

# 20 years of the European Neighbourhood Policy: a general assessment

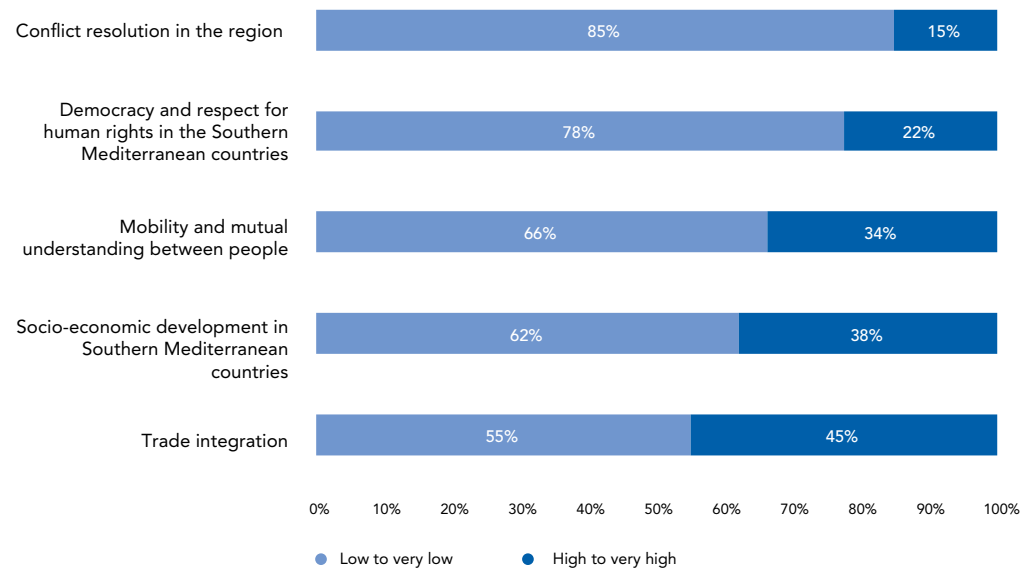
The first block of the EuroMeSCo Euromed Survey aimed to assess the European Neighbourhood Policy's (ENP) impact.

## **Main findings:**

- There is a consensus amongst respondents that the ENP has had a limited impact on the main areas of the cooperation agenda with Southern partners.
- Respondents clearly agree that "Conflict resolution" and "Democracy and respect for human rights" have been less impacted with low to very low assessments near to 80%.
- Almost a half of all respondents considered that trade integration was positively impacted.
- When it comes to identifying the causes of the limited impact, respondents depicted a combination of several elements, but highlighted disagreement on priorities among EU and ENP partners.
- Among EU respondents, the lack of cohesion between member states and the EU's foreign policy tools was identified as an important element that explains the low impact of the ENP.

The **first question** of the survey invited respondents to evaluate the impact of 20 years of the ENP. It asked participants to assess the extent to which different policy areas have been effectively impacted by the ENP. According to respondents, the ENP had a low impact on all assessed areas (see graph 1). Respondents considered that "Conflict resolution" and "Democracy and respect for human rights" were the least impacted areas with 80% selecting low to very low. A more moderate, yet negative, evaluation was given to "Mobility and mutual understanding" and "Socio-economic development" while "Trade integration" had the least negative result.

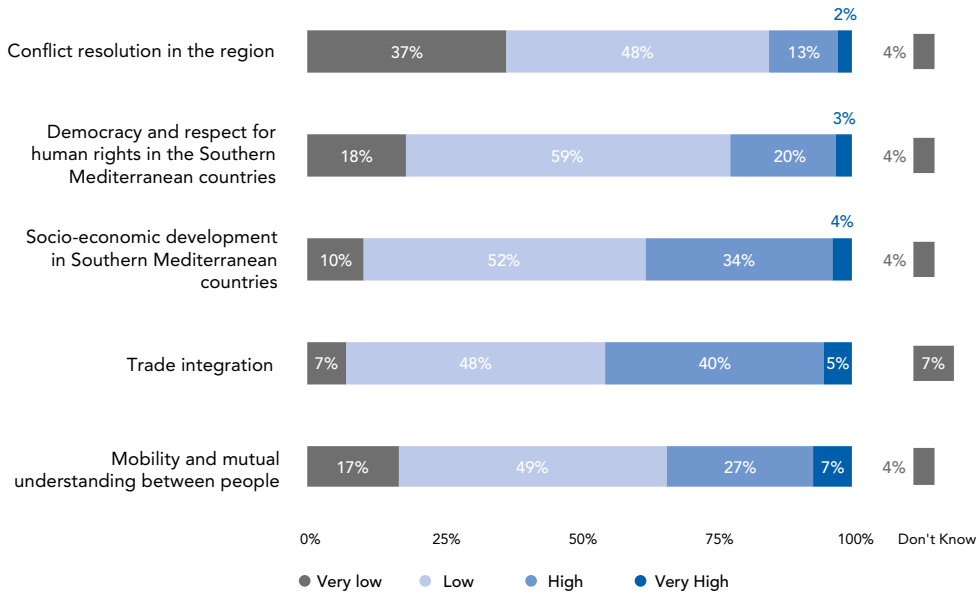
**Graph 1: Q.1** The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

Zooming in on these results (graph 2), percentages of 'very low' or 'very high' categories display some nuances. The trend is that 'very low' is much more common than 'very high'. The case of "Conflict resolution" featured a significant amount of very low responses (almost 40%). In comparison with the other choices, "Trade integration" had the smallest percentage of 'very low' answers. Focusing on positive evaluations, percentages of 'very high' impact were well under 10%.

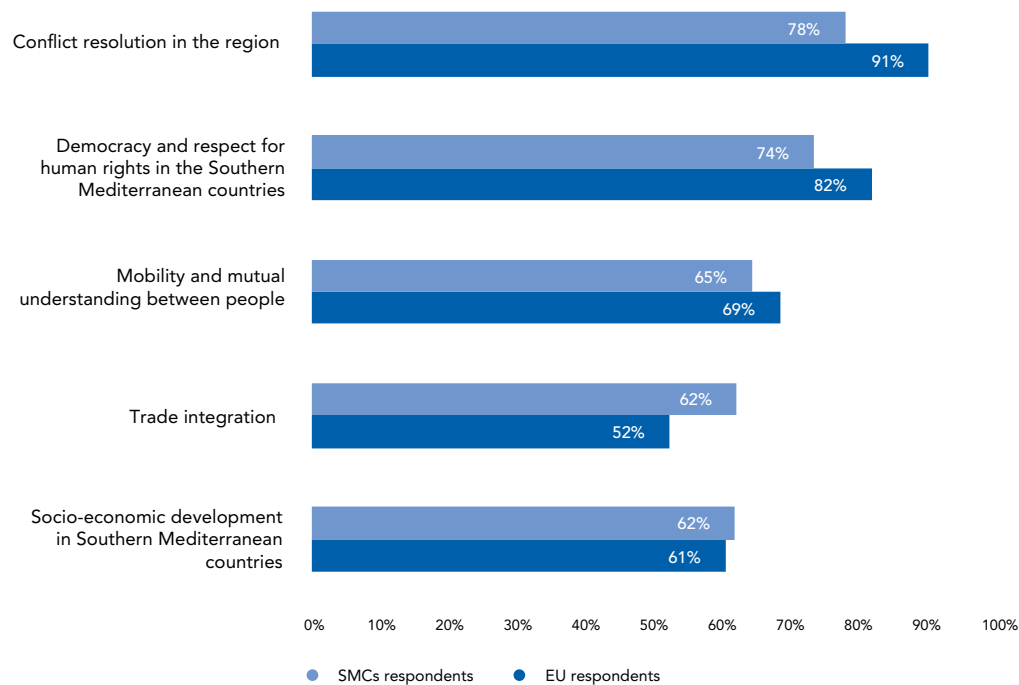
**Graph 2: Q.1** The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

When the data is disaggregated between EU and Southern Mediterranean countries (SMCs) respondents some trends emerge (see graph 2bis). Those from the EU were more critical of the effectiveness of the ENP’s impact on conflict resolution, democracy and human rights and mobility and mutual understanding in the region, when compared with those from the south. When it came to trade integration, the tables turned. SMCs respondents saw the ENPs impact on trade integration in a more positive light, with a margin of 10%.

**Graph 2bis:** Q.1 The European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) was designed 20 years ago. It became the structuring framework of Euro-Mediterranean relations. Since then, to what extent do you consider that it has effectively impacted the following areas?



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

In their comments, respondents highlighted some elements that could help explain the ineffective impact of the ENP:

The objective of a common area of shared prosperity and good neighbourliness has totally failed. Partly because it was ill-designed from the beginning (replication of the enlargement policy and process but without enlargement, which was particularly ill-suited for the neighbourhood south).

— French respondent

While the ENP is an opportunity to strengthen Euro-Mediterranean relations at all levels, its security-driven edge only reproduces a rebound effect of more displacement of vulnerable populations. A more comprehensive approach that addresses the recent geopolitical turmoil in the Sahel and North Africa is of paramount importance. The EU should revisit its 'equal partnership' schemes and terms with the neighbouring countries.

— Moroccan respondent

Even though I think it brought the neighbourhood closer to Europe, it did not bring Europe to the neighbourhood.

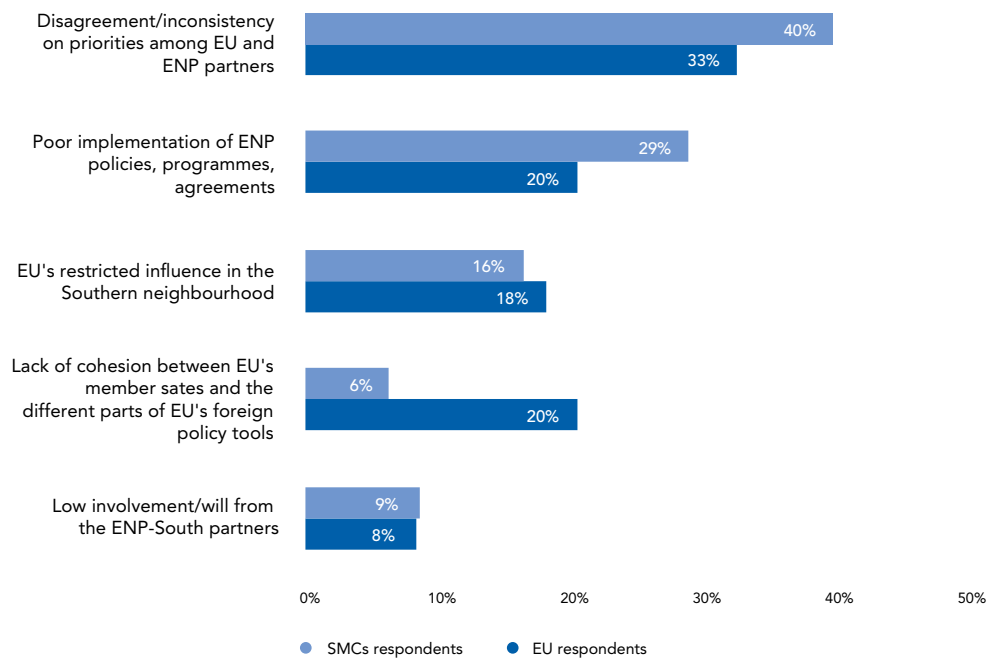
— Austrian respondent

As for the impact of neighbourhood policies on the movement of people, I considered it very high, particularly between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Regardless of the kind of movement or its legal names, the EU has been and is still pursuing a selective policy of migration, which creates new migration paths that are more dangerous and inappropriate for human rights.

— Algerian respondent

**Question 1b** was an open-ended question which allowed respondents to elaborate on the limitations of the ENP which were addressed in question 1 (graph 1). Categories developed from the answers highlighted two broad themes: disagreement on priorities among EU and ENP partners and poor implementation of ENP policies, programmes and/or agreements (graph 3). Interestingly, for EU respondents, the lack of cohesion between member states and the EU's foreign policy tools were also important elements that explain the low impact of the ENP.

**Graph 3: Q.1b** In general terms or in relation to the specific areas mentioned above, why do you think the impact has been limited? (categories developed from open-ended answers)



Source: Compiled by the IEMed based on the results of the 14<sup>th</sup> Euromed Survey

Below are some open-ended responses which elaborate on the key issues:

The ENP was essentially a generic European response to the EU's own post-enlargement challenges. In that sense, it did not provide a realistic long-term vision and is today a bit outdated. The ENP needs to include the post-revolution new generation while taking into consideration tech developments and economic needs. Moreover, the new approach needs to distinguish between the neighbouring regions of the EU as the interests of the eastern flank are becoming very different (rightly so) from those of the southern flank.

— Algerian respondent

The EU neither had the capabilities nor the political will and unity to pursue some of the ENP objectives whilst, at the same time, political regimes of target countries, engaged in consolidating their non-democratic rule, have been rather obstructive.

— German respondent

I think that influence, especially regarding human rights and conflicts, is sometimes weak. There are no real pressure tools to influence governments to spread the principles of human rights and democracy and raise the level of awareness among citizens regarding issues related to citizenship, rights and duties.

— Egyptian respondent

There is a fundamental divergence of interests at three levels that makes it difficult for the ENP to have a significant and sustained impact on the areas above. First, interests diverge within EU member states. Second, they also diverge between the EU and ENP partners. Third, they diverge within ENP partner countries, both within elites and most notably between elites and the local population.

— Italian respondent