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The Enlarged European Union and Africa's Development:

How to Keep the Commitments of the Millennium Development Goals

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In December 2005, the EU-25 adopted the new Strategy for Africa, based on the Millennium Development Goals. Keeping the commitments requires the new member states and re-emerging donors to adapt their development tools and policies. They are rediscovering the African continent, which has not been part of their foreign policy priorities since 1989. Indeed, the older member states have long experiences in development assistance to Africa: how can they transfer their expertise to the new member states within the European framework? Having learnt from their recent democratic and economic transitions, to what extent can the new member states contribute to Africa's development?

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The fall of the Iron Curtain brought Central and Eastern Europe back to the international scene in the 1990s. This period also corresponded with "aid fatigue" and "Africa's effacement". Soon the former satellites of the Soviet Union joined the OECD and entered the European Union, the largest donor to poor countries in the world. Having accepted the *acquis communautaire*, the new member states are challenged to take an active part in the definition and implementation of the common development policy. Their status has changed from aid recipient to aid donor.

If there are still some reasons for afro-pessimism, they are nourished by worries that many countries in sub-Saharan Africa will not achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015. In fact, Africa is the only region in the world where poverty has progressed since 1990. Today, almost one African out of two lives on less than one euro a day. Two out of five do not have access to improved water supply, and 2.4 million Africans die from HIV/AIDS every year.

At the same time, there are many promising signs. Africa is a young continent with indisputable economic potential. Recent growth of 5%, supported by the rise in prices of raw materials and oil, can open the way for sustainable development, provided it is based on diversified production and trade. At the political level, many countries are on the track of democratisation, and the continent is taking the resolution of internal conflicts in its own hands. Some North African countries and South Africa are lively centres of development and might help to spread development to the rest of Africa.

In this context, the European Union published the "EU Strategy for Africa" in December 2005. There are still many unanswered questions on its implementation, particularly regarding the involvement of the new member states, financing and the coordination of the common policy on Africa at various levels of intervention. The enlarged European Union is engaged in assisting African countries in their fight against poverty. It has to keep its promise to Africans to retain credibility in their eyes.

What future for Africa? Europe and the "Others"

Africa lays at the heart of strategic interests: its naturals resources are coveted by the emerging powers of the South such as China and India. South Africa has confirmed its role as a regional power. Transnational corporations and international organisations form another piece of the image. This new international context is weakening the position of the European Union in Africa.

Can Africa profit from this new competition? The answer is unclear. South-South relations bring new export opportunities for African countries, which among other things benefit from the rise in prices of raw materials and see their terms of trade improving. Yet it does not go in hand with the diversification of production. Africa risks remaining a supplier of raw materials to the rest of the world. At the political level, new alliances are appearing and threaten the values promoted by the European Union.

"The European Union has to take into account that it is not the only global actor on Africa's soil, it meets competitors like China and the United States"

Luboš Kropáček, Professor at Charles University, Prague

Among the emerging powers, China's weight is growing on the continent. Its share in African trade has grown by 40% every year since 2000, reaching 40 billion US dollars in 2005, thus surpassing the United Kingdom. As China is concerned with new sources of supply, its investments mainly target the oil extraction sector. A month after the EU, China released its own global strategy on Africa, differing from the European's one in several ways: China accentuates its lack of colonial history and, in the name of non-interference, imposes no aid or investment conditions related to good governance or human rights. Deepening ties with Zimbabwe and Sudan, banned by the European Union, are revealing.

The originality of Europe's approach to Africa lies in its global dimension, which links aid to trade, security and environment protection. In contrast with the United States, which promotes "transformational development", the European Union holds the concept of "sustainable development". Africa's development is not merely a goal in its own right but implies global economic, social and environmental stability.

The new EU member states and Africa: strangers or neighbours?

Relations between Central and East European (CEE) countries and Africa cannot be fully compared to the historical tights between the European powers and their former colonies. This, however, does not impede development assistance: Scandinavian donors prove that historical ties are not a *sine qua non* condition in the matter.

Furthermore, most of the CEE countries had commercial, technological and military relations with African countries during the socialist era. Czechoslovakia and Hungary, for instance, gave nearly one percent of their GDPs to countries "on the road to socialism" like Angola and Ethiopia. Thousands of African students graduated at universities in Central and Eastern Europe.

While the new member states may want to avoid referring to the ideology-laden assistance which started in the 1960s, it represents a foundation on which they can build on, at least by using existing networks. At the beginning of the 1990s the new member states immersed themselves in their own political, economic and social transitions, abruptly abandoning the African continent. Trade relations between the CEE countries and Africa remain weak with the exceptions of Egypt and South Africa. Diplomatic relations weakened in the case of the Czech Republic, which closed its missions in Abidjan and Dakar. Slovenia holds one mission in Africa, while Estonia will open its first in Egypt. In academia, the attention paid to African studies fell.

The CEE countries reengaged with development issues in the second half of the 1990s. The development agenda logically focused on their neighbours, mainly those in the Balkans, former-USSR (Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova), and socialist countries in South-East Asia (Vietnam). The CEE countries tend to spread their political, economic, institutional and social experiences of transition. Consequently, among the priority recipient countries, the Czech Republic counts only two African countries out of eight, Hungary one of fifteen, Slovakia three of twelve, Poland one out of six, an Estonia and Lithuania none.

"In Africa, many European donors cooperate more intensely with other donors such as the United States, Japan and Canada than among themselves. At the same time, the new member states are practically absent"

Paweł Baginski, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Warsaw

Even though the so-called re-emerging donors aspire to OECD Development Assistance Committee membership, their GDPs remain low despite strong economic growth, limiting their contribution to the common development policy. Their strategic priorities are aimed at their eastern neighbours, while their presence on the African continent is quite marginal.

However, the growing interest of the new member states in Africa is linked to the metamorphosis in local public opinions. Polls show that the population is clearly in favour of development policy albeit in slightly lower proportions compared with their Western neighbours. Nevertheless, citizens are under-informed about development, suggesting a need for public awareness campaigns. Media actions and projects lead by CEE development NGOs in Africa naturally tend to have a positive impact.

The new member states face a major challenge to reply to bottom-up citizens' initiatives with a governmental top-down policy. Indeed, some CEE countries still lack a legislative framework for the development agenda. The Czech case is even more complex because such competences are divided between nine ministries. In sum, harmonisation, coordination and cohesion at the national level are necessary conditions for the better integration of CEE countries in the EU's development policy.

What lessons remain for Africa from the CEE transitions?

What lessons can Africa learn from Central Europe's transitions? Beyond the diversity of their post-socialist trajectories, many aspects differ between the current situation in Africa and that in CEE in recent years. CEE inherited a stock of physical and human capital clearly superior to that in Africa. Among other things, the CEE transitions were not limited to economic reforms but included also political ones. In fact, the transition was initiated by a popular will to end the totalitarian regimes.

This thirst for change opened a window of opportunity for the so called "extraordinary politics", which allowed new governments, with a strong democratic legitimacy, to undertake reforms with high social costs. This is an additional limit to the transposition of the CEE experience to Africa. Last but not least, most of the new member states had democratic experiences before soviet domination. Africa's history is very different, and as such the South-East Asian experience seems more relevant.

While the CEE experience is not directly applicable to Africa, the continent can still draw some inspiration from the good practice of the transition there. Thus, beyond the specific case of Poland, successful transitions have prioritised the importance of the institutional framework in their implementation, mostly in the way it guarantees the rights of small businesses: the key to economic takeoff.

Finally, the prospect of EU membership played a key role for the CEE countries. Could any political project mobilise Africa to the same extent? NEPAD alone is insufficient for the task. So what kind of partnership can the European Union offer to Africa? This calls for a reinforcement of the political dialogue between both continents.

In sum, the CEE countries acquired a unique experience. In the quest for better governance, they can contribute valuable advice in the promotion of civil society, human rights, decentralisation and regional integration. During integration into the European Union, they acquired experience in negotiating asymmetric trade agreements, which would be valuable for African countries, especially the less developed ones. In the medium- and long-term, peace and security could become a domain of their expertise: the Polish armed forces will soon be deployed in Congo-Kinshasa.

"South-East Asia proves democracy is not a necessary condition for development, but development leads to democracy"

Jean-Luc Maurer, President of EADI, Geneva

New solutions to the instability of development financing

Poverty will never be significantly reduced if the developed countries continue to dishonouring the commitments they themselves made. If they had respected the UN's recommendations and dedicated 0.7% of their GDPs to the fight against poverty since 1970, developing countries would benefit to the tune of 2.5 trillion US dollars. Today only four EU countries of twenty-five meet the 0.7% criteria.

The old member states of the European Union declared that they would increase their Official

Development Aid allocation from GNI to 0.56 in 2010 and 0.70% in 2015. On their part, the new member states should increase aid to 0.17% and 0.33% respectively by those dates. More than a half of the increase should go to Africa. Yet the medium-term forecasts for some CEE countries show that these objectives will not be met. As well as the sustainable development agenda, the international development agenda remains on the sidelines of governmental priorities, becoming an object of adverse trade-offs when budgets are tight.

The aid budget is not the only decisive factor. Its stability and expectedness must also be secured because aid volatility can generate macro-economic shocks, limiting policy planning, and thus damaging the absorptive capacity of the recipient countries. To meet this aim, tasks on three distinct fronts have to be undertaken. Two overhang the European framework: debt relief and the implementation of new financing schemes. The third concerns reform of the European Development Fund.

Last July, the G8 Summit at Gleneagles seemed to mark the "end of history": *debt cancellation* took the place of *debt relief* in the discourse of heads of states. Seventeen Highly Indebted Poor Countries, of whom fourteen are in Africa, qualified for the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, representing some 37 billion US dollars over 40 years. Multilateral debt reduction was followed by bilateral creditors including the new member states of the European Union. Furthermore, the debt relief became an increase in public pro-poor expenditures in qualifying countries.

Nevertheless, debt relief begs many questions about equity and effectiveness. Countries like Poland, Argentina and Mexico, relatively rich compared to sub-Saharan Africa, have already benefited from substantial debt relief. Yet countries that carefully attended to their debts, like Hungary, were *de facto* deceived. However, the tsunami in South-East Asia proved that indebted countries may be led to refuse offers of relief from worries that acceptance would prevent them from accessing international capital. Debt reduction forms vary from "dry relief" to more sophisticated methods of conditionality that secure spending in favour of poverty reduction. In this case, the effects of debt relief are similar to direct aid.

Creditors' goodwill can also be challenged. In fact, clearing debt is a comfortable solution given that the debts are often unsustainable; it also gives creditors a positive image. Moreover, in some countries the debt service has already surpassed the amount of the initial loan, often conceded to non-democratic, corrupt governments. Indebted countries worried that debt relief would supplant aid in the form of grants and thus negate the principle of aid additionality. However, the increase in total aid during recent years cannot entirely be attributed to debt relief. Nevertheless, this increase is still far from meeting their needs.

To respond to this challenge, the 60th UN General Assembly prepared a declaration on new financial instruments, signed by 79 countries. The EU's new member states were represented only by Estonia. Among the new instruments, the International Financial Facility should allow developing countries to borrow the missing

"An additional 50 to 70 billion US dollars of development assistance is needed to meet the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, which means to double current streams"

Corso Bavagnoli, Ministry of Economy, Paris

"Cutting debt is not a panacea, but meeting the MDGs without debt cancellation would be like travelling to the Moon without a space shuttle"

Tomáš Tožička, Ecumenical Academy, Prague

50 billion US dollars promised by developed countries. The IFF should be up and running from 2007. A second tool supported by 13 countries emerged from a common initiative from France and Brazil. Consisting in a tax on airplane tickets, it should bring in 200 million euros a year for the fight against pandemics ravaging Africa (HIV/AIDS, malaria, and TBC). Other proposals, such as the Tobin tax on speculative capital movement, gained less success.

The European Development Fund (EDF) is an interface between the financial and managerial aspects of development assistance. The main task of the tool is to implement the Cotonou Agreement, which regulate the relations of the European Union with 78 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP). The EDF is planned on a five-year basis; the 9th program will implement 13.5 billion euros with 10 billion euros accumulated in residues. Until now, the EU Council has rejected the proposal in favour of budgetisation, and decided to programme the 10th EDF. For the first time, it will include the participation of the new member states. The major part of the 23 billion euros funding will be apportioned to countries in sub-Saharan Africa.

Arguments in favour of budgetisation are convincing. The EDF is a remnant of the colonial era. Its inclusion in the EU budget would make it more transparent and would submit it to the democratic checks ensured by the European Parliament, traditionally sensitive to development issues. On the administrative level, the amount of residues makes weak ACP countries' absorptive capacities evident. EDF programming over seven years, instead of five, would also offer more flexibility.

A number of member states definitely resist the budgetisation of the EDF. This is the case of the United Kingdom, Spain, Portugal, Greece, and the new member states. Only Poland's position has been more open. These countries do not want to increase their contributions to the EDF equal to their contributions to the EU budget. The debate on the EDF's budgetisation reflects incoherence between member states' particular interests on the one hand and the implementation of the common development policy on the other.

"The programming of the 10th EDF is an occasion to develop common strategies and to introduce the division of labour in EU action, including the possibility for the new member states to choose countries and sectors which interest them"

Philippe Etienne, Director General of the DGCID, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Paris

"Most important for the new member states is not to sign a cheque to the EDF; moreover, we should make sure that Hungarian NGOs and companies build capacities to be able to respond to calls for projects. That would generate new relationships with ACP countries"

Lázsló Vizi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Budapest

Beyond aid: trade, health and security

Development aid is undoubtedly the most visible side of Euro-African relations. However, aid alone would not permit Africa's takeoff: the continent needs to fully enter into the globalised world while its potential growth must not be threatened by pandemics and military conflicts. Does the European Union sufficiently take these conditions into account when defining and implementing its foreign policy?

Trade liberalisation is currently negotiated multilaterally within the Doha Round of World Trade Organization (WTO) talks. Its aim is to remove trade barriers and thus support the growth of the world economy and facilitate the economic takeoff in developing countries. Yet countries in the South have not profited from globalisation and trade liberalisation equally. The Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are facing strong competition from emerging powers such as China, India and Brazil. The diversification in the South makes full North-South liberalisation problematic and even harmful: it would make the poorer countries more vulnerable. Their openness to international competition should hence be compensated by assisting the trade sector. The old question "aid or trade" has a relevant answer "aid for trade".

Having accepted this view, in 2001 the European Union gave 50 Least Developed Countries wide access to the European market in the framework of the "Everything but Arms" initiative, which makes part of the Global System of Preferences. Nevertheless, the initiative has not so far helped ACP countries to reverse their worsening position in world trade. In fact, these countries' export skills are so weak that they cannot fully profit from customs and quota exemptions conceded by the European Union for their products. At the same time, traditional sectors in Africa such as textile and agriculture are threatened by competition from the emerging powers of the South, which put pressure on the liberalisation of those sectors where they hold a strong comparative advantage. The frequently discussed reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, including a progressive cut of export subsidies on European products, will not be sufficient to ensure the takeoff of the less developed countries.

Taking into account the advantages and disadvantages of the Global System of Preferences in opening African markets, the reciprocal liberalisation presumed by the Economic Partnership Agreements, linking the European Union with ACP countries, will proceed in three steps: within a regional group, then between different Southern markets, and finally between North and South. A win-win situation requires, amongst other things, that the European Union and the rest of the international community keep the commitments on increasing aid in favour of the most vulnerable sectors, especially agriculture. Eventually, special attention must be paid to compensate losses in customs earnings and the weakening capacity of African countries to overcome non-tariff barriers.

The economic takeoff of South-East Asia did not only show that a specific dose of initial protectionism can be efficient, but also that health and education are *sine qua non* conditions of development. However, the health sector has been neglected by international donors. In the past, health was often sacrificed in the framework of stabilisation and structural adjustment programs, implemented under pressure from the Bretton Woods institutions. In sub-Saharan Africa, health expenditure per capita is 80 times less than in OECD countries. Moreover, as general health insurance is missing, 60% of spending is charged directly to households.

"We have to be sure that aid outcomes do not create dependency and complaisance, but actually help to promote trade competitiveness"

Chiedu Osakwe, WTO Secretariat, Geneva

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), financial assistance provided for health services should be multiplied by eight. The link between poverty and bad health is strong: according to the WHO, every year 80 million of people suffer from "catastrophic" health expenditures, representing more than 40% of the household budget. The situation is particularly bad regarding the pandemics ravaging the continent (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria). In countries with prevalence exceeding 5%, HIV/AIDS completely annihilated the slow advancement in life expectancy since the 1950s. The disease then became a major obstacle to economic development in Africa. The creation of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in 2002 manifests the growing international awareness regarding the seriousness of the problem.

However, in spite of the progress recorded in recent years, universal access to anti-retroviral treatment (ARV) still remains a distant prospect. This defeat is evident through the failure of the "3 by 5" initiative, which aimed to treat 3 million patients by 2005. According to the WHO, only 810,000 of 4.7 million infected individuals in urgent need of ARV treatment in sub-Saharan Africa were treated by the end of 2005.

Security, here discussed in its narrow meaning, is the last condition of the development. During recent years, the world witnessed the growing involvement of African countries in conflict resolution on the continent. The taking responsibility for internal problems is a very positive signal, as shown by the dispatch of African Union troops to Darfur.

This new trend challenges the use of the EU's foreign policy budget. In fact, 250 million euros from the ninth application of the EDF were earmarked for ACP countries to support security, 35 million of which were earmarked for regional conflict prevention programmes and training. Europe should strengthen cooperation with the United Nations, whose mandate remains the only guarantee of international legitimacy in case of an external intervention. Finally, NGOs should be more intensely involved in conflict prevention.

The WTO-lead liberalisation, the fight against pandemics like HIV/AIDS and the conflict prevention programmes all require more aid. Insufficient action in each of the three can invalidate advancements in the others.

Managing the diversity of actors and instruments

In current use by development practitioners, "Africa" is often a synonym for sub-Saharan Africa. Nonetheless, in the North of the continent, the countries of the Maghreb have strong chances of reaching the MDGs. In the South of the continent, a regional power is being confirmed. In any case, Africa cannot be considered a homogeneous block.

Moreover, the diversity of development aid instruments is multiplied by the diversity of actors intervening at various levels. The EU's development policy is thus situated between that of its member states and that of multilateral institutions. In contrast to the WTO, where the European Union speaks in a single voice through the Trade Commissioner, in other multilateral institutions like the UN, the IMF and the World Bank, the voice of the European Union as such is less audible. However, its weight in the UN is prevailing in terms of financing: 38% of the UN budget is paid by the EU, which leads more than 40% of UN peacekeeping operations. More than 60% of development aid distributed to Africa by the UN is provided by the EU.

"We need a massive investment in the health sector; it represents a strategic objective, a condition accompanying economic growth"

Jean-Paul Moatti, Professor of medicine and director of an INSERM Research Unit, Marseille

Regarding the United Nations, the European Union may choose from three possible *modus vivendi*. First is to facilitate concord between members states and pressure the international consensus (Kyoto Protocol, Johannesburg Summit), although there can be difficulties converging member states' positions, as the Iraq War attests. Second is to intervene as a regional organisation with a Security Council mandate (the Kosovo interim administration, police mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Middle East Quartet). The African case is different, as evidenced by the isolated interventions of the United Kingdom in Sierra Leone and France in Côte d'Ivoire—at least in the beginning. Finally, the European Union can act as an international player, but its development interventions might weaken the UNDP's presumed coordination role.

A smart mix of the three options available to the EU could empower both international and regional organisations, especially the African Union. The EU's Strategy for Africa, adopted in December 2005, represents progress in reaching a European consensus, but a single European voice is still absent in other areas.

This strategy could also be fruitful *vis-à-vis* other powers. The growing influence of China in Africa has already been underlined. China undermines the efforts of the European Union and international organisations in promoting democracy and good governance on the continent. The United States prefers a largely bilateral approach to global consensus as shown by the recent implementation of the "Millennium Challenge Corporation". A reinforced dialogue with both actors, and more generally with the G24, seems necessary. It is also important to note that important donors such as Switzerland and Norway are not EU members. This means aid will continue to be coordinated on an *ad hoc* basis. In this particular case, the OECD remains the best platform for promoting the values of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

Regarding the EU members states, subsidiarity and the 3C principle (complementarity, coordination and coherency) of the EU's development policy must be respected. To be more efficient, member states' bilateral projects need to be complementary, coordinated in the way that all countries and sectors are covered, and mutually coherent with common agricultural, trade, security and environmental policies. The EU's ambition to act as an aid coordinator and donor at the same time does not facilitate this task, but a joint strategy can strengthen its visibility on the international scene.

One of the main lessons learned from the history of development assistance concerns the emphasis on the ownership of development by recipient countries, mainly via their participation in the choice of aid objectives. Europe should not elaborate a strategy *for* Africa but engage in a genuine partnership *with* Africa. To do so, do Africa and the European Union share a common vision of the continent's future?

The ownership of the development cooperation is not merely a challenge for partner countries. Donor states are concerned, too. Indeed, in the case of the new member states, the part of the aid delivered through the EU budget varies from one-half for the Czech Republic to two thirds for Estonia. However, are Czech or Estonian citizens aware of EU development activities? Do they identify themselves with its development policy?

More information dissemination, media and public awareness campaigns are needed to accomplish the ownership of the common development policy by European citizens. This task is made more urgent by the fact that the development ranges between the most popular policies of the European Union.

"It is in its diversity that the European Union can find its comparative advantages in development assistance, compared to other regional organisations"

Vincent Géronimi, President of GEMDEV, Paris

Recommendations for the implementation of the EU Strategy for Africa

Build the capacities of the new EU member states

- Traditionally oriented in their development policy towards transition countries in Eastern Europe (Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova) and in the Balkans, the new member states have to **find a compromise in their strategic priorities with Africa**, where most of the countries lagging in the MDG achievements are situated.
- **Promote the implementation of trilateral projects** associating the new member states with more experienced ones. As the limited budgets of the new member states make direct and sectoral aid inappropriate, they should **engage more intensely in multilateral programmes**.
- To support the civil society to **take ownership of the common development policy**, the European Union should **strengthen the capacities of NGOs and companies in the new member states** to allow them to participate in the implementation of European projects.
- **Intensify information dissemination, public awareness and media campaigns about** the EU's development policy.

Translate Central and Eastern Europe's experiences of political and economic transition in concrete projects

- **Strengthen the strategic partnership with Africa** to motivate African countries in a manner similar to the way the prospect of European Union accession motivated the new member states.
- Learn from the experience of asymmetric trade agreements with the European Union and **assist African countries in developing negotiation skills**.
- **Promote good practices for transition, particularly in governance**, inspired by the transfers of experience already enacted by the new member states in CIS and Balkan countries, while making sure of their applicability to Africa's problems.

Secure the scope of stable financial instruments at the level of fixed objectives

- **Keep to the committed aid increases** as per the aims the European Union fixed in 2005, and **secure aid expectedness and the stability of financial flows in the long term**.
- **Ensure the complementarity of new sources of financing and their earmarking**, especially in the fight against pandemics ravaging Africa (HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria) requiring massive investment in health sector.
- Invite the re-emerging donors to **join the UN initiative on new sources of development financing** and consider the adhesion to the initiative on air bill tax.

Strengthen the complementarity, coordination and coherency of European policies towards Africa

- **Promote the complementarity and division of labour at the European and bilateral levels** between old and new member states.
- **Counter the negative effects of world trade liberalisation** through assistance to vulnerable sectors (especially agriculture) in less developed countries and support the diversification of African production and exports.
- **Improve aid coordination with other multilateral actors and big powers**, either traditional (USA) or emerging (China, India and Brazil).

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