

EU and its Neighbourhood

Eastern Partnership and Union for
the Mediterranean



Agenda

- European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)
- Union for the Mediterranean (UmF)
- Eastern Partnership (EaP)



What is the ENP?

- ENP = EU framework for privileged partnership with EU 'neighbours'
 - = countries close to the EU, that will not become a MS in the near future.
- Consists of
 - **Bilateral partnerships**
 - **Multilateral partnerships**



Who is involved (and who is not)?

Bilateral Partnerships

- **Eastern Neighbours:** Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Belarus*.
- **Southern Neighbours:** Algeria, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Syria*, Palestine, and Tunisia.

*cooperation suspended



Who is involved (and who is not)?

Multilateral partnerships:

- Eastern Partnership
- Union for the Mediterranean
- Black Sea Synergy



Why was the ENP created?

- **Launched in 2004**
 - Post-CEEC enlargement
- **Motivation**
 - Avoiding “new dividing lines”
 - Promote economic and political reforms → Stabilise borders
- **Legal/ treaty basis Article 8 (TEU)**

1. The Union shall develop a special relationship with neighbouring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighbourliness, founded on the values of the Union and characterised by close and peaceful relations based on cooperation.

ENP in practice

- **Actors**

- Commission
- European External Action Service (EEAS)
- Council & Parliament

- **Monitoring tools**

- Action Plans and Partnership Priorities
- Annual reports

- **Incentive tools**

- Financial instruments
- Mobility partnerships
- Trade agreements

Why enter a partnership?

- **EU** motivations (and goals)

- **Political**
- **Security**
- **Economic**

- **Partner** motivations

- **Economic**
 - Access to EU markets
 - Financial support
- **Political**
- **Technical**

Integration without membership

2015 Reform and guiding principles

- **ENP revision (2015)**
- **Focus on**
 - **security,**
 - **stability, and**
 - **migration**

- **Guiding principles**
 - **Differentiation**
 - **Conditionality**
 - *“More for more”*

Critique: 2015 ENP revision

- **Critique:** Shift of focus undermines ENP's other goals
 - Prioritising security → undermines promotion of democracy & human rights → undermines credibility



Critique: South v. East

Area of Cooperation: (1) Trade

- Preferential market access
- **Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTAs)** – *East*
- Trade agreements – *South*

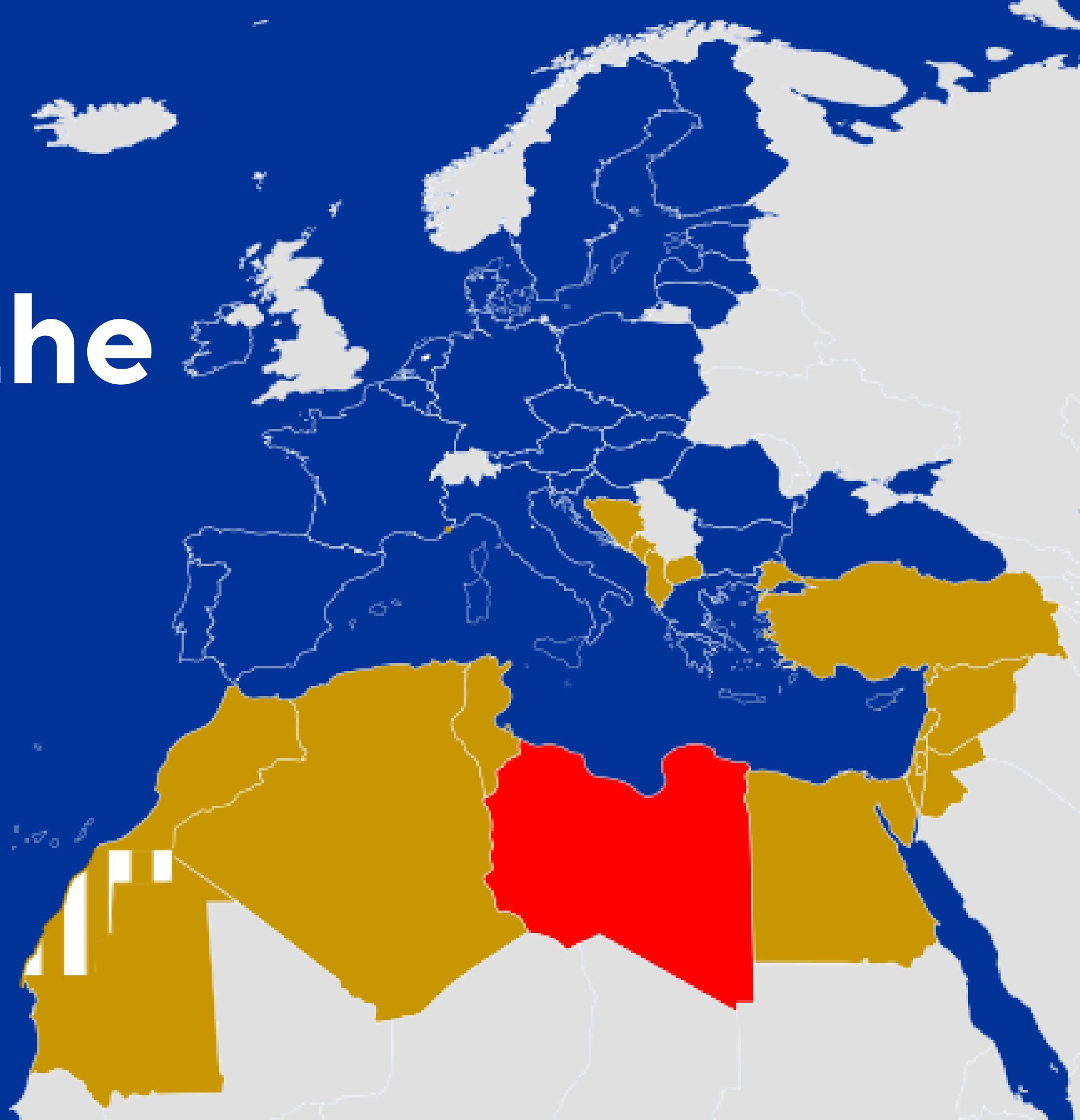
(2) Migration

- Asylum and border management

Critiques

- Asymmetry of incentives
- Question of effectiveness and fairness

The Union for the Mediterranean



What is the UfM?

Intergovernmental organization.

Established: 2008 (building on the Barcelona Process).



Members: 27 EU countries + 15 Southern and Eastern Mediterranean partners.

A framework for partnership, not EU membership.

Aims and Activities

Main goals

Areas of Cooperation

Regional Stability

Human Development

**Economic
Integration**

Business & Job Creation

**Higher Education &
Research**

**Transport & Urban
Development**

Water, Energy & Climate Action

Major Hurdles

Migration: Irregular migration and refugee flows.

Security: Regional conflicts and political instability.

Economic Disparities: The development gap between North and South.



The Arab Spring's Influence

Initial hope for democratic reform.

Led to increased instability in some areas (e.g., Libya, Syria).

Shifted UfM focus to addressing root causes of conflict:

1 - Youth unemployment

2 - Political exclusion



Case Study: Cooperation with Tunisia

Projects & Support:

- 1 - Support for democratic transition.
- 2 - Initiatives for textile industry.
- 3 - Youth employment programs.



Criticism & Challenges:

- 1 - Over-emphasis on security and migration control.
- 2 - Limited success in reducing irregular migration.
- 3 - Persistent lack of economic opportunities for youth.

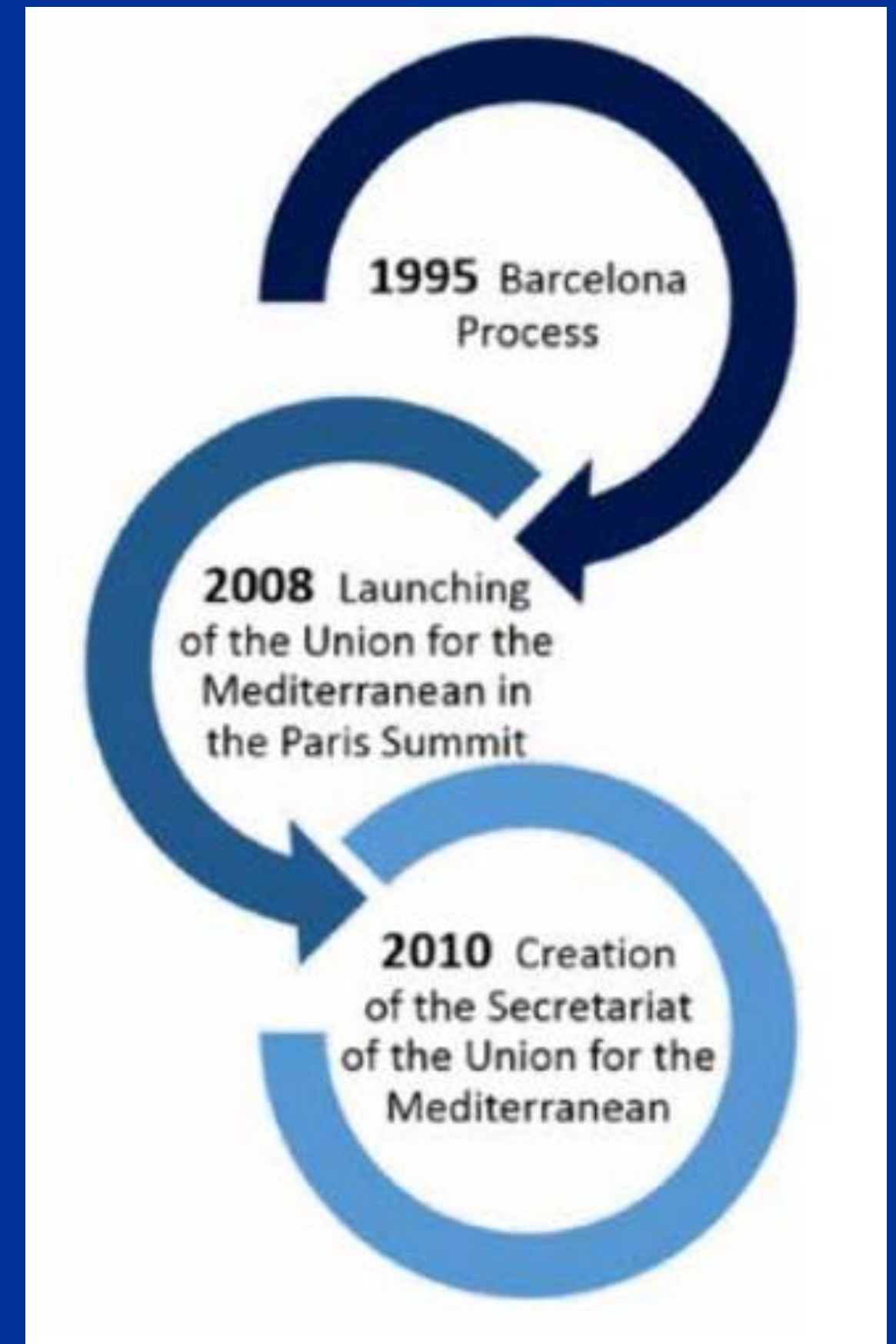
A Mixed Record of Success

Successes:

- 1 - Maintains a platform for dialogue.
- 2 - Launches practical regional projects.
- 3 - Keeps all parties engaged.

Shortcomings:

- 1 - Limited impact on major political and security issues.
- 2 - Development gap remains wide.
- 3 - Migration cooperation struggles to address root causes.



How to Move Forward?

Greater Southern Ownership: Move towards a more equal partnership.

Focus on Key Priorities: Concentrate on areas like youth employment and climate change.

Increase Flexibility: Adapt more quickly to changing regional dynamics.

Eastern Partnership



What is Eastern Partnership?

- Launched in 2009 as a joint initiative of the EU, its Member States, and its Eastern European partner countries
- Aims to strengthen and deepen political and economic relations between the EU and the partner countries
- Built on shared fundamental values: democracy, rule of law, human rights, good governance, market economy, and sustainable development
- Offers both bilateral and multilateral cooperation: government-to-government, and also linking civil society, business, regions, and universities
- Works on key dimensions like economic integration/trade, connectivity (transport, energy), people-to-people contacts (mobility, civil society), and reform support (rule of law, governance)
- Uses a “more-for-more” and differentiated approach
- In the context of recent geopolitical developments it emphasises resilience of partner countries and regional cooperation.



Areas of Cooperation – 2025

- **Investing in competitive and innovative economies** – 500,000 SMEs supported
- **Investing in the rule of law** – All high-level officials declare their economic assets, and these declarations are verified
- **Investing in sustainable and smart connectivity** – 3,000 km of priority roads and railways built or upgraded
- **Investing in people and knowledge societies** – 70,000 individual mobility opportunities for students and staff, researchers, young people, and youth workers
- **Investing in security and cyber resilience** – A strengthened framework in place for identifying and addressing hybrid threats; strengthened partners' capacities to increase cyber resilience and tackle cyber crime
- **Investing in environment & climate** – Another 3 million people gain access to safe water services; air quality monitored and improved in 300 cities
- **Investing in health resilience** – 850,000 health workers vaccinated and benefit from improved therapeutics, equipment, and working conditions
- **Investing in inclusive, gender equal and diverse societies, and strategic communication** – 2,500 local civil society organisations, 120 independent media outlets and 2,000 journalists supported
- **Investing in digital transformation** – 80% of households have affordable access to high-speed internet
- **Investing in sustainable energy** – 250,000 households reduce energy consumption by at least 20%

Countries of the EaP



Armenia

- Has a CEPA with the EU – deep cooperation on trade, energy, and governance.
- EU = Armenia's top trading partner (~22% of trade).
- Major infrastructure & connectivity support.
- Active in Erasmus+ & visa facilitation programmes.



Azerbaijan

- EU = Azerbaijan's top trade & investment partner
- Key energy & transit partner for Europe.
- Cooperation on governance, business climate & connectivity
- Growing mobility and education ties
- Supports green energy transition and renewables.



Belarus

- Participation in EaP has been suspended since June 2021
- EU assistance shifted to civil society, independent media, education and culture in exile
- A proposed support package of up to €3 billion for Belarus
- Belarusians still access certain multilateral EaP-programmes (e.g., EU4Culture, EU4Independent Media)



Georgia

- Has a DCFTA with the EU (deep trade integration).
- EU = main trading partner (~21% of trade).
- Visa-free travel to Schengen since 2017.
- Granted EU candidate status in 2023.
- Strong infrastructure & digital projects support.



Moldova

- EU candidate; accession talks started 2024
- Has a DCFTA with the EU
- EU = largest trading partner (~54% of trade)
- Focus on energy security & reforms.
- Visa-free travel to the EU.



Ukraine

- EU candidate; accession talks underway.
- Association Agreement + DCFTA with deep trade integration.
- EU = major partner for recovery & reconstruction.
- Focus on modernisation & EU standards.
- Strong people-mobility & trade support.

EU Role in EaP Members' Affairs



- **Political Guidance & Conditionality** – Encourages democratic reforms, rule of law, and good governance; ties cooperation to reform progress.
- **Economic & Trade Partner** – Provides market access through DCFTA/association agreements, supports SMEs, and invests in infrastructure.
- **Funding & Technical Assistance** – Offers grants, loans, and expertise for energy, environment, digitalisation, health, and civil society projects.
- **Youth Initiatives** – Supports mobility for students, researchers, and youth, as well as cultural exchanges, training, and youth projects.
- **Strategic & Security Support** – Advises on cyber resilience, border management, and regional stability initiatives.
- **Norms & Standards Export** – Promotes EU legal, environmental, social, and economic standards across member states.

EU Response to Domestic Conflicts

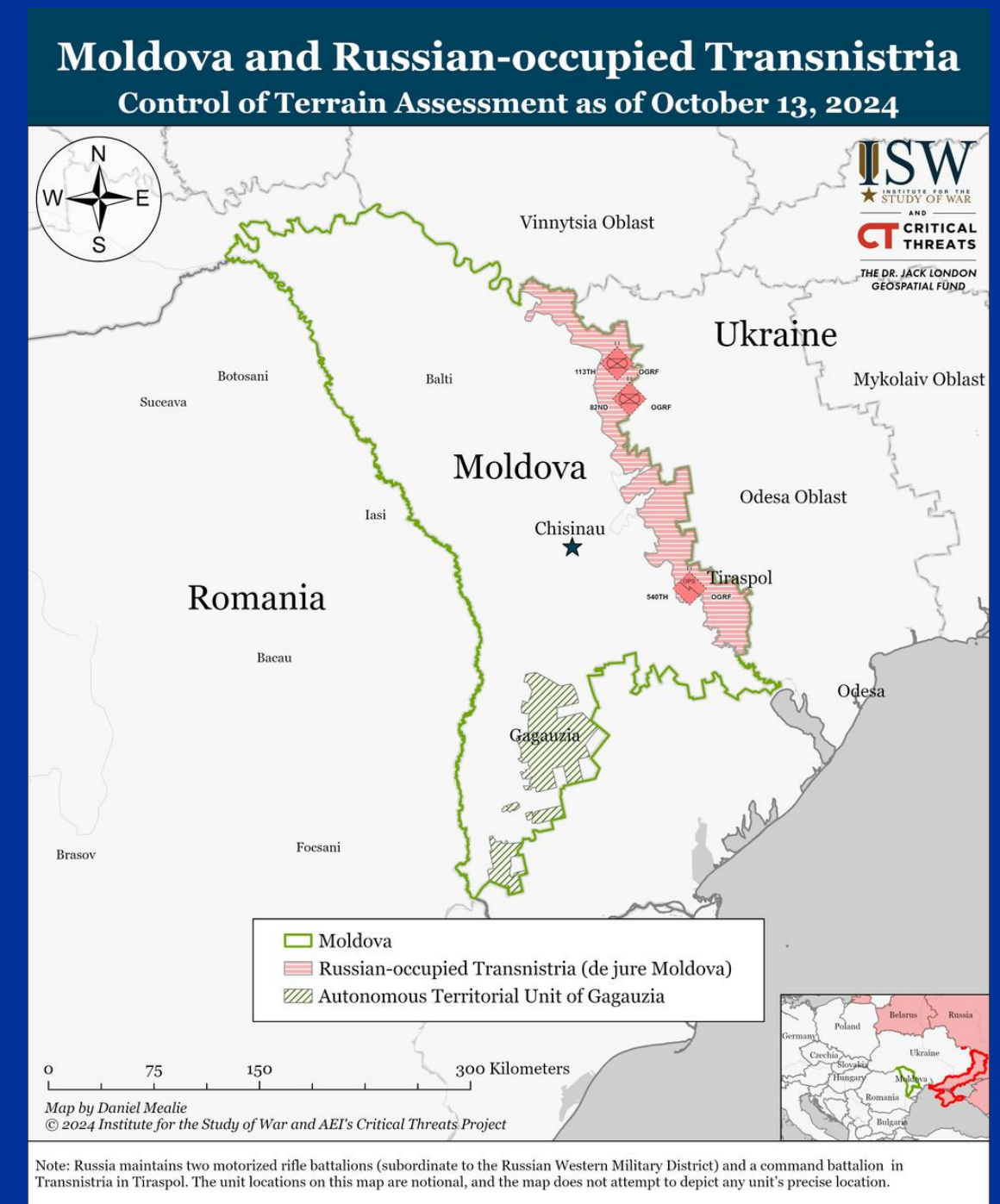
- **Sanctions & Diplomatic Pressure:** The EU has imposed multiple rounds of sanctions targeting Russian individuals, banks, and key sectors (energy, defense, finance) following the annexation of Crimea (2014) and the 2022 invasion.
- **Financial & Economic Support:** The EU has provided billions in macro-financial assistance, grants, and loans to stabilize Ukraine's economy. The EU is Ukraine's largest trading partner.
- **Military & Security Assistance:** While not directly sending troops, the EU funds military aid, training, and capacity-building for Ukrainian forces.
- **Humanitarian Aid:** Substantial support for displaced persons, healthcare, and reconstruction projects.
- **Diplomatic Efforts:** The EU is a key participant in the Normandy format and the Minsk agreements process, promoting ceasefire and conflict resolution.
- **Political Integration:** Promotion of reforms under the EU-Ukraine Association Agreement, including democratic governance, rule of law, and anti-corruption measures.



UKRAINE

EU Response to Domestic Conflicts

- **Financial & Development Aid:** The EU is Moldova's largest donor, providing support for infrastructure, energy diversification, and economic development to reduce dependency on Russia.
- **Political & Democratic Support:** Assistance with governance reforms, anti-corruption, judiciary independence, and civil society strengthening.
- **Sanctions & Regional Pressure:** Supports EU sanctions on Russia, limiting the influence of Russian-backed actors in Transnistria.
- **Conflict Mediation:** EU supports the 5+2 negotiation format for Transnistria, offering technical expertise and confidence-building measures.
- **Security Cooperation:** Partnership in border management, cybersecurity, and conflict prevention measures.
- **Limitations:** Transnistria remains a frozen conflict; Russian military presence continues, constraining EU leverage.



MOLDOVA

EU Response to Domestic Conflicts

- **Diplomatic Engagement:** The EU maintains dialogue with both Armenia and Azerbaijan, supporting ceasefire agreements and conflict resolution through mediation.
- **Development & Reform Support:** EU programs focus on democratic governance, economic development, and social stabilization to build long-term resilience.

Aka

→ The 30-Year Ceasefire Period (1994–2020) with no success

→ Limited mediation in conflict



ARMENIA & AZERBAIJAN

EU Response to Domestic Conflicts

- **Election Observation & Political Support:** EU sends observer missions to monitor elections and supports democratic institutions and reforms.
- **Financial Assistance:** EU invests in infrastructure, governance reforms, and civil society development.
- **Trade & Integration:** Through the Association Agreement and DCFTA, the EU promotes economic modernization and closer integration with EU markets.
- **Diplomatic Pressure:** EU condemns external interference in domestic politics, including Russian-backed unrest or political influence.



GEORGIA

Challenges

- **Asymmetry & Conditionality** – Reforms often top-down; partner countries have limited flexibility.
- **Coherence & Coordination** – Multiple instruments and layers make policy alignment complex.
- **Local Ownership & Cultural Fit** – EU agendas may clash with local socio-political realities.
- **Geopolitical Pressures** – Partner states face competing influences (Russia, China) and external shocks.
- **Monitoring & Sustainability** – Ensuring long-term impact and locally embedded reforms remains difficult.

TIME FOR QUESTIONS

- 1. Should the EU move toward two fully separate neighbourhood policies — one for the Eastern region and one for the Mediterranean — instead of insisting on a single ENP umbrella?**
- 2. Is it legitimate for the EU to work with authoritarian neighbours if this protects strategic interests such as energy or migration management?**