The European Neighbourhood Policy – a critical overview of current results

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In the last decade, the common foreign and security policy of the European Union (EU) has balanced between consolidation and regionalization and has been based on an idealistic rather than realistic approach. Its main tool implemented towards countries of the Eastern Europe, Northern Africa and the Middle East is the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Launched in 2004, in peculiar circumstances, shortly after the biggest enlargement of the EU, the ENP ought to constitute a new formula of bilateral relations with its new neighbours. The key task of the ENP is to stabilize relations with the EU's neighbours, to develop political, economic and social cooperation, to ensure EU stability and predictability beyond its borders. The EU enticed partner countries with the perspective of future membership of the EU or advanced forms of association. In fact, the ENP can be seen as a substitute for the Union's enlargement that has previously been the main vehicle for the Union's normative power in Europe. Until now no partner country has been granted the realistic perspective of full membership. Generally, the ENP is criticized for inappropriate goals and inflexible implementation.   The main aim of this paper is to briefly refer to:
-the goals of the ENP when it was launched;
-the process of implementation of the ENP and its results;
-reasons for its ineffectiveness in the current formula;
-possible changes in the ENP after adoption of the EU's Global Strategy.
Key words: European Neighbourhood Policy, Common Foreign and Security Policy, foreign policy of the European Union.

Introduction

The current unstable situation of international relations revokes the problem of the effectiveness of the EU. Its common foreign and security policy (CF&SP) evolves from the coordination of national policies to unanimous policy run by the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and special programmes under the European Neighbourhood Policy. This process is a part of a wider process of reassessment of the EU's international position. After decades

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of being a normative power that pursues democratic and liberal changes, the EU is changing its international identity and priorities, which is reflected in the EU's Global Strategy adopted in June 2016. The main goal of the following paper is to give a critical overview of the current results of the ENP and to answer the question if the ENP has been successful, what its main weaknesses are and what should be enhanced. This question is critically important not only in the context of the internal security of the EU, but also reflects the process of the development of the EU as a new global geopolitical power, whose *raison d'etat* is gradually coming into conflict with its own normative commitments (Sakwa, 2015: 553). The following paper contains several parts: it describes the roots and main features of the ENP, implementation and key problems in this process. It also discusses the possible results of the adoption of the Global Strategy for the EU.

The roots of the ENP and the process of its implementation
After the end of the so-called "cold war", the EU tended to strengthen its international position and to get the status of economic and political superpower. The future of the EU was seen as a) a laboratory and a model of integration for other regions; b) a market player - a power that defends and promotes its own economic interests; c) a normative power – a rule-generator and exporter of norms; d) a force for stabilization within the EU and beyond; e) a magnet and neighbour, using the incentive of membership (Cremona, 2004: 553-565), Following this aim, the Treaty of Maastricht established the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CF&SP). It was not the only emanation of progressing the internal consolidation of the EU, but also a kind of response to needs that came from outside of this organization (Treacher, 2004: 50). The EU member countries were coordinating to some extent their foreign policies rather than formulating a united European policy. This coordination obtained features of a structural foreign policy, was based on common democratic values, long-term oriented, and aimed at encouraging viable political and economic changes in Central European countries. The EU preferred non-military instruments, developing soft power means. For the closest Eastern EU's neighbours: Poland, Czech Republic and Hungary, future membership of the EU was a better incentive for Europeanization. Regarding other neighbours, that due to geographical, political, economic and social reasons were not granted the perspective of membership of the EU, the picture of the CF&SP is more complicated.

During the implementation of the CF&SP some very important questions have arisen for the effectiveness of the process differences between member countries regarding security issues. Two visions of the security architecture have concurred: a vision of close cooperation with NATO, and a European vision, that to some extent aimed to limit American presence in Europe. The situation was even more complicated by the traditional neutrality of some EU members (Austria, Finland, Sweden). Despite the fact that the basic international role of the EU was formulated relatively precisely, the CF&SP was seen as not consistent, comprehensive, but rather as a sum of national policies of sovereign countries (Koutrakos, 2003: 74). The EU sought its place in international relations creating its own image as a "force of good", which was reflected in the European Security Strategy of 2003. The EU wanted to promote its own model of a political system

and contribute to stability in the European neighbourhood, what can be undoubtedly treated as evidence of the idealistic approach to international relations.

This issue became more significant after the biggest enlargement of the EU in 2004. Earlier, in December 2002, the European Commission announced that the forthcoming enlargement should not result in a creation of new cleavages in Europe and a constant goal of the EU was to promote welfare and stability, also beyond its borders (Council Conclusions).

In March 2003 the European Commission announced a document "A Wider Europe – Neighbourhood: A New Framework for Relations with our Eastern and Southern Neighbours" (COM (2003) 104). The countries that were not granted the status of an official candidate for EU membership were proposed a closer political and economic cooperation. Its political priority was focussed on democratization; it should increase the level of security in the EU's neighbourhood. Finally, facing new challenges, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was announced. Its main goal was, as Romano Prodi said, to establish 'a ring of friends surrounding the EU and its closest European neighbours' (Prodi, 2002).

The ENP was adopted by the European Commission in May 2004. Its aim is to establish a stable buffer zone outside the EU's borders by promoting democracy, rule of law, human rights and prosperity. It was the final element of shaping a new formula of the EU foreign policy with North African, Middle East and East European countries, but generally with the same means and values that were used towards Central Europe a decade earlier. Being in line with the European Security Strategy of 2003, the ENP declared "to make a particular contribution to stability and good governance in the immediate neighbourhood". The ENP was presented as the most highly profiled policy of the EU since the enlargement in 2004, when the EU "got nearer to the zones of present or recent instability", and was presented to public opinion as a new "grand project" of the EU (Kolvraa, 2017: 12). The EU wanted to create "a ring of friends" by spreading liberal values, economic development and social cohesion. In fact, such a situation has brought to the EU a vast number of new problems. The ENP constitutes two dimensions: Southern and Eastern (the first one covers Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia; the second – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). Outside of this mechanism and the whole ENP remains the EU neighbours of various status: EFTA countries (Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, Switzerland), Balkan countries and Turkey (potential members of the EU) as well as Russia (that refused to participate in the ENP). What is more, Belarus, Syria, and Libya did not undertake dialogue, while Algeria was delaying negotiations regarding the ENP. As a consequence, the ENP covers not all neighbours of the EU. The main activities undertaken towards them have a normative character and aimed to ensure stability and predictability, democratization and liberalization. To some extent, the EU's neighbours were positioned not just as non-European outsiders, but as a security problem and a potential threat (Kolvraa, 2017: 14).

The reasons for that are not only political but also geographical and cultural. As a result, there is a kind of division of responsibilities between member states interested in both dimensions of the neighbourhood. France, Italy and Spain are particularly interested in the development of dialogue with North Africa and Middle East countries, while relations with East European post-Soviet republics were the focus of Poland's foreign policy. In 2007-2008 new projects emerged within the ENP that aimed to boost regional dimensions of the integration processes. In 2006 Germany proposed the ENP Plus conception and the Black Sea Synergy, and, in the next year, under the French presidency of the EU, the Union for the Mediterranean and the Eastern Partnership was adopted, initiated by Poland and Sweden.

The main tool in the relations with countries covered by the ENP was Individual Action Plans. Bilateral cooperation was dependent on the achievement of normative criteria, such as democratic values, pluralism and liberal market economy. Participants were obliged to ensure political transformation and democratization, respecting human rights, fighting against terrorism and other forms of criminality. The EU has formulated towards these countries short-term aims, whose achievement seemed to be very difficult. The necessity of Europeanization of law, fighting informal practices, including corruption, met the resistance of bureaucrats in neighbour countries.

The ENP employed two sets of tools designed to foster the implementation of the ENP's goals. The first type of tools consists of financial and technical assistance, the development of infrastructure, preferential trade agreements. The second type of tools includes a wide range of political actions, such as joint actions, programmes and common strategies (Kwiecień, 2016: 95). The absence of a special offer for ordinary citizens of countries covered by the programme is seen as one of chief weaknesses of the ENP (Piskorska, 2014: 175). The funds for countries of both dimensions of the ENP were allocated not equally. For example, the 2007 European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument allocated EUR 3404 million for Mediterranean countries and EUR 1154 million for Eastern European countries (Piskorska, 2014: 196).

A new step towards stronger partnerships should be made by Association Agreements that should replace Partnership and Cooperation Agreements, signed in the 1990's. New documents focus on strengthening the framework for enhanced dialogue, promotion and strengthening stability and freedom. They foresee sectoral cooperation in governance, the economy and civil sector but are dependent on democratic achievements. Until now Association Agreements of various types have been signed with Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia in the East and with Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Israel, Lebanon and Jordan in the South.

A wide number of countries covered by the ENP differed significantly in their capacity to implement European values and attitude towards eventual association with the EU. The ENP did not help to avoid a serious crisis in North Africa and East Europe in 2011-2015 (Arab Spring, military conflict in Ukraine). A critical

overview of the ENP done by the European Commission has led to the conclusion that the ENP should focus on the stability, resilience and security of neighbouring countries. The EU has limited its own aspirations, its role as a normative power and promoter of democracy was called into doubt. It generally leads to the conclusion that the ENP in the current formula is ineffective and needs reassessment. Assumptions on the EU's normative and transformative power should be revisited.

Reasons for the ineffectiveness of the ENP

From the beginnings of the ENP, it raised disputes and anxiety about its effectiveness (Emerson, 2004). Agenda setting, based predominantly on idealistic premises, turned out to be too naive (Lehne 2014). The soft power employed by the EU was not efficient at managing the political situation in neighbouring countries. Moreover, as some scholars state, by undertaking a self-perceived depoliticised and technocratic view of regional security, the EU is increasingly perceived as being out of touch with the security concerns of its neighbours (Simão, 2017: 347).

By relinquishing enlargement, the EU was in danger of losing its capacity for effectively stabilising its nearest neighbours as well as losing its legitimacy and justification in their eyes (Haukkala, 2008: 1601). The ENP is good evidence of how the EU balances between idealism and realism: on the one hand, promoting democracy, human rights and the development of the civil society, the EU plays the role of a normative hegemon, on the other it tends to ensure for itself security and stability in neighbouring countries, even at the expense of democratic values. Merging both opposing trends, the ENP is called a "buffer policy" (Nitszke, 2016: 381). It is a border policy that depends not only on the interests of the EU and its members, but also on chaotic developments in partner countries (Kolvraa, 2017: 13-15). As a result, the ENP does not constitute a well-knit programme. Key activities within the ENP – the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean, announced in 2008 – have weakened the unity of the ENP conception and led to a rivalry between promoters of both programmes. The EU seeks to combine the Southern and Eastern dimension of external policy into one policy framework, according to the "one-size-fits-all" approach and at the same time to maintain a balance between them (Kwiecień, 2016: 94). It transformed both programmes to asymmetrical cooperation with the EU's position of an exporter of norms and values (Mouhoub, Debbihi, 2016: 158). The EU used the "carrot and stick" policy, known as the "more for more" rule, that was hard to accept by partner countries and caused distrust (Gracik-Zajaczkowski, 2015: 113). Paradoxically, while internal borders of the enlarged EU through integration are increasingly "softer", at the same time the external borders are becoming "harder" as the last lines of defence against threats from neighbouring countries (Kolvraa, 2017: 15).

The first critical statement regarding the ENP was expressed by the European Community in December 2006 in the communication *On strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy* (COM (2006) 726). The document outlined 3 weak spheres of the ENP:
-slow economic and trade integration
-the lack of liberalisation of visa procedures, limited mobility
-unresolved regional conflicts in the ENP countries.

It was mentioned that such problems can become a threat for the EU, resulting in a mass and sudden influx of refugees, energy crises, breaking off trade relations, the spread of terrorism, organized crime and drug dealing.

The next document of 2007 entitled Stronger European Neighbourhood Policy has not changed the main principles of the ENP but stipulated a more flexible approach towards neighbouring countries, easier access to the EU's programmes and agencies, participation in common projects with the EU member countries (COM (2007) 774). The Lisbon Treaty of 2009 has significantly reshaped the CF&SP. It has introduced the European External Action Service headed by the High Representative, who is also the Vice-President of European Commission. Such a step aimed to improve the effectiveness of the EU's foreign actions and the level of European security. One of the intended outcomes of the Lisbon Treaty in the field of the EU foreign policy was "improved consistency between the different areas of the EU external action" (Furness, Gaenzle, 2017: 476).

In practice, implementation of the ENP in its new version was still under the influence of particular interests of member states. Not surprisingly, almost simultaneously, two neighbour cooperation programmes were launched in 2008 – the Eastern Partnership, initiated by Poland and Sweden and the Union for the Mediterranean, promoted by France. The Eastern Partnership should cover the post-Soviet states of Eastern Europe and Southern Caucasus. From the very beginning of the initiative, it was treated as a tool of geopolitical rivalry with Russia, which refused to participate in the programme. The Union for the Mediterranean, implementing the so-called Barcelona Process, which started in 1995, has not caused so many controversies.

As a result of both programmes within the ENP framework two different approaches emerged – the state approach and community approach. The Mediterranean region is an example of the state approach, where the EU delegates its competences to a particular member state, while Eastern Europe is approached rather by community interests (Mouhoub, Debbihi, 2016: 160). Paradoxically, the development and future of the Eastern Partnership are influenced by relations with a country that is not included in the ENP: Russia. Its negative attitude towards the Eastern Partnership as well as military conflicts in the post-Soviet region is complicating the whole process of cooperation with post-Soviet countries. The Arab Spring in 2011 changed the manner of the EU involvement in the Mediterranean region pushing itself to a stronger community approach. On the contrary, after the political turmoil in Ukraine in 2013-2014, the EU ceded the initiative for introducing stability to its main members: Germany

and France. In both cases, the EU did not manage to present itself as a credible and relevant power to political leaders of neighbouring countries. Probably, the reasons for the ineffectiveness of the ENP stemmed from the very nature of the EU. It promotes its own model of democracy and economy by "soft" financial means rather than by threats and military force (Sjursen, 2006: 169). A principle of positive conditionality, the "more for more" rule, should promote partnerships with countries that made significant efforts and progress in democratic reforms which, as developments after the Arab Spring show, is not strictly correlated with political stability.

The ENP evidenced a lack of a proper and attractive offer for neighbouring countries. The EU was pursuing its own policy towards neighbourhood without dialogue and understanding of the problems in the South and East. What is more, in some states the real problem is not implementing democratic rules, but the process of state building.

Such a narrow point of view on the problems in neighbouring countries is a manifestation of Eurocentrism (Lehne, 2014). It results also in the EU ignoring the influence of other geopolitical actors, which, contrary to the EU, are determined to use military force to defend geopolitical interests.

Another, but not less important, issue is that the EU was criticised for granting support to neighbouring countries whose authorities were corrupted and mismanaged European funds. In fact, financial support does not mean boosting democratic reform. Corruption, nepotism and state detention are realities of Arab and post-Soviet countries, have a systemic character and engage in some way almost all societies (Czachor, 2015). A weak civil society and a specific political culture do not allow the belief that EU funds can change the situation. Transferring money generally did not have a big impact on implementing the rules enforced by the EU. The results of the EU's financial engagement in the ENP countries can even be the opposite: abused support makes protective mechanisms stronger and increases corruption. As a result, there is a strong need for fundamental changes in the field of political culture that cannot be hastened by a foreign financial support.

The ENP can be also criticized for following the theory of path dependency – it tries to follow patterns that were successful in the case of Central European countries, quite different from North African and Middle East countries. The ENP is affected by the concept of "external governance", and expands its own model of governance without regard to the local specificity of neighbouring countries (Lavenex, 2004).

Prospects for EU foreign policy: the Global Strategy and beyond
Even though the tough Lisbon Treaty, which came into force in December 2009, aimed to consolidate the CF&SP of the EU, it is still regionalized and provided separately within the Eastern Partnership and the Union for the Mediterranean. Improving collective actions through institutional reforms could not be effective in the absence of a clear strategic direction (Furness, Gaenzle, 2017: 476). The

problem of the actorness of the EU at the international level is well identified and analyzed. Even after the Lisbon Treaty, Europe has witnessed the lack of political will to react unanimously in the case of serious international crises. The most powerful EU members, France, Great Britain (until Brexit) and Germany rather push their own national interests, or act together, than coordinate the interests of all the members of the EU. Despite the fact that formally the ENP remained coherent, the vision and priorities of both programmes have changed due to different political and security reasons. In 2015 the European Commission adopted a new document on the reconstruction of the ENP, but it rather did not lead to a breakthrough. The ENP has to respond to the actual challenges. For European politicians and scientists the question under what conditions the ENP can achieve one of the objectives of the EU: to resolve conflicts in its neighbourhood is still pertinent (Gylfason, Wijkman, 2017: 363-395).

The current model of the ENP, which covers all neighbouring countries, in Africa, Middle East and Eastern Europe and is based on bilateral agreements did not contribute to the consolidation of the ENP. Despite the stipulation of strengthening the ENP, expressed in the European Commission's report Stronger European Neighbourhood Policy, the ENP underwent fragmentation. Negotiations with neighbouring countries were at various stages, some of them even resigned from closer cooperation with the EU. Passed in 2011 the European Commission's document reviewing the ENP, A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood (COM (2011) 303) accepted such dualism in performing the ENP, although called to complementary, not competitive activities.

The Arab Spring in 2011, the so-called "Euromaidan" in Ukraine in 2013, the annexation of Crimea in 2014 and the conflict in the Eastern part of Ukraine have significantly influenced the capacities of the ENP and brought a wave of criticism regarding the EU's ambitions to play a role of normative power.

The current results of the ENP were criticised in the document Towards a New European Neighbourhood Policy passed by the European Commission in March 2015 (JOIN (2015) 6). This paper has formally started the process of the revision of the ENP. It concluded that "our neighbourhood is less stable than it was 10 years ago", "The ENP has not always been able to offer adequate responses to these recent developments, nor to the changing aspirations of our partners. Therefore, the EU's own interests have not been fully served either". The consequence of this document was a resolution adopted by the European Parliament in July 2015 (P8_TA(2015) 0 272). The resolution concluded that the reform of the ENP should facilitate better reaction to changes in the international environment since the Arab Spring and Ukrainian crises made it apparent that the EU's current mechanisms are not efficient. It stipulated reversion to the initial goals of the ENP, the creation of a welfare zone, and a good neighbourhood based on common values. It also recalls that the ENP cannot be implemented without coordination with other external activities of the EU. Priority was given to the CF&SP and the Common Defence and Security Policy of the EU. The place of the ENP among other documents was clearly defined and it should play a secondary role. It was rather seen as a functional tool of security policy than a tool of

strategic importance. The European Parliament's resolution called to the development of cooperation not only with neighbours but also with "neighbours of neighbours", which means that the key problems of the ENP are seen in a broader regional perspective.

The abovementioned proposals were consulted by the EU institutions, member states and partner countries, and as a result, in November 2015 the European Commission announced the reinvention of the ENP. Primarily, the EU has softened its position in a normative sphere – it was concluded that not all partner countries aspire to meet all the EU's standards and norms and that the EU should take into account various forms of the partnership. The renewed ENP should be more individualized and consider the aspirations and capabilities of every single partner country. Three fields of cooperation within the ENP were established:
-unemployment, cooperation in the energy sector, support for SME;
-cooperation in security issues, including a fight against terrorism and organized crime;
-cooperation and assistance in the refugee crisis.

The future of the ENP will be further shaped by the document adopted by the European Council in 2016, the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy (EUGS). Its general conclusion states that "we live in times of existential crisis, within and beyond the European Union. Our Union is under threat. Our European project, which has brought unprecedented peace, prosperity and democracy, is being questioned" (EUGS, 2016: 13). Such a phrase will have a significant influence on the new model of relations with neighbour countries. The EUGS aimed to replace the 'European Security Strategy' of 2003. It is treated as evidence of changing reality and of current moods in Europe resulting in more modesty and realism. The emphasis was put on 'principled pragmatism', which in the foreign policy is based on realistic assessment (Cross, 2016). After recent developments in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, the EU's neighbourhood has transformed from the 'ring of friends' into an 'arc of instability' (Keukeleire, Delreux, 2017: 2). This fact is reflected in the focus on the EU's own security in the Global Strategy: the goal is to strengthen defence cooperation, create a solid European defence industry, and to effectively deal with the new security threats. Other issues, like investing in state and societal resilience in third countries have second priority.

The EUGS should open a new chapter in the CF&SP. Among the main challenges it recognises existential crises inside and outside the EU, the neglect of the integration process, the destabilization of Eastern Europe, terrorism and violence in the South. The EUGS is an attempt to merge realism and idealism. It uses such categories as "interests" and "values". Within the principled pragmatism a new model of action in the international relations is sought and balances between isolationism and interventionism. In the light of the EUGS, the main goal of the EU is to ensure member states and citizens' basic interests and common values.

The EUGS foresees a comprehensive approach to the conflicts and crises by using all available tools. The EU will support the creation of cooperative regional orders in most disintegrated zones, especially in North Africa, Middle East and Eastern Europe. These orders should be based on common values: sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, which is in line with the UN Charter and EU principles. Democracy and liberalism were not mentioned. The EU declares its contribution to an effective mechanism of global governance which will be organized on the basis of international law. Concluding, the EU is prepared for a transformation in the international order, not limiting itself to sustain the current one.

The EUGS has significantly influenced the ENP which was reflected in the 2017 Report on the Implementation of the ENP (JOIN (2017) 18). The supporting stabilisation instead of promoting democracy arises as a priority of the ENP. The EU has limited its aspirations to implement European values in neighbouring countries and introduced a new approach that encompasses greater respect for the political and socio-economic diversity of neighbouring countries. The revised ENP recognises that individual partners have different aspirations and interests in their relations with the EU. As a result this may result in a more flexible and sensitive attitude to partners.

Conclusions

The article puts forward a critical overview of the conceptual roots and the process of implementation of the ENP. The current limited and insufficient results of the ENP are the outcomes of different, even competitive visions that aimed at the creation of stable space beyond the EU borders. Both programmes run under the ENP: the Eastern Partnership and Union for the Mediterranean were shaped by particular interests of member states, not by the whole community. As a result, such countries as France and Spain were focused on cooperation with North Africa, while Poland or Sweden with former Soviet Union republics. It turned out that on the official level of policy framework, all conceptions aimed at strengthening ties with neighbour countries, are for member states acceptable, but when it comes to actual cooperation most influential EU countries block each other.

The most important conclusion is that the goals of the ENP, formulated in the early 2000's were too ambitious and challenging. After the political turmoil in Northern Africa and Eastern Europe all partner countries in the ENP need a more concrete programme and trustable vision of future steps of partnership. The "more for more" logic should be first of all implemented in clearly beneficial for both parties spheres like energy, environment and transport. As a kick-start, development of the cooperation may include the future economic area of the EU and Northern African, Middle East and Eastern Europe countries (Sapir, Zachmann, 2012, 37). The EUGS should be a proper step in the reassessment of the EU's international position. Modest normative ambitions, a "step by step" strategy and flexible relations with neighbouring countries seem to be the proper way to change the ENP.

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