

# Improving the ENP and Establishing the Eastern Partnership Initiative: A Czech Perspective

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The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is among the most important external policies of the EU. Unfortunately, it has not substantially influenced EU member countries in the manner it was intended. This led to other regional EU initiatives that had similar aims but took more differentiated and country-specific approaches. The Eastern Partnership Initiative, which is one of these initiatives, will be discussed in detail in this article. Using empirical research conducted in Prague in September 2010, the Czech Republic's role in this initiative will be thoroughly explored.

**Keywords:** *security community, executives, ENP, EPI, membership*

## Introduction

Since its foundation, the strategic purpose of the EU has been to increase security and stability among its members by promoting economic and social relations beyond military and strategic interdependence. These characteristics made it a *security community*, as termed by Deutsch in 1957. Deutsch defined *security community* as a group:

carrying features of reciprocity, trust, the discovery of new interests, possibility to settle disputes peacefully and even acquiring collective identities through transactions such as trade, migration, tourism and cultural and educational exchanges.<sup>1</sup>

The theory of security communities introduced by Deutsch and his

colleagues in 1957 spawned several empirical studies over the subsequent decades. Specifically, Waever, de Wilde, and Buzan's elaboration on this theory in 1998 introduced the concept of "resecuritisation," which concerned potential threats to security communities and ways to face them. Waever identified disintegration and fragmentation as the greatest threats to the security of the EU. The resecuritisation process in Europe highlights the fact that while mature security communities do not expect war, they still experience *non-military* security dilemmas, such as economic, environmental, or ethnic conflicts, and they may eventually be fragmented by these events if they do not take action in time. Weaver sees the long-term solution to this potential fragmentation as "further integration;" specifically with countries in proximity because political and military threats travel more easily over shorter distances.

The is crucially relevant for this article since after the Cold War, most of the sources of insecurity for the EU were seen in the EU's neighbourhood: first in Eastern Europe, and later, after the completion of the Eastern enlargement, in the Balkans. As the EU started to realise that continuing instability in its neighbourhood could spill into Europe and threaten its security community, it started to assume a leading role in the stabilisation of its neighbourhood. The EU stabilised its neighbourhood by enlarging its security community by successive rounds of new member selection. However, some of the countries that have joined the EU in recent years have had poor economic and political statuses, which proved rather problematic for the EU. Faced with an unpopular process of enlargement but a lengthening queue of applications from governments in its neighbourhood who resented being excluded, the EU developed a network of agreements with these countries. The whole strategy was called the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP).<sup>2</sup>

The ENP's main aim was to establish a kind of privileged relationship that would include 'the closest possible association below the threshold of membership.'<sup>3</sup> This partnership would enable interested countries to be gradually integrated into the EU's internal market and regulatory structures, offering partners the possibility of participating in various EU programmes. Several issues were identified as "threats to mutual security," and a joint response to these common challenges was called for.<sup>4</sup>

Studies of the ENP overwhelmingly show that there is a clear dis-

crepancy between rule *adoption* and rule *application*. While the EU has been fairly successful in inducing ENP countries to adopt legislation in line with democratic governance provisions, these provisions have generally not been implemented.

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There are certain deficiencies in the ENP that have led to this inefficacy. First, and likely the main reason is the lack of membership perspective. Second, as a consequence, member countries avoid aligning legislation with the *acquis*. The only possible reward, the prospect of access to the market to an unspecified extent at a future time, is overshadowed by the growing anti-liberalism and neo-protectionism in the EU, as reflected by the French and Dutch rejections of the Constitutional Treaty in 2005. This is coupled with the EU's unwillingness to commit and distribute massive financial resources throughout its neighbourhood, largely because of the financial burden of EU enlargement and the problems in the Eurozone. Third, despite that the rhetoric of the Commission Communication establishing the ENP is couched in terms of interdependence and partnership, in reality EU rules are dominant. The EU does not give any meaningful say to neighbours in setting the normative agenda; objectives and means are non-negotiable. Fourth, the EU is faced with the problem of building a neighbourhood stretched over a very large geographical area and encompassing a wide diversity of countries with different problems and priorities. Finally, the Action Plans of the ENP are also problematic, as the *acquis communautaire* of the EU may not be an appropriate framework for countries struggling with basic economic reforms.

These shortcomings of the ENP have led to the slow implementation of its policy objectives in partner countries. As detailed below, the EU came up with other incentives to improve the main tools of the ENP conditionality.

## Historical Background for the Eastern Partnership Initiative

Even as early as 2006, the Commission had prepared a Communication to identify areas where the ENP required reforms. However, as shown by the most recent Communication of the European Commission, *A New Response to a Changing Neighbourhood*, published on 25 May 2011, the most important tools for improving the ENP and the partners' re-

form processes were seen to be differentiation and more regional orientation. This regional concentration and differentiation process had already taken shape when, in May 2008, Poland and Sweden proposed the establishment of an Eastern Partnership Initiative (EPI). The main idea behind the EPI was to improve the ENP by promoting further integration with the Union's six immediate *Eastern Partnership Initiative (EPI)*. The main idea behind the EPI was to improve the ENP by promoting further integration with the Union's six immediate *Eastern* neighbours: neighbours: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine. The EPI was formally launched on 7 May 2009.

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### *Structure of the EPI*

There are several reasons as to why focus was paid to the Eastern European countries:

- They are relatively functional and predictable so they appear unlikely to become a serious threat to the European Union's security.
- The region has significant potential for grassroots democracy. Over the past decade, mass protests against election fixing took place in each of the countries on at least one occasion.
- Most of these countries also take significant pride in the European identity, which is mostly supported by their citizenry as well.

The EPI builds on the strong parts of the ENP and attempts to make up for the issues that have drawn criticism from partners, such as the fact that the ENP was not designed to deal effectively with the substantial geographical, historical, cultural, economic and political differences between the Southern and Eastern neighbours of the EU, and that it was rather ambiguous regarding prospects of closer integration with the EU. The EPI has both bilateral and multilateral forms of cooperation. The bilateral track is built upon the already existing Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCAs) and the framework of the ENP, but it establishes a deeper and wider engagement than these predecessors have. As part of its aim toward multilateral cooperation, the initiative seeks to develop strong cooperation among the six partner states and with the EU by addressing through flagship initiatives the common issues, interests and problems that affect all participants. This gives it a more ambitious, flexible and efficient appearance compared to other regional initiatives. The flagship initiatives were designed in the following ways:<sup>5</sup>

*Mobility and Security:* This approach offers partner countries tai-

lor-made pacts which cover issues such as assistance in fighting corruption, organised crime and illegal migration, upgrading asylum systems to EU standards, setting up border management structures, establishing a new visa policy that should lead to visa liberalisation when coupled with financial assistance to partners, establishing readmission agreements and developing a plan to improve member states' consular coverage in partner countries.

*New contractual relations:* There will be new individual and tailor-made Association Agreements (AAs) which will be negotiated with partners who wish to make a far-reaching commitment to the EU. These agreements will establish a closer link with EU standards such as democracy, rule of law, human rights and *acquis communautaire*, as well as advanced co-operation on the European Security and Defence Policy. There will also be a Comprehensive Institution Building Programme (CIBP) that will help partner countries meet conditions established by the EU by improving administrative capacities in all sectors of cooperation.

*Gradual integration into the EU economy:* The six EPI countries have a large potential for economic growth, and because of their geographic proximity to its member states, the EU has a direct interest in supporting their economic development and becoming their principal trading partner. The AAs already include a deep and comprehensive free trade agreement (DCFTA) that covers all trade issues. There are also plans to establish bilateral agreements among partners, possibly leading to a Neighbourhood Economic Community, an Agricultural Dialogue, and the strengthening of intellectual property protection.

*Supporting Economic and Social Development:* A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on regional policy will be established, launching pilot regional and transnational programmes with additional funding and supporting sector reforms in the regions.

*Environment and Energy Security:* Energy interdependence provisions will be included in the AAs<sup>6</sup>, and all partners will be encouraged to participate in the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme.

*Civil society mobilisation:* Recognising the importance of socialisation in the transformation process, an Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum (EPCSF) will be established. This forum will bring together NGOs, think-tanks, national and international civil society organisations from the EU or partner countries to work on the

empowerment of societies and help increase the resources available to the region.

This article selects the Czech Republic as a representative member state for the EU's position towards the EPI and is mostly based on empirical research conducted in Prague in September 2010, which involved in-depth interviews mainly carried out with representatives of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the Foreign Affairs Committees in the Czech Republic Parliament, and several non-governmental organisations (NGO)s. Accordingly, in the subsequent sections, the Czech Republic's role in the initiation, implementation and improvement of the EPI is explored in detail.

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### *Evaluation of the Czech Incentive in formulating the EPI:*

After the collapse of communism, the foreign policy of the Czech Republic was initially characterised by a rather low profile in Eastern Europe, due to several reasons:

Firstly, unlike Poland, Czechs always felt “Central European” rather than “Eastern European.” As a result, they felt a need to distance themselves from the East to prove their European credentials, as instanced by the motto “return to Europe.” Consequently, the main priority of the Czech foreign policy from the late 1990s until its 2004 EU accession was to subordinate all other foreign policy efforts and focus on joining the EU and NATO.

Secondly, the Czech Republic has not been as afflicted by the problems experienced by most of Eastern Europe, such as political instability, frozen conflicts, environmental threats, or migration pressures. This is because it does not have a direct geographical border with any of the EU's current Eastern neighbours, there is no substantive Czech minority residing in any of the countries currently falling under the EPI, unlike Hungary or Poland, which have large expatriate populations living in Ukraine, and there is no substantial Eastern European ethnic minority living in the Czech Republic, such as the Lithuanians in Slovakia or the Ukrainians in Eastern Poland. Furthermore, due to the absence of borders with Eastern countries that would allow small cross-border trade to develop – as well as the largest Czech companies' lack of interest in trading with or investing in this region – there has also been no economic impulse to develop stronger political ties with Eastern European states.

However, a stronger profile and a certain comeback of Eastern policy can be witnessed in Czech foreign policy discourse since its accession to the EU in 2004. Within the Czech Republic, emphasis was placed on developing relations with Eastern neighbours mainly due to historical and cultural links with the region and close acquaintance with the countries because of their intensive contact during the socialist era. In addition, Czechs felt solidarity with the countries aspiring to join the European club, as it is generally acknowledged that the prospect of EU membership motivated the Czech government to undertake many internal democratisation reforms far more quickly than would have been possible otherwise. There were also economic and security considerations. According to Kratochovil,

with the economic growth and increased competition from newly industrialising countries and increasing labour costs in the Czech Republic, Czech companies started to need new markets and investments in lower-cost countries. Eastern Europe was a natural choice for Czech businesses due to their knowledge of the local environment and the good reputation of Czech industry and products in the region.

Additionally, a significant influx of migrant workers, mainly from Ukraine, raised security concerns about the Czech Republic's Eastern policy, especially in terms of visa and residency laws concerning the citizens of Eastern European countries.

Given these issues, along with the pressure produced by the Russo-Georgian conflict (2008) and the gas crisis between Russia and Ukraine in January 2009, it was unsurprising that improvement of the ENP and the newly formulated EPI became the main external priority during the Czech EU Council presidency in the first half of 2009. However, due to problems such as the global economic crisis, the resurgence of Russia and the challenge it posed at the EU's Eastern border, strained relations with China, the absence of some major EU leaders, such as Sarkozy, Brown, Berlusconi, and Zapatero as well as representatives of some Eastern partners, such as Moldavia and Belarus, and the fragile condition of the Czech government, the Czech presidency did not successfully advance the EPI.

However, this does not mean that the Czech Republic lost its enthusiasm for the EPI. An analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted in Prague in September 2010 shows that, given its geopolitical situation and economic interests, the Czech Republic still aims to improve the

EPI. Below follows a detailed analysis of how Czech national interests have been formulated in the country’s foreign policy and used to implement and improve the EPI at the EU level.

### National Interest Formulation in the Czech Republic

Moravcsik (1998) argues that decision making in the EU is done in three stages. In the first stage, national interests are articulated at the domestic level within EU member states and transmitted to political executives through party and interest group position papers, party manifestos, citizen petitions, and similar means. In return, the executives aggregate these interests and formulate the states’ foreign policies from them. In the second stage, they develop strategies and bargain with one another in order to reach substantive agreements that realise those national interests more efficiently than they would be realised through unilateral actions. In the third stage, they choose whether to delegate or pool sovereignty in international institutions to secure the substantive agreements they have made.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the institutional decisions and external policies of the EU are actually outcomes of the bargains struck between executives of EU member states trying to represent their national interests.<sup>8</sup>

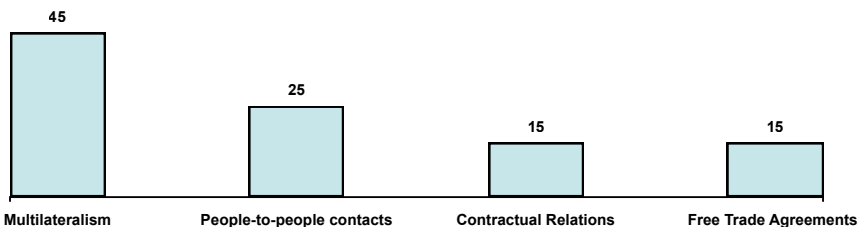
In that sense, the analysis of the Czech Republic executives will reveal their position at the EU level regarding the EPI and the main reasons behind it. For this purpose, a total of 20 interviews were made in September 2010 including interviews with representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, major political parties in the parliament and several civil society organizations.

#### *Analysis of the Czech position regarding the EPI:*

The outcome of interviews conducted with Czech executives show the following results:

Table 1: The most significant advantages of the EPI

(N=20)



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In this question because each person had more than one answer, the percentages relate to the responses not the respondents. The response to this question shows that the establishment of a multilateral track in the EPI is a very useful tool of confidence-building to overcome difficult relations and solve frozen conflicts among partner states in the region.

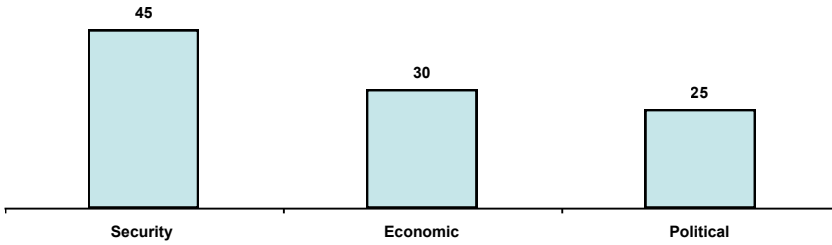
As an example of the other factors, Jan Kaminek from the Human Rights and Transition Policy Department in the MFA contributes to this argument by emphasising the importance of people-to-people contacts in this multilateral framework and the advancement of bottom-up pressure for change and support for democratic values among the population:

as the EU has learned that specifically leaders in Belarus and Ukraine are less eager to integrate with the EU as membership would constrain their style of leadership, people-to-people contacts become specifically important for convincing others.

Anita Grmelova from the Middle East and North Africa Department of the MFA states that the key strength of the EPI is its ability to enable countries with different political ambitions and at different stages of socio-economic development and democratic maturity to create differentiated associations with the EU. Jakub Kajzler, international secretary of the (then) ruling party, ODS (Civic Democrats), highlights the economic advantages of the EPI that were brought to the fore specifically by the DCFTAs. He argues that:

the removal of economic barriers vis-à-vis third countries and regulatory approximation necessary for establishment of a single space with Eastern neighbours will make it easier to adapt to European norms and standards, both economically and politically, and will ultimately result in achieving economic development and prosperity in Eastern Europe. This will help in solving security threats and stabilisation as well, because in poor countries there is more crime, terrorism and fragile democracy.

Table 2: The reasons for the Czech Republic in supporting the EPI (N=20)



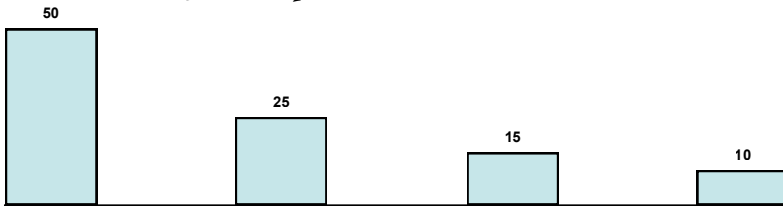
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In this question again each person had more than one answer so the percentages relate to responses. The majority of the Czech decision makers emphasise “security” as the most important reason. Katerina Bocianova, chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the CSSD (Social Democrats), is one of the most ardent supporters of the EPI for security reasons and she argues that:

through the EPI, the EU can face security threats such as energy security, frozen conflicts and illegal migration more strongly. Specifically, after the Ukraine gas crisis, energy security became increasingly important, and in the EPI, issues such as regulatory harmonisation, early warning mechanism, joint response in terms of energy crises and the creation of a diversified and interconnected energy market became prominent.

Despite that Eastern Europe has become increasingly important for the EU mainly because of its proximity and that the establishing of the EPI has led to the development of a network of mutual contacts and mechanisms for policy implementation, the actual integration process through the EPI has also been very limited. Actions undertaken by the EU show that it does not see integration with its Eastern neighbours as important enough to warrant investing significant resources in the integration process. Most of the goals set out in the documents remain unfulfilled. Although work on AAs has commenced with all countries except Belarus, and negotiations regarding the DCFTA with Ukraine are on track, problems have appeared right from the beginning. These problems were mentioned throughout the interviews.

Table 3: Main problems with the EPI (N=20)



Lack of a specific direction    Lack of support from EU member states    Authoritarian regimes in the EPI partner countries    Unresolved conflicts in the region

According to Pavel Bucek from the Department of Northern and Eastern Europe in MFA, the most important problem in the EPI is the lack of a specific political narrative about where it is heading. He explains the upshot of this behaviour:

This attitude of the EU gave rise to a policy of evasion, where the key strategic issues were either not mentioned or formulated in a very complicated and vague manner. Apart from making EU policy incomprehensible by imposing extensive technical conditions that have little to do with promoting democracy without the membership prospect, this could also prove ineffective and counterproductive.

Even the association status that is currently made available to EPI countries is unlikely to excite Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia, or provoke them to commit to reforms. Because of their proximity to the EU, these countries aspire to EU membership, visa liberalisation and an increase of available finances.

Vladimir Nemeč, Deputy Director of the EU Policies Department in MFA, draws attention to the demotivation caused by the lack of support from EU member states who argue that the EPI is duplicating already existing mechanisms found in the ENP. This lack of support is exacerbated by the wide economic crisis in the Euro zone and the fact that some member states are only interested in regional initiatives in their immediate neighbourhoods. Magdalena Janesová, deputy director of the Common Foreign and Security Policy Department in the MFA, underlines the fragile foundations on which the authoritarian regimes in Eastern countries are based. This fragility is demonstrated by recent anti-government protests in Armenia and Azerbaijan that seem to have been directly inspired by the recent events in North Africa. This situation makes it difficult to commit these countries to democratising and liberalising reforms.

Jan Tomasek, deputy chief of mission in the MFA, complements this argument by pointing to the fact that the unresolved conflicts in the region — Abkhazia, South Ossetia, Transnistria and Nagorno-Karabakh — continue to constitute serious security challenges, as well as important obstacles to economic and political progress and regional integration. Unfortunately, the EU still lacks the instruments, political will and strong unified foreign policy necessary to prevent conflicts in the region. Jan Marian, head of the Russian Federation and Belarus Unit in the MFA, adds that areas where the EU has limited influence

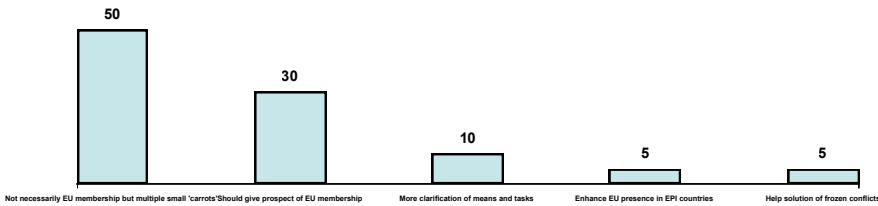
are, in fact, immediately filled by Russia, which uses its historical, cultural and linguistic similarities to consistently build up its soft power in the region through economic ties and media. This is an additional factor threatening to undermine the influence of the EU in its Eastern European neighbourhood.

As mentioned earlier, it is in the interests of the Czech Republic to substantially contribute to political and economic reforms in the Eastern neighbourhood of the EU. Given the disadvantages of the EPI, the Czech Republic is among the EU members most interested in improving this incentive and developing active and fruitful co-operation with Eastern European countries. The interviews conducted with Czech executives have yielded the results described below, which highlight the contribution of the Czech Republic to improving the EPI:

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*Czech contribution to improving the EPI:*

Table 4: Possible improvement of the EPI (N=20)



To answer criticism of the ambiguous direction in which the EPI is heading and the way this hurts political support for it in the partner countries, Katerina Moravcova from the MFA states:

Given that the EU cannot offer the big carrot of membership, and as all six EPI countries are very eager to benefit from the financial envelope the initiative carries, the EU could give multiple small *carrots*. These *carrots* could include access to the EU's agricultural and services market, starting DCTFA negotiations, formulating an action plan for a visa-free regime, possibilities for privileged institutional cooperation, more financial aid, mobility, high level visits, help in attracting assistance from other external donors and the chance to take part in EU policies.

Jakub Kulhanek, from the Association for International Affairs adds to this argument the need for the EU to enhance its presence in the

EPI countries, particularly in local media, foster official contacts at all levels of governance, underline the European identity it shares with its eastern neighbours and encourage visits by EU member state officials to EPI countries where objectives of the partnership should receive greater visibility and public awareness. This will help create a positive image among young generations of Ukrainians, Moldavians, and Georgians, and, in turn, can help create a pro-European generation capable of pushing for better alignment with the EU.

Although this is a long-term project, these incentives are important for partners to get onto the right track. For the countries that do not aspire to EU membership, such as Armenia, Belarus and Azerbaijan, even the prospect of intensive cooperation with the EU could be helpful on issues such as migration, organised crime, spill-over of good neighbour relations and trade interests.

Still, being cautious, Oldrich Cerny, executive director of Prague Security Studies, argues that the:

EPI should hold out the actual prospect of membership in unambiguous terms for Ukraine and Moldova if the EU wants to offer the strong and timely incentive essential to reforming these countries. This will not mean that these countries become candidates in the very near future, but the prospect of actual membership could render the EPI more productive.

The existence of frozen conflicts is another major obstacle to efficient cooperation. Jan Kaminek points out that the EPI can be an important instrument whereby the EU can implement its soft power and try to mediate between conflicting parties. Here, the Russian factor is also very important. Because the initiative is seen by Russia as an anti-Russian project, the EU will have to be careful not to damage its strategic ties with Russia while trying to use its soft power in the region.<sup>9</sup>

As demonstrated below, not all executives retain positive attitudes toward the EPI; some interviewees have stayed indifferent, while others oppose it.

#### *Czech indifference and opposition to the EPI:*

Coalition government partner TOP 09 is one of the actors to remain indifferent toward the EPI. As their 29 May 2010 position paper *2010 Election Platform-2010 Parliamentary Election* shows, they believe that:

the Western Balkans and Eastern Europe are traditionally the spheres of operation of Czech diplomacy, where it identifies its

interests. Stability of this space and support of freedom, rule of law and democracy are in the interest of the Czech Republic.

However, they do not propose concrete methods for the realisation of this plan. Another former coalition party partner, VV, also had an unclear position regarding the EPI. David Kral attributes this indifference to the fact that since the party's membership is based on polls; they only concentrate on domestic issues such as combating corruption and struggling with old political structures. Vladimir Sedlacek, from the Department of International Relations of the Communist Party (KSCM), argues that his party is not only against EU enlargement and similar initiatives, but it is also totally against EU membership, as during the time of socialism Czechoslovakia was more developed and self-sufficient. Cyril Svoboda, chairman of KDU-CSL, claims that his party prefers first a deeper integration and careful absorption of the countries which became members in the previous enlargement waves, in other words, they have a negative attitude toward the EPI, as they see this initiative as a stepping stone to a premature enlargement process.

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## Recent Developments

Events in the Arab world have cast the Eastern neighbourhood agenda as a background feature of the EU. However, the fact that the ENP was not successful in Arab countries should be taken into consideration when reviewing policies by which the EU can have greater influence on countries in its Eastern neighbourhood.

Analysis concerning the success of the EPI was produced in the Second Eastern Partnership Summit in Warsaw on 29-30 September 2011. The summit was attended by heads of states and representatives of the EU, and by 32 delegations from EU member states and EPI partner countries. The summit's participants reviewed the current implementation of the EPI and adopted a joint declaration at the end of the summit. It was acknowledged that relations between the EU and its European partners had deepened significantly. All EPI partner countries are currently negotiating association agreements with the EU and taking steps towards trade and visa liberalisation. The multilateral co-operation platforms of the EPI are focused on democracy, good governance, and stability, economic integration, convergence with EU policies and energy security. In addition, contacts between people have become operational and continue to grow.

However, the problems mentioned throughout this paper still remain. Specifically, the Hungarian and Polish presidencies in 2011 were important in illuminating the deficiencies of the EPI and the areas in which improvement is needed. In terms of further improvements, the partner states welcomed the published review of the ENP in a Communication from the High Representative and the Commission, which suggested greater differentiation and mutual accountability, more successful efforts toward building a common area of democracy and prosperity and increased interactions and exchanges. They also agreed that the achievements and progress of the EPI must bring direct and clearly perceived benefits to the citizens of partner countries, and that these benefits should be more visible. The suggested improvements, successfully implemented areas and disadvantages of the EPI have already been pointed out by the Czech executives.

## Conclusion

Although designed to be one of the most ambitious external policies of the EU and an instrument for maintaining the security community of the EU while postponing the acquisition of further member countries, the ENP's ability to influence partner countries' transition to democracy and liberalisation has remained limited. One of the ways to improve its influential capacity is the "differentiation" method. Differentiation means taking into account several things, such as the different desires and functions of the relevant countries and regions, the varied benefits of joining the EU, which largely depend on the individual aspirations and achievements of each partner country, and the existence of additional rewards for progress made in the partner countries' reform and EU-alignment processes. All these means were present in the EPI along with other new instruments, such as the multi-lateral co-operation dimension, DCFTA and people-to-people contacts. The overall design was to facilitate the steady transformation of the EU's Eastern neighbours into well-functioning democracies with transparent and reliable market economies. This is not only useful and necessary for their own democratisation and well-being, but it is also important for preventing acute problems and security threats from spilling over into the EU, which has so far remained a well-functioning security community.

As a representative for the EU's external policy position, the Czech Republic's stance on the advantages and disadvantages of the EPI as a

tool for transforming its partners into liberal democracies has been analysed in this paper, using in-depth interviews conducted with Czech executives in September 2010. Several shortcomings of the initiative have been outlined herein which lead to the similar outcome as the ENP; far from making a huge impact on the partners' democratisation efforts, the EPI also gives the impression of an instrument for guaranteeing the existence of the EU as a security community by focusing specifically on the issues which are of major importance to the EU. Throughout the interviews, the Czech Republic's position on improving the EPI for transforming these neighbours was also analysed. In that sense, the EPI is not only about the EU's ability to make a substantial impact on its partner countries; it is also an opportunity for the Czech Republic to become a leader in the region and have the chance to substantiate its foreign policy at the European level. This is not only an asset for the Czech Republic alone but it is an additional advantage for enhancing the potential for global power of the EU.

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## Notes

- 1 Karl Deutsch (1957), *Political Community and the North Atlantic Area*, Princeton UP, p. 6. See also: Buzan, Barry, Joop de Wilde & Ole Weaver (1998). *Security: A new Framework for Analysis*. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers.
- 2 Boyka Stefonava (2005), 'The European Union as a Security Actor: Security Provision through Enlargement,' *World Affairs*, 168:2, p.6-7.
- 3 Mustafa Aydın (2005), 'Europe's New Region: The Black Sea in the Wider Europe Neighbourhood,' *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 5:2, p.66.
- 4 The Commission detected the transborder dimensionality of environmental and nuclear hazards, communicable diseases, illegal immigration, trafficking, organised crime, border management and terrorist networks (Commission, 2003a: 6).
- 5 *The EPI does not alter the generally discouraging EU approach towards membership, but it aims to clarify the EU's political and economic message to partner countries and to draw reform-oriented countries closer*



to the EU. It defines the degree of the EU's engagement and new benefits to be offered based on the partner countries' ability to meet agreed targets for political and economic reform.

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- 6 For details of such initiatives see: <[www.osi-brussels.eu](http://www.osi-brussels.eu)> (accessed 12 June 2013).
- 7 These contain plans for completing negotiations on Ukraine's and Moldova's membership in the Energy Community, concluding a Memoranda of Understanding on energy issues with Moldova, Georgia and Armenia, supporting full integration of Ukraine's energy market with the EU's market, enhancing political engagement with Azerbaijan, which is the only gas producing country in the EPI, and finalising the EU-Belarus declaration on energy.
- 8 Andrew Moravcsik (1998), *The Choice for Europe*, University College London Press, p.18.
- 9 Moravcsik also compares the decisions that lead to the institutional choice(s) of the EU to the main goal of a liberal economy: finding the intersection of demand and supply. Supply is the institutional choice decided collectively by the EU as a result of the bargaining of member states' executives. Demand is national interest formulation at the domestic level by a coalition of voters, political parties and interest groups.

## Appendix

### *List of Interviewees*

Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs:

Pavel Bucek (Ukraine and Eastern Partnership, Department of Northern and Eastern Europe)

Jan Marian (Head of Unit for Russian Federation and Belarus)

Jan Tomasek (Deputy Chief of Mission)

Jan Latal (Human Rights and Transition Policy Department, Transition Promotion Program)

Helena Stohanzlova (Human Rights and Transition Policy Department, Transition Promotion Program)

Jan Kaminek (Human Rights and Transition Policy Department)

Magdalena Janesova (Deputy Director of Common Foreign and Security Policy Department)

Vladimir Nemecek (Deputy Director of EU Policies Department)

Anita Grmelova (Head of Gulf Policy Group, Middle East and North Africa Department)

Martin Vitek (Deputy Director of EU General Affairs Department)

Katerina Moravcova (South and Southeast European Countries Department)

Political Party Representatives:

Vladimir Sedlacek (Department of International Relations of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM))

Cyril Svoboda (Chairman of the Christian and Democratic Union – Czechoslovak People’s Party (KDU-CSL))

Jakub Kajzler (International Secretary of the Civic Democratic Party (ODS))

Katerina Bocianova (Chairwoman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Czech Social Democratic Party (CSSD))

Civil Society Representatives:

Tomas Karasek (Director of Association for International Affairs) Jakub Kulhanek (Research Fellow in Association for International Affairs)

Petr Kratochvil (Deputy Director of Institute of International Relations)

David Kral (Director of Europeum, Institute for European Policy)

Oldrich Cerny (Executive Director of Prague Security Studies Institute)

Sabina Dvorakova (Director of Association for Democracy Assistance and Human Rights)

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