



CSOs views for a more secure European Neighbourhood Partnership

Today the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the European Commission, **Federica Mogherini**, together with Commissioner for Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, **Johannes Hahn** presented issued the [joint communication with the review of the European Neighbourhood Policy \(ENP\)](#) to the members of the Foreign Affairs Committee in the European Parliament.

The new policy aims to shift away from an EU-centered approach towards more strengthened and equal partnerships to tackle common challenges and seize common opportunities in the Eastern and Southern Neighbourhood. Whilst the communication addresses the common challenges on socio-economic development, youth employability, good governance, democracy and rule of law, **SOLIDAR** is concerned about the strong focus given to “hard” security, both declined in the energy and migration sectors, instead of investing in social protection contributing to social and economic stability.

Also, despite referring to the universality and indivisibility of human rights and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy, it needs to be more specified how human rights conditionality will be implemented. Lastly, despite mentioning support to CSO fora, the recognition of the role of civil society in bringing about transformative change, defined in the Agenda 2030, requires a stronger focus.

This communication comes after the conclusion of a CSO dialogue that brought together 70 civil society organisations from the Middle East and North Africa region and Europe, that was organised on 16 November by **CONCORD, Arab NGO Network for Development (ANND) and the EuroMed Non-Governmental Platform, hosted by the European Economic and Social Committee**, in preparation of the launch of the reviewed European Neighbourhood Policy.

The dialogue clearly highlighted that investing in young people, working together in providing them better socio-economic future perspectives, was considered to be one of the ‘mainstream’ points – together with a strong gender perspective – to promote sustainable and inclusive development throughout the region and that the reviewed ENP should take close to its heart, and hence we welcome the reference in the joint communication given to youth and socio-economic rights of women.

In order to put these principles into practice, the civil society organisations participating at the dialogue recommend the following elements upon which the new partnership between the EU and the countries in the region can be build:

- Uphold values and Human Rights, including **human rights conditionality**, against which systems to promote

reform in the MENA region, supported by the EU, will be evaluated.

- Support the **statutory role of civil society** that needs to be recognised as key interlocutor for an open, meaningful, transparent, structured dialogue on local, national, regional and EU level.
- **Enhance the role of civil society** allowing them to have a meaningful and concrete **impact** on the ground, especially by taking concrete actions against practices by partner countries that limit the space for civil society in the region.
- **Embrace the human security approach**: Security is not about barbed wire, but it is about investing in people, especially in education, decent jobs, social protection and to foster the sense of solidarity among people.
- **Migrants and refugees**: A set of mechanisms needs to be taken such as humanitarian corridors, tackling root causes of migration, and other efforts. Moreover political courage of EU member states is needed to provide suitable answers to the current crisis.
- Trade and investment: A real partnership, in light of the EU Agenda 2030, should be established to **ensure policy coherence for sustainable development**. This would necessitate a change in the underlying approach of the trade agreements (i.e. DCFTAs).
- Specific attention has to be dedicated to people with special needs, in particular **Persons With Disabilities (PWDs)**, to ensure their integration in society as well as participation in decision making processes.
- In the management of the humanitarian crisis more support has to be provided to civil society (i.e. grassroots organisations) to promote a **sustainable resilience agenda over the long term**.

SOLIDAR and its members and partners in the region have published seven country reports on the European Neighbourhood Policy for [Algeria](#), [Tunisia](#), [Morocco](#), [Palestine](#), [Lebanon](#), [Egypt](#) and [Jordan](#).

Please read SOLIDAR Policy Briefing "[Social Protection: Key for Peace and Prosperity in the Middle East and North Africa Region](#)".

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