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Greening the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

(WWF Briefing, April 2005)

The policy Context

Parallel to the final phases of the enlargement to the ten new member States, the EU prepared the new ENP and presented it in the European Commission's Communication "Wider Europe" at the end of March 2003. The following communications and Council conclusions form the overall policy framework of the ENP, in particular the communication of May 2004 on "The European Neighbourhood Policy Strategy", COM(2004)373.

The ENP objectives as stated by the EU are "...to share the benefits of the EU's 2004 enlargement with Neighbourhood Countries (NC) 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."

The ENP and the Environment

The NCs have on their territories many important ecoregions that are under serious threat due to overexploitation of their natural resources (principally water, forests, fisheries, oil and gas) and unsustainable development of economic activities (energy, transportation, fisheries, water infrastructures, tourism, industrial development, etc). Moreover, security, an issue that is high on the agenda, is also at stake. Indeed, regional conflicts are often closely linked to unsustainable management of natural resources and lack of good governance (e.g. Southern Caucasus region, conflicts over oil and gas transport; Israeli-Palestinian conflicts of water resources and waste water management).

WWF sees the development of the new policy for the neighbourhood countries as a major opportunity to ensure *democracy, sustainable development* and environmental protection in the regions to the South and East of the EU. Pollution and environmental degradation do not respect borders. WWF would like this policy to deliver the environmental protection necessary to ensure benefits to citizens and businesses, increases in prosperity and stability, and reduction of conflicts over scarce resources;





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The Policy Tools

To draw the NC in an increasingly closer relationship with the EU, the ENP will use, as its main operational tool, jointly agreed Action Plans (AP) based on common values and a set of priorities. The AP will cover action in specific key areas: political dialogue and reform; trade and measures preparing partners for gradually obtaining a stake in the EU's Internal Market; justice and home affairs; energy, transport, information society, environment and research and innovation; social policy and people-to-people contacts. Action Plans have been already adopted for some countries (e.g. Morocco, Tunisia, Israel, Jordan, Ukraine and Moldova) and are under negotiation for others (Lebanon, Egypt, Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan).

From 2007 the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) will support national, regional, thematic and cross border co-operation involving both EU member states and NCs. In the context of the EU Financial Perspectives, the Commission has proposed significant funding for the ENPI, approximately €15 billion, for the period 2007-2013. These funds will certainly act as an incentive for economic and political reform within the partner countries. The proposed ENPI Regulation is under discussion by the Council and the Parliament.

WWF's position

WWF is deeply concerned about the sustainability dimension of the ENP and is advocating for an appropriate integration of environmental and governance concerns/requirements in the Action Plans, the ENPI and future implementation tools.

Regarding the Action Plans, WWF acknowledges that, in those already adopted by the COM, environment is treated as an area for enhanced 'cooperation' but there are few specific proposals and wording makes it clear that environment is regarded as a low priority in relation to economic development, security considerations, migration issues, and governance and legal/judicial reform. WWF will be working with the H.Boll Foundation and representatives of the local civil society in the NC to ensure that the new and/or revised Action Plans, as well as the future programming documents will include democracy, sustainable development and environmental protection as concrete priorities.

Regarding the ENPI proposal, WWF welcomes that the environment, sustainable development and civil society participation are mentioned very regularly in the proposal, but regrets that there is a complete lack of safeguard mechanisms or conditions to ensure that the NC use these funds effectively for such purposes.





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WWF would expect the new ENPI regulation to be improved so that it:

1. Makes more explicit the use of the funds for thematic environmental programmes and environmental measures.

Possibility for the adoption of thematic programmes on the environment should be mentioned in the text of the Regulation (Art.6.1.b). Promoting cooperation in the freshwater, marine and fisheries sector should be included as part of the scope of assistance (Art. 2) and “conservation” of natural resources be added to its “good management” (Art.2.e).

2. Sets up environmental safeguards and ensures there is proper environmental integration in the design and evaluation of the ENPI programmes.

Detailed and stricter requirements for the environmental evaluation of the programmes should be set up in the ENPI Regulation using the Structural Funds Regulation (N°1260/1999) as a basis. It should be particularly stressed in the case of the “major projects” to be supported by the ENPI. The negative environmental impact of a programme should be acknowledged in Art.9.5. as an additional reason to reconsider EU funding for a project/programme

3. Ensures that the use of the ENPI fund is compatible with EU environmental policies and legislation

The need for compatibility with the provisions of the Treaty, instruments adopted under it, Community policies and actions including on environmental protection should be included in Art. 5.

4. Supports civil society participation and enhanced capacity.

Involvement of relevant partners, including civil society, at regional and local level is called for in Art 4.2 and Art 4.3. Assessment of this involvement should be required in the annual reports submitted by the Commission to the EP and the Council (Art.25).

In the context of the cross border cooperation, CBC, (TITLE III) enhancing the capacity of the civil society should be eligible (Art.14) and be mentioned as a type of measure (Art.15). To ensure participation to the CBC **management structures** (Art.10-11)., a participatory mechanisms or Advisory body should be considered using as a model the Monitoring Committees of the Structural Funds, the Regional advisory Councils for Fisheries, etc.



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