

ODA as a Soft Power Instrument

The EU Experience and its Relevance for Asia

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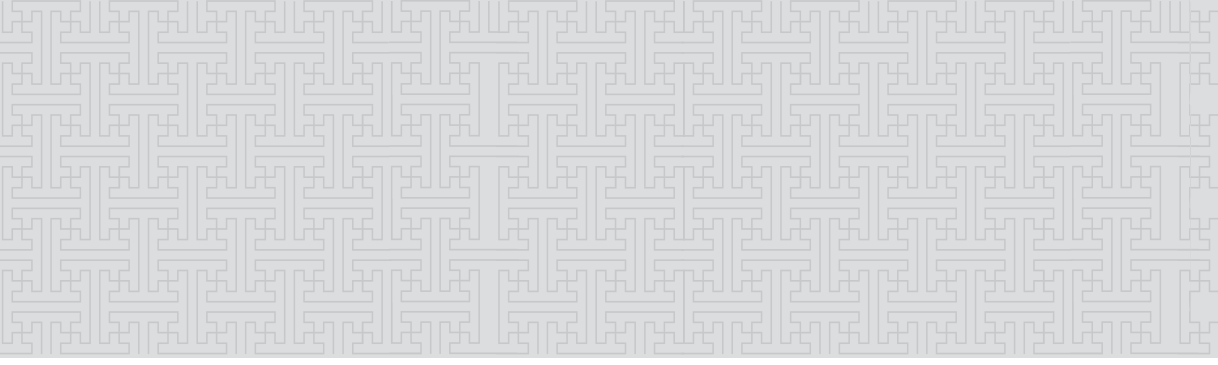
대외경제정책연구원은 EU집행위원회의 지원을 받아 2006년 3월 1일부터 SNU-KIEP EU센터(이하 EU센터)를 운영하고 있다. EU센터는 EU에 관한 연구, 교육, 출판, 홍보 등의 다양한 행사를 수행하여 한국에서 EU에 대한 이해를 높이고자 한다. 서울대와 공동으로 운영하고 있는 EU센터에서 대외경제정책연구원은 EU 관련 국제회의, 연구, 출판, 학술 교류 등을 중심으로 활발한 활동을 전개하고 있다.

Executive Summary

The article starts with an overview of the EU ODA, the author succinctly presenting the EU policy towards the ACP countries, Northern Africa, Asia and Latin America. This introductory section is followed by an analysis on the EU ODA policy as such which is considered to be still perfectible terms of consistency and coordination.

The article continues with an analysis of the EU ODA from the “soft power” theory perspective. The author emphasizes that development assistance is linked to the notion of “power” to the extent that it generates prestige, influence and persuasion in among international actors. This leads to the idea of ODA as a foreign policy instrument. As for the way the EU is using its ODA for achieving its foreign policy agenda, the author underlines the use of the economic and political “the conditionality” as “the hard edge of soft power.” On the same logic the author presents the more recent EU strategy of linking development to security, thus “smartening” its “soft power.”

In the second part of the article, the author reviews the possible relevance of EU ODA policy experience for Asia. The author stresses that despite major differences, the EU can provide enough “prêt a porte” elements for other regions. Thus, based on the EU experience, a political will of individual regional actors, a basic institutional framework, an integrated ODA vision and a financial instrument to support it, are the ingredients to start a common regional ODA policy. At the very least, even the simple initiation of a form of cooperation and coordination of national ODA policies between the major regional



donors in Asia will be a welcome step forward. In this context, the “European Consensus on Development” strategy could inspire a similar “Asian Consensus on Development.” The author also advocates the idea of an independent “Asian Agency for Development.”

The article concludes with a pledge for a strengthened EU-Asia cooperation on development based on “3C formula”: cooperation, coordination, concreteness.

국문요약

본 연구는 EU(유럽연합)의 ODA(정부개발원조)에 대한 개괄적 설명을 시작으로 ACP 국가(아프리카, 카리브 해, 태평양 연안국), 북아프리카, 아시아 및 라틴아메리카에 대한 EU의 ODA 정책을 다루고 있다.

우선, 일관성과 평등을 중시하는 EU ODA 정책의 원칙을 소개하고 있으며, 이어 “연성권력”이라는 이론적 관점에서 EU의 ODA를 분석한다. 본 연구는 개발원조가 명성에서부터 국제적 행위자들에 대한 영향력과 설득력에 이르기까지 “권력”이라는 개념과 연계되어 있음을 강조한다. EU는 ODA를 외교정책 어젠다 달성에 사용하고 있는데, 본 연구에서는 정치·경제적 “조건”을 “연성권력의 단면”이라고 분명히 하고 있다. 이와 같은 논리로 최근의 개발과 안보를 연계시키는 EU전략을 “연성권력”의 “경험축적”으로 설명하고 있다.

그 다음으로 EU의 ODA 전략 경험이 아시아에 주는 시사점을 짚어보면서 두 지역이 매우 다르다 하더라도 EU가 제공할 수 있는 기본적 틀이 있음을 강조한다. 요컨대, 개별 지역 행위자들의 정치적 의지, 기본적인 제도적 틀, 통합된 ODA 비전, 그리고 금융 수단의 지원이라는 EU의 경험을 토대로 동아시아도 ODA 정책을 펼칠 수 있다. 적어도 국가 ODA 정책과 아시아 주요 수여국 사이의 가장 단순한 형태의 협력과 조화조차 큰 진전으로 인식될 것이다. 이러한 맥락에서 “개발에 대한 유럽의 의견수렴”전략으로부터 “개발에 대한 아시아의 의견수렴”을 도출할 수 있을 것이라 기대하며, 독립적인 활동이 가능한 “아시아 개발 기관”의 창설을 권고하고 있다.

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ODA as a Soft Power Instrument

The EU Experience and its Relevance for Asia

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I An Overview of the EU ODA

Today, the EU has the status as the world's leading donor, providing nearly 60% of total official development assistance. The core of EU Development policy is based on poverty reduction in general and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by the 2015 target date.¹⁾ The EU development policy (ODA) is one of the three pillars of the EU external relations, the other two being the trade policy and the political dimension (CFSP) of external relations.

The development cooperation has been central to the European 'project' since its inception, long before the common foreign policy was to take shape, as the first European Development Fund (EDF) for the colonies and overseas territories was set up in 1957. For about 40 years the EU ODA was focused on the ACP countries, with a particular focus on Africa. Since the 1970s also other regions like Latin America and Asia became subjects of EU development cooperation but never reached the attention and the associative perks of the ACP group. Finally, the systemic changes of 1989 marked a sensitive shift of EU development policy concentration from ACP to Central and Eastern Europe and, later, to the extended "Neighborhood." As this new trend was about more than simple ODA and it dealt with middle income transition economies, usually it is treated separately from the "pure" development cooperation policy. Furthermore,

1) The EU has committed itself to increasing the ODA budget to 0.7% of gross national product by 2015, the shared interim goal being 0.56% by 2010; half of the increase in aid will be earmarked for Africa. However, up to now, 4 EU countries, Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Sweden have achieved (and exceeded) the UN target.

the post 1989 geopolitical shift marked the beginning of blending the political and security elements into development cooperation, both for aid effectiveness and strategic reasons, which made the whole process a lot more complex and, yes, contestable.

II The EU Classical ODA Subjects – the ACP Countries

When most ACP countries became independent in the 1960s, they remained associated to the then Economic Community via the Yaoundé Agreement – largely a reciprocal prolongation of the bilateral colonial ties to the francophone African states. With the accession of the UK in 1973, former British colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific joined in an agreement with the EC, signed in Lomé.²⁾ Successive Lomé Conventions over 25 years covered three dimensions: aid via the EDF, non-reciprocal trade preferences, and a political dimension. The distinct feature of Lomé conventions was a commitment to an equal partnership between Europe and the developing countries. The most important innovations brought by this framework were the adoption of non-reciprocity as the trade policy basis with the ACP countries and the introduction of export stabilization schemes. The Lomé IV marked also the introduction of political conditionality in the aftermath of the 1989 revolutions in Central and Eastern Europe. A key characteristic of Lomé Agreements has been its group to group nature EU interacting with ACP as a single body despite differences between its members.³⁾

The Cotonou Agreement in 2000 marks a distinct phase of the EU development cooperation. In the Cotonou Agreement we can observe at least three paradigm shifts: a new innovative economic paradigm, a strengthened political conditionality and a strong differentiation principle introduced.⁴⁾ Trade liberalization and the democratic institution building was the new background context of this agreement. Economically this new frameworks makes the transition from non reciprocity to free trade through regional Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) which were due to enter into force

2) Lomé linked the then 9 EEC Member States with 46 developing countries from Africa, Caribbean Islands and the Pacific, hence the name ACP. It comprised of the original 18 Yaoundé states, Mauritius and 6 other African states and 21 less-developed Commonwealth countries: 12 from Africa, 6 from the Caribbean and 3 from the Pacific. The ACP membership, however, was ever increasing during the lifetime of various Lomé Conventions (I, III, III and IV).

3) In the EU tradition, the development cooperation has been significantly institutionalized. In the Lomé and later Cotonou institutional framework there is a Council of Ministers (involving now 105 governments plus the Commission), a Committee of Ambassadors and, importantly for legitimacy, and a Joint Parliamentary Assembly. The Joint Assembly has a consultative status and it meets twice a year in Brussels or in one of the ACP countries. Also dispute settlement mechanism has been also created.

4) Holland Martin, *The European Union and the Third World*, London: Palgrave (2002).

in January 2008.⁵⁾ Politically, Cotonou introduced a strengthened approach on democratic conditionality. Also Cotonou introduces a regional approach, the Lome uniformity being replaced with regional differentiation and a renewed emphasis towards support for regional cooperation and integration. There is also a differentiation principle by the development status, the Least Development States (LDC) being treated more favorably.

Beyond Cotonou - EBA

With the Everything but Arms initiative introduced from March 2001, the EU became the first major trading power to commit itself to opening its market fully to the poorest countries going well beyond the WTO initiatives. The EBA represent a breach with the long established policy of offering ACP countries preferential advantages over all other developing countries. It signified that the ACP as a group was no longer the dominant element in the EU relations with the developing countries. EBA, adopted as an amendment to the EU's Generalized Scheme of Preferences, provides all Least Developed Countries, including those from Asia with duty free non reciprocal access to the EU for all products except arms and ammunition. Today, the LDC framework comprises 49 countries from all over the world though mostly still are from Africa.

A reinforced focus on Africa

In December 2005, a "European Union Strategy for Africa" has been adopted by the European Council. Later on the Portuguese Presidency conveyed the EU-Africa Summit which adopted an "Africa-EU Strategic Partnership" in Lisbon in December 2007. Following the latest trends on EU ODA, among the priorities set out in this common vision, the themes of peace, security and governance seem to be gaining the upper hand over development issues.

5) By the 31 December 2007 deadline set by the expiry of the WTO waiver for the ACP-EU's long-standing preferential trade arrangements, 35 of the 77 ACP countries had signed a new Interim Agreement with the EU covering mainly trade in goods. The Caribbean is the only region to have signed a comprehensive regional EPA. Signatory countries of comprehensive or interim EPAs will benefit from quota- and duty-free access to the EU market, with transitional measures for sugar and rice from 2008. All parties except the Caribbean will have to continue talks in 2008 with the aim of concluding comprehensive EPAs at the regional level.

III Northern Africa – the Mediterranean Policy

Alongside Lome, cooperation relations with the Mediterranean countries of Northern Africa are among the European Community's oldest relations. There have been several generations of agreements since 1976, most recently since 1995.

As regards trade, the EU Mediterranean policy is part and parcel of the "free trade area" trend. The road towards achieving the objective of a vast Euro-Mediterranean FTA by 2010 is still a long and difficult one. Financial and technical cooperation is particularly geared towards backing up political, economic and social reforms in the nine partner countries (Algeria, Palestinian Authority, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia). In order to go some way towards creating a multilateral framework around this network of bilateral relations and, in particular, to promote South-South links, the Barcelona Process was launched in 1995. However, without waiting for the Barcelona Process to bear fruit, in 2003 the EU announced the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP) which is including the Barcelona process. Whether it was a good idea to include countries as different as Ukraine and Morocco, or Armenia and Egypt, in the same policy is questionable and there is no doubt that the eastern and southern strands of the ENP have to be perceived very differently.⁶⁾

The recent initiative by the French President, Nicolas Sarkozy, to launch a Mediterranean Union between the States to the north and south of the Mediterranean is unlikely to rationalize an architecture which is already complicated enough.⁷⁾

6) Frisch Dieter, *The European Union's development policy*. (ECDPM Policy Management Report 15). Maastricht: ECDPM (2008).

7) Ibid.

IV Relations with Asia and Latin America (ALA countries)

Since mid 1970s, the development cooperation was extended with other developing regions, with Asia and Latin America and especially after the Spain and Portugal joined the Community. As trade relations with Asia and Latin America were governed, until quite recently, by the GSP, the focus tended to be on other forms of cooperation financial and technical cooperation. This kind of cooperation was given tangible form in a first budget entry in 1976 which still bore the heading “non-associated developing countries.” It was only in 1985 that this was finally changed to developing countries of Asia and Latin America (ALA). From 1988, there were separate budget appropriations for “Latin America” and “Asia.” If all forms of aid are added together, including emergency aid in the case of natural disasters (relatively common in these regions), the Community itself channels some EUR 500 million per year into Latin America and about EUR 1 billion into Asia.⁸⁾ That amount is supplemented by EIB loans.⁹⁾ As these are continents in which the so called “emerging” countries predominate, official aid normally plays a more limited role than economic and trade cooperation and private investment. In contrast to the volume of aid channeled into Africa, it is only in exceptional cases that Community aid to Asia and Latin America achieves the “critical mass” needed to enable the Commission to play the role of lead donor or to lead the coordination of aid between the Community and the Member States.¹⁰⁾

In the historical advancement of the EU-Asia development cooperation three phases can be identified: a period of indifference (1957-1981) when the development cooperation with Asian countries was mainly dominated by food and emergency aid to the South Asian countries; a period of renewed interest (1981-1992) when, mainly due to Spanish initiative, the cooperation with the Asian and Latin American countries obtained more institutionalized form under two special Council Regulations; and the post Maastricht period (1992- up to

8) Ibid.

9) Currently, cooperation with Asia, Latin America and South Africa is financed through the Instrument for Development Cooperation (DCI) (total amount: €16.897 billion for the 2007-2013 periods). For Asia, the Commission adopted 18 individual country strategies and a regional strategy for the period 2007-2013 with an overall budget of some €5.2 billion.

10) See Frisch Dieter.

date), when in the wake of the “Pacific Century.” the EU has launched its first comprehensive “Asia Strategy” in 1994.

While cooperation with the LDCs in Asia is similar in form to cooperation with the poor countries of Africa, the priority themes of cooperation with the large emerging countries/regions – India, China, ASEAN – are increasingly in the fields of the economy, science, technology, energy, environment and, last but not least, trade, fields in which the EU and its Asian partners share mutual interests.¹¹⁾ Up to now trade arrangements with Asia have always involved the autonomous GSP system with more favorable treatment for the LDCs (through EBA initiative). Steps towards the creation of free trade areas have also been taken in EU-Asia relations. Negotiations in this respect have been under way with India, South Korea and ASEAN since 2007 and are intended to lead to new-generation trade agreements covering not just goods and services but investment, public contracts and non-tariff barriers.

11) With China first trade agreement was signed in 1978 and was replaced in 1985 by a trade and cooperation agreement. Since 1998, there have been annual EU-China summits. Since 2007 negotiations on a new “partnership and cooperation agreement” were opened. The EU’s relations with ASEAN celebrated their thirtieth anniversary in 2007. An EEC- ASEAN cooperation agreement (non preferential) was signed in 1980. The partnership is a multi-faceted one covering dialogue on political and security issues, economic and trade cooperation, and financial cooperation of some EUR 200 to 250 million each year.

V EU ODA – A Perfectible Model

The Maastricht Treaty in 1993 provided a legal basis for development cooperation. Article 177 spells out that EU policy should foster sustainable economic and social development in the developing countries, and more particularly the most disadvantaged among them. Policy should also smooth the gradual integration of developing countries into the world economy, and combat poverty in the developing countries. The EU is to promote democracy and the rule of law, and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. The Treaty also defines 3 principles (the so called 3Cs) on which EU development policy should be based:

- Complementarity between development policies of the Member States and the EU, in order to avoid duplication and to maintain the relevance of individual programmes of the Member States. The ambition is that the EU should intervene in areas where it has a comparative advantage relative to the member states. The areas selected are the link between trade and development, support for regional integration, support for macroeconomic policies and institutional capacity building, particularly in the areas of good governance and the rule of law.
- Coherence of all Community policies so that they take account of development objectives.
- Coordination between the Member States and the EU administration;

Later on, the Amsterdam Treaty (1997) added a fourth principle: - Consistency of all external activities of the European Union.

Not surprisingly, the parallel operation of EU and Member State policies involves a series of consistency and coordination issues. Institutional fragmentation is probably the most visible a factor. Responsibility for development policy is divided between DG External Relations (which deals with ALA and the Neighborhood countries), DG Development (ACP countries) and ECHO which deals with emergency assistance. In addition, since 2001 a new agency the EuropeAid Cooperation Office has been responsible for implementation of all development programmes. Besides, many horizontal issues directly related to development are the responsibility of other DGs such as trade,

agriculture and fisheries.

There were efforts to improve internal coherence through the promotion of inter-service groups but some tensions and disagreements are starting right from the College of Commissioners where the Development policy and its commissioner is overwhelmed by the centrality and importance of other policies like trade, agriculture etc. Probably there will be a need for a development commissioner with stronger attributions, a sort of “Mr. Development” (in analogy with Mr. PESC) eventually with one leg in the Council (in analogy with the proposed double-hatted EU Minister of Foreign Affairs).

Furthermore, the EU is still to improve the coherence of the policies that are most important for the developing countries and the politically most problematic is not the ODA policy but trade policy and the CAP. Tariffs are still high with the EU for a range of agricultural products that are important to developing countries although important progress has been made on export subsidies, which have been drastically reduced through the successive CAP reforms.

On coordination issues, there are not only problems between Brussels and the Member States but particularly problems of coordination between the Member States themselves. The problems are not only of managerial nature but also divergences of concepts. In general, Northern states regard development co-operation as a full-fledged policy area while Southern European states tend to see development co-operation as an instrument for foreign affairs and economic policies. Besides differences in the geographical priorities of ODA, some member states have a solid tradition and vocation of development cooperation while for others this subject has only a marginal character. All these might, at least partially, explain the coherence and coordination problems between different donor countries, between donor countries and the EU, and between different Community policies.

Nevertheless, what always characterized the EU is constructively addressing challenges and progressively finding solutions. Thus, in the past years several policy innovations were introduced in order to address the coherence and consistency issues. An “European Consensus on Development” has been adopted (December 2005) followed by a “Consensus on Humanitarian Aid” (December 2007) and a system of annual “Reports on Policy Coherence for Development” has been implemented since 2007. Also, for more coordination and harmonization among EU donors, a new “Code of Conduct” for the division of labor between the Commission and the Member States has been introduced. In addition, the Commission is preparing a “Compendium on Best Practices” in division of labor. Thus, there are more than enough programmatic and strategic

documents and now there is time for putting them into practice and see some concrete results.

VI EU ODA and the Soft Power Concept

ODA as a foreign policy instrument

Since ODA is an instrument generally used in the dynamics between states at various levels of economic development, it automatically relates to the idea of power and influence in the international arena, elements which are generally managed in the context of foreign policy of an international actor. The idea of ODA as an instrument of foreign policy is not new. In earlier works both Hans Morgenthau and Karl Deutch outline several characteristics of ODA that form a clear link between foreign aid and foreign policy. Actually the most notorious example of foreign aid used as an instrument of foreign policy and power projection has been applied in Europe in the form of the Marshall Plan of the 1940s. To a certain extent, it is considered that the “regional approach” and the centralized administration of the Marshall Plan stand at the base of what was to become the European Economic Community. That is, Europe was the first subject of a coherent, strategically motivated and strongly conditional aid policy.

EU ODA as a (soft) power instrument

The idea of ODA as a foreign policy instrument leads us logically to the definition of ODA as an instrument of power projection in international relations. In contrast with the “hard edge” of power which is the blunt use of force through military instruments, the benevolent and benign nature of ODA would place it in the category of “soft power” instruments. The Harvard Professor Joseph S Nye was the first to define the term soft power as ... “the ability to shape the preferences of others... with intangible assets such as an attractive personality, culture, political values and institutions, and policies that are seen as legitimate or having moral authority.”¹²⁾ However, in Nye’s mind, “hard” and “soft” power are complementary but a policy will gain legitimacy if a country relies more on its “soft power” than on its “hard power”, that is the use of cooptive methods rather than coercive ones. This seems to be the idea which more recently inspired the EU philosophy and official discourse on “soft power.” This idea is suggestively presented by the former EU Commissioner for Trade, Chris Patten in his book

12) Nye Joseph, *Bound to Lead. The Changing Nature of American Power*, New York, Basic Books (1990a).

“Not quite the diplomat”, the “soft power” being defined as a “weapon of mass attraction” for the EU in the international arena.¹³⁾

Not surprisingly, due to its non state and neutral-benign image, EU has been put at work by the Member States in more sensitive (political and “internal affairs”) areas which require a more subtle and “soft” approach. According to the Maastricht Treaty, in the division of work between EU and the Member States and EU is to take the areas where it might have a comparative advantage.... like the promotion of democracy and good governance, areas where the EU persuasion and political conditionality is more likely to be accepted.

Conditionality - the “hard” edge of Soft Power?

In general, aid was never unconditional and this goes back to the Marshall Plan, where post-war Europe was the subject of US aid. In absence of credible military means, conditionality is considered to be the EU’s “hard power,” which means that the EU can rely on various instruments like the suspension of aid and preferential economic agreements when engagements are not respected.

Economic conditionality elements were always present in the framework of the EU-ACP relations, but when we are referring to ODA as an instrument of soft power we have in mind especially the use of political/governance conditionality which was present since the Lome IV and reinforced in the Cotonou Convention. Articles 9 and 96 replicate the provisions on the ‘essential elements’ and the ‘suspension clause’ contained in the Lome agreement. Articles 9 and 33 also include positive measures for promoting human rights, strengthening democratic governance and consolidating the rule of law. The introduction of “good governance” into the agreement proved to be a particularly controversial issue. As a compromise solution, the EU and the ACP agreed to include good governance, lightly defined as “the transparent and accountable management of human, natural, economic and financial resources for the purpose of equitable and sustainable development” (article 9.3), as a “fundamental element” of the partnership, subject to regular monitoring.

The commitment to good governance does not possess the legally binding nature of the “essential elements” and failure to uphold it does not lead automatically to the initiation of the suspension mechanism enshrined in the Convention. Nevertheless, serious cases of corruption, including bribery, are now

13) Patten Chris, *Not Quite the Diplomat: Home Truths About World Affairs*, Allen Lane (2005).

grounds for suspending the co-operation. Article 97 sets a specific consultation procedure to deal with such cases. However, the consultation procedure remains largely unregulated and the “appropriate measures” are at the discretion of the EU.

After an experience of about 15 years of promoting democratic governance through political conditionality, in the context of EU ODA policy, the results appear to be rather mixed. Particularly there were observed, tensions between positive and negative conditionality, the negative conditionality, which refers to the suspension of aid as a measure of last resort showing little effective results. In accordance with its soft power projected identity, the overarching strategy of EU was and remains one of “constructive engagement.” Its overall objective is encouraging political change in a light persuasive and constructive manner based on dialogue and partnership with governments. Thus, EU considers that new types of political/governance conditionality based on incentive mechanisms and selectivity approaches could yield greater results. This strategy aims to establish a more subtle, refined and progressive incentive mechanism which bases aid on the direction of change, rather than the perceived level of democracy.

In the latest EU ODA philosophy, “aid selectivity” is a particular form of ex post conditionality establishing a positive link between aid allocations and country performance. This strategy is rooted in the belief that the effect of aid on growth tends to increase with the quality of policy. As a consequence, it is argued that aid would be more effective if it were either more systematically targeted to poor countries with sound economic reform programs or used to promote good policies. Thus, the separation of aid into several components and the introduction of phased programming provide alternative incentive mechanisms...

Any discussion on the EU’s soft power projection through conditionality should include the 5th Enlargement experience. Actually, the policies of “enlargement” and “neighborhood” represent the first external policies of the European Union where the notion of “soft power” was explicitly formulated in official public discourses. With the 5th Enlargement represents the ultimate proof of the conditionality effectiveness in some specific conditions. Obviously, in the case of the Enlargement the stakes were different and the conditionality “stick” was proportionately balanced by a huge “carrot” represented by the accession perspective and interim benefits in the form of consistent pre-accession aid. Nevertheless, there is a reasonable chance that the 5th Enlargement conditionality methodology might be adapted to give results also in other circumstances, where the incentive is not the EU membership but economic and technical support, and trade liberalization which is exactly what the ordinary ODA is offering. This

is the rationale of the European Neighborhood Policy (ENP). If it will prove successful, then the EU will have a universal benchmark for the effective use of development aid and trade liberalization as incentives for development reforms and stability in third countries.

The ENP refers to a combination of discourses on the attractive power of European values and norms, and the supplementing of traditional conditionality with a negotiated approach based on partnership, participation, ownership and differentiation. The conditionality benchmarks are to be developed individually in cooperation with the partner countries, in order to insure the principles of ownership and commitment. Obviously from theory to practice there remain some obstacles like the fact that the benchmarks are sometimes not precise enough to design aid projects according to the needs of the subject countries and the effective implementation of the principle of “differentiation” would require better country expertise in elaborating the individual Action Plans. Nevertheless, since the ENP is just at the beginning of its implementation a reasonable length of time (10 years?) will be needed to measure of its practical success.

From “soft” to “smart”- The challenges of linking Development to Security

As we have seen, in the last years, besides the political elements related to democracy and good governance there is an increasing trend to include conflict prevention, conflict resolution, anti terrorism, within the development related agreements.¹⁴⁾ This is a consequence of the challenges of the last decade, and especially the post 9/11 environment. Thus, the EU is trying to use its soft, attractive power more pragmatically and strategically. The theoretical backing is provided again by the Harvard Professor Joseph Nye who argues that soft power alone is rarely sufficient to accomplish a country's goals. In most instances, countries need to combine soft and hard power into strategies where they reinforce rather than undercut each other. That is “smart” power... a concept dearly embraced by the EU leaders in their official discourses.¹⁵⁾

14) The Cotonou Agreement introduces new topics such as peace building and conflict prevention in article 11 as well as migration issues in article 13.

15) Hugh Richardson, Head of the Delegation of the European Commission to Japan, uses this concept in a recent speech on *Smartening the EU's soft power* (Waseda University, Tokyo, 16 May 2008). This is based on similar speeches given by the External Relations Commissionaire.

Thus, in the last years, the European policy-makers proclaim a two-way link between development and security to be an increasingly core element of EU foreign policy. They insist that this defines European strategies in Africa, the Balkans, and the Middle East etc.¹⁶⁾

Institutionally, since the Maastricht Treaty, the development policy got a political and strategic content as peace, conflict and migration are issues which come naturally, following the incorporation of development goals into CFSP. Ten years latter, the European Security Strategy (2003) offers a specific three-way linkage between security, development and governance reform, security being considered the first condition of development.

The “European Consensus on Development,” agreed in 2006 as the first common set of guidelines for European development policies, reiterates a conviction in the two-way linkage between security and development: development is said to be necessary for security; security necessary for development. The fragility of developing, conflict-prone states is to be addressed “through governance reforms, the rule of law, anti-corruption measures and the building of viable state institutions.”¹⁷⁾

However, this new approach is faced many challenges. It is commonly suggested that the EU is still at an early stage in making development assistance ‘conflict sensitive’ and there are still many challenges on the way, not least at the level of policy makers. Still very little expertise on conflict exists within development policy-making circles and still the development in conflict resolution strategies has not been developed sufficiently in detail to provide meaningful operational guidance. In addition, the development NGOs have been critical on the new security-development link accusing it of diverting poverty relief into support for Western strategic objectives in middle-income regions like the Balkans, Middle East etc where EU security issues are at stake. On the other hand, the Brussels officials, especially from the Council, complain that the development projects have no clear strategic and security impact. The Member States themselves are still clearly divided over the extent to which the security

16) Youngs Richard, *Fusing Security and Development: Just another Euro-platitude?* CEPS Working Document No. 277/October 2007.

17) The Article 11 of the Cotonou Agreement, provides a legal base for conflict funding from the EDF, this being one of the main achievements in the development-security linkage. Also the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) makes formal provision for ODA to support conflict mitigation initiatives. Also the civilian Rapid Reaction Mechanism, introduced on the back of the ESDP, includes provision for the deployment of police, legal and civil administration experts.

agenda should influence development policy. Especially in the context of Asia the consistency problems have been more visible especially regarding the relations with Myanmar, North Korea and China.¹⁸⁾

A possible point of confluence between security and development objectives might be found in the governance agenda. For many years, ODA supported governance reform in developing countries as a mean of improving the effectiveness of pro-poor development. Direct links between governance reform and strategic interests are now identified in the EU security and conflict prevention discourse although in general the good governance agenda remains more linked to development policy-making than to strategic goals.¹⁹⁾

“Smart” ODA - still a soft power instrument?

Considering the latest trend of “smart” strategic use of ODA can it still be considered a “soft” power instrument? And is it EU still a “civilian” power? There is a considerable fuzziness in the literature over where to draw the line between “soft” - civilian and “hard” - military power. Nevertheless there is common sense that usually anything that involves the use of the military is no longer “soft.”²⁰⁾ An “ideal type” of civilian power is an actor which uses civilian means for persuasion, to pursue civilian ends, and this is how the EU has been defined in 1972 by François Duchêne who preached for the projection of EU external influence through essentially civilian forms of power.²¹⁾

On the other hand we can argue that just because the EU has acquired military means and uses its ODA more “strategically” in the context of the security-development binomic interdependence, it does not invalidate its definition as a civilian “soft power” actor, especially since the civilian objectives are pursued (security and stability for development). In fact, as Joseph Nye suggest, the EU must have military means in order to be a civilian power, because it is only by wielding military power that civilian ends can be pursued.²²⁾ Thus,

18) See Richard Youngs.

19) Ibid.

20) Smith Karen E, “The End of Civilian Power EU: A Welcome Demise or Cause for Concern?” *The international spectator*, 35 (2), April-June 2000, pp. 11-28.

21) Duchêne Francois, “Europe’s Role in World Peace,” in R Mayne (ed), 1972: *Europe Tomorrow: Sixteen Europeans Look Ahead*, London: Fontana/Collins (1972).

22) Nye Joseph, *Soft Power: The Means to Success in World Politics* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

a “smart”/efficient soft power would entail the backing of some forms of hard power.

VII The Universal Relevance of the EU Experience

By any standard the EU is a successful model of integration. Therefore, not surprisingly, the EU model is highly regarded elsewhere in the world and there are many declarative wishes to study and selectively adapt parts of the EU experience, however few, if any, concrete attempts where registered until now.

In Asia every year there are at least a couple of conferences on the EU model and the possible EU “lessons” for regional integration and every time the conclusions are similar: due to the particular historical, cultural and geopolitical characteristics of Asia, the EU cannot be a model for Asian regional integration. The more optimistic conclusions state that the EU can be, at most, a reference point. Every attempt to discuss the potential transfer of the extensive EU experience in integration gets stuck in the same postulate: ...the classical patterns of regional integration in Asia is market driven integration and informal, non institutional political cooperation in contrast with the institutional and law driven characteristics of EU...

Nevertheless, the more stubborn researchers of the regional integration phenomenon and the Asia-Europe relations insist that, at a closer look, the EU model dismantled in pieces might not look that complicated and esoteric and there can be identified both paradigms and punctual elements with universal transferable value.

Thus, there can be identified enough “prêt a porte” (ready to be taken) useful inspiring elements for other regions. Thus, especially the earlier stages of European integration can be adapted in other regions. Basically for a large part of its existence EU has been just a more institutionalized Customs Union. Also the earlier stages of the political, economic and monetary cooperation are feasible transferable examples. Even some institutional elements like the Council of Ministers and the European Parliament in its earlier form (a Parliamentary Assembly representing the national parliaments of the region) may be not that original, and can be already found in other regional organizations. A basic Single Market, following the advance of trade liberalization beyond the free movements of goods, to the free movement of services and capital and even people, can be attained in other areas, at least by mutual recognition method, providing that there is enough economic rationale and political will, and the EU experience provides the full set of technical steps for it.

Furthermore, EU branded operational concepts like the “Open Method of Coordination” used for the coordination of economic policies and growth and

jobs strategies, can be feasibly adjusted to suit the regional integration patterns in Asia, thus serving not only economic purposes but political and security aims too, through the creation of a culture of dialogue and cooperation among the regional partners.

Not least, various the models forwarded in the context of debate on the future of Europe (a la carte, multi-speed, variable geometry, flexible structures) might also represent a useful a source of inspiration for a complex and diverse region like Asia.

Thus the EU model offers an “a la carte” menu of bits and pieces of experience from which Asian leaders and strategists can choose what might best suit their taste, from a culture of dialogue, conciliation (including historical reconciliations), compromise, consensus and solidarity, to flexible methods of cooperation and coordination and various technicalities of market integration (like harmonization based on mutual recognition), regional cohesion, programs and projects design and implantation ...

The EU ODA experience - What might be relevant for Asia?

As we have seen, the EU development cooperation policy is far from been perfect and certainly is not among the most functional and integrated EU policies. When it comes to reference elements, the EU regional-development policy (cohesion policy) would be more relevant as a “model.” Nevertheless, the synchronizing the individual development policies of an increasing number of member states, the progress towards efficiency and coherence with other policies, and not least the role of a common ODA as a soft power instrument for projecting a regional identity in international affairs, might represent sufficient points of interest for the ODA actors in Asia, especially for the political leaders who dream about the structuring of an Asian regional identity.

Put it simplistically, based on the EU experience, a political will of individual regional actors, a basic institutional framework for cooperation and coordination, an integrated regional ODA vision and a financial instrument to support it are the basic ingredients to start an integrated regional ODA policy. In the particular conditions of Asia there are relatively few actors with solid individual ODA programs and therefore based on the political will, an integrated regional ODA vision can be initiated through bilateral, trilateral or fully regional cooperation (in the case of ASEAN +3) as part of the already existing political dialogue, or by using the already existing regional Development agencies (like ADB or ESCAP) or, by initiating a new regional development agency to project an integrated

regional development vision.

Today, the “Asian ODA” policy is more or less the Japanese ODA policy given its weight and tradition in the region as well as its global presence. Therefore, in the Asian context, any form of regional ODA structure will have the Japanese ODA at its core together with one, two, eventually a few more regional partners (Korea, China, possibly Taipei and the wealthier members of ASEAN like Singapore). An ODA bilaterals Japan-Korea, Japan-China or trilaterals Japan-Korea-China are theoretically feasible, if the political conditions and will exists. The cooperation on ODA, with some concrete joint pilot programmes and projects, might become part of the bilateral dialogue with major political and diplomatic significance.

From the early EU experience with EDF, a regional ODA vision must have a specific financial instrument fuelled from the national (ODA) budgets of the donors and there must be a relatively independent and neutral agency to manage the regional financial instrument and the effective programmes and projects implementation. Since the creation of a lighter Asian version of the European Commission would be rather fictional for the moment, the most feasible option would be the use of the already existing regional development framework. This is the Asian Development Bank, an institution with 40 years experience. Although the participation in ADB is international (with US providing about 15% of the funds) the regional focus and massive regional participation is very relevant.²³⁾ Eventually a fully regional component might be developed within ADB or attached to it by using the already existing infrastructure, staff and experience. However, when it comes to the ADB, it is ultimately it is a Bank, a financial lending institution, the relative equivalent of the EIB, which is not providing non reimbursable assistance and a more comprehensive dialogue and cooperation on development. Therefore an “Asian Agency for Development” managing a specific regional financial instrument would be needed in order to manage a regional ODA policy. Another option would be to construct this regional agency in the framework of the (United Nations) Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) which is regional enough with 58 members from the region out of the total of 62. As for the regional financial instrument on the EDF model, a fully regional section of the existing Asian Development Fund (created since 1973) might be adjusted to manage non reimbursable assistance/grants to suit the needs of a fully fledged regional ODA.

23) 14 EU members are members of ADB.

In fact, there are already calls for an exclusively regional lending institution in the form of an Asian Investment Bank, since the ADB, although “Asian in spirit”, is not fully Asian. Leading Asian economist like Jaimini Bhagwati supported the idea of an Asian Investment Bank providing loans in an Asian currency (yen?) to promote regional infrastructure projects and intra Asian trade. Such an institution could play the same role as EIP in fuelling the EU ODA ...this being said, how about the structuring of an Asian ODA?

Furthermore, the EU experience shows that a regionally managed ODA has comparative advantages in areas which normally require a more synergic approach like the link between trade and development, sustainable development, regional financial stability and more politically sensitive issues. Until now, comparing with European donors, the individual Asian ODA policies have rarely touched issues like the institutional capacity building and good governance. The EU experience shows that a non state, neutral agency has more chances to be effective in managing elements of political conditionality than a national donor and this is particularly true for the Japanese ODA in Asia where the receivers are particularly sensitive to any interference in internal affairs, particularly if harsh historical memories are involved.

The EU experience and expertise on “tranzitology” especially the conditional assistance programmes for economic and political reforms in Central and Eastern Europe might also provide a relevant set of benchmarks for Asia.

At the very least, even the simple initiation of a form of cooperation and (ideally) coordination of national ODA policies between the (few) major regional donors in Asian will be a welcome step forward. What the EU ODA experiences basically proves is that countries of different size, culture historical and geopolitical interest can basically agree on a common framework and harmonize and coordinate their visions and action. The management of diversity and the culture of compromise, consensus, cooperation and coordination is probably the most relevant model for Asia.

Especially in the last years the EU has released several veritable “blue prints” and “Codes of Conducts” for effective coordination of ODAs which might be a useful lectures for the ODA policy makers in Asia. How about an “Asian Consensus on Development”?

VIII Towards a Strengthened EU – Asia Cooperation on Development

The already existing EU-Asia cooperation, at bilateral and inter-regional level, offers the best framework for the mutual experience transfer of best practice in development cooperation and for increasing aid efficiency at global level through cooperation and coordination. When it comes to the ODA experience, both the EU and its member states can mutually benefit from the extensive Japanese experience in Asia and all over the world. Not least, for years, the Japanese ODA has been facing similar problems of adjustments, inter-institutional coordination and successive reforms for addressing the efficiency problem as well as the coherence of ODA with trade and external political and security priorities.²⁴⁾ Also, when it comes to the concept of ODA as a soft power instrument, Japan probably provides the ultimate example of a soft power projection through an essentially ODA supported foreign policy. Therefore, an EU-Asia dialogue and cooperation on ODA offers mutual benefits in terms of both experience sharing and practical implementation.²⁵⁾

Therefore, in order to take benefit of the existing potential, the ODA component within the already existing frameworks of dialogue and cooperation should be consolidated both in terms of areas covered and especially in terms of consistency in order to generate concrete joint strategies, joint working groups

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- 24) The efficiency and strategic coherence of Japanese ODA policy has been affected for years by bureaucratic rivalry especially between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI, formerly MITI), over the management of aid. The METI traditionally promoted the mercantilist uses of aid that advance Japan's economic interests while the Foreign Ministry emphasized the political uses of aid in ways commensurate with Japan's regional and global responsibilities. At the same time, recently there are signs of institutional strengthening of the ODA management as since the 1st of October 2008 the part of Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) providing Japanese ODA loans and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) who manages grant aid dispersed by the Foreign Ministry, has been merged into one organization, "New Japan International Cooperation Agency." For the first time, one Japanese agency is now able to provide technical assistance, ODA loans and grant/ aid all under one institution.
- 25) Japan's record as an aid donor dates back to the 1950s and since the first disbursement, Japan's ODA became the most acceptable and efficient instrument of Japanese diplomacy. Japan has used ODA as a form of investment, a confidence-building measure, a solution for bilateral problems, a manifestation of economic power and global leadership.

and joint actions.

The EU-Asia Strategy

In 2001, the EU sought to redefine its relations with Asia, announcing a new strategic partnership for the region. Three out of the six key points of the “EU-Asia Strategy,” refer directly to the Development cooperation dialogue: demonstrating the EU’s effectiveness as a partner in reducing poverty in Asia; promoting respect for human rights, democracy, good governance and the rule of law; building global alliances with key Asian partners to address global challenges (including poverty and its derivatives). Other two elements (engagement with Asia in the political and security fields; strengthening mutual trade and investment flows with the region) have a strong relevance to the development cooperation in terms of development-trade and development-security links.

From the “soft power” perspective, a particular significance has the 6th key element of the EU-Asia strategy, the provision on strengthening the level of awareness of EU in Asia. The new Strategy contains many considerations, on sharing/transferring the EU basic norms and value (democracy, human rights, governance and rule of law, social development and labor standards) with universal value. If the EU wants to diffuse its values, thus projecting its “soft power” in the region, an increase in the level of awareness from the part of the Asian public is critical. This is particularly true since a recent “perceptions” analysis conducted in the region shows that despite the EU standing as an economic giant, and the biggest ODA provider, the Asian public is rather unaware and/or indifferent to it.²⁶⁾ Therefore, it is not a coincidence that in the last years increased EU funding was made available to support the creation of EU information centers and EU Studies Centers throughout Asia (especially China) with a particular focus on “outreach” (public relations) activities.

A 3C formula for EU-Asia dialogue on ODA

Among the priorities on EU-Asia dialogue on development, corollary to the Brussels vocabulary, a 3 C formula can be suggested:

- Cooperation and dialogue on regional and global development cooperation should find a firm place within the EU bilateral agenda with countries in Asia

26) *The EU Through the Eyes of Asia*, Edited by Martin Holland, Peter Ryan, A Nowak and Natalia Chaban, Singapore Warshaw (2007).

as well as within the interregional dialogue like EU-ASEAN. Particularly the bilateral dialogue and cooperation among the donor countries should be strengthened (EU-Japan, EU-Korea). Also and an EU-China dialogue from a “donors” perspective (not donor-beneficiary) should be initiated.

The ASEM constitute a particularly good interregional platform for promoting joint overarching strategies on development which are to be detailed thereafter at the bilateral level. Steps have been already undertaken in this sense but a clear vision and political message is still missing. Since the 7th ASEM meeting in Beijing has just ended, drafting an “Asia-Europe Consensus on Development” might be a good homework for the next ASEM meeting in two years time.

- Coordination of ODA policies in geographical areas of mutual priority for increased impact and efficiency. Such geographical areas of priority in the ODA strategies of both EU and the individual Asian donors are clearly Africa and Central Asia. Especially Africa stands out as being central in the ODA strategies of EU, Japan (new trend) and China.
- Concreteness should be given to the joint political and declarative initiatives resulting from the bilateral dialogue. The issue of cooperation on global challenges, including the development cooperation is regularly present into Joint Strategies and Partnerships signed by EU with various partners in Asia (Japan, China, and Korea). Now there is a need to move towards concrete implementation, to agree on detailed joint action plans, to start joint pilot programmes and projects, to set up an effective and regular institutional framework for meetings at operational/experts level. Here, again, the extended EU experience in converging the different member states ODAs should be helpful.

Africa - a common ground for EU-Asia ODA cooperation

Africa has been traditionally a central focus of ODA from various countries since it has always been a continent confronted with problems of underdevelopment and alarming humanitarian issues. At the same time, it is difficult to oversee the obvious geo-economic temptations represented the natural wealth and economic potential of Africa especially in the current context global hunger for raw materials and the volatile situation in the Middle East.

Therefore today we are assisting to a sort of competition among the donors for obtaining leverage and prestige and thus “soft power” in Africa through ODA. This can be turned in an advantage for Africa if an increased number of donors can achieve the critical mass needed for bringing the long waited breakthrough in the development of the continent. This critical mass can be achieved especially if the donors agree to coordinate their ODA strategies and resources. For decades Africa has proved to be a veritable black hole, swallowing financial resources without visible results. Therefore, a more holistic and strategic approach, linking ODA with issues like good governance and security are essential and the various donors should reach a consensus on this issue and, ideally, promote a coordinated development strategy. However, while EU provides some clear benchmark on development-good governance-security links, Japan agrees on the importance of this elements but has no tradition and experience in implementing this elements, while China, with an increasing presence in Africa, does not touch this (EU defined) “fundamental” issues at all, thus undermining the other donors efforts in the region since the African governments can obtain assistance the “easier way.” Thus, once again, coordination and convergence between the donors ODA strategies is needed and the quickest way to do it is at bilateral level. The most recent initiative from the part of the EU is a suggested “Trilateral dialogue and cooperation with Africa and China,” basically a proposed EU-China cooperation on Africa.²⁷⁾ This is in recognition of the increased role played by China in Africa. The EU calls for a “pragmatic and progressive approach” and “Effective aid.” Thus, EU is tactful and flexible enough to propose a pragmatic approach for cooperation with China avoiding controversial issues like democracy, human rights etc. Nevertheless, if the cooperation will eventually take shape, it is likely that China will accept to agree on elements of good governance since its own financial and investment interests can be undermined by corruption and non functional local administrations. Significantly, cooperation for peace and security in Africa is also included in the above mentioned initiative, since China has been for long a “player” in the region.

27) European Commission Communication COM (2008) 654 “The EU, Africa and China: Towards trilateral dialogue and cooperation” (Brussels 17.10.2008).

IX Conclusion

The EU has developed a distinctive approach to development policy and has established a distinctive identity as a benign, civilian and soft power agent in the international arena. It has developed new models of partnership and cooperation and it has found ways to pursue economic and political progress through a more refined use of the conditionality instrument. Innovative ways of “smartening” the EU soft power, to meet the contemporary challenges, were found through linking the development with democracy, good governance and security.

Although the EU development cooperation policy is far from perfect, it can be considered a model to the extent that it provides empirical evidence that countries of different size, culture, historical and geopolitical interest can basically agree on a common framework and harmonize and coordinate their visions and actions in an effective manner. The management of diversity and the culture of cooperation, compromise, consensus, and coordination is probably the most relevant model for other regions in search of identity and common action like Asia.

The significant evolution in the Asia-Europe cooperation, especially in the last 15 years at bilateral and inter-regional level, offers a promising ground for mutual experience sharing, and cooperation on development issues. The current global challenges require a new coordinated approach of all ODA actors in various problematic regions and the timid attempts from EU for a punctual partnership with various countries in Asia should be strengthened with a comprehensive interregional “Asia-Europe Consensus on Development.”

If the EU will succeed in projecting a bilateral or inter-regional ODA partnership with Asia based on its core values and “community method of cooperation” (coordination based on compromise and consensus) this will represent a solid proof for the relevance and viability of its “soft power” as well as for the relevance of the “soft power” concept itself in the international relations today.

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