

## The EU and South Caucasus: learning lessons from Moldova and Ukraine

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Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia, included into the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) in 2004, started recently their negotiations on Action Plans with the European Union. This will allow them to foster cooperation and integration with the EU in the framework of the ENP. In order to make the ENP Action Plans (AP) exercise more effectively the countries of the South Caucasus can learn from the experience of first wave ENP countries such as Ukraine and Moldova, which have been at the implementation stage of the Action Plans for more than a year.

The present paper discusses the ENP for the South Caucasus and makes a number of recommendations for the countries of the region on how to proceed with the negotiation and eventual implementation of the ENP Action Plans. The objective of the paper is rather limited. Its aim is not to describe all the actions that the countries of the South Caucasus have to undertake. The objective of the paper is to highlight a number of challenges that arise at the very start of the implementation period. Thus, the recommendations of the paper concern the negotiation phase, and the efforts of the governments of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia to start the process of ENP AP implementation, while keeping in mind the experiences of Moldova and Ukraine.

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## What is the ENP?

The ENP stands for an extension of the EU governance regime – norms, standards and values – beyond the political borders of the Union. Its objectives range from the promotion of human rights, democratisation and prosperity to the support for good governance in the neighbourhood. In exchange for reforms, the EU offers the prospects of deeper economic integration and increased political dialogue.

The ENP is neither a foreign policy, nor an enlargement policy. It is in fact a mix of domestic policy instruments, foreign policy and enlargement practices. The ENP is something of a philosophical quest for the EU in which it seeks to answer the question of how to support the transformation of its neighbours in line with EU standards, while not offering membership<sup>1</sup>. The response is a strange and unique policy mix called the ENP.

The ENP policy instruments include support for institution building, trade liberalisation, economic reform, legislative harmonisation and contribution to conflict resolution in the neighbourhood. The EU helps build institutions in the neighbourhood through such policy instruments as the extension of Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Office (TAIEX) and twinning mechanisms for the ENP countries, but also through ESDP missions such as the EUJUST Themis Rule of Law mission to Georgia, EU Police Mission in the Palestinian authority (EUPOL COPPS) or the Commission-led EU Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EU BAM).

The EU also envisages trade liberalisation with its neighbours and ways for the latter to come closer to the EU in legislative, economic and political terms. The EU is also launching in 2007 a new financial assistance program for the neighbourhood – the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument.

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<sup>1</sup> See for example a CEPS Policy Brief 95/March 2006 “From Neighbourhood to Integration Policy: are there concrete alternatives to enlargement?” by Eneko Landaburu, Director General of DG External Relations, European Commission. Downloadable at [http://shop.ceps.be/BookDetail.php?item\\_id=1305](http://shop.ceps.be/BookDetail.php?item_id=1305). The title itself is quite telling of the conceptual ambiguity of the ENP as it tries to bring together and differentiate at the same time three key concepts: EU neighbourhood, European integration and EU enlargement.

## What are the ENP Action Plans?

In November 2005 Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia started consultations on ENP Action Plans with the European Union. The Action Plans are not legally binding agreements, but political documents outlining a joint set of objectives and measures to undertake for the EU and its neighbours. They aim at providing a framework for the harmonisation of norms and standards of the countries in the neighbourhood to the EU. The Action Plans' stated aims are to enhance the strategic partnership with neighbouring countries "beyond cooperation and towards significant integration"<sup>2</sup>.

The Action Plans are not about foreign policy. Aside for the predictable parts on political partnership, cooperation in crisis management and common foreign and security policy issues, the Action Plans are overwhelmingly about domestic policies. They include issues ranging from democratisation and the rule of law, to the implementation of phytosanitary and industrial standards in the neighbouring countries. The implications of this are important for the way the ENP countries should approach the issue of Action Plans implementation.

## ENP AP implementation in Moldova and Ukraine

Both Moldova and Ukraine had to make a number of preparatory steps in order to proceed with the implementation of Action Plans, after their endorsement by the EU-Moldova and EU-Ukraine Cooperation Councils in February 2005.

### 1) Domestic Institutions

Moldova and Ukraine gave the responsibility to oversee the implementation of the ENP AP to certain institutions. Some of these were present already before the entry into force of the Action Plans, and some of them were created specifically to facilitate the implementation of the Action Plans.

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<sup>2</sup> See EU action Plans with Moldova and Ukraine, page 2, downloadable at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/documents\\_en.htm#2](http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/documents_en.htm#2).

In Moldova a National Commission for European Integration chaired by the prime-minister was created. In Ukraine a similar institution is named Committee on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration and is chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

In Moldova the minister of foreign affairs (Andrei Stratan) received the status of vice prime minister. The ministry of foreign affairs was renamed and reorganised into the ministry of foreign affairs and European integration (MFAEI). This allows the minister and the ministry to benefit from an institutional position within the government which makes it possible not only to coordinate, but also direct other state institutions in the implementation of the ENP AP. Thus in Moldova the model of intra-institutional coordination of the ENP AP implementation is hierarchic and centralised. One single institution is responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Action Plan and it has the influence within the government to set the pace of implementation for most governmental agencies. Within the MFAEI a department for European integration was created which is divided into three directorates: political cooperation, economic cooperation and relations with Southeast Europe. This is by far the biggest department in the MFA.

Ukraine's experience has been somehow different. The Ministry of Economy had been responsible for the coordination of EU-related activities during the Kuchma presidency, whereas the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had been assigned a modest task of negotiations with the EU. In the aftermath of the Orange revolution, the coordination of European affairs was transferred to a vice prime minister. The experience of having two persons/institutions dealing with European affairs has not been particularly successful due to a certain lack of coordination and a division of labour which was not entirely clear cut. Later on, in the government led by Iuri Ekhanurov (from September 2005 to March 2006) the post of vice prime minister for European integration issues was abolished, and only the Foreign ministry was left responsible for coordinating the implementation of the Action Plan. However, the MFA could mainly coordinate, rather than direct the implementation of the ENP AP. In this case, the Ukrainian MFA coordinates the process with no legal right to direct the implementation of the ENP AP. Thus the model of coordination is horizontal in contrast to Moldova's hierarchic one.

Already before the entry into force of the Action Plans in both Ukraine and Moldova parliamentary committees for European integration and European integration departments in

all the ministries were created. Most often this happened through the renaming of the external relations departments of ministries.

In both Moldova and Ukraine the institutions dealing with EU issues remain rather weak and lacking expertise. The form of the institutions dealing with EU issues often lacks content. This is mainly the case for the so-called European integration departments from most ministries other than the MFAs. Renaming these departments did not mean that they acquired the institutional capacity to proceed with the implementation of European norms.

Overall, Ukraine's experience with the implementation of the Action Plan has been better in many respects. Particularly due to greater expertise about EU related issues, and greater commitment from most ministries to proceed with the implementation of the ENP AP.

## 2) Diplomatic representations to the EU

Both Ukraine and Moldova have separate Missions to the EU. These missions are different from the embassies to Belgium/Benelux and NATO. EU-related issues are very demanding and are an entirely separate area from bilateral relations with Belgium. Thus the creation of separate missions to the EU with separate ambassadors and diplomats who deal exclusively with the EU is an important factor in promoting relations with the EU.

## 3) Internal strategies of ENP AP implementation

The ENP Action Plans are documents with a set of rather vague commitments and obligations. Thus, all the homework on their implementation belongs to the neighbouring countries. Consequently, both Ukraine and Moldova have worked on the elaboration of governmental road maps (or action plans) to proceed with the implementation of the ENP Action Plans. Ukraine published such a document in April 2005<sup>3</sup>. Moldova published a timetable with concrete measures for the implementation of the ENP AP<sup>4</sup>. It has also been working on a European Strategy of Moldova<sup>5</sup> which would have the same purpose of setting

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<sup>3</sup> See Ukraine's "Action Plan implementation tool for 2005: priorities and concrete actions to be undertaken" April, 2005, <http://www.ukraine-eu.mfa.gov.ua/eu/en/publication/content/1997.htm>

<sup>4</sup> "Short-term priorities for the EU-Moldova Action Plan implementation (February 2005-March 2006)", <http://www.mfa.md/En/EurInteg/Documents/prioritati%202005-martie%202006%20eng.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> See European Strategy of the Republic of Moldova, <http://www.ipp.md/biblioteca1.php?l=en&id=85>

a road map for the European integration of the country and the implementation of the ENP Action Plan.

#### 4) Reporting progress on implementation

Both Ukraine and Moldova have been publishing reports on the progress achieved in the implementation of the ENP Action Plans<sup>6</sup>. These documents were detailed reports of the ministries' and parliament's activities aimed at the implementation of the ENP AP. The first reports were presented to the wider publics of both countries, as well as to the European Commission in September 2005. The reports have been criticised for being too long, with too many details of secondary importance, they often did not distinguish between normal governmental activity and ENP AP implementation<sup>7</sup> and were often self-laudatory. A big problem was that such reports were compiled by each of the ministries themselves and were hardly a critical or objective analysis of the real situation. These reports reflected the weak capacity of both the Moldovan and Ukrainian government to assess the implementation of the Action Plans and to present clear results.

The Moldovan government cooperated with civil society in the process of writing such reports. For example in April 2006 the MFA EI put on its website the draft governmental annual report on the implementation of the Action Plan and requested feedback and comments from NGOs regarding the improvement of the document.<sup>8</sup>

#### 5) Civil society monitoring

In Moldova two coalitions of NGOs were created to monitor the ENP AP implementation and governmental compliance with ENP commitments. One such coalition publishes every 3 months a public report on ENP AP implementation called "Euromonitor"<sup>9</sup>. A second

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<sup>6</sup> See "Carrying out EU-Ukraine Action Plan" as of 5 October 2005, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine, also see "Internal Report on Semestrial Evaluation of the EU-Moldova Action Plan Implementation 2005", September 2005,

<http://www.mfa.md/En/EurInteg/Documents/Raport%2012.09.2005%20eng%20rev%20integral.pdf> ,

"Report of the Government of the Republic of Moldova on the Implementation of the EU-Moldova Action Plan (August-October 2005)", <http://www.mfa.md/En/EurInteg/Documents/RAPORT%20aug-octob2005.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> Interviews with EU officials, Brussels, October-November 2005 and experts in Chisinau, December 2005.

<sup>8</sup> See the website of the Moldovan foreign ministry [http://www.mfa.md/Ro/IntegEur/Home\\_DIE.html](http://www.mfa.md/Ro/IntegEur/Home_DIE.html)

<sup>9</sup> See "Euromonitor: EU-Moldova Action Plan - Assessment of progress in 2005", Issue 1, February 2006, <http://www.e-democracy.md/files/euromonitor01en.pdf>

coalition called “Euroforum” has been setting up working groups which would monitor the implementation of different sections of the ENP AP.

In Ukraine an NGO<sup>10</sup> developed a methodology to assess progress in the implementation of the ENP Action Plan, and based on this methodology will develop a mechanism to monitor the implementation of ENP AP.

While it is obvious that civil society cannot monitor all the technical and legislative issues covered by the ENP AP, the monitoring of certain priority areas is feasible and is taking place<sup>11</sup>. Such priorities include democratic developments, economic reform, cooperation on CFSP, rule of law, fighting organised crime, border management etc. The independent monitoring provides the government with an alternative view on the implementation of the ENP Action Plan as well as it sometimes helps identify government policies/actions that are incompatible/non-compliant with the ENP AP provisions. On a number of occasions civil society groups have drew the attention of the governments and the wider public on instances of governmental non-compliance with ENP AP provisions<sup>12</sup>, which created some public pressure on the governments to comply.

In Moldova a NGOs representative<sup>13</sup> is represented in the governmental National Commission for European Integration involving all the high ranking state officials.

On the negative side is that these NGO coalitions have been very slow in mobilising themselves. For example in Moldova “Euromonitor” started to appear only one year after the signing of the ENP AP. The second Moldovan coalition – “Euroforum” has not even been

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<sup>10</sup> The Razumkov Centre, <http://www.uceps.org/>

<sup>11</sup> Examples of these are the “Euromonitor” in Moldova, a special issue of the “National security and Defence” magazine in Ukraine (see below), but also the monthly CEPS “Neighbourhood Watch” dedicated to important developments in the EU neighbourhood. See the website: [http://www.ceps.be/Article.php?article\\_id=416](http://www.ceps.be/Article.php?article_id=416)

<sup>12</sup> One such instance was related to Moldova not joining EU CFSP statements on Belarus from August 2005 to March 2006. Civil society groups raised the issue publicly, and apparently the Council of the EU raised the issue with the Moldovan government. As a result the government of Moldova started to subscribe again to EU statements on Belarus. For an example of a statement that was not signed by Moldova, but was signed by Ukraine see “Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the EU on preelection situation in Belarus” Brussels, 9 March 2006 7205/06 (Presse 75) P 042, [http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/88712.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/88712.pdf) and for a statement on Belarus signed by Moldova see “Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on the presidential elections in Belarus”, Brussels, 22 March 2006, 7682/06 (Presse 87), P 051, [http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms\\_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/88962.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/cfsp/88962.pdf).

<sup>13</sup> From the Institute of Public Policy, [www.ipp.md](http://www.ipp.md)

visible publicly, even if exists formally. In Ukraine there have been no public results of the independent monitoring of the ENP Action Plan implementation<sup>14</sup>.

### Challenges for the countries of the South Caucasus

Based on Ukraine and Moldova's experience with the implementation of the ENP AP, one can already highlight a number of challenges that the countries of South Caucasus will have to face while dealing with the ENP.

- The EU is bad at differentiation, despite the fact that ENP is formally declared to be based on the principle of differentiation. Moldova and Ukraine experienced it in 2004, the same way that the countries of the South Caucasus experienced it in 2005. The adoption of Moldova and Ukraine's ENP APs was delayed because of problematic negotiations on Action Plan between the EU and Israel. In the case of South Caucasus the European Commission had also to delay the start of negotiations on ENP AP because the Republic of Cyprus was questioning Azerbaijani links to the Turkish Republic of North Cyprus. Because of a single charter flight between Azerbaijan and North Cyprus months before the draft ENP AP was even put on table, all the countries of the South Caucasus could not start negotiations on the ENP AP in time. Thus the principle of differentiation and joint ownership was seriously undermined.
- The ENP AP framework was set up with the first wave of ENP AP signatories, and this framework is likely to remain rigid. Thus for the countries of the South Caucasus it will be rather difficult to modify the EU approach to ENP AP negotiations. Georgia, which has had its own ENP AP draft, and has proposed its own vision of priorities for the Action Plan<sup>15</sup>, has seen how difficult is it to negotiate with the EU and how unreceptive is the EU to Georgia's own priorities in a document that was supposed to be in joint ownership.

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<sup>14</sup> A special issue of the "National Security and Defence" journal, published by the Razumkov Centre was dedicated to the ENP and Ukraine. However, this was not monitoring of the implementation of the ENP AP. See "National Security and Defence" 7 (61), 2005, Kiev, [http://www.uceps.org.ua/additional/NSD67\\_eng.pdf](http://www.uceps.org.ua/additional/NSD67_eng.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> See for example Draft "Georgia's EU integration Strategy", Office of the State Minister on European and Euro-Atlantic Integration, 28 January 2006, Tbilisi, <http://www.eu-integration.gov.ge/eng/nationalstrategy.php>. Also see "NGO Recommendations on Georgia's Action Plan for the European Neighbourhood Policy", <http://osgf.ge/?show=infodesk&action=show&id=189>.



- The EU and South Caucasus are too far geographically and psychologically from each other. The South Caucasus is important for the EU, but there is no sense of urgency in dealing with the challenges of such a difficult region. For the next two-three years such a feeling of urgency is unlikely to emerge. Things are not much different from a South Caucasus perspective either. The EU is not seen in Armenia, Georgia and Azerbaijan as an actor of primary importance and visibility. NATO, the US, Russia and Turkey are actors with more intense webs of interests and relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan or Georgia. This can have an impact on the political attention that is given to the implementation of the ENP Action Plan. The situation is very different in Moldova and Ukraine. Both are urgent cases for the EU and in both countries the EU is seen as the primary external partner, while the ENP AP implementation has a very high political visibility for the public and is a key priority for the governments.
- In fact not all of the South Caucasus is included into the ENP. The secessionist entities in the region are de facto excluded<sup>16</sup>. Without involving into the ENP Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh the ENP objectives of a stable neighbourhood in the region cannot be achieved. The challenge is how to connect the secessionist entities of Abkhazia, South Ossetia and Nagorno-Karabakh to the ENP process without granting them international recognition. If these entities are not connected to the ENP, the intra-regional gap in norms, values, standards, legislation and degrees of reform will only be increasing making the societies of the countries affected by conflicts even more separated. This will not contribute neither to the settlement of conflicts, nor to the achievement of the ENP objectives.
- The EU programmes to assist with ENP AP implementation are very slow to come due to internal procedures inside the EU institutions. Suffice one example. The ENP AP offer Moldova and Ukraine access to Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Office and to twinning programs. Both are designed to strengthen the capacity of ENP states and their governments to implement the ENP AP. However, more than a year from the entry into force of the ENP APs, these two instruments are not yet open for Moldova and Ukraine due to slow internal procedures in the EU.

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<sup>16</sup> The challenge is similar for Moldova, where Transnistria is de facto excluded from the ENP

Most probably Moldova and Ukraine will be able to benefit from these only by mid 2006. Thus for one and a half year out of the three years time frame of the ENP AP Moldova and Ukraine will be implementing the ENP AP without benefiting from some of the main EU instruments of EU support. Moldova and Ukraine do benefit from TACIS, and from some programs supported by EU member states, but still the ministries in Moldova and Ukraine have a worrying lack of knowledge about the EU, its norms, procedures and standards. Developing such knowledge takes time and effort.

## 10 Lessons for the South Caucasus

Considering the challenges that the South Caucasus faces, as well as some of the positive and negative lessons that one can learn from Moldova and Ukraine's experiences with the ENP AP, one can make a number of recommendations on ENP AP implementation which would be valid for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia<sup>17</sup>.

### 1) Study Moldova and Ukraine's mistakes and achievements

Moldova and Ukraine's experiences might not be entirely positive, but learning the mistakes that Moldova and Ukraine did during the first phases of ENP AP implementation can be of great help for Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia in the initial stages of the ENP AP implementation at least.

### 2) Five years is an appropriate time frame

The ENP APs need not be implemented quickly. They need to be implemented well. The five years period for the ENP AP suggested by the EU to the Countries of the South Caucasus is a reasonable time frame. For two key reasons. Firstly, it is better to implement the ENP APs well in five years, than to fail to implement them in three years. Moldova and Ukraine's ENP

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<sup>17</sup> Some of the recommendations below are based on Valeriu Gheorghiu "EU-Moldova Action Plan: Negotiations and Implementation", Report at the International Conference „The International Experience of European Integration and Perspectives of Neighborhood Policy for Armenia”, 3-5 November 2005, Yerevan, Armenia, downloadable at <http://www.ipp.md/biblioteca.php?l=en&idc=32> ; and Dov Lynch „The European Neighbourhood Policy and Georgia: Lessons Learned from Previous Action Plans”, paper presented at a conference organized by Heinrich Boll Stiftung, May 16, 2005, Tbilisi.

APs are supposed to be implemented in three years, but the likelihood of that is not sure, particularly in Moldova. If they fail to achieve reasonable progress in ENP AP implementation, this will have serious implications for their future relations with the EU. The ENP APs clearly state that the type of new contractual relations with the EU, after the expiration of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (PCA), will be decided on the basis of Ukraine and Moldova's success in the implementation of the ENP APs. An eventual failure to implement the ENP APs in three years will seriously undermine Moldova and Ukraine's negotiating position in the post-PCA environment. Thus for the countries of the South Caucasus it is important to implement thoroughly the ENP APs if they want to have good arguments to request from the EU an enhanced agreement that is closer to what they expect from the EU.

Secondly, a five years ENP AP will give more room to strengthen the capacity of states to implement the ENP AP through greater EU support, which might be slow to mobilise. An ENP AP that is designed for five years can attenuate the effects of slow accumulation of knowledge about the EU in the countries of the South Caucasus, and can be a chance for a better and more thorough implementation of the ENP AP.

### 3) ENP APs are 90% domestic, not foreign, policy.

Ministries of foreign affairs cannot implement the ENP Actions Plans. Even a quick reading of the already published ENP APs will reveal little foreign policy issues in these documents<sup>18</sup>. The ENP APs are mainly about domestic policies and reforms. Diplomats cannot implement technical standards, vote laws in the parliament, ensure independence of the judiciary or implement the Bologna process to ensure education standards. It is the other ministries that really implement the APs. Thus it is good if as many non-diplomats are involved in the ENP exercise as possible. At some point in the future the European affairs could be taken away from the foreign ministries and diplomats, and European integration ministries with a broad range of technical and sectoral expertise could be created.

Greater involvement of non-diplomats into EU-related issues is also necessary for the countries' missions to Brussels. The missions to the EU will need non-diplomats for the daily interaction with the EU institutions. Diplomats should deal with CFSP, crises management

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<sup>18</sup> See the already approved ENP APs at [http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/documents\\_en.htm#2](http://europa.eu.int/comm/world/enp/documents_en.htm#2)

and political issues, but not with standards in transport, trade, agriculture and education. Thus the countries of the South Caucasus should be prepared to send to their missions to the EU non-diplomats according to their needs and priorities. These can be economists, energy, transport or home affairs ministries' officials.

#### 4) Train non-diplomats on EU related issues

The countries of the South Caucasus should start developing knowledge about the EU among all the ministries as quickly as possible through training, education and exchange programs. It is normal that foreign ministries know best what the EU is, how it functions and what are its requirements. But while MFAs know the EU they don't know many of the technical standards which are crucial for ENP. Other ministries know technical standards and don't know the EU, or they know it less than the MFAs. This is a serious gap. Such gaps limit Moldova and Ukraine's capacity to proceed with ENP APs implementation.

#### 5) Develop road maps of ENP AP implementation

The countries of the South Caucasus should develop strategies/road maps on the implementation of ENP APs as soon as they the negotiations are ready. These strategies should contain an exhaustive list of detailed measures of how to implement the ENP APs, the name of the responsible institutions (ministry, department, unit and even persons, sometimes) and the deadline by which the measure should be implemented<sup>19</sup>. The countries should develop indicators of effective implementation and ask for more or less regular feedback from the European Commission.

#### 6) Publish semestrial reports on the implementation of the ENP AP

These reports should be sent to the European Commission, and made public inside the countries of South Caucasus. This will make the government improve its reports and way of action due to feedback and reactions from civil society and international partners. The reports should be clear, concise, and describing only activities related to the implementation of the ENP AP, not everything a government is doing.

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<sup>19</sup> The draft "Georgia's EU integration Strategy", mentions that a Strategy Implementation Action Plan (SIAP) will be developed which "will indicate concrete actions to be accomplished in each sector, timeframe of their implementation, responsible institutions and relevant financial resources", *op. cit.*, page 22.

7) Involve the businesses in the ENP process

The countries of the South Caucasus should inform the business community on how can they benefit from the ENP process. This can be done through trainings and seminars. Such measures are particularly important in countries with small economies where the companies have little resources to understand how to benefit from new opportunities in relations with the EU. For example, in Moldova the perspective of greater openness of the EU market for Moldovan goods was significantly limited by the fact that businesses were not well informed about the new trade regime with the EU and how could they use it to expand their exports.

8) Democracy matters

Democratic standards matter for the EU. Progress in ensuring greater compliance with democratic standards, makes the EU more open to cooperation in other areas. Implementation of technical standards requested by the EU is not “Europeanisation”. Simply implementing technical norms of the ENP AP will not lead to a serious rapprochement with the EU, unless there is also progress in democratisation, ensuring rule of law, independence of the judiciary, free and fair elections and freedom of the media.

9) NGOs should create coalitions to monitor the implementation of the ENP AP

NGOs should start organising such coalitions already as soon as possible, even if negotiations on the ENP APs have not been concluded. It takes time until such coalitions are created, and their modalities of action and division of labour are decided. Such coalitions should start to be prepared now, so that they are effectively functioning when the ENP APs are signed. NGOs can create working groups which will monitor the implementation of various chapters of the action plans.

Creating such coalitions as a bottom-up exercise will strengthen NGOs capacity to lobby the government and seek foreign funding for their activities on ENP AP monitoring. NGOs should not wait until foreign donors will request such coalitions.

NGO coalitions should write regular reports on the progress towards the implementation of ENP AP in priority areas, make statements when the government is not complying with important parts of the ENP AP, raise the public visibility of the process of ENP AP implementation.

10) Secessionist entities should be connected to ENP

It is time for the EU and countries of the South Caucasus to think how the secessionist entities can be connected to the ENP. This can start with the involvement of the secessionist entities into some ENP programmes, particularly in such fields as education, transport development and democratisation. This will serve the conflict resolution processes by involving the whole South Caucasus in the broader network of European values, norms and standards.