

EVENT

Dinner Dialogue
Foreign Policy
Security Policy

The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and the Presidential Elections in the Ukraine



The EU Neighbourhood Policy in the light of the recent presidential election events in the Ukraine was the topic of debate of the Dinner Dialogue hosted by Ecologic and the Heinrich Böll Foundation on 14 December 2004 in Berlin. The core questions centered on the applicability of the recently negotiated EU/Ukraine Action Plan in the light of the changes that have taken place in the Ukraine at the end of 2004. Should the EU continue or rather rethink its policy vis a vis the Ukraine, and offer it a European perspective? What important elements will have to be considered which may shape a future EU policy in this region? Annika Weidemann, Rainer Steenblock and Claudia Nolte were the guest speakers.

Annika Weidemann (EU Council Secretariat, CFSP) opened the evening with a short introduction to the EU policy towards Ukraine. She stated that the content of the negotiated Action Plan is strongly based on the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement, and many elements of that agreement will be continued. The focus lies mainly on economic questions, trade, the environment, and possible military cooperation. In fact, the ENP promises access to the Common Market and to political processes, however, it declines participation in political institutions. This has caused widespread dissatisfaction in the Ukraine, given that the country perceives itself as being part of Europe and not as a European neighbour.

The recent elections in the Ukraine are unlikely to lead to any short-term changes of the status quo as regards ENP. At the end of the first three year Action Plan, a new agreement - the EU Commission speaks of European Neighbourhood Agreements - may be

negotiated. In principle however, in spite of the EU's unwillingness to offer any further membership perspectives to its neighbours, an association agreement with the Ukraine is not entirely out of question. The Council of Foreign Ministers has in fact tasked HR Javier Solana and the EU Commission to prepare further proposals, which can go beyond the current ENP framework.

One of the greatest drawbacks of EU Foreign Policy is the inability of its 25 members to come to fast agreements / decisions. Part of the reason lies in the still strongly nationally driven foreign policy of the member states, which is best manifested in the strong differences in regional focus. The Ukraine can however - similar to Croatia - exert pressure on the EU and fuel the dynamics of integration by consequently carrying out reforms and meeting expectations. At this stage in the process, the EU should await the process of government formation and the onset of reforms. Two main priorities of Viktor Yushchenko - market economy status for Ukraine and WTO membership - are well within the framework of the Action Plan and are likely to appear on the agenda in 2005.



Rainder Steenblock (MdB, responsible for EU Politics for the Green Party in the Bundestag) stressed that the ENP is a sensible step albeit politically incomplete. Various neighbouring regions are lumped together, although differences should be made in terms of historic and strategic reasons, or as regards the current difficulties they face. Furthermore, a possible accession of the Ukraine may require another 10-15 years time; the decision will thus be made by a different generation and under different circumstances. Nevertheless, the EU will have to accord more attention to its relationships to its Eastern neighbours, since many a new member state holds strong interests in the new Eastern border regions. Strategically seen, the Ukraine is an important country for the EU (i.e. its potential for conflict resolution in Moldova or the Caucasus). However, when pursuing its interests in the region, the EU must always consider its relations with Russia. The election events must not prompt the EU to set up new documents. Instead it should seek to initiate concrete action within the framework of the ENP. The danger lies in the EU turning its attention away to other problems after the election, which could result in less support for the reform processes in the Ukraine. At this stage however, the EU must fulfil its political responsibility vis a vis the Ukraine.



Claudia Nolte (MdB and Member of the Foreign Policy Committee of the German Bundestag) pointed to the fact that the

EU's initiative for creating good neighbourly relations is a good step - also as regards the furthering of its own interests in those regions. The Neighbourhood Policy should however differentiate much more in terms of content between European and non-European states. Ukraine is a European state, and should thus be offered a different set of options - particularly after the election victory of Viktor Yushchenko. It should be made clear that this will take a lot of effort and that the road will be long and cumbersome. But at the same time, the Ukraine should feel welcomed. The EU must furthermore increase its presence in the region to be able to do more and increase its own leverage - for instance in Moldova.

The ensuing discussion looked at the following aspects of this debate:

- The relations with Russia. A new balance will have to be found, in view of the interests of the new EU member states. Furthermore, the issue does not only touch on the future of the Ukraine but also involves a debate on the future of Russia.
- The EU-Ukraine politics cannot be directly compared to the EU-Turkey politics. The EU-Turkey special relationship ranges back forty years, and cannot simply be discarded or translated.
- The finality debate - Should it be held at all? The discussion centres too much on two key options - full membership or privileged partnership. This fails to create the necessary space for discussing alternatives.
- The precondition for future enlargement is strongly based on the EU's ability to restructure its budget (particularly as regards agriculture and coherence funds). It is difficult to imagine how this can be achieved.
- The neighbourhood and enlargement debates are dominated to a large degree by development policy. Although the motivation is correct, the EU must learn to define its foreign policy interests much more clearly, also in order to determine the role it wants to play on a global scale. Such efforts may well lead to different results as regards the views on the future of the EU.
- How long will the public eye rest on Ukraine, and directly linked to that, how long will outside engagement last? EU solidarity and support will have to be kept up for a longer period of time.
- The civilising project (based on the Copenhagen Criteria) should be clearly separated from the political project - the former should be further supported whereas the latter should be implemented.
- Coherent EU politics are paramount. National interests should not undermine efforts on a European level.
- Future scenarios - the ENP in 2020. Internal changes in the

EU have the potential to lead to a new definition of Europe and in turn lead to a shift in European Neighbourhood Policy.

- Is the EU too reactive in its policy making? How could a more active political approach look like, and what could it achieve?

Links & Downloads:

- [Proposed Action Plan EU / Ukraine](#) [1]
- [ENP Website of the European Commission](#) [2]
- [Europe website of the Heinrich Boell Foundation](#) [3]
- Heinrich Boell Foundation: [Die Europäische Nachbarschaftspolitik](#) [4], Sascha Müller-Kraenner [pdf, 134 KB, German]
- [CV Annika Weidemann](#) [5] [pdf, 5 KB, German]
- [CV Claudia Nolte](#) [6] [pdf, 9 KB, German]
- [CV Rainer Steenblock](#) [7] [pdf, 10 KB, German]

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Berlin

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Links

[1] http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/Proposed_Action_Plan_EU-Ukraine.pdf

[2] http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/index_en.htm

[3] https://www.boell.de/de/05_world/223.html

[4] https://www.ecologic.eu/download/dinner_dialogue/2004/europaeische_nachbarschaft_smk.pdf

[5] https://www.ecologic.eu/sites/files/event/2013/cv_weidemann.pdf

[6] https://www.ecologic.eu/sites/files/event/2013/cv_nolte.pdf

[7] https://www.ecologic.eu/sites/files/event/2013/cv_steenblock.pdf