Between development policy and foreign policy ambitions:

The European Union Strategy for Africa

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Abstract

The European Union has a declared policy to establish a "more effective foreign and security policy" by integrating its different policy instruments. The paper has a dual aim. The first is to show if and to what extent the declared intention of the European Union to integrate its different foreign policy instruments has actually been fulfilled in the case of its Africa policy. The second aim is to explain why or why not this development has taken place. It is the argument that the drive towards integrating the Union's different foreign policy instruments towards Africa can be explained by referring to the old ambition of the European Community to become a significant actor on the international scene. It is assumed that the development of the CFSP and not least the ESDP is particularly crucial for fulfilling the global ambitions of the Union.

Introduction

During the cold war, development assistance was the European Union's only external policy instrument (Grilli, 1994; Lister 1998). With the end of the bipolar world, new possibilities opened for the European Community to play a different and much more prominent role on the international scene. Among other things, it manifested itself in the establishment of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) in the Maastricht Treaty. These two policy instruments, in particular, mean that the Union got an important potential for playing a much more proactive role on the international scene.

In order to realize the potential, the Union has to use all its foreign policy instruments in combination. As it is argued by the High Representative for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, Mr. Javier Solana: "A more effective foreign and security policy begins with the political will to use all the available instruments in a co-ordinated and coherent way....Collectively these are substantial: as the world's largest aid donor we already make an important financial contribution to aid

programmes and to humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. We have a global diplomatic network ….We can use our diplomatic, economic and financial muscle to influence the behaviour of recalcitrant parties and aggressors" (Financial Times 29 September 2000).

The quotation leaves no doubt that the European Union has an ambition to influence world politics, if it is up to the Union's High Representative. It should not come as a surprise as it appears that the European Community has had this particular ambition ever since its start in the late 1950's (Cafruny & Peters 1998: 1ff; Cameron 1998: 20). It is important to emphasize that it is not only Javier Solana and thereby the Council of Ministers that have this ambition. The Commission also shares the goal of the European Community to become an important world player. Thus, DG Relex, responsible for both external relations and conflict prevention in the Commission has a clear recognition of the importance of an integrated approach for example to conflict prevention and therefore, the Commission has a recognition of the need to mainstream conflict prevention in all Union external policies and instruments (ECDPM 2006).

The paper scrutinizes the European Union's efforts to integrate its different external policy instruments in order to establish a "more effective foreign and security policy". The paper focuses on the Union's policies towards Africa with special emphasis on the initiatives launched in the current millennium. The Africa policy is chosen based on the assumption that the efforts to combine the EU's different external instruments are most clearly spelled out in the case of this particular region. In the year 2000, the ambition to formulate a coherent policy toward the whole of Africa manifested itself in the first Euro-Africa summit held in Cairo (Olsen 2005). The until now final step in this process is the adoption in December 2005 of the 'EU Strategy for Africa' which sets out the first European political framework to address the aim of improving the coordination, coherence and consistency of the Union's policies and instruments aimed at a particular region (EU Strategy 2005).

The first aim of the paper is to show if and to what extent the declared intention of increasing the integration of the different external policy instruments has actually been fulfilled in the case of the Union's Africa policy. The second aim is to explain why this development has taken place or why it has not taken place. It is the argument that the drive towards integrating the Union's different policy instruments towards Africa can be explained by referring to the old ambition of the European Community to become a significant actor on the international scene. It is assumed that development of the CFSP and not least of the ESDP is particularly crucial for fulfilling the global ambitions of the

Union. The assumption is based on Christopher Hill's old argument that "defence is the key to the development of the Community's place in the world" (Hill 1993: 318). Therefore, special attention is paid to the initiatives towards Africa which are launched within the framework of the ESDP.

Before embarking on the analysis, the next section presents the conceptual framework for the analysis of why or why not, the drive towards integrating the different policy instruments of the Union has taken place. It is followed by a brief presentation of the two policy debates which precede the launch of the EU 'Strategy for Africa'. The empirical analysis falls into three sections. First, special attention is given to the initiatives launched within the framework of the CFSP/the ESDP. It is followed by a separate analysis of the development assistance policy and finally comes a separate analysis of the humanitarian aid policy. The conclusion returns to the two core questions of the paper.

The conceptual framework

The foreign policy of the EU is defined as "the ensemble of the international activities" of the Union "including output from all three of the EU's pillars and not just that relating to the CFSP" (Hill 2004: 144-145). It is difficult to understand the foreign policy and thus the international role of the European Union by looking only at the external determinants of its foreign policy initiatives. It is necessary to anchor the analysis in a simultaneous understanding the internal character of the European cooperation (Hill & Smith 2005). In line with this conception, Adrian Hyde-Price suggests three concepts for understanding the international role of the EU namely – interests, identities and institutions (Hyde-Price 2004).

As far as interests are concerned, Adrian Hyde-Price argues that "the EU as an international actor must …have its own interests, however diffuse and amorphous they may be at times" (Hyde-Price 2004: 102). However, these interests cannot be seen in isolation (Hyde-Price 2004: 102). They have to be understood as the outcome of discrete political processes involving a number of different actors such as the Brussels-based EU institutions and the member states. Moreover, interests and preferences develop and behaviour change over time (Hill 2003: 95-155; 296-7). As it is pointed out by constructivist theories interests and accordingly decisions are to a large extent the result of interaction and socialization between actors operating both at the national level as well as at the EU-level. An

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important point in constructivist thinking is that participation in EU negotiations and decision-making results in a striking trend towards convergence of attitudes among the elites participating (Smith 2003: 197-198; Smith 2004: 746; Knill 2001).

The empirical analysis builds on the assumption that not only material interests, but also ideas influence the course and objectives of the Union's foreign policy initiatives (Hyde-Price 2004: 107; cf. Goldstein & Keohane 1993). There is general agreement that the European Union builds its policies and its image on specific ideas and values which are closely associated with the question of the Union's identity. Material interests cover issues like security, economic and financial affairs. In this paper, it is also assumed that the European Union has a special 'material interest' in being or in becoming a significant international actor. As already mentioned, the EC has had this aim ever since the start of the European Community in 1958 (Cafruny & Peters 1998: 1ff; Cameron 1998: 20). The interest in becoming a powerful international actor can most adequately be understood as an expression of and as a precondition for an emerging European identity.

Secondly, identity matters as identities contribute to shape the definition of European interests and thereby identity constitutes an important influence on the foreign policy behaviour of the European Union. The so-called 'European identity' is associated with values such as liberal-democracy, social market economies and peaceful resolution of disputes (Hyde-Price 2004: 108). For his part, Roy Ginsberg suggests that the principles and values are "democracy, soft-edge capitalism, a zone of peace among members and diplomatic mediation between third parties to undercut the causes of major conflict" (Ginsberg 1989: 436; also Hill & Wallace 1996: 9). The part of the identity debate which deals with the Union's external policy argues that ethical and moral concerns to a large extent influence the Union's position on the global arena (Hill & Wallace 1996: 1-16; Ginsberg 1999; Whitman 1998; Manners 2002). Concretely the values and the principles of the European Community guiding its external policies have been defined as the emphasis on "diplomatic rather than coercive instruments, the centrality of mediation in conflict resolution, the importance of long-term economic solutions to political problems, and the need for indigenous peoples to determine their own fate – all of these in contradistinction to the norms of superpower politics" (Hill & Wallace, 1996: 9).

Thirdly, institutions are considered to play a key role in the processes forming interests and identities. It is important that it is not only decision-makers and states that have interests and preferences. Also institutions have preferences as it is argued by historical institutionalism (March &

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Olsen 1989; March & Olsen 1998; Knill 2001). Two European Union institutions are supposed to be of particular interest when it comes to establish a more effective foreign and security policy namely the European Commission and the Council of Ministers. Simon Hix argues that the Commission has special policy preferences within the area of international politics seeking to increase the role of the EU in world affairs (Hix 2005: 402). The Council of Ministers' secretariat becomes more important concomitant with the development of the CFSP/ESDP (Bretherton & Vogler 2006). It is assumed here that the Council develops the same type of institutional and political interests as the Commission. In institutional terms, it means that the Council secretariat has a strong interest in developing the common foreign and defence policy as exactly these policy fields give more power to the secretariat. As a consequence, the secretariat has an interest in pushing the EU to play a bigger role in international affairs including in international conflict management. Involvement in conflict management and conflict prevention requires the use of all the Union's external policy instruments as it has repeatedly been stressed by Javier Solana (Solana 2000a; Solana 2000b) and thus the involvement of both the Commission and the Council.

Summing up, the foreign policy interventions of the European Union are influenced by interests which might be both material and non-material in nature. Among the material interests, it is assumed that the ambition to play an important role internationally is the most important for the EU when it comes to its Africa policy. One of the crucial policy instruments for fulfilling this ambition is the development of the common defence policy, i.e. the ESDP. Based on the European identity, it is to be expected that the European Union will prefer diplomatic instruments and also, that it will be strongly preoccupied with conflict management but in ways that do not violate the sovereignty of the countries where it intervenes. Finally, it is assumed that the two most important EU institutions, the Council and the Commission have strong interests in developing the international profile of the European Union.

Before embarking on the empirical analysis, a few remarks have to be made on the method of the study. The first aim is fulfilled by considering the ESDP initiatives towards Africa as the baseline for evaluating if the Union lives up to its ambitions of improving coordination, coherence and consistency in its policy towards Africa. As a consequence the two other policy instruments, development assistance and humanitarian aid are measured against the ESDP/CFSP initiatives based on one core question namely: Does the implemented policy buttress the ESDP/CFSP initiatives already launched? The second aim of the paper, the explanatory one, is fulfilled by applying the theoretical

framework presented. The crucial question in relation to the three policy instruments under scrutiny is why was this particular initiative launched? Was it launched in order to support the ESDP/CFSP initiatives or are there other explanations to the specific policy initiatives?

The European Union's Africa policy

In the years following the end of the cold war, it is possible to identify two debates within the European Union concerning its policy towards Africa. On the one hand, there was a 'development debate' which characterised the period from 1993 to around the year 2000 when the development sector in the European institutions was pulling together a strategy on how to support conflict prevention in Africa by means of development assistance (Olsen 2002: 316-322). The launch of a European debate on conflict management was followed by a number of symbolically important decisions such as the Madrid summit in 1995 stressing that the security problems in Africa were also a concern of Europe (Olsen 2002: 317). Article 11 in the Cotonou Agreement from 2000 explicitly deals with 'Peace-building policies, conflict prevention and resolution'. Among other things, it stresses that "in situations of violent conflict, the Parties shall take all suitable action to prevent an intensification of violence…The Parties shall ensure the creation of the necessary links between emergency measures, rehabilitation and development cooperation" (Cotonou 2000).

Following the signing of the Cotonou Agreement, a number of policy statements emphasized that development policy and cooperation programmes are the most powerful instruments when the Community wants to treat the causes of conflict. Therefore, these instruments should form part of an integrated approach to conflict prevention alongside other direct and indirect EU tools. In May 2001, the Council adopted a 'Common Position concerning conflict prevention, management and resolution in Africa' which in its preamble recalls the Cotonou Agreement. The common position is important because it is a CFSP statement and thus complementary to the development focus of the Communication on the EU-Africa dialogue which was issued in June 2003 (ECDPM, 2006: 23). The Conclusions from the Development Council in May 2002 marks the end of a period of policy reflection on conflict prevention in EU development circles. Thereafter, one sees the EU institutions on the development side, at least, moving into an operationalisation phase.

On the other hand, it was not until after May 2002 that the broader security debate was promoted to the public agenda by the EU foreign policy and defence circles. The 'political-military' debate on security became formalised in May 2003 when EU foreign Ministers asked Javier Solana to produce a security concept which led to the adoption by the Council of Ministers of the European Security Strategy in late 2003 'A Secure Europe in a Better World' (ECDPM 2006: 26; Olsen 2006: 162-164). Among a number of issues, violent conflicts in certain sub-Saharan Africa countries are pointed out as being of special concern. The ESS clearly stresses that 'Security is a precondition for development': "The scope of the vision of the ESS is thus broad and comprehensive and does not confine itself to traditional notions of 'hard' security. The Strategy also acknowledges the influence and interplay of different areas of EU external. In doing so, it recognises the value of the work that has been done for years by the development side in supporting measures to promote good governance and conflict prevention ….." (ECDPM 2006: 24).

The ambition in the Africa Strategy to develop coordination, coherence and consistency in the European Union's foreign policy draws on both these debates. Therefore, it is no surprise that the Africa Strategy reflected the mixture of these discussions manifesting itself in the 'new' recognition within the development philosophy of the European Union namely that peace and stability are crucial preconditions for lasting development. The realization is clearly spelled out in the Africa Strategy: "Without peace, there can be no lasting development" (Africa Strategy 2005: 10). And moreover, "it is now universally recognised that there can be no sustainable development without peace and security. Peace and security are therefore the first essential prerequisites for sustainable development" (Africa Strategy 2005:26). Therefore, the European Union steps up its efforts to promote peace and security at all stages of the conflict cycle (Africa Strategy 2005: 69ff). The European Union has to "set up a more comprehensive EU approach complementing these Community instruments through CFSP/ESDP approaches. A common EU policy is therefore needed….(Africa Strategy 2005: 71).

The emphasis on peace, stability and security is not only an expression of a new recognition that these circumstances are important for the promotion of development in Africa. It is also an expression of a European wish to adapt its policy to the changing global security context that emerged in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 which have made it necessary to rethink the EU's policy towards the developing world. "The consensus on a common framework of objectives, values and principles that the Union ….supports and promotes as a global player and global partner"

(Africa Strategy, Annex, 21 October 2005: 60). Exactly, the same type of reflections is found in the European Security Strategy from 2003 (ESS 2003).

The common foreign and security policy

It is the aim of this section to show how the European Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and in particular how the European Defence Policy (ESDP) towards Africa has developed in recent years. The Anglo-French agreement in St. Malo in December 1998 was vital for pushing the European defence dimension (ESDP) forwards at a steady pace (Howorth 2005: 179-204; Salmon 2005; Smith 2004; Wong 2005: 134-175). The number of significant steps on the CFSP and the ESDP was taken at Council meetings during the late 1990s and the years of the 21st century were based on a general understanding among the member states that the Europeans increasingly had to take on the responsibility for their own security because the Americans obviously were no longer willing to keep up the level of military presence in Europe (Posen 2006: 174ff; Howorth 2003: 235). The significant development of the European Union's common foreign policy and in particular of its common defence policy is the result of decisions taken by Council of Ministers i.e. the result of political decisions involving the member states (Howorth 2003:223ff; Posen 2006: 179ff).

As far as Africa is concerned, the EU Council of Ministers on June 12 2003 adopted a resolution which for the first time deployed EU military forces on the continent concretely in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The resolution was adopted within the framework of the European Common Defence Policy (ESDP) and it was groundbreaking as far as it was the EU's first crisis management operation outside Europe and moreover, it was implemented without using NATO facilities under the Berlin Plus Agreement (Gegout 2005; Ulriksen et al. 2004). The aim of Operation 'Artemis' was to stabilize the security situation in the crisis-ridden Ituri province in the DRC and improve the humanitarian situation in and around the main town of Bunia (Faria 2004, 20-40; Ulriksen et al. 2004).

There are several interpretations to why the operation in the DRC was launched. One is that the intervention had its background in the deep divisions among the European member states caused by the war on Iraq in the spring of 2003. The Congo operation was an attempt by the European powers to prove that they could still cooperate and that the CFSP/ESPD was still alive (Salmon, 2005: 375-9;

Menon 2005: 631-48; confidential interviews, Brussels December 2005). At this particular point in time, it also appears that the French president Chirac found it pertinent for the EU to prove that it could act autonomously from NATO. 'Artemis' was a way for France to be recognized politically as an effective military actor (Gegout 2005: 347; Ulriksen et al. 2004: 512). For Britain, the participation in 'Artemis' was mainly to prove that it was still interested in developing a European defence dimension (Gegout, 2005: 438). In summary, the launch of Artemis was basically motivated by the interests of two of the great EU powers which shared an interest in continuing the development of the ESDP as a means to secure a role for the EU on the international scene by intervening militarily in a geographical area which is not as politically sensitive as for example the Middle East.

On 17 November 2003, the General Affairs Council approved a draft decision to use the European Development Fund (EDF) to create a so-called 'Peace Facility of Africa' in line with the request made by the African Union (Faria 2004: 36). On March 25 2004, it was officially announced that the African Peace Facility which was a 250 million Euro instrument, financed by 'development money' i.e. the EDF was established with the aim to support African peacekeeping operations. By October 2006, the Peace Facility had supported the African Union's AMIS mission in Darfur by providing more than 242 million Euros to its mission. In a recent evaluation report of the EU supported operation in Darfur, it is stated that "it is evident that AMIS has been able to contain the violence where it operates, but the signs of a return to stability are not as consistent or as strong" (ECDPM 2006: 4). Also, the EU has disbursed a very significant amount of money to humanitarian assistance including food aid to Sudan as well as it has funded a number of political initiatives aimed at solving the crisis in Darfur (Factsheet 2005). Within the framework of the APF, the EU has also supported a multilateral peace operation in the Central African Republic with a small amount of money.

The APF is the outcome of almost 10 years of reflections and discussions among European and African decision-makers on the importance of conflict prevention for development and of the need to have appropriate measures to tackle conflicts in Africa. As mentioned, years before it had fully worked out all the details of its policy on conflict prevention in 2001 and 2002, the EU had reached agreement with the ACP countries on the need for a formal legal framework guiding their collaboration in this particular area namely article 11 in the Cotonou Agreement . Therefore, Development aid Commissioner Poul Nielson had no legal obstacles for accepting that money originally aimed at promoting socio-economic development (i.e. the EDF) was transferred to the Peace Facility in order to

maintain peace in Africa. "The biggest innovation of the APF was in reality its legal basis..…...In the European treaties work on peace-keeping or conflict resolution has really always been seen as falling under the inter-governmental pillar and not in the 'community domain' of the EC where development traditionally has been located. Other elements of the conflict cycle such as conflict prevention, post-conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction work have long fallen in the EC's domain and have been regularly recognised as such by the Member States (ECDPM 2006: 8).

Discussing the interests behind the launch of the African Peace Facility, there is no doubt that the Facility is instrumental in buttressing the ambition of the Union to become a global actor. At the same time, it can not be dismissed that the EU involvement in the crisis in Darfur has also been promoted by a strong European desire to have the African Union to take responsibility for the security in Africa. Allegedly, it was the aim to avoid direct EU military involvement in Darfur (Confidential interviews, Brussels, December 2005; Biscop 2005: 133). As far as the EU member states are concerned, many states were wary of what they saw as a potential 'slippery slope' with development funds being increasingly called upon to fund military work. Nevertheless, the very same member states were after all simultaneously in the final stages of the discussions on the new European Security Strategy approved in December 2003.

In December 2004, the Council adopted a Joint Action deploying a number of European police officers in the DRC. This so-called EUPOL mission was the EU's first civilian crisis management operation in Africa which, quite remarkably, fell within the framework of the ESDP. The next element in the European Union's engagement towards promoting stability and security in the DRC was the launch in June 2005 of an advisory mission for security reform in the country. The mission was intended to provide assistance to the local security authorities ensuring that the promotion of policies was compatible with human rights, democratic principles and good governance.

During the election campaign in the spring of 2006, maintenance of order in Kinshasa was recognised by the UN as a key element for the success of the electoral process (EUPOL 2006). The Foreign Affairs Council decided temporarily to strengthen the EUPOL mission in Kinshasa by adopting a Joint Action on a military operation in support of the UN mission (MONUC) in the DRC. The EUFOR DRC was conducted within the framework of the ESDP and was assigned to support MONUC to stabilise the situation during the election process, protect civilians and protect the airport in Kinshasa. The military deployment with the operational headquarter provided by Germany included an

advance element of almost 1.000 soldiers in and around Kinshasa. Also, the EU's military contribution included the availability of almost 2.000 troops on-call 'over the horizon' concretely in neighbouring Gabon from where they were quickly deployable if necessary (Background, DRC elections 2006, June 2006).

Summing up, based on the information presented here it is possible to draw a number of conclusions. First, the different initiatives towards Africa described here, all fall within the framework of the CFSP and the ESDP and thus within the realm of the Council of Ministers. Secondly, it is necessary to emphasise that despite the "different policy debates and the number of institutions involved, the policy consensus on how to promote conflict prevention between member states and the Commission and internally between Development Ministers and Foreign Ministers or between DG Dev and DG Relex is remarkably solid" (ECDPM 2006: 26). The initiatives towards Africa can be interpreted as elements in the endeavour to establish a coherent and consistent European policy towards Africa as it is formulated in the EU Africa Strategy. It is possible to see these initiatives as elements in a policy that aims at realising the old ambition of turning the European Community into a global actor. "The Congolese crisis has functioned as a political testing ground for the EU to design forms of intervention", it is concluded in a recent discussion paper (SDA 2007: 34; 9; 13).

There is no doubt that the Council Secretariat was strongly involved in the preparation of the initiatives scrutinized here. The Congo Mission 2006, in particular, indicates "a large degree of common interest between the EU institutions and the bilateral policies pursued by the member states" (SDA 2007, 34; 35). At the same time, it also has to be recognised that bureaucratic conflicts and conflicts of interests have disturbed decision-making and implementation (SDA 2007: 11). In general, there seems to be agreement that France, UK and Germany in close collaboration have been very important actors behind the development of the ESDP towards Africa. It is well-known that France has had a long standing interest in an independent European defence capacity which can contribute to building up Europe's international power position (Posen 2006: 166f). In an interview given to the newspaper 'Financial Times' in the spring of 2003, Blair put forward a number of views that were in line with the French ambitions to turn the EU into a significant world player (Posen 2006: 169f). The overall motivation was a wish to strengthen the CFSP by developing the ESDP (Posen 2006: 171) and thereby securing the EU a significant position on the international scene.

In conclusion in recent years, the EU has launched a number of significant initiatives towards Africa. It is highly likely that the initiatives were motivated by the old ambition to turn the European Community into a significant international actor. As mentioned, Africa may be a particularly 'easy' region for the EU to 'test' or to show this ambition. Africa is 'easy' because of the generally low international political attention which the continent receives from outside powers. As indicated, all the relevant nation states and EU institutions have been in agreement pursuing the goal of turning the Union in to a significant international actor. Moreover, it can be argued that the strong focus on conflict prevention and conflict management is no coincidence as it is exactly in line with crucial values and ideas that contribute the EU's identity.

Development assistance policy

This section scrutinizes if and to what extent the Union's development assistance policy has buttressed the declared aim of improving coordination, coherence and consistency in the Union's policy towards Africa. By 2004, the European Union provided around 11% of the global aid flows (OECD, 2006: 158, table 1). If the aid of the member states is added to this figure, it means that 'Europe' accounted for more than 64% of the global development assistance in 2004 (OECD, 2006: 158, table 1).

At the UN millennium summit in September 2000, the EU countries promised to increase their development aid in order to secure resources for reaching the ambitious Millennium Development Goals (MDG) one of which is by 2015 to halve the number of people living in absolute poverty. Afterwards, the EU expressed its full commitment and dedication to the MDG on several occasions (Commission 12 April 2005). It was also clearly underlined at the EU summit in Barcelona in March 2002 where the 15 member states promised to make an effort to set aside at least 33% of their individual GNI for ODI by 2006 (Morrissey 2003: 6). The goal was later revised upwards as the EU countries agreed to reach 0,51% of individual GNI in development aid by 2010 and 0,7% by 2015. Within the aim of this paper, it is worth noting that it was decided that 50% of the agreed increase should be allocated to the African continent (Council 16 & 17 June 2005: 8-9).

The increase in the volume of aid to sub-Saharan Africa meant that the region received a slightly increasing share of the total net disbursements of ODA from the EU as it almost reached 37% in 2005 compared with 30,4 % in 2001 (OECD 2006: table 29). Most probably, the share will increase

further in the future as a result of the decision to give priority to Africa. This change in aid allocations seems to point towards a preliminary observation that the aid policy buttresses the Union's ambitions towards Africa.

Parallel to the increasing aid volumes, remarkable changes took place in the geographical distribution of development aid from the EU to individual African countries. From 2001 to 2005, a number of countries experienced increases in their aid volume, whereas others had their aid reduced. The aid to Ivory Coast from the EU was cut by more than 70%. From 2001 and the following years, Kenya experienced significant reductions in aid allocations but from 2004 till 2005, there was almost a doubling of the aid volume to the country. In this context it is most interesting that a number of countries experienced significant increases in their aid allocations. Measured in current prices, the DRC experienced an increase in EU aid of around 500%, Mozambique some 200 % whereas the EC aid to the Sudan jumped by no less than 1000 % from 2001 to 2005 (OECD, 2007: 68).

The two trends in European development assistance policy require an interpretation. The increasing political priority given to conflict management and conflict prevention can, at the face of it explain the remarkable increase in aid to the DRC and the Sudan. Both countries are in an extremely vulnerable post-conflict viz. conflict situation where development aid can be one of the instruments to stabilise the situation. And as described, both countries are among the absolute priorities of the ESDP towards Africa.

On the other hand, there are numerous statements and official documents which explain the increase in the aid volume with reference to the strong EU consent to the UN millennium goals (Commission 2005). The development Commissioner Louis Michel has explicitly stated that "the European Union has geared its development policy firmly towards poverty reduction. We share the vision of the UN's Millennium Declaration: a world free from want" (Michel 2005). There is no doubt that the DRC and the Sudan are among the poorest countries in Africa. Due to the official poverty focus of European development assistance, the two countries had to be among the main recipients of EU foreign aid to Africa. It points towards a conclusion that the European decision-makers disburse aid to the African countries based mainly on criteria tied to the traditional aim of poverty reduction. This type of argument can not only explain the significant increases in aid disbursements to the two countries mentioned. It can also explain the growth aid to Zambia and Mozambique. This type of

'traditional' reasoning may finally explain the reduction in aid to the Ivory Coast with its ongoing civil war and the fluctuations in aid to Kenya, for example.

It is necessary to stress that it has not been possible to find indicators suggesting the increase in the aid volume to sub-Saharan Africa in particular can be explained with reference to the fight against international terrorism i.e. to a new type of security concerns. Also, it is difficult to explain the changes in geographical distribution of EU aid to Africa as an element in the fight against terrorism (Olsen 2006).

Summing up, it is possible to argue that the increasing aid to Africa combined with the priority given to the DRC and the Sudan buttressed the aim of pursuing a coherent and if possible effective Africa policy. At the same time, it is highly likely that other motives such as poverty eradication have also influenced the Union's aid policy. Irrespective of the possible mixture of motives and interests, the aid policy towards Africa seems to point towards a conclusion that a number of important decision-makers have been in agreement to establish a more effective foreign and security policy as a means to give the EU a more prominent role to play internationally. That such a role may be in agreement with fundamental values of the Union does not make the conclusion less firm.

Humanitarian assistance

The section scrutinizes if and to what extent, the Union's humanitarian assistance policy has buttressed the declared aim of improving coordination, coherence and consistency in the Union's policies towards Africa. It appears that humanitarian assistance is a highly relevant instrument in support of the ambition to establish an effective foreign policy. The decision in 1992 to establish a separate EU office with responsibility for emergency assistance (ECHO) had its background in the frustration over the lack of a European capability to deliver efficient humanitarian assistance during the crisis following the war liberating Kuwait in 1991. However, there was also a political wish to have a specialized organization within this particular policy field. Both purposes aimed at fulfilling a third motive which had noting to do with the sufferings of the victims in the numerous emergency situations. It was to give the European Community much more international visibility in a policy field that is very often in the focus of the international media (Personal interview, Brussels 16 November 1999).

The latter interpretation is confirmed by Martin Holland who states that "the earliest attempt to differentiate between the different functions performed by the EU in external aid was the creation of ECHO in 1992. The objective was a familiar one – to establish an effective organizational structure and to make the EU more visible" (Holland 2002: 100). Thus, one of the decisive motives for establishing ECHO was the old ambition to give the European Community a much more prominent position on the international scene. However, such a notion may stand in sharp contrast to a common sense expectation that humanitarian aid is motivated by moral and ethical concerns.

The combined resources from ECHO, from so-called 'other Commission' and from bilateral contributions made 'Europe' the biggest provider of humanitarian assistance during the 1990s accounting for 53-54 % of global humanitarian assistance on the average (ECHO 1999: 29). ECHO as a separate donor accounted for around one-third of the amount placing it among the top global donors of humanitarian aid (ECHO 1999: 29). Between 2001 and 2006, on the average 37% of all humanitarian assistance from the EU went to Africa (ECHO 2002: 15, 20; ECHO 2006). It means Africa continued to receive a considerable amount of humanitarian assistance from the European Union both before and after September 11. This pattern of allocation can be interpreted as an indication that ECHO followed its 'forgotten-crises strategy' launched in 2001 (Tanguy 2002) assuming Africa contains the biggest number of forgotten crises. The strategy stated as a general aim of the EU's humanitarian assistance policy that aid should be given to crises where other donors were reluctant to become involved, among other things because of lack of media attention as it has been the case with the West Saharan refugee crisis. On the other hand, the pattern of allocation can also be seen as an indication of the attempt to pursue a coherent and consistent foreign policy where Africa is an obvious target region because of its many emergency and post-emergency situations.

However based on the actual financial decisions, it appears that after 2001 ECHO ended up in disbursing significant amounts of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and Iraq which can hardly be described as 'forgotten crises'. Thus in 2003, Iraq and Afghanistan were the two biggest recipients of disbursements of humanitarian assistance from the EU. And Afghanistan continued to be so in 2004. The amounts are remarkable compared with the disbursements to Congo and Southern Africa (ECHO 2003, 2004) which were also very big crisis regions. This pattern of allocation of humanitarian assistance from ECHO questions not only the adherence to the forgotten crises strategy. It also questions the commitment to pursue a coherent and effective foreign policy towards Africa.

In conclusion, the significant disbursements of humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan and Iraq stress at least two important observations. One is that a bureaucratic organization like ECHO cannot set its own goals independently from what core decision-makers find politically important. Secondly, humanitarian assistance is increasingly considered as an integrated part of the foreign policy of states and of the European Union, too. It means that depending on the specific case and the specific situation, humanitarian aid will be channelled to crises that are considered politically important, to a large extent because of intensive media coverage but partly irrespective of the objective needs elsewhere (Macrae 2004; Macrae & Harmer 2004). The situations in Afghanistan and in Iraq were so important to some decision-makers within the EU and to the interests of many member states that huge amount of assistance was directed to these countries. On the other hand, it is difficult to argue that this pattern of disbursement undermines the attempts to establish a coherent and effective foreign policy as exactly the priority given to Afghanistan and Iraq could very well be part of a coherent and consistent global foreign policy of the EU. It is only possible to argue that the political emphasis given to Iraq and Afghanistan and thus the priority in the allocation of humanitarian assistance exactly to these two countries weaken the possibilities for pursuing a coherent and consistent policy towards Africa.

Conclusion

The paper has two aims. The first is to show if and to what extent the declared intention of increasing the integration of the different foreign policy instrument has actually been fulfilled in the case of the EU's Africa policy. The second aim of the paper is to explain why the development described has taken place. The baseline for scrutinizing the policy is the ESDP viz. the CFSP initiatives launched towards the region in the current decade.

It is the conclusion that a number of significant initiatives has been taken within the ESDP framework and it is taken as an indicator of a general determination to establish the European Union as a significant international actor. It was emphasized that the ambition to turn the EU into an important international player seems to have been backed by a remarkably strong agreement among the two Brussels institutions, the Commission and the Council and the leading member states. On the other hand, it is not to be neglected that disagreements existed among these actors when it came to decision-

making on concrete initiatives. Finally, it has to be stressed that the initiatives launched with their priority given to conflict prevention and conflict management fitted very well with the Union's identity.

In summary, the baseline revealed an active and fairly ambitious policy. It was concluded that the development assistance policy of the Union and in particular the strong priority given to the DRC and to the Sudan buttressed the aim of pursuing a coherent and possibly also effective Africa policy. The motives were hardly inspired only by the ambition to establish the EU as an international actor. Most probably, the motives were mixed consisting of the global ambitions as well as the wish to eradicate poverty in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals.

It was concluded that it is difficult to argue that the pattern of allocation of the humanitarian assistance did not buttress the foreign policy goals of the Union towards Africa. On the other hand, it has to be acknowledged that humanitarian assistance, as a separate policy field, is strongly subject to political considerations, i.e. that the allocation of humanitarian aid is particularly sensitive to day-to-day political priorities. Therefore, humanitarian assistance is hardly the best indicator of the ambition to establish an effective and coherent foreign policy.

In conclusion, it can be argued that the drive towards integrating the different instruments in the Union's Africa policy to a large extent can be explained with reference to the old ambition of the European Community to become a significant international actor. The best indicator is the different ESDP initiatives but also the development aid policy. However, the Africa policy cannot be explained solely with reference to this motive. Clearly, the motives and the interests were mixed, but it seems safe to argue that they were not in contradistinction to the identity of the Union. Also, it is worth noting that there seems to have been a fairly high degree of agreement, but not necessarily unanimity among the relevant nation states and institutional actors concerning the initiatives launched towards Africa in the current decade. The general agreement among the leading actors can most probably be explained by the fact that Africa is such a low politics region compared to others as for example the Middle East.

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