Experts from politics, administration, and civil society discuss the challenges and future direction of the European neighbourhood policy at a conference organized by the Bertelsmann Stiftung. The EU shall act more assertive in its neighbourhood and consistently support positive developments.

CONTACT PERSON

Gabriele Schöler

"Is our neighbourhood still a 'ring of friends' or rather a 'ring of fire'?", asked Art de Geus, chairman of the Bertelsmann Stiftung, referring to the political transformations taking place in the European neighbourhood. Their effects and the question of how the EU should react with its neighbourhood policy, formed the background to the one-day conference of the Bertelsmann Stiftung in Berlin.

Nearly 100 participants discussed the expectations of the EU and the neighbours towards the future ENP as well as the instruments and institutions necessary for an efficient policy.
The keynote speeches and the discussions reflected the high expectations towards the neighbourhood policy on both sides. Some neighbours would like to receive increased financial and immaterial support on their way towards democracy and the rule of law, others asked for more economic cooperation. The EU most notably wants to achieve peace, stability, and prosperity in its neighbourhoods. The participants also discussed obstacles such as insufficient financial resources and the complexity of the European institutions.

Reforms for a more effective ENP

Michael Köhler, representative of the EU commission, emphasized that the ENP should primarily use its existing instruments more efficiently, and asked for more engagement of the member states in the policy. New financial instruments have to be established in order to encounter the manifold expectations.

The participants agreed that the ENP may no longer remain restricted to the direct geographic neighbours of the EU. Conflict prevention and resolution ask for a broader approach focusing on the larger region. An open communication of its aims shall help to prevent that geostrategic conflicts sweep off the ENP’s successes. Furthermore, the neighbours have to be empowered so as to resolve regional conflicts in multilateral fora.

Whether incentives coined as “more for more – less for less” can achieve the desired effects, or whether the EU should rather offer “more for less” – provide more cooperation when neighbours show less capacity of transformation – remained a controversial issue.

Elmar Brok, chairman of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs, emphasized that stability and peace in Europe must not be endangered by a competition with Russia. The European neighbourhood policy should always keep the doors open for good relations with the neighbours as well as with their neighbours.

Additional impulses for future activities and cooperation of the EU in the region were delivered by Wolfgang Schüssel, former chancellor of Austria, and Fathallah Sijilmassi, secretary general of the Union for the Mediterranean.

Synthesizing expectations into palpable proposals

The Bertelsmann Stiftung will include many of these interesting proposals in a strategy paper to be published at the beginning of 2015. The paper will
synthesize the expectations which have been expressed in order to propose new and reformed instruments and contents of a future ENP.

PUBLICATION

Towards a New European Neighbourhood Policy

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Conference “Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy”, 27.11.2014, Berlin
Keynote – speech of Dr. Michael Köhler, Director EuropeAID in the European Commission, 27.11.2014

- Keynote by Dr Michael A. Köhler, European Commission, Brussels

Conference "Towards a new European Neighbourhood Policy"

Interviews with Conference Participants

Interviews with Conference Participants
- Moncef Cheikh-Rouhou on the priorities of the southern neighbourhood policy

- Elena Korosteleva on the priorities of the eastern neighbourhood policy
• Agnieszka Łada on Poland’s role in EU’s relations with Russia

Partner

• Tobias Schumacher on the instruments and institutions for an efficient neighbourhood policy

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Dimitrios Triantaphyllou on the geographic scope of the neighbourhood policy

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