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DEVELOPMENT**

**A SHIFT IN EUROPEAN UNION DEVELOPMENT POLICY**  
IN LIGHT OF THE ADVENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND A  
NEW WORLD ORDER

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The western world and, particularly Europe, is having a leading role in the creation of a new global order in many aspects. Recent and current phenomena such as the economic and financial crisis of 2007 and conflict and instability in the Middle East have provoked major structural changes in both sovereign states and multilateral organizations which are now being reshaped to better respond to these challenges.

These challenges, together with the prioritization of deep change, are of extreme importance in the case of the European Union. This true especially now, given that its political and economic authority in the international sphere is under question and its value and capability is constantly tested in the enormous adversity it encounters<sup>1</sup>. This is also the case with respect to its foreign policy in development and cooperation. An agenda has been designed and its most recent and important milestone are, without a doubt, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Post-2015 Development Agenda became a reality on January 1, 2016, when the new Sustainable Development Goals succeeded the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Adopted in 2001, the MDGs were a set of eight goals and eighteen targets to be met before the end of 2015. As for the SDGs<sup>2</sup>, these are a set of seventeen goals and one hundred and sixty-nine targets. Officially known as *Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*<sup>3</sup>, the SDGs represent a call and plan for action, bringing together countries and stakeholders committed to implementing it through collaborative partnership. *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* is meant to stimulate action over the next fifteen years in areas of critical importance for the planet and for humanity—and its programs already seem to be in motion.

This paper examines what characterizes this new world order and how it has forced a reshaping of EU development policy. It will also analyze to what extent and how the latest European regulation regarding development addresses sustainable development. As a leading actor, it is of vital importance to understand what might be challenging the EU's global weight and traditional leadership role in the field of development and how the EU is responding.

Nevertheless, what this paper attempts to accomplish is far from a comprehensive analysis of the EU's development policy and the ongoing process of change and transformation that is being

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<sup>1</sup> This weakness and disunity was recently demonstrated by the Brexit vote; a development that has left Europe shaking.

<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform, "Sustainable Development Goals". Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgs> (last visited on December 15, 2016).

<sup>3</sup> "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development", Resolution adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 25 September 2015 (UNGA A/RES/70/1).

undertaken. This is merely a review of current events and what they imply in terms of the direction that EU policy in this field is headed.

## **2. EUROPEAN UNION ROLE IN DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1. Official Development Assistance and the historic leading role of the European Union<sup>4</sup>**

European Union development policy seeks to eradicate poverty in a context of sustainable development and it is a cornerstone of EU relations with the outside world<sup>5</sup>. In order to accomplish it, the EU has taken prominent roles in official development assistance programmes all around the world. Providing a total of over 50 per cent of all global development aid, the EU is the world's leading donor. By extension, the EU is actor in determining the global architecture of international aid and its work has been and continues to be unique in both its form (equities, grants and loans) and volume.

Official development assistance (ODA) is a term coined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to measure aid. The DAC first used the term in 1969 and it is widely used as an indicator of international aid flow. Most ODA comes from the 28 members of the DAC. A further \$15.9 billion comes from the European Commission and non-DAC countries to account for an additional \$9.4 billion. Although development aid rose in 2013 to the highest level ever recorded, a trend of a falling share of aid going to the neediest sub-Saharan African countries continued. In 2015, development aid totaled \$131.6 billion, representing a rise of 6.9% from 2014 in real terms as aid spent on refugees in host countries more than doubled in real terms to \$12 billion<sup>6</sup>.

The largest donor countries in 2015 were the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan and France. Sweden made the largest contribution as a percentage of gross national income (GNI) at 1.40% and the United Nations' ODA target of 0.7% of GNI was also exceeded by the UAE, Norway, Luxembourg, Denmark, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

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<sup>4</sup> The European Union (EU) that is considered in this document is the one defined in the OECD DAC Peer Review 2012: "The EU is the legal successor to the European Community. The EU is an economic and political union of Member States [...] and has legal personality [...] The EU has a sui generis legal nature, and it is an individual donor in its own right, with its own development policy. Its legitimacy is dual, based on both the legitimacy of the governments of the Member States that are represented in the Council (i.e. indirect legitimacy) and the legitimacy of the European Parliament that is directly elected by EU citizens (i.e. direct legitimacy)".

<sup>5</sup> *European Development Policy*. European Commission website: [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/european-development-policy\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/policies/european-development-policy_en) (last visited: December 3, 2016)

<sup>6</sup> OECD. Development aid rises again in 2015, spending on refugees doubles. Available at [http://www.oecd.org/dac/development-aid-rises-again-in-2015-spending-on-refugees\\_doubles.htm](http://www.oecd.org/dac/development-aid-rises-again-in-2015-spending-on-refugees_doubles.htm) (last visited: December 3, 2016)

ODA is officially defined as:

“Flows of official financing administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the main objective, and which are concessional in character with a grant element of at least 25 percent (using a fixed 10 percent rate of discount). By convention, ODA flows comprise contributions of donor government agencies, at all levels, to developing countries (bilateral ODA) and to multilateral institutions. ODA receipts comprise disbursements by bilateral donors and multilateral institutions”<sup>7</sup>.

To qualify as official development assistance, a contribution must contain three elements: (1) Undertaken by the official sector (official agencies, including state and local governments, or their executive agencies); (2) with promotion of economic development and welfare as the main objective; and (3) at concessional financial terms (if a loan, having a grant element of at least 25 per cent).

As to how is ODA measured, ODA volumes may be measured absolutely, by the amount transferred, or relatively, as a proportion of the donor country’s economy. According to the OECD, the top donors are member states of the European Union, which together donate \$70.73 billion. EU Institutions account for a further \$15.93 billion<sup>8</sup>.

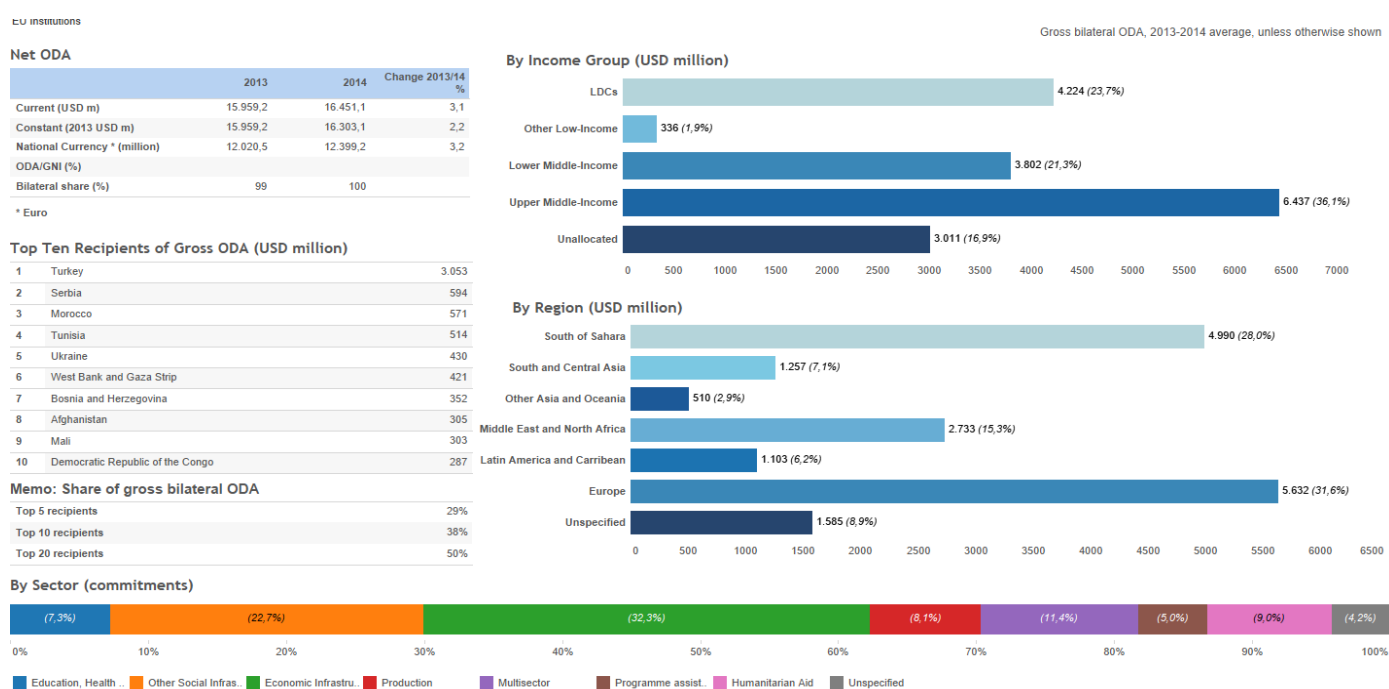


Figure 1. European Institutions’ development policies volume. Source: OECD

<sup>7</sup> OECD, *Glossary of Statistical Terms*.

<sup>8</sup> *Development and cooperation*. European Union website: [https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/development-cooperation\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/development-cooperation_en) (last visited: December 3, 2016)

## 2.2. The 2000s and a period of change in EU development policy

Despite its historic and current prominent position in the development arena, EU development policy has been under constant review and remodeling. And, since the early 2000s, EU development policy has not only undergone major structural changes in its institutional framework but it has also started to face a new international aid scenario. The normative-based EU development policy has been challenged by reformed EU institutions and new global challenges, and the EU is attempting to respond to this context during the EU's weakest moment since its forming. This, together with a series of agreements and documents, marked the entrance of the EU into a new era of aid policy.

This era began with the Cotonou Agreement (2000-2020), which replaced the Lomé Convention (1975)<sup>9</sup> and introduced important changes in aid and trade procedures. EU aid disbursement became conditional not only on a needs-base but also according to performance in implementing jointly-agreed country strategy papers (CSPs). Additionally, the EU began to push for new trade agreements or Economic Partnerships Agreements (EPAs)<sup>11</sup>, though this process remains unfinished and highly criticised<sup>12</sup>. This Agreement was followed in 2005 by the European Consensus on Development, which set common strategic norms<sup>13</sup>, objectives and plans of action for the EU development policies. Another milestone was the 2007 Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labour, which focused on better aid management calling on all Member States to concentrate their aid activities in a limited number of countries as well as on a limited number of sectors per recipient partner.

On December 2009, the Treaty of Lisbon, aimed at creating new institutions and legal instruments to fortify EU external actions, came into force to reshape the EU development policy. For example, in Article 208, it acknowledges (1) poverty fighting as the primary goal of EU development policy and (2) the need to strengthen the role of policy coherence for development (PCD) by the EU. PCD is a concept designed to maximize the positive impacts of policies for development by linking, for example, European immigration policy and development or climate change and development<sup>14</sup>. The Treaty also created the new post of High Representative (HR) for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and, at the European Commission, a new Directorate General

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<sup>9</sup> The Lomé Convention is a trade and aid agreement between 71 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries and the European Economic Community (EEC). It was signed in February 1975 in Lomé, Togo.

<sup>11</sup> The EPA are a scheme to create a free trade area (FTA) between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP). They are a response to continuing criticism that the non-reciprocal and discriminating preferential trade agreements offered by the EU are incompatible with WTO rules. It is worth mentioning that the EPAs date back to the signing of the Cotonou Agreement.

<sup>12</sup> It is strongly criticised particularly by African partner regions.

<sup>13</sup> Such as participation, political dialogue, partnership and ownership.

<sup>14</sup> During a meeting held on October 19, 2016, a top EU official of the Unit of National programs for North and West Europe, mentioned that the link between EU migration and development policies was most urgent and necessary than ever before, motivated by the refugee crisis.

for Development and Cooperation EuropeAid (or DG DEVCO)<sup>15</sup> was set in January 2011. According to its website:

“DG DEVCO is responsible for formulating European Union development policy and thematic policies in order to reduce poverty in the world, to ensure sustainable economic, social and environmental development and to promote democracy, the rule of law, good governance and the respect of human rights, notably through external aid. We foster coordination between the European Union and its Member States in the area of development cooperation and ensure the external representation of the European Union in this field”<sup>16</sup>.

The clear objective was to make DC DEVCO a ‘one-stop shop’ for all stakeholders in the field of development cooperation<sup>17</sup>. However, this goal of complementarity and coordination was far from being achieved<sup>18</sup>. Therefore, the European Commission initiated a debate in 2010 on the future of EU development policy and presented its proposal for a new policy, the *Agenda for Change*<sup>19</sup>, in October 2011. The policy revisions stated in the document were welcomed by most. However, due to budgetary pressures at that time, policy change in the area of development was particularly slow<sup>20</sup>.

In May 2012, the Council of the European Union released some conclusions<sup>21</sup> on the *Agenda for Change*. It emphasized the need to develop a more responsible, effective and comprehensive approach in EU external action and development policy to respond to a rapidly changing global landscape.

Together, these new proposals and agreements marked a new period in EU development and cooperation policy. However, what ultimately provoked a deeper shift was the change in paradigms, motivated by new challenges and the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals.

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<sup>15</sup> Stefano Manservigi is the Director-General of DG DEVCO since 16 May 2016.

<sup>16</sup> European Commission website. About International Cooperation and Development - DG DEVCO. [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/general\\_en](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/general_en) (last visited on January 10, 2017).

<sup>17</sup> MAH, Luís, “Reshaping EU Development Policy: Collective Choices & The New Global Order”, p. 5. WP 130/2014. Lisboa School of Economics and Management.

<sup>18</sup> As stated in the European Union OECD DAC Review (2012).

<sup>19</sup> European Commission, 2011b.

<sup>20</sup> To the budgetary constraints, we must also take into account that this policy change requires the agreement of all member states, which increase the slowness of the process.

<sup>21</sup> The Council of the European Union Conclusions on “Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change”. 3166<sup>th</sup> Foreign Affairs Council meeting. Brussels, 14 May 2012.

### **3. A CHANGE IN GLOBAL ORDER. A PARADIGM SHIFT IN DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION**

It was in the run-up to the international Conference of Financing for Development, held in Addis Ababa in July 2015 when the EU first called for a true paradigm shift in global development cooperation. The refugee crisis was asphyxiating Europe and the inefficiency of the resources deployed in development policies meant that arguments for a withdrawal from aid commitments grew, pressing to turn the rudder around.

This Conference resulted in a negotiated outcome which provided a global framework for financing sustainable development and a comprehensive set of policy actions which would support the mobilization of means needed to achieve the advent of the Sustainable Development Goals. The Addis Ababa Conference was followed by the UN Post-2015 Summit in New York and the Climate Change Conference in Paris. In these summits, the international community started calling for a move towards a universal agenda. And that brought several fundamental implications. First, the Bretton Woods institutions and the European Commission were cast in a classic North-South model dependent on donor-recipient relationship. However, the advent of SDGs means that the development agenda will no longer be only focused on a group of countries, but across all countries. Secondly, another major change in the international landscape is driven by some countries shifting from a recipient to donor status. Furthermore, countries that historically had a limited impact in development affairs and aid have become major donors<sup>22</sup>. Thirdly, related to the shifting composition of donor countries, there is also an implied change in ODA recipient countries. And what is more, the OECD is likely to reduce the list of aid recipient states in nearly 20 this year, the vast majority being Latin American countries. And finally, with regards to the objectives, SDGs follow a broad agenda that, besides social development, also seeks to address the other two pillars of sustainable development: economy and environment.

In short, not only are current challenges reshaping world dynamics as we knew them, but also the response to them, represents a paradigm shift over and above reactionary measures. SDGs are a holistic approach to development and rather than focusing on economic growth before dealing with social or environmental issues, development policy is now looking at the trade-offs on all

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<sup>22</sup> The best example in the case of The People's Republic of China. China holds a special position, since it does not report to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC). Nonetheless, China is starting to engage in triangular co-operation, partnering with several international organisations and DAC members. In recent years, China has become a key partner of the OECD and collaborates with the DAC through the events of the China-DAC Study Group.

three fronts simultaneously. That is the real paradigm shift. For, as Thomas Kuhn<sup>23</sup> would put it, when anomalies become the norm and the change is so radical, a paradigm shift is upon us.

#### **4. THE 2030 AGENDA AND THE CUTTING EDGE OF EU DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

##### **4.1. When policy catches up with reality**

All the activities and plans set in motion by the international community in 2015 were finally put into adopted by the European Union at the end of 2016. On November 22<sup>nd</sup> 2016, the European Commission sent a communication to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, consisting of a *Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development*<sup>24</sup>. This proposal, titled *Our World, our Dignity, our Future* responds to the need to incorporate the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* into the European Union's development and cooperation policy. In short, if 2015 was the year of commitments, 2016 has been the one for action.

Besides its content on development and cooperation, the *2030 Agenda* is also being incorporated into EU's sustainability policies<sup>25</sup>. In addition, the EU's Foreign and Security Policy<sup>26</sup> also highlights the importance of the SDGs in the context of EU external action. Aware of its active part in the negotiations of the *2030 Agenda*, the EU is determined to play a leading role in implementing it. Besides, "both the Union and its Member States are obliged to comply with the commitments and take account of the objectives they have approved in the context of the United Nations"<sup>27</sup>.

In relation to its development and international cooperation policy, the EU proposes a new Consensus on Development in order to undertake "a shared vision and common term orientations to provide the framework for the common approach to development cooperation policy"<sup>28</sup>. The

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<sup>23</sup> Thomas Kuhn, an American physicist and philosopher, coined the concept of paradigm shift, defined as a fundamental change in the basic concepts and experimental practices of a scientific discipline.

<sup>24</sup> Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development. "Our World, our Dignity, Our Future". Available at [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-16-3884\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3884_en.htm) (last visited on December 5, 2016).

<sup>25</sup> The Commission Communication on "Next steps for a sustainable European future: European action for sustainability".

<sup>26</sup> "Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy", High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, June 2016.

<sup>27</sup> Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development. "Our World, our Dignity, Our Future", p. 3. Available at [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-16-3884\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-16-3884_en.htm) (last visited on December 5, 2016).

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4.



last European Consensus on Development<sup>29</sup> was reached in 2005, but the world has changed considerably since then. Moreover, the EU and its Member States have to find the right mechanisms to respond to current challenges. Because world politics are rapidly changing, and even more EU politics. Current phenomena, such as the refugee crisis, massive young unemployment, inequality, Brexit, etc., have revealed that a shift is needed in its policies. This shift appears to be especially drastic in areas related to development issues.

It has been mentioned before, when referring to ODA, that the EU is by far the largest donor in the world. However, there are several points for improvement in EU development policy. First, European aid is heavily fragmented, which reduces its effectiveness. Second, the EU is still far from meeting the commitment to achieve the historic UN target<sup>30</sup> ODA/GNI ratio of 0.7%. By the end of 2015, EU collective ODA represented 0.47% of EU Gross National Income (GNI)<sup>31</sup>. Nonetheless, EU's commitment is outstanding. Neven Mimica, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, mentioned when this data was released "that the EU remains the world's leading provider of Official Development Assistance (ODA) clearly demonstrates our firm commitment to financing for development and supporting the new Sustainable Development Goals. In 2015, faced with an unprecedented migration crisis, the EU and its Member States were able to increase both their support to refugees as well as their development aid to developing countries"<sup>32</sup>.

It is important to point out that the SDGs are meant to be present in any EU policy related to development issues. And that became true, in the European context, on November 22<sup>nd</sup>, when the Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development was presented. It included changes to reflect status changes of several countries from recipients to donors.

Because of the change in the assistance status of different countries and their specific needs, there has been subsequent change in the approach; the EU is now focusing more on technology transfer and capacity building as avenues to development, especially in those areas and countries from where migrants and refugees are coming to the EU. As a result, the EU is specifically interested

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<sup>29</sup> "The European Consensus on Development", Joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy: 'The European Consensus', signed on 20 December 2005, as published on 24 February 2006 (2006/C 46/01, OJ C 46/1)

<sup>30</sup> In 1969, the Pearson Commission proposed a target of 0.7% of donor GNP to be reached "by 1975 and in no case later than 1980." This suggestion was taken up in a UN resolution on 24 October 1970. The target built on the DAC's 1969 definition of ODA.

<sup>31</sup> European Commission Press Release. EU Official Development Assistance reaches highest-ever share of Gross National Income Brussels, 13 April 2016.

<sup>32</sup> In light of the ongoing refugee crisis, the OECD data of 2015 also shows the level of in-donor refugee costs reported as ODA by DAC Members. The OECD data also indicates a significant growth in reporting of these costs amongst EU countries. However, the overall EU ODA increase (€8.9 billion) was greater than the surge in refugee costs (€5.3 billion). In other words, the EU, in 2015, increased both its support to refugees, as well as its development aid to developing countries.

in the Magreb region and the fact that those countries do not need aid, but knowledge. This is crucial since “delivering sustainable results and increasing the impact of EU development policies is only possible if there is effective capacity in partner countries”<sup>33</sup>. A good example of capacity building is the EU strategy for North Africa within the framework of a EU Migration Trust Fund<sup>34</sup>. In this particular region, the fund supports security concerns and development, as well as law enforcement, border management, etc.

At the same time, we are witnessing a major change in the topics of interest in development policies. The highest priorities for the EU are currently migration, youth and women. With respect to migration, in an interview conducted with a EU official<sup>35</sup>, he mentioned that two major plans are being undertaken: in the short-run, the European Commission is tackling the refugee crisis, its causes and its consequences. And in the long-run, the EU is also addressing historic migration to Europe (with special focus on Africa). In particular, the major issues that are being addressed are the push factors that lead migrants to flee their countries and come to Europe. Thirdly, there is a change in the method of funding distribution. The European Commission is outsourcing most of the implementation of its projects. But not only in terms of research centers and consultancy firms. Until now, in order to implement a project or conduct research about a specific subject, there was a bidding process open to different actors. This process was centralized in the European Commission (the aforementioned ‘one-stop shop’). However, this has gradually been outsourced. Today, receiving countries are the ones setting the bidding process themselves, downplaying the importance of Brussels. Finally, there is a change in the funding scheme. The ‘grant vs. loan’ debate<sup>36</sup> is by no means a new one. However, that does not mean that debate about which is the best mechanism are over. Until very recently, the EU always implemented grant packages first and, when that money run out, loans were deployed. But that has now changed in this new era. Today, loans are being offered first, and grants are deployed only in the absence or impossibility of loans.

In this new period of EU development and cooperation policies, the Budget Support and Public Finance Management division in EuropeAid is especially important. This division approves all the different conditions that recipients have to meet in order to receive the money (under the supervision of the European Court of Auditors). Besides, it works on the design and management of systems of public finances (especially in recipient countries). With respect to revenues, the European Commission tries to mobilize internal resources first. As a matter of fact, for a number

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<sup>33</sup> European Commission website. [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/capacity-development\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/capacity-development_en) (last visited on February 3, 2017)

<sup>34</sup> A Trust Fund is a development tool that pools together resources from different donors in order to enable a quick, flexible, and collective EU response to the different dimensions of an emergency situation.

<sup>35</sup> This interview was held in October, 2016 in Brussels, Belgium.

<sup>36</sup> Klein, M. and Hardford, T., Grant vs Loans?, The World Bank Group, March 2005.

of EU officials, the future in funding development strategies is in Domestic Revenue Mobilization. As for expenditures, the European Commission is focused on “teaching” developing countries how to spend more efficiently.

Finally, it should be remarked that if EU development and cooperation policies have been generally evolving to be better suited to face current challenges, a strong focus has been put on security issues.

#### **4.2. When development meets security**

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development strongly emphasizes the need for concerted and multi-level policy responses to global development challenges, including those related to security. More specifically, SDG 16 acknowledges that sustainable development is not possible without peace and good governance. And the reason why SDGs now consider security amongst its main concerns is the fact that “after a few decades of international debate on the fragility concept, security has gradually seeped into the development equation of donors’ engagement, leading to a gradual recognition of a security-development nexus”<sup>37</sup>. Therefore, in this new period, the EU has started to move towards this kind of approach in its handling of the security-development nexus. Much progress has been made over past years, but there is still plenty of room for improvement.

With respect to this development-security nexus, two areas should be highlighted: (1) the EU’s comprehensive approach to country-level engagements in fragile and conflict-affected countries, and (2) the question of security and the aforementioned EU’s new emergency trust fund for migration in Africa<sup>38</sup>. The latter is a good example of this development-security combination in EU’s policies. The reason why the emergency trust fund has been created is to deal with the ongoing unprecedented levels of irregular migration. With this fund, the EU will support the most fragile and affected African countries by helping foster stability in the regions to respond to the challenges of irregular migration and displacement and to contribute to better migration management<sup>39</sup>. It represents current efforts in policing and protecting the EU’s external maritime borders (which have become priority topics on the EU agenda). That is, security, while addressing

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<sup>37</sup> Lannon, E., and Gstöhl, S., eds. (2015), “The European Union’s Broader Neighbourhood: Challenges and Opportunities for Cooperation Beyond the European Neighbourhood Policy”, Routledge Series on Global Order Studies. Abingdon, UK: Routledge, p. 140.

<sup>38</sup> The EU ‘Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa’ attempts to tackle what has become a major humanitarian crisis and a security challenge for Europe in recent years and especially since the tragic civil conflicts in Libya and Syria.

<sup>39</sup> More specifically, it will help address the root causes of destabilisation, displacement and irregular migration, by promoting economic and equal opportunities, security and development.

the ‘root causes’ of migration and displacement, otherwise known as development or a lack thereof.

With respect to comprehensive approaches to country and regional-level interventions in fragile and conflict-affected countries, the EU has started to design programs that focus on achieving the partner country’s development objectives and are backed by a wide range of policy instruments. As for the securitization question, EU policymakers are being increasingly aware of the potential of the promotion of European security interests at the expense of sustainable development. And that is, precisely, the reason why there is an ongoing process of combining both the intergovernmental decision-making system for EU security and development policies.

However, this transformation process in EU policy design that addresses interconnected issues such as development is not exempted from debate. As a matter of fact, there are several points that have encountered fierce opposition. And perhaps the strongest critics have been against the way the migration-development strategy is to be implemented. According to some experts and studies<sup>40</sup>, the aforementioned link between migration and development that the EU tries to undertake is being poorly designed. They argue that the mechanisms meant to solve this problem are unfit for the task. Instead of addressing the assumed ‘root causes of migration’ that make migrants flee their countries, such as the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) are a political strategy to respond to domestic pressure to address the migration crisis and as an effort to leverage African cooperation on migration management<sup>41</sup>. Furthermore, they state that the implicit consequence of ‘buying’ sending states’ cooperation will not be able to achieve African (or others) compliance on migration management. Finally, the EUTF raises some concerns about current EU development policies, since most its funding comes from traditional instruments<sup>42</sup>. However, this has been understood by some as a way of “diverting aid to promote EU migration and security interests in ways that stretch ODA definitions”<sup>43</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> Castillejo, C., “What implications for future EU development policy”, German Development Institute, March 13, 2017.

<http://blogs.die-gdi.de/2017/03/13/what-implications-for-future-eu-development-policy/> (last visited on 30 May, 2017)

<sup>41</sup> Idem.

<sup>42</sup> In particular, the European Development Fund.

<sup>43</sup> Castillejo, C., “What implications for future EU development policy”, German Development Institute, March 13, 2017.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Current challenges that the Western World faces today have led to the advent of SDGs as a logical (and necessary) product of multilateral conventions and international commitment<sup>44</sup>. And, at the same time, SDGs are ushering in a new era for development. The real paradigm shift inherent in the SDGs is that we have stopped thinking about the world in terms of North and South. Instead, we are thinking of it as a global community of nations that all contribute in different ways to tackling the universal global challenges that affect us all. And, as a key actor of the international community, the EU is expected to lead the way.

Before addressing all the challenges and threats that surrounds it, the EU is striving to achieve various goals at home in Europe. Moreover, the EU contribution to this international effort is not just about aid. A whole process of transformation has been set in motion in order to be better suited for the future. The change has started and the way EU development policies contribute to the wider international cooperation has been redesigned. However, this process is far from being completed, and it requires to deeply examine current debates and contradictions in multiple fronts, from EU development principles and commitments to growing trends in this area.

The future will judge how right this shift was. The very existence of the EU will depend, to a large extent, on its success.

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<sup>44</sup> Even though commitment at the international level is always a complicated endeavor, subject to dispersion and change. Perhaps the most recent example is the statement made by President Trump on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 in which he withdrew the U.S. from the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015. This changes things substantially, since the U.S. was to be the figurehead of such an agreement, and it may also lead to a wave of uncertainty and a potential call effect for other countries (especially, U.S. competitors) to leave the agreement as well.

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