

EUROPE'S FOREIGN AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES TOWARDS A NEW BEGINNING

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“Politics is not judged according to its intentions but according to its results”
Tzvetan Todorov

The pattern of power relationships in international relations will change in the coming decades in favour of today's newly emerging and developing countries. The number of people living in the poorer regions of the world – presently 4.9 billion – will grow to approx. 7.7 billion by the year 2050. In view of this development Europe will have to adjust to a relative loss of economic and political importance. At the end of the 19th century every fourth person on earth was a European. Today, Europe's share of the world's population is thirteen per cent, and by the year 2050 it could fall to seven per cent. Europe's importance in the world economy is also declining. Pertinent forecasts lead us to expect that the European contribution to the world's gross national product – today at eighteen per cent – could be halved in the coming decades. The international order of the 21st century will – politically, economically and possibly also culturally – be defined by states such as China and India and by emergent economic blocs like ASEAN and Mercosur. China and India – as much as the United States, whose population could grow to 500 million – will probably defend their position as the most populous countries, but their cumulative share of the world population is falling. Around 2050 a quarter of humanity will have its home in Africa. Germany will then probably have seventy million inhabitants.

The forthcoming changes confront the European Union and its member states in the fields of foreign, security and development policy with new demands which until now have hardly been paid systematic attention. The envisaged Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) is facing the challenge of taking into account the emerging world political trends. Even if we do not assume – in the tradition of the 19th century – that the size and composition of a people are among those "currencies of power" (Machtwährungen) which determine the importance of a country in international politics, it is nevertheless the case that demographic developments will have consequences for foreign policy – and thus for future international relations as a whole. The old continent, which critics attest as lacking in strategic thinking, will be obliged to position itself anew with regard to its foreign and development policies. The states of the present Third World, including the 78 ACP states which have close ties to the European Union through the Cotonou Agreement, are at the beginning of a structural change with momentous consequences. Population growth, urbanisation, technological progress and economic globalisation will change the social and political structures of the "South" and thus greatly increase the weight of Asia, Africa and Latin America in world politics. In only a few years fifty per cent of the world's population will live in urban agglomerations. In West Africa alone there will then be more than thirty cities with a population of over one million. The Indian middle class will likely have grown to over 200

million people and France, which until recently was predominantly Catholic, could soon be home to just as many Muslims as Christians.

A uniting Europe which wishes to defend its international influence would be well advised to take into account the growing importance of less developed regions. Debates on the role of state sovereignty and national reservations regarding majority decisions within the CFSP do not seem to be particularly helpful here. The foreign policy architecture of the European Union and its member states should be directed, taking into consideration the means at its disposal, towards new priorities. National political traditions – the past as a system of orientation for current and future external relations – must be taken into account just as the institutional dynamics of European integration. Above all, however, a binding agreement is necessary on the future relationship between national and EU responsibility with regard to external relations. The "coherence" of European foreign policy which is demanded by many presupposes that a solution is found for dealing with the inner-European contradictions of interests and perceptions.

There is a general consensus that common foreign policy positions of the EU and its member states would be advantageous, since individual states find it ever more difficult to influence international developments on their own. Inner-European agreement on the objectives and the means of future activities in foreign and development policies is difficult to achieve, however. At the present time it appears rather unrealistic to hope for a rapid "communitisation" of European foreign policy activities. It was the member states which dominated the intergovernmental negotiations on the future European constitution and it is the member states which decide whether, under what conditions and to what extent foreign policy competency will be transferred to the EU. The European Union is a political project which is in the course of development, for which there is no precedent, and the development of which in the past was always accompanied by changes in its institutions and decision-making procedures. National political traditions must be transformed into coherent, efficient, European external activities. This will not be possible from one day to the next and not without contradictions. Countries such as the United Kingdom and France have different foreign policy traditions to Germany, Poland or the Netherlands.

The foreign and development policies of the European Union and its member states require a realistic new beginning. The eastward enlargement could offer a welcome occasion to take stock, and to openly discuss the contradictory interests both between and within individual policy fields. This could lay the ground for step-by-step plans which – taking into account national traditions of thinking and on the basis of specific interests – attempt to reconcile ambitions with operative possibilities. This will also have to entail trying to understand the positions and agendas of non-European actors. The behaviour of foreign policy actors (i.e. essentially the national élites) will continue in future to be determined not only by facts and potential power but also by culturally defined perceptions and self-images – whether these are correct or not. Europe is facing the challenge of developing a strategic culture which integrates foreign, foreign trade, security and development policy perspectives. A Common Foreign, Security and Development Policy (CFSDP) is overdue.

In the following it is argued that development policy should be given a higher value as a integrated element of European foreign policy in order to lend the necessary weight to this marginal political field. This requires fundamental reforms on the basis of a realistic stock-taking. In a recently published report by the House of Lords it was stated, "As for coherence

between the EU's development and other policies, there is still a wide gap between the principle and the actuality."

If it is assumed that development cooperation should serve the public foreign policy interest of the continent and that European integration should be strengthened where common activity is meaningful then cooperation with the developing countries is an obvious starting-point. It not only offers favourable conditions for an "emotional communitisation" (Max Weber) but it also seems justified both politically and functionally. Here, however, the principle of subsidiarity, on which the Treaty of Maastricht is based and which understands the development policy of the Community as an "extension of the corresponding policies of the member states" is – following the eastward enlargement – less helpful than ever. It fails to recognise that nationally administered development policies, with the possible exception of special bilateral relationships to previous colonies, scarcely have any room for manoeuvre on their own and that less state sovereignty in Europe would lead to more sovereign ability to act in the world. Inner-European reforms which combine the abolition of national development administrations with forward-looking concepts for an efficiently Europeanised development policy appear to be overdue. If it were possible today to design a European development policy free from historical burdens, administrative routine and benevolent rhetoric, the result would hardly remind us of the "Lomé culture" which for a long time served as a model. To complicate matters even further, in addition to the lack of coherence between the Community and the member states (which touches upon the "sovereignty" of national aid and development policies) there is also a lack of coherence between the development policy of the Community and other policy fields.

Against this background a precondition for a result-oriented reform debate is a break with the traditional European compromise culture. It appears necessary here to openly address the national interests of the member states, which are often hidden behind eloquently formulated objectives, and to take them into account on the basis of a realistic stock-taking. However, the fact that European foreign and development policies present a confusing and contradictory multiplicity of unclarified, partially overlapping responsibilities and ambitions is only partly due to a debate culture which gives idealistic self-images preference over concrete analysis. Analytically and politically helpful would be strategies which openly name the national interests which are regarded as vital and - on the basis of step-by-step plans - attempt to make them the foundation for a better coordinated European policy towards the South. The creation of a European Development Ministry (accompanied by the abolition of national development ministries), or institutional guarantees for the systematic consideration of development policy aspects within the framework of the CFSP, could show the way. The present institutional arrangement, which leaves the prerogative of the individual state unchallenged and places its hopes on a subsidiary complementarity for which there is no legal guarantee, is not very convincing. What sense does it make that France has integrated the previous *Ministère de la coopération* into the Foreign Ministry while the same resort has cabinet ranking in the United Kingdom while in Germany the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) would possibly no longer exist if the last federal elections had produced a different result?

In addition, there are the competing points of view on how the relationships among the individual areas of politics touch upon external relations. In its final report the Working Group VII "External Action" of the European Convent emphasised, "The Working Group, while recognising that development policy has its specific purposes, which are reflected among the principles and objectives of EU external action, underlines the need for ensuring

coherence between development cooperation and other aspects of EU external action as well as external aspects of internal policies, since development assistance should be considered as an element of the global strategy of the Union vis-à-vis third countries."

The European Union has developed within a few decades to the third largest political institution in the world. Born out of the agony of defeat, it is, in the words of Jeremy Rifkins, less a place than a process, a discursive forum with an orchestrating role. Its potential advantage, however, as a soft power – being different from nation states which aim at separation rather than integration – has not yet been convincingly realised.

In order to be able to come up to the expectations placed in a strategically oriented foreign and development policy in a dynamically developing world, the future relationship between foreign, security and development policies must be clarified in a forward-looking way. In order to do so, political priorities, normative, thematic and regional aspects must be integrated across political fields. The central question here remains how the EU will design the relationship between integrated and national foreign relations.

With regard to the shape of future European external relations three scenarios are presently imaginable, leaving aside the possibility of a bilateral re-nationalisation of the development relations of individual states.

- (1) The *positive scenario* sees a efficiently Europeanised foreign and development policy on the basis of rapidly communitised aid and external relations. A precondition for this is the end of national development policies and the binding acceptance of conceptual and regional priorities.
- (2) The *middle scenario* assumes a hesitant preparedness to integrate which continues to be dampened by considerations of national interest and influence. The external relations of the EU are developed mainly on the basis of improved processes of coordination and agreement procedures among the states and the resulting incoherencies from the point of view of Europe as a whole are simply accepted.
- (3) The *negative scenario* leaves the design of future external relations decisively in the decision-making sphere of bilateral actors who, primarily oriented towards their own national interests, refuse common solutions to development policy and when necessary enter into temporary, bilateral alliances for specific purposes.

Most observers are agree that the present development activities of the EU, which are shaped by historical preferences and individual national and institutional interests, represent a compromise which involves high political costs. If the EU wishes to establish itself as a influential soft power, then it must attempt to replace national responsibility for foreign policy – at least as a perspective – by Europeanised structures and decision-making procedures. The *methode Monnet* – i.e. the application of the subsidiarity principle to national foreign and development policies – is outdated. To the extent to which the external relations of the EU are successfully directed towards objectives defined by the EU itself, the traditional national foreign and development policies (including the institutional structures tailored to them) will become obsolete.

It is thus important that the European Union, which is the largest trading partner of many developing countries, has– since the end of the East-West conflict – become one of the most important development policy actors. If its bilateral and multilateral aid is added together, the European Union provides more than half of the public development aid (ODA)

worldwide. The planning and implementation of "European development cooperation", which continues to be financed by the individual states, has in the past decades increasingly shifted from the member states to the Community. In 2002 one fifth of the current development aid budget of the EU – €6.5 billion – was administered by the EU, which was thus the third-largest OECD provider. In addition to the demise of COMECON and OPEC, this has also been contributed to by the fact that the USA, which in the latest Commitment to Development Index (CDI) ranks at the bottom end of the scale, has drastically reduced its public development aid since 1989.

There is wide agreement that the structures of European development cooperation, for which bilateral and multilateral actors are responsible, must be renewed and that efforts in the same direction in all fields of politics which are of decisive importance to the developing countries are desirable. It is also uncontroversial that this – as is stated under the heading of "development policy" on the internet pages of the German Foreign Office – can succeed "only within the framework of a coherent foreign policy (...), which takes into account, in addition to a sustainable development policy, among other things aspects of security policy, of foreign trade policy, of international financial policy and of agricultural policy".

In the search for a policy mix which attempts to generalise European experiences and knowledge, the drawing of a line between foreign, security and other policies is of less importance. More important are institutional guarantees for taking development concerns into account. Attempts to reshape Europe's until now rather opaque external relations require an agreement on the relative weight of existing areas of politics. This could be achieved within the framework of an extended – by development policy viewpoints – Common Foreign, Security and Development Policy (CFSDP) which replaces classical power politics by a socio-political governance perspective.

All this requires new, unconventional ideas. The partnership model represented by the Lomé and Cotonou Treaties could be further developed by the inclusion of an asymmetric "mutual conditionality" for all developing countries. This could maintain the contract principle by demanding appropriate political and development policy compromises from both sides. Thus, for example, binding commitments for the abolition of tied aid or the gradual reduction of subsidised agricultural exports could be tied to political and economic concessions on the part of the developing countries. The latter could be rewarded by payments from a fund, which potential state and non-state beneficiaries could apply for, when precisely defined conditions are fulfilled (progress in democratisation, human rights policies etc.) A similar model could also be applied with regard to political institutions. Committees in which both sides are equally represented, the independence of which would have to be secured in a suitable form, could supervise the contractual loyalty of both sides.

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