

The European Union and the South

Relations with developing countries

MARJORIE LISTER

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”

ERM
GATT
1948 Treaty of Friendship
IMP
EMS
CAP
NATO

DEPENDENCE
CO-OPERATION
DEVELOPMENT / INTERACTION

UACES



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The European Union and the South

At the end of the current millennium the best description of Europe's relations with the developing countries of the South is: all change. Since 1958 the European Community has operated special policies for developing countries, many of which were formerly European colonies. However, neither the policies for Central and South America, the Lomé Convention for the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, nor successive policies for the Mediterranean countries reflect a unified Europe.

The European Union and the South begins by investigating the prospects for a common European foreign policy. It argues that Europe has developed a complex web of external relations but no common foreign policy. In so far as the EU seeks a special world role to overcome its image as political dwarf, the role of champion or partner of the developing South has much to recommend it.

This book presents an up-to-date, scholarly analysis of the foreign and development policy dilemmas facing Europe today. It will be essential reading for students of European external relations, development policy and international affairs.

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Introduction

The European Union (EU) has a vast network of relationships with countries and organizations in all parts of the world. This book undertakes to examine in particular its relations with the developing countries – the ‘South’. As a region the South is no better defined than its equally amorphous counterpart, the developed countries or ‘North’. Nevertheless, the ‘South’ is a near-ubiquitous term used to refer to the former colonies of Europe and other poor countries such as Liberia and Ethiopia.

Among the developing areas of the world, European interest has concentrated first and foremost upon Africa. The present text, too, concentrates its attention on European relations with Africa while also recognizing the importance of connections with the Caribbean, the Pacific, Latin America and East Asia. Within Africa, European interest has traditionally concentrated on the sub-Saharan part of the continent, but, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, this situation is changing.

This book is intended to introduce the subject of the EU’s relations with developing countries to readers with some knowledge of or interest in the contemporary process of European integration or with a specialism in international affairs. Students of European Studies, International Relations, International Political Economy or Development Studies will find many themes of interest. *The European Union and the South* delves into a relationship which is of central importance to the future of Europe, to the future of the developing countries and to the position of both parties within the global international system.

Before dealing specifically with the European Union’s development policy, Chapter 1 situates this policy in the context of the Union’s place in the world at large. Chapter 1 raises the question

of whether or not the EU has a foreign policy as such. It examines how the theory of foreign policy analysis has been applied with limited success to the EU. Despite over three decades of effort at integration, the EU is neither a state nor even a unified voting bloc in the UN. Nevertheless, many European-minded leaders foresee Europe's taking up a global role commensurate with its great economic strength. The structure of the European Commission, which is frequently reorganized, reflects the divisions of responsibility for different aspects of Europe's external relations.

The EU's development policy, one sub-field of foreign policy, is one of its earliest common policies. However, it is still far from unified and each member state maintains its own approach to development. The EU has built up a considerable experience of development policies, but their success is often called into question.

Chapter 1 assesses the development of the internal and external policies of the EU and looks at how Eastern and Central Europe as well as the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries have developed a relationship of 'dependent interdependence' with the EU. The issue of what a politically more powerful Europe could offer to the international system comes under scrutiny. One possible answer is that Europe could use its understanding and history of relations with the South to promote the South's interests in the international arena. Neither the USA – which has traditionally had minimal interest in Africa – nor Japan – whose interest in Africa is growing – is as well suited to this role as the EU. Finally, Chapter 1 probes the EU's bilateral relations with its major partners, the USA and Japan, as well as its multilateral relations with developing countries in Asia, Latin America and Africa.

The external relations of the EU with developing countries of the modern-day South are still built on the foundations of the colonial empires. Chapter 2 delves into the colonial past, a past that still affects, moulds and shapes the present. Because of the strong bonds that France and the UK in particular have with their former colonies, these relations remain important for the contemporary EU and the countries of the South.

Chapter 2 begins with Europe's earliest links to Africa. It examines the views of nineteenth-century European scholars and modern cultural conservatives. The little-known, egalitarian

period of European-African relations in the sixteenth century gave way to the age of colonialism. This was 'the rule of the people, by other people and for other people'. Even today, the commemoration of Columbus' 'discovery' of America is fraught with difficulties over the excesses of European conquest.

Chapter 2 investigates Europe's problem in dealing with those who are perceived as 'other' or different to itself. The role of women in the colonial enterprise, the various explanations of colonialism, the scramble in and out of Africa – and the legacy of the colonial empires – are examined. Up to the present, Europeans have not solved the problem of building relationships with less developed countries. The fashionable argument that Europe today faces a near-inevitable 'clash of civilizations' with other cultures is explored and its policy implications are spelt out.

Chapter 3 looks at a specific region with which Europe has longstanding ties: the Mediterranean. The two shores of the Mediterranean Sea are closely linked and aspire to an ideal of greater cooperation. Nevertheless, the different levels of economic development between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean mean that relations are better characterized as dependent rather than equal. At the end of the Cold War, Europe is trying to fill the security vacuum in the Mediterranean left by the reduction of activity of the two superpowers.

The EU (formerly Community) has been constructing a Mediterranean policy since 1957. But the development of the policy has been sporadic, reactive rather than progressive. Since 1989 the EU has given increased priority to its relations with the countries of the Mediterranean region. It even aims to create a Euro-Mediterranean free trade area.

Chapter 3 also examines Europe's often disappointing relations with Morocco and with the five-member Union of the Arab Maghreb (UMA). The UMA was meant to replicate the experience of European integration on the southern shore of the Mediterranean, but so far it has produced few results. Environmental cooperation in the Mediterranean region, migration and the prospects for creating a permanent Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Mediterranean are analysed in the final sections of the chapter. The conclusion argues that Europe needs to take a sustained and positive role in the Mediterranean to create a zone of prosperity rather than an 'arc of crisis'.

In Chapter 4, the most ambitious of Europe's development

policies, the Lomé Convention, comes under scrutiny. This chapter examines the political economy of the fourth Lomé Convention, signed in 1989 by the then twelve members of the European Community and sixty-eight countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States. The negotiations for Lomé IV, including the controversial support for structural adjustment policies, are analysed. Chapter 4 covers the results of Lomé's trade and aid provisions, its Stabex, Sysmin and emergency aid programmes.

Following the 1995 mid-term review of the Lomé IV provisions, the balance of power in the Lomé relationship shifted in Europe's favour. There has been increased speculation that the present or fourth Lomé Convention will be the last. Chapter 4 further investigates the effects that the fall of the Berlin Wall have had on European-developing country relations and argues that these spill-over effects should not be allowed to disrupt the *acquis* (the acquired rights and benefits) of the Lomé relationship.

Chapter 5 analyses the Lomé Convention in its political context. It identifies three principal 'sources of marginalization' for the Convention and juxtaposes these against the Convention's 'sources of stability'. The latter include the functioning of the Lomé Convention as an alliance and as an international regime. Chapter 5 investigates the Lomé Convention as an example of regional cooperation and finds that the 'fallacy of transposition', which argues that developing countries cannot replicate the experience of European integration, is itself fallacious.

Finally Chapter 5 explores the possibility of expanding Lomé to new developing country partners. The current negotiations between the EU and the 'new South Africa' are broadly welcomed, although the proposals for free trade in industrial goods between the EU and South Africa give cause for concern. Once South Africa is admitted to partial or limited membership of the Lomé system, Chapter 5 argues that a similar arrangement for the Caribbean island state of Cuba could be possible and desirable.

Chapter 6, in 'conclusion', surveys the long history of linkages between Europe and Africa. It reviews the evolution of Europe's post-colonial relations from the Treaty of Rome up to the Lomé Convention. It envisages Europe's entering a new phase of relations with Africa, with the African, Caribbean and Pacific states, and with developing countries in general. Europe is cur-

rently engaged in the pursuit of internal integration, the 'European construction'. But Europe requires a further project, a 'EurAfrican construction' to complement its integration. This wider project could ensure that peace and prosperity are not limited to Europe, North America, Japan and the newly industrializing countries of Asia and the Pacific Rim. By taking up such a 'EurAfrican construction', Europe could avoid the aimlessness and lack of spiritual purpose which have been identified by Czech President Vaclav Havel, Professor Stanley Hoffman and others as being among its chief problems.

Like the Nigerian-born poet Ben Okri, Europe needs to take a positive look at the future of Africa and the developing countries in general, and to make great, concrete efforts to bring about a positive future for them. Like 'destiny' in one of Ben Okri's poems, the EU should continue to take a positive interest in the peoples of the South:¹

We are the miracles that God made
To taste the bitter fruit of time.
We are precious.
And one day our suffering
Will turn into the wonders of the earth.
... Destiny is our friend.

Chapter 1

The European Union and foreign policy

This chapter begins by introducing the question of whether or not the EU has a foreign policy. Arguing that it does not, the chapter then assesses the potential for the EU to develop a unified foreign and security policy in the future. The tools of traditional foreign policy analysis add relatively little to our understanding of the EU. The EU is best understood as a unique type of institution rather than an embryonic state. Chapter 1 examines also the divided nature of decision-making in the European Commission. The vision of Europe's political power and world role is explained, and contrasted with the widespread perception of Europe as a 'political dwarf'. But despite the higher growth rates of other areas, Europe is still an economic superpower.

Analysing the EU's longstanding development policy, the chapter concludes that the record of achievement has been mixed. Security policy is another area of controversy. Arguably, constructing a common European defence and security policy will be even more problematic than a common foreign policy. Next the chapter compares the development of internal and external policies of the EU, finding different rates of expansion in recent years. This part of Chapter 1 concludes by asking what the EU could offer to the international system by taking on a greater world role.

The last section assesses selected multilateral and bilateral relations of the EU with other regions. The interactions between the EU and Central and Eastern Europe, South East Asia, Latin America, Japan and the USA are investigated. Although Europe has an impressive array of external relations with these and other areas, they do not amount to a unified foreign policy.

Conflicting images of a powerful 'superstate Europe' and of a

pathetic Europe unable to cope with local instabilities in the Balkans co-exist in the 1990s. The confusing status of the EU and its foreign policy at present recalls the debates of the 1970s. In the early 1970s it seemed that all the old bets or predictions about the future of Europe were off. Political science had failed to foresee the course of development of the European Community. Johan Galtung characterized Europe as an emerging superstate bent on world mastery while another scholar, Andrew Shonfield, depicted the European Community as a group of states or a 'bag of marbles' only loosely united by inefficient decision-making structures.¹

The question not only whether the objective or goal of a European foreign policy would be met but also of the means by which this might be accomplished came under scrutiny. In a forceful article, Stanley Henig identified two possibilities for developing a common European foreign policy: first, through organic growth, that is, through the development of internal integration; or, second, through the Community's need to respond to external events. Henig opted for the latter – for the need for external shocks to jolt Europe into further integration. In an extraordinary vision of the world as existing in order to provide a backdrop for European events, Henig argued that 'Dealing with the economic problems of Upper Volta or even Nigeria does not really pose that much of a challenge to those who make common policy and whatever the amount of "spill-over"... such successes hardly make a major contribution towards European integration.'² At the end of the twentieth century, it is apparent that dealing with the problems, for instance, of Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) or Nigeria remains a challenge in its own right, and not only for Europe.

More recently, some academics have tended towards the view that the EU has developed a common foreign and security policy (CFSP). Hazel Smith even argued that we should consider that the EU has a foreign policy so that we can apply our knowledge of foreign policy to this otherwise inexplicable phenomenon.³ But the attempt to fit European realities into the theory of foreign policy analysis has dismally failed. Despite the theoretical and quantitative efforts of hundreds of US and European scholars, there is no general theory of foreign policy and little agreement on methodology or on which theoretical paradigm (state-based, interdependence-based, dependency, neo-functionalist) to apply

to which actual case.⁴ We might consider this as the 'rise and fall' of foreign policy analysis. The classic foreign policy models of Graham Allison, for instance, have been revised and refined, but neither alone nor together can they fully explain the events they were designed to explain, namely, the Cuban Missile Crisis.⁵

Still less is the theory of foreign policy able to deal with the unusual *sui generis* case of the EU. Susan Strange noted the tendency of international relations theorists to adjust facts to fit into theories rather than to question the adequacy of their theories. The case of European 'foreign policy' supports her contention that the facts of European foreign policy are more complex than the theories so far admit.⁶

Even the broader charge that political science as a whole has failed to produce any worthwhile results from its methodology is not falsified by the experience of explanations of European 'foreign policy'.⁷ Political scientists are little better now at predicting the evolution of the EU than they were two decades ago, however enjoyable and fulfilling their theorizing may be. As a prominent analyst painstakingly explained, one of the main analytical distinctions for theories of comparative foreign policy is that '*internal* refers to theories related to domestic factors of a given nation state, and *external* refers to those related to the systemic structure of the outside world'.⁸ If this is one of the main analytical contributions of this sub-field, the emperor of comparative foreign policy analysis has very few clothes indeed.

Nikolaj Petersen distinguished three possibilities about how the foreign and security policy of the Community might be conceived: first, as an extra dimension to the foreign policies of the EU member states; second, as a separate policy parallel to national foreign and security policies, i.e. a thirteenth foreign policy; or, third, as an independent expression of the Community's foreign and security policy 'which in some respects is superior to the national policies'.⁹ Professor Petersen chooses the third option, the maximalist position. In fact, there is little evidence that the Community has gone beyond the second option, although its foreign policy is intertwined with, rather than separate from, the national policies of the member states. Professor Petersen admitted that a CFSP cannot be compared with true European policies on fisheries or tariffs but, basing his view more on hope than evidence, sees it moving in that direction. In fact, it is even harder to argue that the EU has a common foreign and security

policy than a common foreign policy alone. Security is very much a junior area of cooperation. A joint EU foreign policy could become 'superior' to national foreign policies in a legal sense, but, as discussed on pp. 19–20, some EU member states do ignore legal strictures. The idea that an EU foreign policy would be 'superior' in the sense of being better or more effective in achieving its goals remains to be proven.

In fact, relatively little attention has been paid to the quality or content of the foreign policy that the EU could produce.¹⁰ In order to secure the assent of the now fifteen EU member states, any foreign policy initiative would have to be safe and uncontroversial. An EU foreign policy would be a conservative, lowest-common-denominator policy. It could be a policy without clear objectives. Like the EU policies regarding Yugoslavia and Chechnya, discussed on pp. 19–20, EU foreign policy would tend to be passive rather than active. Of course a conciliatory, conflict-avoiding European policy would be preferable to a Europe bent on world domination, but it might not be better than the sum of the individual foreign policies of the member states. It might be a neo-mercantilist foreign policy, neglecting the ties of affinity, culture and empire which have been important in particular to the UK, France, Belgium, Spain, Portugal and Italy.

Professor Soetendorp, also proposing the theory of an emergent unitary European foreign policy, expounded the view in 1994 that the Community was becoming a single foreign policy actor. He maintained that in fact this transformation 'has been a continuous goal of the member states'.¹¹ Although admitting that some member states wanted to retain their foreign policy sovereignty, Soetendorp saw an inexorable, functionalist progression into joint foreign policy making. Not only was a joint foreign policy almost inevitable, it led to a morally superior type of policy: 'actors involved in joint decision-making change from self-interested actors into joint problem-solvers and from self-maximizers into joint maximizers'.¹² Foreign policy élites and bureaucracies within the member states would abandon their 'egoistic self-interests'. However, to the outside observer, the pursuit of European rather than national-level interests might look just as 'egoistic', and possibly more dangerous.

In addition to examining the foreign policy – or lack of it – of the EU, many scholars have tried to define the nature of the EU itself. Is it an inter-governmental organization, a nation state, a