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The EU and Global Development Policy in Challenging Times

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report

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Tracing the EU as a Global Development Actor

The European Union (EU) is often depicted as one of the world's foremost development assistance actors. The EU and its member states together constitute the world largest development aid donor with a combined budget in 2018 of US$ 69.24 billion. This is a much larger annual amount than the world's second largest donor, the United States, which had an annual budget of about US$ 34.26 billion.[1] That said, the EU is a complex development actor because it comprises a supranational European development policy that is managed by the EU institutions in agreement with the EU member states, on the one hand, and 27 national development policies that are coordinated and made coherent under the wider European umbrella, on the other.

The shaping of the EU as a global development actor has taken place in parallel with the emergence of a global development agenda. The EU institutions and the EU member states have expended considerable effort on shaping the global development agenda. At the same time, the EU as a whole has been influenced by the debate taking place within and among international organizations about how best to achieve sustainable global development, end the North-South divide and attain greater overall coherence and efficiency in development policy. Moreover, the pressures generated by the lack of development, insecurity and oppression in the southern Mediterranean region and in sub-Saharan Africa have compelled the EU to forge a partnership with African states to tackle the drivers of migration and refugee movement. The spread of the COVID-19 virus and the all-consuming crisis that the pandemic is causing will undoubtedly have a significant impact on EU development policy and trigger reactions that risk having a detrimental effect on the global development agenda and the EU's overall commitment to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The fall-out is also likely to impinge on European donors' financial capacities to show generosity towards developing countries, in parallel with a reduced inclination to support measures on a balanced approach to migration and a stepped-up effort to secure the management of the EU's external borders. Nonetheless, amid the rapid spread of COVID-19 in Africa, the EU needs to find a way to support the fight of African states against the pandemic. In this context, the EU-African partnership framework may prove useful in tackling the challenges of distributing financial aid, medical equipment and other resources, and sharing scientific knowledge and public information.

The origins of global development policy: From the Millennium Development Goals to the Agenda for Development

At the end of the second millennium, hopes were high that the international community would at last be able to solve two of the most intractable problems that besiege the world – underdevelopment and poverty. On the verge of the new millennium, the international context was propitious in the sense that the long stand-off between the liberal West and the communist East, with its detrimental consequences for the rest of the world, had come to an end. At the end of the Cold War, the lessening of tensions between the US and Russia in the Northern Hemisphere opened up possibilities that the

[1] OECD, DAC, 2018. http://www.oecd.org/newsroom/development-aid-stable-in-2017-with-more-sent-to-poorest-countries.htm; European Commission, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/news-and-events/eu-remains-worlds-leading-donor-development-assistance-eu757-billion-2017_en . Conversion rate 2018 US dollars to euro (average) = 1.

grievances of the states in the global South might be tackled in a more equitable manner. The years before 2000 were characterized by a series of high level summits on various developmental issues: the World Conference on Education for All (2000), the UN World Summit for Children (2000), and Population and Development Summit (1999), the World Conference on Women (1995), the World Summit for Social Development (1995) and the Earth Summit (1992), to name just a few of the most important. These summits re-established the reputation of the UN as an actor in its own right and a venue for world leaders to come together to consider issues of global importance. More importantly, they helped to shape a global development agenda and therefore constituted important steps towards the Millennium Summit in 2000.

Preparations for the Millennium Summit

The UN, under the leadership of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, began in 1998 to prepare for a summit of summits to take place in September 2000. Mindful of the symbolism of a new millennium, the secretary-general wanted to use the opportunity that this created to formulate a set of goals that would garner the support of states around the globe to become serious about resolving the problems of poverty, disease and the lack of decent living conditions, while reinstating the centrality of the UN in the governance of global development by harnessing the work that had been completed in previous conferences and summits. Annan published *We the Peoples: The Role of the United Nations in the 21st Century* in April 2000. The report was intended to prepare the deliberations at the Millennium Summit by identifying "some of the most pressing challenges faced by people that fall within the United Nations ambit" (Annan, 2000: 6). To this end, Annan proposed a number of priority areas and recommended a series of steps to be taken in order to improve the life of the world's poor. The priority areas were organized under two broad headings: freedom from want and freedom from fear. From these two overarching ambitions flowed a number of more precise goals dealing chiefly with the alleviation of extreme poverty and unhealthy living conditions by improving the level of education, providing access to decent work and fighting HIV/AIDS. The second part of the report advocated the adoption of a human security perspective on long-term development, chiefly by preventing the outbreak of armed conflict, tackling the spread of arms and securing the rule of law more widely in the world. In conclusion, the report dealt with the need to steer the world along a more sustainable development path and adopt measures for coping with climate change. In so doing, the report tied various environmental challenges and disasters to the ambition to eradicate poverty and prevent the outbreak of armed conflict. Although the report had a clear aim to place the UN at the centre of the governance effort required to confront these massive challenges, it did not delve into the intractable problems of how to persuade states to commit to and implement agreed policy or to make the necessary financial resources available.

The Road to the Millennium Development Goals

Since the 1990s, the UN has been central in shaping the global agenda, turning international development and poverty reduction into the major issues of concern for the UN Secretariat, UN agencies and UN-sponsored conferences and summits. By the 1980s, however, the mood among the elites in donor states in the West had already taken a decisive turn towards market liberalism, which had far-reaching consequences for their thinking on the rationale behind development aid. Not least

Republican politicians in the US had begun to question whether financial donations and contributions to developing countries really alleviated poverty and improved social and economic conditions, or rather led them into dependency and poverty traps. The overall amount spent by industrialized countries on official development assistance (ODA) fell quite significantly in the 1980s and 1990s, partly as a result of scepticism about its efficacy, partly as an unintended consequence of the end of the great power rivalry of the Cold War (Browne, 1997).

In this environment, the ministers for international development in the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member states began to work towards a new understanding on a set of realistic, equitable and enforceable development goals that built on the work that had been produced within the framework of the UN since the 1990s. The OECD took a more technocratic/expert-oriented approach compared to the UN Secretariat's more normative language inspired by justice and human rights (Hulme, 2009). In parallel with the market liberal orientation sweeping across the western world and the results-based management approach that was making its mark on public service reform, development aid was also forced to reflect such goals and adopt a new approach that emphasized measurable performance and realistically attainable goals supported by indicators and targets (Hulme, 2007). In the 1996 report *Shaping the 21st Century: The Contribution of Development Co-operation* (DAC, 1996), representatives of the OECD member states and officials from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) agreed on three overarching international development goals, grouped under three headings: (a) enhanced *economic well-being*, through a reduction in the proportion of people living in absolute poverty; (b) *social development*, focused on primary education, gender equality, basic healthcare and planned parenthood; and (c) *environmental sustainability* and the regeneration of natural resources.

According to Hulme (2007; 2009), the OECD's international development goals were influential in the process leading up to the Millennium Assembly in September 2000 and the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, and even more so in the agreement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2001. According to Hulme, the concordance between the goals proposed by Kofi Annan in *We the Peoples* and the international development goals of the OECD can be explained by the support given by a number of international organizations, such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the OECD, as well as a number of European ministers of international development who decided to champion the cause of realistic objectives directed at poverty eradication. While the UN Secretariat had favoured a stronger emphasis on combating HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases, some of the international development goals, such as the empowerment of women and reproductive health, had to be watered down due to opposition from the Vatican and some conservative Muslim states. The final agreement on the MDGs, the accompanying targets and the methods for establishing indicators and sources of data drew a great deal on the work of the OECD member states and its DAC.

The MDGs were agreed by the UN General Assembly in New York in September 2000. They constituted eight goals and 18 targets, ranging from eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, to universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality and improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS and ensuring environmental sustainability. They also contained goals on setting up a global partnership for development to assist the least developed and land-locked countries, establishing a rules-based trading and financial system, and making medical drugs cheaper and more readily available. However, in order to make the fulfilment of these goals a realistic prospect, the UN member states also had to agree on a governance approach and to guarantee financing. A breakthrough came at the International Conference on Financing for Development in Monterrey, Mexico, in March 2002. In the Monterrey Consensus, donor and recipient countries came together with international financial institutions to agree on a set of principles for achieving the MDGs. These emphasized the joint responsibilities of developing and developed countries, and the paramount role of trade as a lever for development. In addition, in order to achieve sustainable economic growth, they enlisted the private sector to ensure that advances in digital technologies would benefit people in the poorest and least developed countries too (UN, 2003). At the time, the MDGs were hailed for their comprehensiveness and ambition. At the same time, however, they followed traditional development logic in the sense that they turned to the poor states in the global South to address a number of problems related to underdevelopment with the help of the rich countries in the North, through the use of aid and other kinds of development assistance. This maintained divisions between the richer North and poorer South that not only cemented unhelpful stereotypes and blame-shifting when targets were not met (Clegg, 2015), but was also not consistent with the overarching message of the Millennium Declaration, which exhorted the need to address the challenges posed by globalization in a way that ensured that the benefits and costs were shared evenly among the world's states (UN, 2000).

A new chapter in global development: Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals

The MDGs were drafted to be achieved by 2015. As they closed in on their self-imposed deadline, the UN member states set themselves the aim of elaborating a further set of goals for the coming 15-year period. A number of events shaped the minds of world leaders and influenced the initial deliberations on these goals, which also took place under the auspices of the UN. However, events in the period 2000–2015 presaged a more ominous global situation than had been foreseen at the time of the Millennium Declaration (Pronk, 2015). The vulnerability of an increasingly interconnected world was made clear by the 9/11 destruction of the Twin Towers in New York and the increasing threat of global terrorism that followed in its wake. The advances in poverty reduction recorded since 2000 were mainly linked to an improvement in living standards in China and India, while many states in Africa and the Middle East continued to fall behind due to military conflicts, lack of human security and governance malpractice, which in turn sparked an increasing flow of migrants. The global economic and financial crisis of 2008–2012 underscored the vagaries of the international financial system, which affected developing as well as developed countries, as did the growing trend for wealth creation through financial speculation rather than productive long-term investment. Most conspicuous however were the signs of a rapidly changing climate, causing a deterioration in living conditions around the world. The obviously negative impacts of climate change on the ambition to achieve a world where people can live without the fear of want or insecurity highlighted the challenge of improving living conditions in developing countries and maintaining them in industrialized countries while preventing further aggravation of an already fragile global climate.

At the Rio+20 conference in June 2012, the UN member states set themselves the task of overseeing the elaboration of a new development agenda and a broader set of goals, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which were to go beyond and subsequently replace the MDGs. At this conference, it was also decided that a novel approach to negotiating development goals should be attempted to complement the traditional method of summit-level negotiations among all member states on the basis of pre-prepared documents drafted by the Office of the Secretary-General, with a method of deliberation built on joint fact-finding and the involvement of civil society groups and other non-governmental actors. The rationale for setting up two negotiation tracks lay in a desire to end the lingering mistrust between developed and developing countries while at the same time building on the momentum from the negotiation of the MDGs, as their content was seen as essentially sound (Chasek et al., 2016). Furthermore, from the perspective of overall legitimacy, it was also seen as crucial to open up the deliberations and make them more transparent.

The new approach consisted of setting up an Open Working Group (OWG) of 30 representatives nominated by UN member state governments. As the interest from the UN member states was greater than the number of places, states were grouped in twos or threes. Finally, 70 state representatives took part in the deliberations speaking through the groups and occasionally for themselves. In order to bridge the North-South divide, the OWG was co-chaired by Kenya's and Hungary's ambassadors to the UN. To achieve consensus, the deliberations were preceded by a fact-finding phase during which experts and stakeholders shared their knowledge of the issues on the agenda. The OWG agreed on a set of 17 goals and 169 targets, which were subsequently adopted by the General Assembly in 2014. The adoption of the OWG's report set in motion the second phase of negotiations in which the UN member states considered the goals and targets for sustainable development as well as the framing of a new development agenda (Chasek, 2016). The final document, *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, was agreed at the UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York on 2 August 2015. It encapsulates Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, which are set to guide the development policies of the UN member states for the coming 15-year period (UN, 2015). Since its inception, Agenda 2030 has become a focal point for global development that links economic, social and environmental dimensions in the quest to eradicate poverty, insecurity and inequality, and the unsustainable patterns of consumption and production that affect all states and their populations.

The SDGs are grounded in a more comprehensive agenda than the MDGs, especially with regard to the environmental dimension. Another important difference is that the SDGs are universal, in the sense that they are directed at all the UN member states, which have committed to achieve them through national action plans. The SDGs are also more integrated in the sense that their targets are not only listed in their primary goal, but also linked to other goals in which they play a role. The rationale for integrating targets into several goals is to make it easier to see the linkages across sectors, prioritize the attainment of goals over time and address the unavoidable problem of goals working at cross-purposes. The thorough work that went into drafting the SDGs could not resolve all the problems of fulfilling them, as they all have specific barriers and drivers that set off dynamics that influence the prospects of realization (Monkelbaan, 2019). Given the complicated governance involved in a sustainable transition, much of the discussion following the adoption of the SDGs has revolved around policy coherence, prioritization and policy learning (Niklasson, 2019).

Millennium Development Goals

1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger
2. Achieve universal primary education
3. Promote gender equality and empower women
4. Reduce child mortality
5. Improve maternal health
6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases
7. Ensure environmental sustainability
8. Global partnership for development

Sustainable Development Goals

1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture
3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all ages
4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all
9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation
10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts (acknowledging that the UNFCCC is the primary international, intergovernmental forum for negotiating the global response to climate change)
14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss
16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

The EU as a development actor: coordination and convergence, but how and with what consequences?

The emergence of the EU as a development actor gained pace in the 1960s in parallel with the setting up of the Customs Union. The juxtaposition of trade and development policy meant that for several decades, the EU made use of preferential trading arrangements in its relations with developing countries rather devise a more traditional ODA-based approach. Over time, however, for a number of reasons linked to both the emergence of a global development agenda and the widening of the EU's policy scope and capacity as an actor, the trade-only approach became increasingly untenable. It has also increasingly been forced to address the question of policy coherence as part of wider questions concerning its ability to steer common action towards achieving the global development agenda and the SDGs.

Early stages of the EU's development policy

The European development policy was one of the original policy areas of the then European Economic Community (EEC). It was developed as a measure ensuring preferential market access to former, mainly French, colonies in Africa as they gained independence at around the same time as the six original EEC member states began the long process of setting up a customs union and an internal market. The EEC and 18, mainly African, states signed the first Yaoundé Convention in 1963. The convention gave the states preferential access to the EEC's burgeoning internal market, although most agricultural products were barred from the regime. Financial aid for development was administered by the European Commission and disbursed from the European Development Fund (EDF) (Djamson, 1976). The initial convention was designed to last five years. Although implementation of Yaoundé I was delayed by over a year, its effects on the associated African states were considered positive in developmental terms by observers at the time – not least because its multilateral set-up diminished the dependency of individual African states on their former colonial masters (Cosgrove, 1972). Following the expiry of the first convention, negotiation of a second Yaoundé Convention was concluded in 1969. It maintained the tariff-free regime between the members of the EEC and the African states and was boosted by a financial injection into the EDF (Djamson, 1976).

The next challenge in the early Community's relations with developing countries came with the accession of the United Kingdom (UK). Negotiations to this effect took place in the early 1970s. UK membership meant that the EEC's Common External Tariff would be applicable to the UK's commercial partners in the Commonwealth, chiefly Canada, New Zealand and Australia. This meant that they would not only lose privileged access to the British market through the Commonwealth Preferential System, but also sustain competition from the states included in the Yaoundé Convention which enjoyed preferential trading terms with the EEC. The UK therefore sought a privileged association for the Commonwealth countries with the EEC (Djamson, 1976). To include the UK's former colonies and dependent territories, the EEC concluded negotiations with 46 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states in Lomé, the capital of Togo, in 1975. The Lomé Convention covered basically all the former dependencies of France, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, along with a few other African states which underscored the predominately African nature of the agreement with the enlarged EEC. Like

Yaoundé, Lomé granted preferential market access to the EEC, barring most agricultural products apart from tropical produce. However, it also extended the preferential trading system to certain products, such as sugar, while refraining from insisting that the ACP states put in place similarly favourable trading conditions for products from Europe. Hence, the principle of non-reciprocal trade was established (ODI, 1975).

The Lomé Convention was extended a number of times until the expiry of Lomé IV in 1999. During this period it was enlarged to include 71 ACP states (Davenport et al., 1995). It established a preferential trading framework to the advantage of developing countries which – together with measures to assist in the diversification of trade and later social and cultural exchanges – became the cornerstone of the EU's development policy. Given the EU's predominance in market building and the promotion of international trade, which are grounded in the EU's early inception as an economic entity, its development policy took a definite orientation towards trade and market access as the primary levers of social and economic growth in developing countries.

The EU as a development actor at the turn of the millennium and beyond

The early 2000s was a significant period in terms of the shaping of the global development agenda. A comprehensive global development agenda was agreed on with a number of ambitious goals. For the EU, which had been participating in the deliberations of a number of international forums in its own capacity as well as through its member states, the beginning of the millennium also entailed negotiations with its African partners on new partnership agreements. In parallel with the drawing up of the MDGs and later the SDGs, the EU worked to establish a new partnership with African states. Although held up at the time as "the most progressive agreements for North-South cooperation", the Lomé conventions had not delivered the intended results in terms of economic and social development in African states (Carbone, 2013a: 4). This, together with the changing international situation, led policymakers to rethink cooperation between the EU and the ACP states. In essence, the EU eventually broke with the idea of privileged relations with the ACP states based on its post-colonial focus to adopt a development policy approach focused on the poorest countries that was more in tune with the global development agenda and the rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO) international trade regime (Young and Peterson, 2013).

The Cotonou Agreement and European Partnership Agreements

The Cotonou Agreement between the EU and 77 (later 79) ACP states was concluded in 2000 for a period of 20 years. It covers the areas of trade, development, and political and economic cooperation. There were numerous reasons for seeking a new framework. For the EU, it was becoming untenable to offer unconditional trade preferences to a specific and growing group of states that were not granted to other, often poorer, states. In particular, the EU had problems defending the special arrangements it made for ACP states, for instance, on sugar, beef and bananas. These concessions got the EU into trouble with the WTO, where it was accused of breaking the most-favoured nation principle (Babarinde, 2005). The EU therefore preferred to reserve its non-reciprocal trading concessions for the least developed countries, which were subsequently included in the "Everything But Arms" agreement of 2001. This agreement was the first in which the EU concentrated on the world's poorest states as part of its efforts to forge a more purposeful and equitable development policy.

The Cotonou Agreement was set up in two stages. The first stage constituted a framework agreement between the EU and the ACP states, while the second concerned the establishment of a series of agreements, or so-called European Partnership Agreements (EPAs), concluded between the EU and groups of ACP states. Since the first Lomé Convention, the ACP states as a group had become unwieldy and increasingly heterogeneous, as many African states fell behind their Asian and Pacific counterparts in terms of economic and social development. It became widely accepted in the EU institutions and among EU member states that non-reciprocal trade concessions had not worked as a method for furthering development in African states (Young & Peterson, 2013). In addition, the ACP states presented very different security and political challenges, issues which were rising up the agenda in EU-African relations (Babarinde, 2005).

The Cotonou Agreement builds to a great extent on the earlier Lomé conventions. However, new commitments have been added on reducing and eventually eradicating poverty, ensuring sustainable development and improving the ACP states' integration into the global economy. The Cotonou Agreement has a number of principles at its heart: equality among the contracting parties; ownership by the ACP states of their own development strategies; the inclusion of new interlocutors, primarily civil society organizations, in the implementation of the agreement's goals; differentiation among recipient countries; and the regionalization of cooperation (Babarinde, 2005). In addition, it contains a political dialogue that introduces new areas of cooperation, such as peace, security, migration and combating corruption and arms proliferation (Carbone, 2013b).

The Cotonou Agreement has been revised twice. In 2005, security cooperation was strengthened as a result of the EU's concerns about terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and its request that the ACP states cooperate with the International Criminal Court. In 2010, the EU and the ACP states agreed to enhance regional integration, especially in Africa, in order to foster cooperation among neighbouring states and work towards achieving security and stability. The African Union (AU) was also made a partner in the EU-ACP relationship. The revised agreement further stressed the interdependence between security and development, and therefore placed more weight on peacebuilding and conflict prevention. It also highlighted the importance of the ACP states achieving the MDGs and securing sustainable development by addressing the challenges of armed conflict, instability, migration, environmental degradation and climate change. The EU also adopted the principles of partnership and aid effectiveness in the same year (Carbone, 2013b).

Negotiations on the EPAs began in 2002 and were scheduled to be concluded by 2007. The European Commission had secured a waiver from the WTO to continue the modalities of trade with the ACP states until 2007, which therefore became the target date for the conclusion of the EPAs (Young & Peterson, 2013). The EPAs were negotiated in clusters: West Africa, Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community, the Caribbean and the Pacific (Akopari, 2017). These groupings did not conform with Africa's traditional geographic regions. This presented challenges for the states that had been grouped together in this way, as it obliged them to find common positions (Akopari, 2017). Moreover, those states which already enjoyed non-reciprocal trade with the EU through the Everything But Arms agreement and therefore had little interest in concluding a less-favourable EPA were scattered among the different country clusters. The European Commission adopted a hard-nosed trade negotiation approach with DG Trade in the lead, which differed from the Lomé Conventions where development concerns had been central. The EPAs were seen as traditional trade association agreements rather than development agreements (Young & Peterson, 2013). The misgivings of the African states led to long delays in the EPA negotiations. By 2007, only the EPA with the Caribbean had been concluded. In 2011, the European Commission set a new deadline of 2014 to conclude the remaining six EPAs, failing which the African and Pacific states stood to lose their preferential market access which had until then been protected by interim agreements (Akopari, 2017). By 2018, 60 ACP states had signed an EPA with the EU (European Commission, 2018a).

A paradigm shift in EU development policy

The EU has made some fairly fundamental changes to its development policy over the past two decades. The various aspects are further explicated below. Generally speaking, however, the changes have left European development policy more integrated by achieving greater coherence between policy at the EU and the national levels. At the same time, in its quest to shape the global development agenda by actively pursuing Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, it has also brought the development dimension into the wider framework of EU foreign policy and relations with third countries.

The European Union's new development policy paradigm

In the early 2000s, a number of internal and external factors led to a paradigm shift in European development policy (Young & Peterson, 2013; Carbone, 2013b). An important aspect of this shift lay in the global development agenda's emphasis on the world's poorest states, as expressed in a goal on poverty alleviation and human dignity. For the EU and its member states, this focus on alleviating poverty meant that the traditional orientation of development assistance towards former colonies made much less sense, as did the traditional focus on aid and preferential trade with the ACP states. In the light of this change, the EU concluded the Everything But Arms agreement with 48 mainly African states in 2001, granting them non-reciprocal market access for all goods except armaments and initially also sugar. Although prompted by the global development agenda and the MDGs, this change in focus was further promoted by the mobilization of a group of EU member states. This group comprised two new entrants, Sweden and Finland, both of which had a strong development tradition; the Netherlands and Denmark, which shared their focus on poverty reduction, and the UK, where development policy under the 1997 Labour government had undergone a sharp reorientation towards poverty reduction and achieving the MDGs (Hulme, 2009).

An important connected policy shift was linked to the changing role of trade in European development policy (Young & Peterson, 2013). As noted above, the EU had been under pressure from the WTO for some time to abolish the preferential trading arrangements it accorded the ACP states under the Lomé agreements. The shift in emphasis in development assistance towards poverty reduction and the MDGs more generally, along with the changing constellation of member state influence allowed the European Commission to transfer responsibility for trading arrangements with the ACP states from DG Development to DG Trade. The expiry of

Lomé IV in 2000 gave the Commission an opportunity to reshape relations with the ACP states in more conventional free trade agreements (the EPAs, see above), which also included rules on trade in services, government procurement, competition policy, intellectual property rights, labour rights and environmental protection that were not dissimilar to the EU's Singapore issues in the Doha Development Round[2] (Young & Peterson, 2013). In addition, it was thought that grouping the ACP states together would have the additional benefit of stimulating regional trade and integration. The EU was criticized in the negotiations leading up to the EPA agreements for taking too strict a line on liberalization as a condition for market access and economic development, and disregarding the needs of developing countries, particularly those in Africa, which had need of other forms of aid, notably balance-of-payments support. Other criticisms were directed at the Cotonou Agreement's emphasis on security and conflict prevention, as well as its insistence on conditionality with regard to norms such as human rights, democracy and the rule of law as a prerequisite for aid (Carbone, 2013a). In the first decade of the new millennium, new international donors, such as China which provided "no-strings-attached" foreign aid, became an alternative to European donors that was often appreciated by African leaders (Carbone, 2011).

Internal EU reforms and the global development agenda

In its capacity as the largest development assistance provider, the EU has worked directly with international organizations – particularly the OECD and the World Bank – to formulate various governance approaches to the implementation of the MDGs and the SDGs. Cooperation between the members of the OECD DAC led to the Paris Declaration on Aid Efficiency in 2005, which subsequently became a reference point for aid agencies and development ministries in donor states (OECD, 2008; Carbone, 2013b). The declaration contained two main principles: stronger ownership on behalf of recipient countries and better coordination of aid policy efforts by donor countries. The aim was to stimulate developing countries' bureaucracies to take responsibility for distributing aid according to globally recognized principles, but also to align foreign aid with the needs of recipient countries. In the same vein, donor countries pledged to prevent wasteful duplication of aid in terms of both sector and geography, and to increase predictability in the disbursement of aid. The declaration thus introduced the principle of partnership to a hitherto asymmetrical relationship, but also sought to entice both donors and recipients to undergo various governance reforms to make aid more effective. The Paris Declaration was followed up by the Accra Agenda for Action in 2008 and Buzan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation in 2011, both of which furthered the aim of aid effectiveness (OECD, 2008; 2011).

The EU welcomed the changes introduced to the way in which development aid is planned, disbursed and implemented with the aim of increasing governance efficiency, improving results and achieving the MDGs. The approach was close to its own agenda of policy coherence, which it had pursued since the entry into force of the Maastricht Treaty

[2] The 'Singapore issues' refers a set of policy objectives promoted by the EU in an early phase of the Doha Development Round negotiations comprising trade and investment, competition policy, transparency in government procurement and trade facilitation. The Doha Development Round refers the still incomplete multilateral trade negotiations under the auspices of the World Trade Organization commenced in 2001.

in 1993. Various international commitments entered into by the EU and its member states provided a basis for the European Commission to propose changes to the way in which European development assistance was governed with the aim of forging more equitable relationships with recipient countries. These also improved the EU's capacity to influence the emerging global development agenda. The EU and its member states adopted the European Consensus on Development in December 2005 (EU, 2006), which reiterated many of the principles in the Paris Declaration on partnership, aid efficiency, coordination, complementarity, differentiation, policy coherence and the participation of civil society. More than anything else, however, it committed the member states to a concerted approach to development aid and consolidated the EU as a development actor at the global level (Carbone, 2013b).

Towards a more political approach to foreign aid?

In parallel with the Cotonou Agreement and the EPAs, which brought relations with ACP states under the umbrella of EU trade policy, the European Consensus on Development spearheaded development as a key dimension of the EU's foreign and security policy. The consensus strengthened the security-development nexus by affirming that insecurity and violent conflict were among the biggest obstacles to achieving the MDGs. In order to prevent an outbreak of violent conflict, the EU pledged to support regional organizations, primarily in Africa, in their stability and conflict prevention mission, and to boost fragile states through various forms of governance reform (EU, 2006). Also in conformity with its overall foreign policy orientation, the EU introduced stronger conditionality in the form of compliance with norms and principles on human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance (Carbone, 2013b). To promote its values in international development, the EU set itself apart from the World Bank, the UN, the OECD and, to a lesser degree, the IMF, but also with regard to new development actors such as China. Equally, the EU's normative conditionality set it on a diverging course from some African leaders who resisted its attempts to "steer" reforms in recipient countries – which also ran counter to its own pledges in the consensus on "ownership", "partnership" and respect for recipients' internal processes and development plans (Carbone, 2013a).

The consensus approach to development heralded a new, more political EU strategy towards developing countries, particularly in Africa. A number of developments, both internal and external, converged. First, the EU's own international identity grew stronger leading up to ratification of the Lisbon Treaty and the creation of the European External Action Service (EEAS) in 2009. The geopolitical changes at the end of the Cold War, the Eastern enlargements of 2004 and 2007, and successive reforms of the EU treaties strengthened the EU's foreign policy capacity. In 2003, the EU spelled out a foreign policy doctrine for the first time in its *European Security Strategy: A Secure Europe in a Better World* (Council of the European Union, 2003). In so doing it took the first steps towards a shared strategic culture. In the document, the EU called for a global approach to security in which regional conflict, state fragility and insecurity were viewed as serious impediments to development. The main tenets of the 2003 strategy were reiterated in the European Consensus on Development and the Cotonou Agreement, highlighting an ambition to achieve greater coherence in its approach to Africa. Since 2000, European and African leaders have been meeting in biannual summits, the first of which took place in Cairo under the aegis of the Organization for African Unity (OAU) and the

EU. However, it was not until 2005 that the EU published its first strategy on Africa (European Commission, 2005), which was soon transformed into the EU-Africa strategic partnership (EU & AU, 2007). The aim of the strategic partnership was to elevate the political importance of the relationship between the EU and the African states and create a forum where a host of different issues could be discussed. The joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) identified four priority areas: (a) peace and security, with an emphasis on the AU's peacekeeping missions within the African peace and security structure; (b) good governance, human rights and cooperation on democratic governance; (c) trade and regional integration as a means to enhance economic growth and development; and (d) cooperation on development to achieve the MDGs, as well as EU priority areas such as gender equality, environmental sustainability, climate change prevention and managed migration (EU & AU, 2007).

By 2010, however, implementation of the first JAES action plan had produced only limited results, and then primarily in the area of conflict prevention as the EU had been a main sponsor of AU peace missions. Nonetheless, despite growing competition from alternative donors, the EU maintained its existing development objectives even though EU member states were still failing to reach the target agreed roughly a decade before that national aid budgets should be 0.7% of GDP (Carbone, 2013a). Despite being beset by opposing perspectives and a mismatch in priorities, the JAES framework established itself as the primary locus for political consultation between European and African leaders on difficult issues such as security, migration, and political values and norms. At the Valletta summit on migration in 2015, the EU sought an agreement on restrictive measures to stem the flow of migrants to Europe by addressing the root causes of migration. At a similar summit in Abidjan in 2017, however, the joint declaration emphasized a more positive agenda of investing in young people and inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

However, at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the EU was not prepared to consider the impact of the spread of COVID-19 within developing countries, which are arguably much more vulnerable to the negative economic, social and political consequences of the disease, such as declining remittances, rising unemployment and possibly even social and political unrest. In preparation for the EU-AU summit in the autumn of 2020, the European Commission and the High Representative (HR) for EU foreign affairs and security policy published a joint strategy that focuses on strengthening the partnership with the AU and African states in March 2020. The communication focuses on well-known themes such as migration, economic cooperation and security, while public health and communicative diseases are not prioritized. In fact, despite the recent outbreaks of Ebola and other communicative diseases in Africa, there are very few mentions of the need to improve public health and none at all of the need to mitigate the consequences of large-scale and pandemic outbreaks (European Commission and HR, 2020). However, as COVID-19 spreads fast across continents, it is inconceivable that the EU will not put the pandemic and its consequences at the heart of the discussions as the preparations for the summit step up during the summer of 2020.

Policy Coherence for Development: Origin, Aims and Outcomes

At the beginning of the new millennium, the EU set out to create a stronger international role for itself. As the EU's external policy developed, it sought to ground its external identity in European norms and values, primarily democracy and human rights, and to position itself as a champion of multilateralism and the rule of law. The EU has been dubbed a normative power with the capacity to influence what is considered "normal" in international politics by projecting normative objectives alongside material interests (Manners, 2002).

As an actor on the international stage, the EU is seen as differing from a state, in that it has no set "interests" linked to stable sovereignty and a national identity, but is more political than an international organization. In the area of international development, for instance, the World Bank was founded to act within a more restricted mandate and staffed with officials with similar outlooks that are primarily economically oriented. This has resulted in certain limitations when considering possible policy solutions (Orbie et al., 2017). At the same time, however, due to its complex institutional structures comprising multiple players with competing institutional standpoints and the uneven distribution of policy competences, the EU's external action has long been associated with a capacity-expectations gap (Hill, 1993). Even so, the EU has become an increasingly important actor in international development, not only through coordination of the 27 member states' development aid, but also by virtue of its own programmes and activities. This has granted the EU a place at the table setting the global development agenda "beyond aid", while prompting the EU to scrutinize the efficiency of its internal governance.

Policy coherence: a new development paradigm?

The principles of policy coherence in development emerged in the 1990s as part of an effort to improve aid effectiveness through better donor coordination and more equitable engagement between the donors and recipients of assistance (Carbone, 2008). A multitude of factors contributed to this change in thinking on global aid (Carbone, 2008). One set of factors was related to how (western) donors had come to perceive development assistance as ineffective at achieving poverty reduction and sustained economic progress – a change of outlook that took place more or less in tandem with an overall reduction in donors' financial generosity. Another set of factors was linked to the rise of "new public management", which prescribed that public policy should be designed with clear goals and verifiable, quantifiable outcomes. The efforts to draw up a global development agenda on the basis of the MDGs put coherence in stark relief, as some of the global goals appeared at first glance to work at cross-purposes and to demand prioritization and sequencing in order to be effective (Mackie et al., 2017).

For the EU, the debate on policy coherence in development assistance came at a time when Europe was itself striving for greater coherence among its external policies in order to strengthen its international identity (Furness & Gänzle, 2016). The Maastricht Treaty had introduced the concept of policy coherence, and the Lisbon Treaty strengthened the language on coherence between internal and external policies (Michalski, 2008). The latter spells out three dimensions of coherence in development policy in regard to the other policies of the EU, its member states' development policy regimes (complementarity and reinforcement) and its objectives (poverty reduction and eradication) (EU, 2012: art. 208). Furthermore, the quest to make policy coherence a central principle of governance in European external action drew inspiration from ongoing work to improve the governance of EU internal policy in order to make it more efficient and legitimate in the eyes of the European public (Carbone & Keijzer, 2016).

Contending definitions of development policy coherence

In essence, development policy coherence means "taking account of the needs and interests of developing countries in the evolution of the global economy" (OECD 2003: 2). This definition highlights the responsibility on donor countries in their individual capacities to ensure that their national development policies do not work at cross-purposes with their foreign policy aims, and in a collective capacity to ensure consistency around a set of global development goals.

Looking more closely at global public action on development, policy coherence is a complex concept that works on multiple levels and across policies (Sianes, 2017; Carbone, 2008). There is a dimension of internal horizontal policy coherence that relates to the consistency of the aims, methods and channels in a single actor's national development policies, and the degree of coherence across different policies relative to an overarching goal. For instance, in (western) donor countries, the aims and interests intrinsic to agricultural policy are often singled out as having the potential to cancel out some of the benefits of development assistance (European Parliament, 2018). Policy coherence also comprises an external dimension of vertical coherence among member states in the same regional/international organization, such as the EU, and consistency among their policies and approaches to development assistance on the ground. Another form of policy coherence plays out at the multilateral level among international organizations, in particular the UN, the World Bank and the IMF. Finally, there is a dimension of interaction between donors and recipients as their respective ideas, norms and worldviews and their concrete approaches to development policy can differ quite substantially and have the potential to work at cross-purposes (Sianes, 2017: 138).

Given the complexity of policy coherence, the EU as a development actor faces a real governance challenge in its approach to ensuring coherence in development. Both the EU and its member states as individual actors must consider the internal consistency of their development policies and the ways in which goals and interests inherent to other policies, such as trade, climate change mitigation, agriculture and migration, affect the overall coherence of their approach to international development and the effect on development assistance on the ground. The EU also needs to coordinate member states' bilateral development policies to form a set of agreed principles at the European level with a common approach to development and relations with third countries in the developing world more broadly. Moreover, the coordination of a common European standpoint in international negotiations on the global development agenda needs to take account of EU member states' desire to maintain their individual presence in these organizations and pursue global development goals through their bilateral development policies. The EU has long-standing relations with developing countries through the Cotonou agreements, the EU's Africa strategy and a host of other plurilateral arrangements. These arrangements stretch over a number of policy areas and although poverty relief and other goals linked to development policy constitute important outcomes of cooperation, there are other policy concerns present in these relations ranging from trade, security, immigration and gender equality to political reform, good governance, human rights and the rule of law. In this vein, the EU has championed the idea of the three Cs – complementarity, coordination and coherence – as guiding principles of development policy. Complementarity addresses the potential complications that arise where the EU and its member states share competences in development policy and their actions are carried out in juxtaposition to each other. Coordination means that the EU and its member states must govern their respective policies in an equitable manner and strive towards common goals while also consulting each other in international forums. Coherence denotes that the EU should consider the impact of other policies on its development policy, and whether their effects might be detrimental to the prospects of developing countries (Carbone, 2008: 330).

Scholars have pointed out that although policy coherence, in particular with regard to what is in essence and altruistic policy such as development aid, may seem common sense and necessary, it is very difficult to achieve and obscures a number of bona fide concerns and differences of opinion (Barry et al., 2010). Sianes (2017) points out that such policies generally contain real and justified differences of worldview as they mirror the underlying interests of the constituencies that support them. For instance, farmers and workers may have very good reasons to protect their livelihoods when the issue of farm support or industrial subsidies is discussed in international forums. In the final analysis, therefore, policy coherence on development issues must consider the need to prioritize among competing interests, which can only be carried out in a political process that is characterized by legitimacy and justice (Carbone, 2008). Moreover, as political, economic and social conditions change over time, prioritizing among competing interests and needs becomes by definition a perpetual endeavour.

The EU and policy coherence on development issues

The EU's approach to policy coherence on development issues gained traction through a series of documents in the mid-2010s. In particular, the European Consensus on Development (EU, 2006) outlined a vision of European development assistance built on the three Cs with a focus on poverty eradication and the MDGs. To achieve the objective of complementarity, the EU pledged to take a stronger role in coordinating member states' bilateral development assistance with EU development policy. Measures included cross-country complementarity to avoid the situation in which some developing countries (the so-called aid darlings) attract most of the EU and bilateral aid while others (the so-called aid orphans) receive little or no aid. European donors were also asked to concentrate on fewer sectors in the recipient countries to make aid more efficient and give efforts greater chance of success. The EU and its member states decided to empower the EU delegations on the ground to take a greater role in managing aid in cooperation with member states' embassies and the development agencies. In addition, greater responsibility was accorded to the authorities in the recipient countries to get involved in the early programming stages in order to identify needs and the administrative resources and capacities available. The EU chose to upgrade the role of recipient countries by conceiving relations with individual states in terms of partnerships where both parties have a stake in ensuring more efficient development assistance. At the same time, the EU enlarged the issue areas that were deemed necessary for sustainability by linking development to democratic governance, conflict prevention, human rights and social, economic and political reform. The EU paid particular attention to addressing state fragility and gender equality as preconditions for poverty eradication. With respect to the practical implementation of coherence in development policy, the European Commission undertook to develop a number of governance tools, such as impact assessments and joint programming, in order to mainstream EU and member state policy implementation in accordance with the MDGs.

As the EU's development approach became increasingly sophisticated and complex, studies were undertaken to evaluate the impact of the various governance tools used by the EU institutions and the member states in their relations with recipient countries. One such tool is joint programming (JP), which was introduced as a way to ensure donor complementarity by avoiding member states and EU institutions concentrating on just a few developing countries and sectors (Carbone, 2017). JP is meant to lead to joint analyses on the ground by the EU delegation of the recipient country's development plans and the activities of other donors. A JP exercise is meant to lead to a joint response from the EU and a division of labour among the member states and EU institutions. The member states supported the logic of JPs at the governmental level as a means of enhancing aid effectiveness. On the ground, however, implementation of joint planning has been impeded by member states' commercial endeavours and national aid agencies' bureaucratic interests (Carbone, 2017). A study investigating the purported effects of impact assessments (IA) on development policy coherence found that instead of leading to greater policy coherence by taking the impact on development assistance into account, IAs perpetuated existing power asymmetries among different policy constituencies and in the process cemented the influence of bureaucratic interests (Adelle & Jordan, 2014).

The refugee/migration crisis and EU development policy

Even before the refugee/migration crisis came to a head in the winter of 2015–16, migration had a place on the European aid agenda as a driver of development and an aspect of a potential win-win cooperation between Europe, Africa and the Middle East. The crisis of 2015–16 amplified the pressures on the southern and south-eastern borders of the EU as an unprecedented number of refugees and migrants entered EU member states in search of protection from war and prosecution, and in an attempt to enhance their material well-being. The crisis on the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea had been brewing for several years. The number of arrivals in the second half of the 2010s caught European policymakers off-guard, however, and the policy solutions offered by the European Commission, in particular with regard to the distribution of asylum seekers, were met with strong opposition from some member states. The challenges posed by refugee and migratory pressures have forced a change in the EU's approach to developing countries, regardless of whether they are countries of origin or transit. The emergence of a development-security-migration nexus is now a political reality to which policymakers have had to adjust. This has had a significant impact on the European bilateral and multilateral aid, as well as on the EU's relations with African states.

The impact of the crisis: is development policy now all about the management of migration flows?

The securitization of irregular migrants and asylum seekers has been noted by academics (Huysmans, 2000). However, given the complexity of the situation in both Europe and its neighbouring regions, involving increased radicalism and terrorism, it is hard to imagine that European interior ministers will not try to seek a solution at the EU level to the problems linked to uncontrolled migratory flows to Europe. The European Commission's Directorate-General of Justice and Home Affairs had begun negotiations on repatriation agreements and work to strengthen the EU's external border with Frontex and member states' interior ministries well before the crisis of 2015. This section examines the impact on EU development policy of the heightened need to manage increased flows of migrants and asylum seekers.

Migration and development policy

In the EU's long-standing contractual relationship with the ACP states, many of which are both sending and transit countries, migration is recognized as a source of development for the sending states and of alleviation of shortages of workers in the receiving states. Much of the approach builds on the assumption that managed migration strengthens development by increasing remittances, which surpassed ODA in the second half of the 1990s and are currently 2.5 times the level of ODA,[3] and contributes to skill transfer and the spread of norms such as democracy and gender equality (Knoll, 2017; Lukas, 2019). However, in the wake of increasing migration pressures, the EU has sought to pursue a more restrictive policy on migration into Europe by focusing on irregular migration and spurious asylum claims. It has therefore stepped up its quest for restrictive migration measures such as return/readmission agreements. This has to a large extent been rebutted by the African ACP states, which resent the fact that the EU wants to separate these issues from the regular dialogue on migration in an attempt to negotiate bilateral agreements on return and readmission. In their view, this approach is not conducive to building trust among the EU-ACP partners (Knoll, 2017: 243). The African states argue that by pressuring them to agree to restrictive measures, the EU has violated the partnership principle on which the Cotonou framework relies, and in the process is working at cross-purposes to a broader understanding of the complexities of migration (South-North as well as within the ACP regions) and its impact on development. Nonetheless, the lack of trust between the EU and the ACP states regarding the restrictive measures tied to irregular migration has not prevented them from agreeing to strengthen the capacity of African states to manage South-South migration through a number of development aid projects funded by the EDF (Knoll, 2017: 246). The issue of return and readmission has been tackled through positive conditionality, the so-called more-for-more approach through which funds for reintegration and migration management capacity are allocated through EU development aid.

The political dialogue between African states and the EU is gradually taking place within the framework of the JAES. This is in line with the strengthening of the EU's foreign and security policy and its growing capacity to adopt a more strategic approach to global challenges. The African states have welcomed the enhanced political dialogue and shown a willingness to tackle obstacles to development in a concerted manner through the AU. The 2015 Valletta summit launched the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa with financial resources from the EDF with the aim of addressing the root causes of irregular migration by focusing on economic development and employment creation, basic local services, migration and external borders, conflict prevention, human rights abuses and better governance

[3] In 2017 remittances totalled US$ 436 billion (Lukas, 2019: 11)

(Apap, 2019). An assessment of the extent to which the JAES framework has met the aim of contributing to human development, however, found that the EU in the latter half of the 2010s had acted in accordance with the logic of emergency in the sense that many of the measures adopted were targeted at stemming the flow of migrants to Europe rather than considering migration through the lens of long-term development and political dialogue (Pirozzi et al., 2017: 24). The assessment concluded that more should be done to address the trafficking of human beings, engage diaspora in Europe and reduce the cost of sending remittances. It also found that the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa was at risk of becoming isolated from other development programmes because of its concentration on migration management. Another assessment found that the EU and its member states dominate the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa by deciding its objectives and controlling the implementation of policy measures, while the African states are largely shut out of the discussion on the fund's orientation and purpose (Tardis, 2018). Concerns have been raised that the EU's insistence on short-term measures to stem the inflow of migrants to Europe undermines efforts to maintain a constructive dialogue with African states, which tend to see migration outflows in terms of opportunities for their citizens to seek jobs, obtain an education and learn new skills. For many African states, financial remittances have become a more important source of income and domestic consumption than any ODA they receive (Parshotam, 2017).

The EU has taken a number of additional measures to address the challenge of irregular migration. It has set up migration compacts with specific states, such as Jordan and Lebanon, that contain both positive and negative measures to incentivize these states to cooperate on border management and the return and readmission of migrants. Lack of sufficient progress, however, led the EU in December 2018 to invest additional funds in sustainable economic development, enhanced employment opportunities and other forms of human development. These investments were made through the European Fund for Sustainable Development within the framework of the Africa-Europe Alliance for sustainable investments and jobs, which indicates a return by the EU and its member states to a more traditional development approach in line with the goals of Agenda 2030 (Apap, 2019).

Nonetheless, the JAES has introduced a stronger emphasis on the security and resilience of societies alongside the more traditional developmental focus. In this context, it has moved beyond the long-standing EU-ACP framework and the agreements forged within the Cotonou framework, where the focus lies primarily on trade and other forms of economic relations, to instead focus more specifically on the problems that beset Africa. This strengthening of multilateral diplomacy between European and African states as well as in the inter-regional institutional cooperation through the EU-AU framework is in line with the EU's 2016 global security strategy, which endorses the security-development nexus in African-EU relations (EEAS, 2016). In that document, the EU clarifies its intention to promote development policy and development assistance as policy measures through which it can contribute to enhancing peace, stability, societal resilience and the adoption of democratic norms, the rule of law and human rights in Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia.

The politicization of development policy through the process of bringing it more closely into line with the framework of

European foreign policy has made the EU's foreign relations more coherent and strengthened the EU as a global actor. At the same time, however, it has not necessarily led to more coherent policies capable of tackling the root causes of instability, insecurity, mass migration and underdevelopment as bureaucracies at the European and the national levels continue to work relatively independently of each other (Furness & Gänzle, 2017). The EU's global security strategy endorses the global development agenda and the SDGs more as a set of desirable societal goals, be they internal or external to the EU, than as a framework for governance to promote policy coherence (EEAS, 2016).

Can development aid tackle the root causes of migration?

The refugee/migration crisis of the second half of 2010s has had a distinct effect on the priorities of European development policy at the levels of the EU and its member states. Contrary to commonly held beliefs, intention to migrate tends to increase in parallel with improvement in material well-being (Latek, 2019). There is a complex link between development and migration, and the decision to migrate depends on a host of factors that provide either a push – such as insecurity, political and social instability, and lack of human development – or a pull, for example the existence of a pre-existing diaspora and of prospects on the jobs market, and in education or health services (Lukas, 2019). Nonetheless, policymakers have pledged to tackle the root causes of migration through development to address the overwhelming migratory pressures on European states and in reaction to the pressure on politicians and bureaucrats to come up with solutions to stem mass immigration. Hence, many of the measures taken have been grounded in a short-term perspective while others have been mere window-dressing while existing programmes or projects are maintained. Moreover, the prioritization of migration management has led to a redirection of aid to regions/states of transit and origin, which means that some aid orphans have benefited by moving out of the shadow of traditional aid darlings (Knoll & Sheriff, 2017).

At this stage, and given the fluid context in which international development policy is playing out, it is difficult to know with certainty how the migration/refugee conundrum will shape European development policy and its overall aim of achieving the SDGs and Agenda 2030. Even at this early stage, however, some modifications and changes of direction have been noted.

The level of European development assistance (the EU's and its member states' bilateral assistance combined) peaked at around €77.5 billion in 2016. It decreased by around 2% annually in 2017 and 2018, but remained at a much higher level than at the end of the financial crisis when it amounted to €55 billion (Knoll & Sheriff, 2017: 17; European Commission 2018b; 2019). The underlying reason for the increase is the wars and instability in Europe's neighbourhoods, notably in Afghanistan, Libya, Sudan and Syria, and the Sahel region, which have necessitated humanitarian and other responses. In this respect, it is the cost of providing shelter within the EU for asylum seekers that has risen most significantly. The cost of hosting asylum seekers has increased much faster that the increase in ODA, resulting in trade-offs and difficult choices. Considerable controversy surrounds the methods and accounting rules used, how the costs of receiving refugees and migrants in donor countries are attributed to national overseas aid budgets, and the fact that they are attributed to these budgets (Färnbo, 2019). The European civil society consortium, Concord, estimates that a considerable part of EU member states' ODA is spent on asylum seeker and refugee costs, despite decreasing since the peak in 2015-2016 (Concorde, 2019).

For Sweden, which has a normative orientation towards development assistance and perceives Agenda 2030 and the SDGs as beacons for a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable future, the migration crisis has been difficult to cope with. Sweden admitted more asylum seekers per capita in 2015–16 than any other EU member state. At the height of the crisis, a substantial proportion of Sweden's development assistance was covering the costs of asylum seekers in Sweden. Costs for refugees also rose significantly in 2016 but were subsequently capped at 30% of the overseas development budget. It is therefore not surprising that Sweden has supported the European Commission's efforts to find a workable solution to distributing asylum seekers in a more equitable manner among the EU member states and strengthening the EU's migration management through both restrictive and supportive measures. In addition, despite its normative inclination, Sweden has not challenged proposals in the negotiations on the EU's future financial framework to apply stricter conditionality on aid recipients' cooperation with the readmission and return of asylum seekers who have had their applications denied and of irregular migrants (Asplund Catot, 2019). In the context of the global development agenda, there seems to be a huge rhetorical gap between the aims of Agenda 2030 and the fulfilment of the SDGs, on the one hand, and the reality of the pressures on donors and recipient states when it comes to ensuring equitable living conditions for the world's poor and those who decide to take their fate in their own hands by attempting to migrate to Europe, on the other.

This concentration on humanitarian aid and migration management measures has resulted in a geographical shift towards states in war-torn regions. However, not all states in this predicament have benefited equally from this shift, as those receiving the most aid are those which are the state of origin or transit of asylum seekers destined for Europe. States such as Yemen have not received funding at a level that corresponds to their needs. Migration has become an indicator for the allocation of development aid in many EU member states, and a number EU trust funds have clear migration management objectives (Knoll & Sheriff, 2017). Concern over migration to Europe is affecting the goal of eradicating poverty and Agenda 2030's goal of "leaving no one behind". The focus on the management of migratory flows has led to a distortion in the selection of aid recipients. Of the EU's top ten aid recipients in 2018, five were not defined by the OECD as "economically weak". Most conspicuously among the top ten is Turkey, which receives the highest amount of aid from the EU by any metric, followed by Morocco, Serbia, Tunisia and India. All of these are classified by the OECD as middle-income countries (Concord, 2019; OECD, 2018). In terms of aid programming, there are fears that short-term pressure to address the chaotic situation in the mid-2010s will have had a negative impact on aid efficiency and policy coherence by disturbing established relations with local partners, negatively affecting the monitoring and quality control of development spending, and distorting decisions on granting aid by putting donors' rather than the recipient states' interests at the heart (Knoll & Sheriff, 2017: 23; Concord, 2019).

Conclusions

In the past 20 years, the global development agenda has moved forward a great deal. Its current policy framework, Agenda 2030, is unique in the way in which it encompasses a number of far-reaching goals, the aim of which is to address social, economic and environmental sustainability in the context of more equitable global development. It is also ambitious in the sense that it commits all UN member states to address these issues both domestically and internationally. The EU and its member states have been influential in drawing up Agenda 2030 and the SDGs, and many European countries have pledged to orient their development and climate-related policies along these lines.

However, Europe has for most of the past decade been experiencing heavy flows of asylum seekers and migrants, which has sparked a crisis at several levels with uncertain outcomes. Efforts to find a way to manage the crisis at the EU-level have been met with a backlash from some EU member states which object to the solutions proposed, such as a distribution of asylum seekers. As a result, the EU has thus far pushed for cooperation with sending and transit states on agreements on readmission and resettlement. It has also targeted the root causes of migration by focusing on insecurity, conflict and violence, while trying to improve economic, social and political conditions for growth and job creation. At this stage, it is difficult to tell how successful these efforts will be, both as regards repressive measures that aim to keep migrants out and those which lie closer to the SDGs which aim to create the conditions for economic growth and social well-being at home. It is also difficult to ascertain what overall impact the focus on migration has had on the EU and its member states' development policies, although some reorientation and redirection of development assistance has taken place. Moreover, efforts to improve the coherence of development policy are put at risk when a singular objective comes to dominate the discourse on development, EU-African relations and the drivers of migration. It is clear, however, that the migration crisis has strengthened the security-development-migration nexus and prompted a further incorporation of development assistance within the umbrella of EU foreign and security policy.

Today, at the height of the COVID-19 crisis in Europe, it is hard to predict what the consequences will be for Africa and developing countries in Southeast Asia (Pilling et al., 2020). At the same time, it is hard to imagine how the pandemic could avoid having far-reaching and damaging effects on economic, social and political development. Some of these negative consequences are easy to predict. On the donor side, hard-hit European states with sprawling public debt will find it hard to justify generous development aid packages to developing countries, which will push attainment of the 0.7% of GDP target further into the future. In addition, as unemployment in Europe rises, remittances to developing countries are set to dwindle which will arguably have an even greater impact on communities than stagnating levels of overseas aid. Finally, the global recession that is just beginning will have grave consequences for the export industries of developing countries as demand is depressed in western states, not least in the tourism sector. On the recipient side, the impact on public health risks being substantial given the dearth of medical resources and hospital beds, and personal protective equipment for health and care workers. However, the economic fall-out from the COVID-19 crisis in terms of unemployment and bankruptcies will also be much harder to cushion in developing countries than in richer western states, which have been able to stimulate the economy to an unprecedented degree. Being largely shut out of the international financial markets, developing countries have sought financial support from the IMF while also asking for relief from debt servicing of loans owed to the G20 countries (Lamble, 2020). However, more urgent support is deemed necessary and in early April 2020, 165 former political leaders called on the G20 nations to provide a US$ 200 billion aid package to help developing countries fight the COVID-19 pandemic (Wheatley, 2020). The long-term consequences in terms of social and political unrest are as yet unknown, as they are in the wider world. In states already beset by poor governance, corruption, insecurity and inadequate public infrastructure, however, the risks are far more grave and more difficult to offset.

There have therefore been calls, not least from the UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, to show solidarity with the world's poor and to cease hostilities and war in the face of the pandemic (UN, 2020). The G20 nations, which include the EU, have also taken up the baton to support an international aid effort to help African states battle COVID-19 (Marks, 2020). Another call has come from the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy for the EU to mount a substantial aid package to Africa as many states on the continent lack the medical and related infrastructure to deal with the COVID-19 crisis (Barigazzi, 2020). Judging from the degree of international apprehension about the effects of the pandemic on developing countries, particularly in Africa, it seems highly likely that efforts will be made to alleviate their plight. Concern about the consequences for Africa is not merely altruistic, as only a concerted global effort stands a chance of halting the spread of the disease and overcoming its negative social, economic and political impacts, which otherwise risk having grave consequences for world peace and sustainable global development for many years to come.

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