Press release | 25.05.2011

Neighbourhood policy review

Review points right direction for neighbourhood policy but many questions remain

A review of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy was presented today by the European Commission and the EU's foreign policy high representative at a crucial moment for the EU's neighbouring countries in the North Africa and Mediterranean region. The Greens have long called for a fundamental review of the ENP and welcomed the direction of the Commission's proposals but highlighted that many questions remain. Commenting on the proposals, Green foreign affairs spokesperson **Franziska Brantner** said:

"This review represents a welcome attempt to point the EU's Neighbourhood Policy in the right direction. It is now abundantly clear that the EU and its member states got a lot wrong in their past relations with the neighbourhood countries, particularly in North Africa. As such, reorienting the Neighbourhood Policy is vital for re-establishing the credibility of the EU in the region. Crucially, it recognises that civil society, and not just governments, should be core partners for the EU and that human rights should be central to neighbourhood policy.

"However, many questions clearly remain. It remains unclear how the proposed differentiation and conditionality on democracy and the rule of law will work in practise, what criteria will be used, who will monitor the implementation and what will happen if the conditions are not met. High representative Ashton and Commissioner Füle are promising 'more for more' (more aid for more reforms) but there must also be a 'less for less' if authoritarian regimes try to turn the clock back. The EU also must do more to promote social justice in its neighbourhood.

"Clearly, the ability to deliver 'more for more' is dependent on the EU's member states. The proposed 'carrots' of increased mobility for citizens from Europe's neighbourhood, better market access and more funds will remain empty promises if member states fail to buy-in. In the context of budget cutbacks and the current debates on border controls it is clear that this will not be easy. After various EU ministers jetted to Tahrir Square for media-friendly visits, it is now important that they follow up with meaningful action."

Green expert for the Eastern European neighbourhood countries **Werner Schulz** added:

"The Eastern Partnership must not become an afterthought of the EU's Neighbourhood Policy. In the context of fragile democratic development, the EU must prioritise supporting and strengthening civil society in our Eastern European neighbourhood. This means building up existing structures like the civil

society forum. There is an open question as to whether additional funding should also be channelled to the eastern Neighbourhood Policy."

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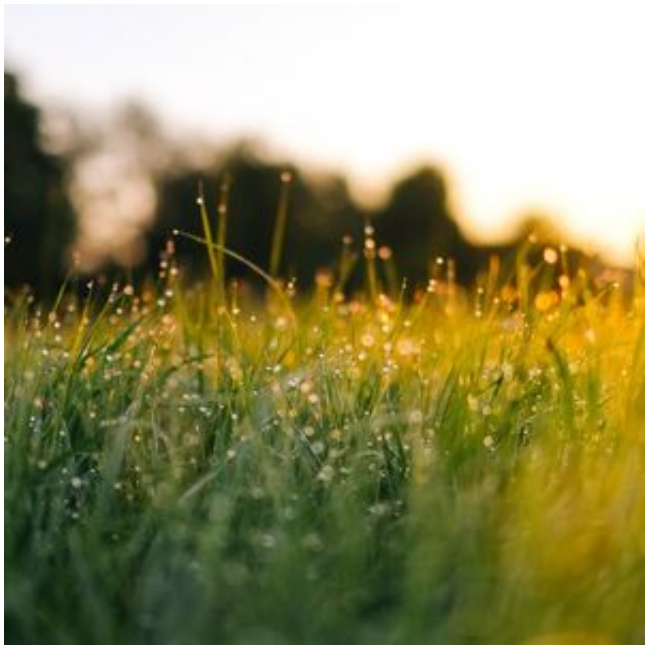
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