

# External Evaluation of the European Neighbourhood Instrument

## Short summary

The main aim of the evaluation is to provide a comprehensive answer to the question whether the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) is delivering against its main objective of advancing towards an area of shared prosperity of good neighbourliness involving the EU and its neighbouring countries and thus if it is fit for purpose.

### Conclusions

- Overall coherence of ENI assistance is good and generally ENI programmes are well aligned to one another as well as to the overarching policy framework.
- The focus on differentiation as a key principle of the Instrument is realistic and pragmatic.
- Through the use of EU policy and political dialogue, ENI programmes are reasonably well aligned to country priorities.
- The effectiveness of the incentive mechanism aiming at a special relation based on shared values of democracy and human rights is limited.
- ENI's response capacity has improved in terms of flexibility, but is found not proportionate to the challenges being faced, in particular the prevention of crises and conflicts: Programmes are of the same magnitude as those under EDF for countries where EU interests are far less vital and pressing. In the near future, financial needs to which the EU will be called to contribute are likely to be much higher than resources made available to ENI in the present MFF: reconstruction and treating the root causes of radicalism and terrorism, among others.
- Despite shortcomings with regard to Joint Programming and the division of labour, coordination with EU MS has improved.

### Recommendations

- The EU should consider developing further guidance on ENI assistance to reinforce coherence and promote a more balanced political/policy dialogue with partner countries. EU goals and ENI potential would gain from being better understood by partners, and thereby also contribute to enhanced ownership.
- The quest for complementarity between ENI and relevant thematic EFIs, MFA and ECHO could be scaled-up to ensure actions mutually reinforce each other, comprehensively cover EU priorities and reflect medium and long term planning horizons.
- ENI should continue its focus on differentiation based on countries' needs and situation, but also by further differentiating the support provided to the EU's closest neighbours from assistance to other, more distant, parts of the world. One way could be to design more Neighbourhood specific assistance strategies based on updated theories of change that fully take into account and link stabilisation, conflict prevention and long term development. This could be associated with strengthening scenario building/forecasting capacities, preferably in close cooperation with EU MS.
- By reinforcing their partners' capacity (both governments and CSOs) to contribute to policy dialogues, ENI could improve its ability to identify country priorities and, more importantly, population needs.
- The incentive-based approach could be developed to reflect a set of financial incentives that goes further than the umbrella programmes and the ranges, with re-revised criteria for allocation (prioritising achievements in conflict prevention and stabilisation). Financial incentives foreseen under the ENI regulation could be more strongly and directly linked to the non-financial incentives to provide further and more sustainable momentum for reform.
- The legislative authority could consider increasing the ENI allocation of funds to avoid the marginalisation of crisis prevention and to increase flexibility to respond to crises in the Neighbourhood. All the while without compromising directly required ENI long-term assistance for treating the root causes of instability and conflicts.
- The EU should devise crisis prevention strategies targeted at the Neighbourhood as a specific dimension of the ENI and further develop existing operational synergies (tighter coordination, pooling of resources and procedures) with IcSP.
- Joint assessment and programming should continue to be rolled-out among partner countries for the 2017-2020 period.