to governments. Local CSOs strongly expect to be considered by the EU as its key partners. In that regard, the EU should define with its field Delegations how to reach out to, and effectively and regularly engage with civil society organisations and right holders on the ground. Evaluations of the commitments by EU Delegations towards local CSOs should be regularly organised, and benchmarks for inclusive consultations should be defined. Several ideas on how to better engage with CSOs were discussed during the workshop. Among others, participants stressed the need for a transparent dialogue mechanism that would allow CSOs to monitor relations between the EU and its partner countries, and put forward CSOs' recommendations to governments when appropriate. The ENP could also provide governments with incentives to further engage with independent CSOs. The CSO roadmaps, as well as the Country Human Rights Strategies, lack transparency, and their content should be shared with field CSOs when they are not made public.

### **5. Coherence**

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There is a need for coherence at three different levels:

1. The EU and its Member States must be coherent with their own principles and criteria regarding democracy and human rights, and the EU must lead by example;

2. The ENP must be coherent and in line with other already existing, and to-be-adopted EU instruments such as the EU's Human Rights Action Plan and the Regulation of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) highlighting that the EU support should target promoting human rights and fundamental freedoms, the rule of law, principles of equality and the fight against discrimination in all its forms, establishing deep and sustainable democracy, promoting good governance, fighting corruption, strengthening institutional capacity at all levels and developing a thriving civil society including social partners;
3. Lastly but not least, there is a need for coherence between EU Member States' policies and the ENP, to ensure that at least Member States' policies do not undermine ENP objectives in the field of human rights and democracy promotion.