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EU neighbourhood policy

No deeper ties in east without progress; Commission still ignoring democratic deficits in North Africa

The European Commission today presented its 'neighbourhood package', assessing the progress of the EU's 12 'neighbourhood countries' in the south and east.

Commenting on the eastern neighbourhood countries, Green foreign affairs spokesperson **Werner Schulz** said:

"While the Commission has set out an ambitious roadmap for its eastern partnership, this masks the significant divergence in the progress of the different countries in converging towards EU norms. Ukraine, the supposed forerunner in the east, is a case in point. The Commission has delivered a scathing assessment. Not only is the Ukraine failing to implement reforms, and implementing reforms half-heartedly, it is also going backwards in the key areas of human rights and the rule of law. The worrying developments in the Ukraine have meant it is gradually losing its status as a model in the region. The Commission cannot deepen ties without progress towards EU norms."

Commenting on the southern neighbourhood, Green foreign affairs spokesperson **Franziska Brantner** said:

"While the shift in the EU's political strategy towards North Africa since the Arab Spring is showing early signs of bearing fruit, it is welcome that the Commission is not trying to dress-up the situation in the countries that have experienced uprisings. In other countries in the region, like Morocco, however, the Commission continues to play down democratic deficits.

"It is a major source of regret that the action plans for the countries in North Africa have not yet been adapted to the new political reality, so EU aid is still guided by the old blueprints that pre-date the Arab Spring. On top of this, the Council is still blocking €240 million of the additional funding pledged by the Commission last year, meaning the countries of the southern Mediterranean would receive only €540 million in new funds until 2013 – much less than promised.

"Taking Egypt as an example, it seems that the 'more for more' principle remains largely empty rhetoric. The EU has failed to sanction the regression in terms of democracy and the rule of law by the military regime, while the EU-IMF negotiations lack any democratic conditionality as yet. If the EU fails to complement the 'more for more' approach with 'less for less', it will not win back lost confidence in its southern

neighbourhood and will not be able to play a proactive role in ensuring the transformations in North Africa have a positive end."

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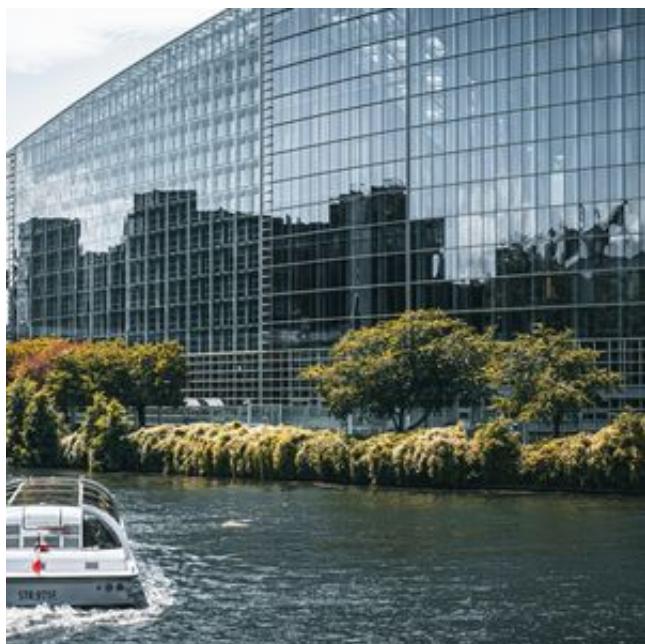


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