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Desk Review of the European Consensus on Development  

Was the ECD instrumental in shaping the objectives, values and principles of EU and Member States’ development cooperation policies?  

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European Consensus on Development

Was the ECD instrumental in shaping the objectives, values and principles of EU and Member States’ development cooperation policies?

A Desk review

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1. Introduction

The adoption of the European Consensus can be considered one of the Community’s strategic achievements (OECD 2007)

The purpose of this review is to determine whether the European Consensus on Development (ECD) was instrumental in shaping the development policies and strategies of the EU and its Member States after 2005. To what extent were the values, objectives and principles reflected in the EU Member States’ strategies to combat poverty and promote human rights and sustainable development? The results of the review will feed into the elaboration of a new vision for the future European Development Policy, in line with the 2030 Agenda and associated Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) on Financing for Development.

Methodology

In order to measure the influence of the common vision outlined in the ECD, a shared document to which all parties have contributed and agreed, the reviewers have carried out a textual analysis of the main policy documents. The findings were subsequently checked against institutional assessments, such as the OECD/DAC peer reviews.

The textual analysis concentrates on the policy documents (strategies, specific legal texts, government coalition agreements, programming documents and other official statements) issued by the governments and related agencies of the 28 Member States and the European institutions (essentially Communications and other documents, including evaluations and staff working papers, adopted by the Commission, as well as Council decisions). The textual analysis addresses some key questions. How often have the concepts and ideas expressed in the original document been brought up in official strategies and documents in the years following its approval? How have these concepts and ideas been presented, substantiated by analysis and articulated in operational principles by national governments? What are the implications of even slight textual variations in policy orientation by single EU MS? How did the vision of the ECD evolve over time in EU and Member States’ development cooperation policies?

The findings of the textual analysis have been cross-checked with institutional assessments. The main sources for this assessment are the peer reviews conducted by the OECD Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) between 2005 and 2016. Other sources include the EU Accountability reports for Financing for Development (2010-2015), and other evaluations by the EU and other institutions. Where appropriate, the analysis was completed with perspectives from think tanks, NGOs and academics.

A major caveat of this exercise is that it is exclusively based on a desk review of existing documents. It has not the reach and depth nor uses the criteria of a evaluation, and it doesn’t capture the valuable viewpoint of stakeholders who have been involved in the policy making process at national and EU level.

Origin and role of the European Consensus on Development

In over fifty years of EU development cooperation, the ECD is the first joint statement that sets out common principles, values and objectives of development policy for the EU and its
Member States. The EU and its MS engaged to formulate and implement their development policies in a spirit of complementarity. The ECD was a successor to a joint declaration by the Council and the Commission on EC development policies issued in 2000, on the eve of the Millennium Summit.

The ECD corroborated the overarching objective of poverty reduction established by the 2000 Declaration and integrated the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development that had been adopted as key global objectives for development and international guidelines for financing for development also with the support of EU actors. Furthermore, albeit timidly, the ECD introduced the nexus between development and security, in particular referred to fragile states.

Another change introduced with the ECD was meant to address one of the perceived limitations of the 2000 Declaration, namely the lack of ownership by the signing parties. The ECD went beyond a simple declaration of intent on Community policies: it was a common platform, which also committed bilateral donors. Ensuring its significance and ownership by all Member States and the Community was even more important. To ensure ample buy-in of the ECD by various stakeholders, the Commission launched a broad consultation process which involved the EU institutions, Member States, partner countries, international organisations, local and regional authorities, NGOs, trade unions, business organisations and academic institutions. The final document was later endorsed and signed by the Council, the Commission, the Parliament and the Member States.

The document consists of two parts: the first enunciates common objectives, values and principles of the EU development cooperation and thus sets the basis for a common vision of EU policies in development cooperation. The second part translates the concepts of the Consensus into sectoral priorities and operational principles at Community level.
2. Summary of findings

The primary **objective** of the EU’s development policy set by the ECD is "the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, including the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals". The Community had already taken such a position in the joint Council-Commission declaration of 2000. Not surprisingly, after approval of the ECD all EU MS aligned to a certain extent to this objective, although with different emphases, depending on their history and geopolitical situation. The evolution of the international context required new orientations and established firmly the link between development, good governance, inclusive growth, as well as security. These priorities have gained prominence and been progressively reflected, to varying degrees, in the policy documents and strategies of the EU and Member States. However, still today, the objective of poverty reduction is “first among equals” for many MS.

Member States and the EU also assumed the concept of the multidimensionality of poverty eradication, functional to the MDGs, which commanded changes to the traditional approach to development cooperation. Through this process, the EU and its Member States essentially moved from an approach centred on treating single issues separately, to a broad strategic vision that prioritises their actions to achieve the main objective: reducing poverty. Thus, the EU Council pronounced itself on distinct policies, such as the environment, migration, gender and security, emphasizing their important contribution to the achievement of the MDGs. The concept of multidimensionality has grown to become a major element of the EU and Member States’ strategies in development cooperation. OECD-DAC peer reviews have commended the definition of a comprehensive vision with clearly defined priorities, urging EU MS to translate the vision into appropriate actions and policies.

**Common values such as human rights, peace and security, gender equality and democratic governance** are amongst the most aligned of any feature of the 2005 Consensus. Some EU MS go even further, for example by committing to rights-based approaches, or by giving more attention to the fight against all forms of discrimination. Others introduce equal opportunities, solidarity, peace and freedom and social equality. Similarly, EU and EU MS development cooperation is recognised by academia and think tanks as being about pursuing human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law as a strategic priority and/or even a feature of the EU ‘brand’.

The policy of embedding **ownership** into a greater emphasis of **partnership** is successfully aligned in most EU and EU MS policy and strategy documents. However, the commitment to ownership is often linked to respect for human rights, the fight against corruption, accountability and good governance. The concept of ownership has also extended beyond ownership by the partner government and now includes other stakeholders most notably civil society, the private sector and legislatures. The commitment to partnership is not uniformly aligned in policies and strategies possibly due to differing understandings of what defines a good development cooperation partnership.

The commitment on greater use of **political dialogue** is largely aligned in EU and EU MS policies and strategies. However, in most cases political dialogue is afforded little more than piece-meal mention. Alternatively, political dialogue is a commitment but more so in the global governance space, and less so in terms of development cooperation with partner countries. Whilst the EU has expanded and deepened the use of political dialogue, including through associating it to policy dialogue, most of the documents reviewed demonstrated significant unwillingness or lack of capacity to invest in these tools in development cooperation. There does not appear to be a consensus around what ambitions are embedded in
the use of and commitment to political dialogue, nor about how to use it as a tool in development cooperation.

In relation to **participation of civil society**, after the approval of the Consensus the EU has progressed in ensuring that all stakeholders are duly included in development processes. EU institutions and Member States have been active in formulating policies and adopting strategies to enhance the role of civil society in development cooperation in partner countries, including the engagement in “Structured Dialogue” with CSOs (and local authorities) in partner countries and in Europe. The volume of EU funding for CSOs has increased, and this is also true for EU MS. Some EU good practice of meaningful and systematic CSO dialogue is evident. There is a very strong alliance of the EU institutions and the EU MS on the issues related to inclusive partnerships. The 2012 EU policy documents and subsequent elaboration of EU Country Roadmaps for Civil Society in partner countries, with the involvement of EU Member States, have marked the path towards a better inclusion of civil society in EU and MS development policies and strategies. However, the challenge lies in ensuring that the Roadmap exercise becomes a real trigger for EU and Member States’ coordination in the support to civil society worldwide, with its particular emphasis on participation of these actors to national and local development processes, as well as their advocacy and watchdog role in the promotion of democracy, social justice and human rights.

Following its insertion in the European Development Consensus, gender equality has probably become a strong commitment for the EU and Member States, as they have participated actively in the follow-up and implementation of their gender-related international commitments. **Gender equality** is captured in basically all development policy/strategy documents, and many strategies and action documents have been dedicated exclusively to it. Awareness is increasing as to the need to mainstream gender across all sectors and at all levels within operations. However, shortcomings are found at the time of implementing, for several reasons, which among others include weak role of leadership, lack of resources particularly human/ expertise etc. This is a reality both for the EU and the Member States. The first Gender Action Plan (2011-2015) has failed to become a robust accountability joint instrument. The reformed Action Plan 2016-2020, calls for stronger leadership from EU management both in headquarters and in delegations, and a more prominent involvement of Member States so as to put commitments into practice. Also, in many countries the EU faces constraints in starting policy and political dialogue on gender due to political instability, lack of government commitment, or emergency situations that monopolise the dialogue with governmental institutions.

**Addressing state fragility** is well aligned in EU and EU MS policies and strategies. It is worth noting that addressing state fragility has gained prominence in a number of EU MS development cooperation policy, strategy and programming. However, whilst addressing state fragility is aligned in most policy documents or strategies, it is worth noting that in many cases the alignment is presented in a way that does not necessarily imply substantive commitment to programming in this space. Many of the EU MS only tangentially refer to addressing state fragility, particularly those that do not have a strong history of programming in the humanitarian or relief space. Another nuance is that there are signs that some MS are ‘addressing state fragility’ within sector response strategies or in pursuit of global priorities, such as in regards to climate change, good governance and even domestic revenue collection rather than as an explicit priority in and of itself. Finally, it is worth noting that the analysis

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1 See OECD-DAC peer review reports and EU Evaluation.
uncovers good alignment to the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

At policy level, all Member States stress their commitment to reach individual and collective aid targets. ‘New’ Member States, which acceded the EU after 2000, have made commitments too, but were clearly less engaged. Some EU MS put forward measures to achieve their commitment, such as programmed or binding budgetary increases and inclusion in the law. Even when they did not comply, and some recognized that the target was beyond reach during budgetary crisis, EU countries formally recommitted to their ODA targets. Africa often figures prominently in Member States’ strategic documents, but very few make explicit reference to the financial commitment. Notwithstanding, Africa is considered a priority by most Mediterranean Member States (except for Spain, which targets more Latin American LDCs). Nordic countries also highlight this priority as it fits prominently into the goal of poverty eradication. Generally, Eastern European countries prefer to leverage their transition experience and devote the bulk of their bilateral aid to neighbouring countries. A number of Member States consider LDCs an important or a priority target of their development cooperation. Again, there are varying sensitivities depending on the Member States’ geo-political situation and historical relations.

Within the context of development finance, the ECD urged to devote particular attention to fragile states: popular uprisings and conflict situation in North Africa and the Middle East, along with the migration pressure, certainly contributed to a heightened relevance of fragile states in Member States and EU policy and budgetary allocation.

The European Consensus on Development was agreed only a year after the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, which itself was strongly supported by European donors. The Consensus thus has a strong focus on making aid more effective, a commitment that is echoed in most EU and EU MS development cooperation policy and strategy documents. A number of Member States are noted for being world leaders in meeting their effectiveness commitments by independent think tanks. Only three of the EU MS had no evidence of alignment with the core aid effectiveness commitments in their policies. However, there is significant nuance in how the commitment to more effective aid is aligned in MS’ policies and strategies. Whilst the OECD-DAC peer review and other reports on aid effectiveness tend to list some of the best performing donors as being EU MS, there is notable and apparently growing resistance to making aid effectiveness a stand-alone priority that applies equally in all circumstances. In this regard, effectiveness as defined in the Paris Declaration, appears to be of greater or lesser importance to MS’ decision makers depending on the particular context. Similar to the finding on ownership and partnership, the narrative on aid and development effectiveness appears to be more often associated to corruption, good governance, human rights and inclusiveness amongst other common values. Additionally, a growing number of EU MS also appear to link what defines their aid effectiveness commitments more explicitly as being about delivering value to taxpayers. Similarly, and in line with the shift from aid to development effectiveness, the 2012 Council Conclusions on an Agenda for Change also focus more on broad aspirational goals such as ‘working better together’ and less so on more technical aid effectiveness principles such as on reducing fragmentation and improving alignment.

Coordination and complementarity aspirations are largely aligned in EU MS policy and strategy documents but in many cases commitments do not come across as substantive, appearing more as commitments in principle rather than about changing management and programming practices. Despite this finding at a policy and strategy level, however, there are signs that the practice is more ambitious than the policy with the notable rapid and expanding use of joint programming (currently over fifty country cases in development) and related joint
analysis and implementation. Some EU MS even include explicit mention in reasoning why the commitment applies less to them. Other major EU MS make little reference to coordination and complementarity in their most recent documents. Alternatively, coordination is referred to in the context of recommitting to international and/or multilateral systems more so than in terms of doing so in partner countries and as part of an ‘EU family’. However, the nuance here is that even with those EU MS that only make tangential commitments to coordination and complementarity, the literature including the donor specific OECD-DAC peer review reports, cite a host of good practices and largely commend EU and EU MS for improving coordination and complementarity in programming. The recent Council Conclusions on Stepping up Joint Programming (May 2016) essentially calls for coordination and complementarity to be the basis for planning development cooperation activities in the first place.

The analysis of the EU and Member States’ policies found good evidence of alignment to the Consensus commitments to Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), although five EU MS did not appear to have done so. Policy Coherence for Development continues to be a priority especially in relation to coherence amongst mechanisms and procedures and focusing on avoiding contradictions whilst building synergies. The Commission’s regular reporting on PCD (the most recent being in 2015) also shows that the EU and a number of EU MS are making notable progress on meeting their PCD commitments. The OECD-DAC peer reviews cite good EU and EU MS examples as global good practices; a number of think-tanks have noted the importance of PCD and commended European development partners, and particularly the EU for driving a “pioneering” approach.

The following table summarises the overall alignment of the EU and Member States development cooperation policies to the common objectives, values and principles of the European Consensus. Member States are very well aligned with the general policy objectives affirmed by the European consensus: these are largely aspirational objectives that were also shared internationally. Broad acceptance can be detected also for principles and aid effectiveness, although these were not necessarily always followed-up by clearly defined strategies and actions: the discrepancies can be mostly attributed to unequal progress in policy implementation, lack of resources, as well as disparate priorities of Member States.

The measures taken for the table are mostly about the alignment of policy commitments by Member States and do not refer to the actual achievements.
The colours indicate the level of alignment of EU Member States policies: green indicates a very strong alignment to the ECD. Blue indicates that the policies are aligned and that ECD has been one of the sources of the policy. Orange indicates that there was no evidence of alignment with the ECD. Violet indicates that there was not sufficient information available to make a statement.

Finally, to gauge the direct guidance that the ECD had in policy making of EU Member States, it is worth signalling that it was explicitly referenced in policy or strategy papers of at least 25 Member States, including six for which a compelling influence was highlighted by OECD-DAC reviews\(^2\). Thus, most Member States have used language and concepts of the ECD or made direct reference to it as an inspirational policy source for their development cooperation policies.

\(^2\) AT, BG, CY, CZ, DK, EE, EL, ES, FI, FR, HR, HU, IE, IT, LV, MT, PL, RO, UK. Influence of the ECD on national policies stated by the DAC peer reviews for BE, DE, LT, LU, and special reviews for SK, SI.
3. EU and MS alignment to Part I of the European consensus

3.1. Common objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Consensus on Development</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5. The primary and overarching objective of EU development cooperation is the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, including pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The eight MDGs are to: eradicate extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce the mortality rate of children; improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability and develop a global partnership for development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. We reaffirm that development is a central goal by itself; and that sustainable development includes good governance, human rights and political, economic, social and environmental aspects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The EU is determined to work to assist the achievement of these goals and the development objectives agreed at the major UN conferences and summits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. We reaffirm our commitment to promoting policy coherence for development, based upon ensuring that the EU shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in all policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries, and that these policies support development objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Development aid will continue to support poor people in all developing countries, including both low-income and middle-income countries (MICs). The EU will continue to prioritise support to the least developed and other low-income countries (LICs) to achieve more balanced global development, while recognising the value of concentrating the aid activities of each Member State in areas and regions where they have comparative advantages and can add most value to the fight against poverty.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Throughout the 1990s and the 2000s, the world’s development cooperation was primarily guided by the goal of eradicating poverty. This objective became the primary aim of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) approved at the UN General Assembly as a follow-up to the Millennium Summit of 2000. Poverty eradication and the MDGs thus became the foundation of all bilateral or multilateral development cooperation policies in the years to come. The environmental dimension of development, which had been the focus of the Earth Summit in Rio in 1992 and in Johannesburg (Rio + 10), was also a major component of the international policy discourse on sustainable development. These two policy strands were naturally reflected also in the European Consensus on Development (ECD), which states that “the primary objective of EU development cooperation is the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, including pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals.”

The ECD enumerates the eight MDGs and then delves into the concept of sustainable development, “a central goal by itself”, extending its implications to good governance, human rights, political, social, economic and environmental aspects. Policy Coherence for Development aims to ensure that all EU policies are coherent with its development goals. Finally, while assuring that policies will be geared towards the poor in developing countries and seeking growth of Least Developed Countries (LDCs), the ECD also underlines “the value of concentrating the aid activities of each Member State in areas and regions where they have comparative advantage and can add most value to the fight against poverty”.

The latter provision, reiterated in other sections of the ECD, opened the way for separate
policy directions aligned to the policy priorities of individual Member States.

The Treaty of Lisbon (2007) introduced a number of changes to the legal and institutional framework, “bringing greater coherence and unity to the EU’s external action”\(^3\). It brought increased consistency across external policies: trade (an exclusive competence of the Union), development cooperation, humanitarian assistance, and common foreign, security and defence policies (shared competence between the Union and Member States).

As concerns development cooperation, the Lisbon Treaty maintained the focus on poverty reduction: the “Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty”; but it mitigates its irrevocability with the statement that the “Union and Member States shall comply with the commitments and take account of the objectives they have approved in the context of the United Nations and other competent international organisations”. Finally, the Treaty clearly confirms the principle that all EU’s policies, which affect developing countries will have to take account of the objectives of its development policy (Policy Coherence for Development).

Over time, the linkage between security and development became increasingly prominent in EU’s political decisions. In 2007 the Council re-affirmed its firm belief that the “nexus between development and security should inform EU strategies and policies in order to contribute to the coherence of EU external action”\(^4\).

In 2011, in the wake of the economic and financial crisis and the events in the Mediterranean basin (“Arab Spring”), and following the institutional and policy stipulations of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU planned a reshaping of its development cooperation policy. The *Agenda for Change* broadened the development objectives to include two main priorities: i) the promotion of human rights, democracy, rule of law, and good governance; and ii) the promotion of inclusive and sustainable growth. Both pillars were earmarked as essential for the global aim of poverty reduction.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by the UN General Assembly in September 2015 confirmed that “eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions, including extreme poverty, is greatest global challenge and an indispensable requirement for sustainable development.” However, the SDGs depart from the previous approach of an agenda mainly devoted to helping developing countries, to establish an universal agreement in which all players, donors and partner countries, share the responsibility of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

**EU and Member States Alignment**

In general, Member States share the objectives of the European Consensus on Development. This is not surprising given the wide public opinion and international support to the fight against poverty that had been building up since the 1970s and brought to the Millennium Declaration and the MDGs (and later the SDGs). However, the policy documents show different and evolving approaches.

The 2009 UK White Paper on *Building our Common Future* assures that the UK government

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\(^3\) 2011 DAC Peer Review for the European Union.

\(^4\) Council Conclusions on Security and Development, 9-20 November 2007
“will continue in [its] commitment that the purpose of UK aid remains, and is rightly, poverty reduction”. At the same time, the white paper refers to actions on growth, climate change, governance and security as essential factors that will facilitate and make sustainable poverty reduction. In 2010, the Danish Development Cooperation Strategy links freedom and poverty: “Danish development policy will contribute to reducing poverty by promoting freedom and creating sustainable development”. The 2010 Czech Act defines development cooperation as “activities financed from the national budget aimed at contributing to the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, including the fulfilment of the Millennium Development Goals, to economic and social development, to environmental protection, and to the promotion of democracy, human rights and good governance in developing countries.” The 2011 French development cooperation strategy evokes poverty along with three other priority areas: “French cooperation strategy focuses on four overarching objectives: foster sustainable and equitable growth for the poorest populations; combat poverty and inequality; preserve global public goods; and ensure global stability and the rule of law”.

Thus, until the early 2010s, the policy discourse focused on poverty reduction and sustainable development with some variations as to the approach and individual priorities. However, the effects of the deepening economic and financial crisis, which has had strong impact on the Eurozone and some Member States in particular, and the conflicts and unrest crises in several regions, particularly those of the Arab Spring, would soon influence the strategic orientation of the EU’s development cooperation. Against this background, priorities such as growth, good governance and security grew in prominence in the political discourse on development cooperation in Member States and were also reflected in the Agenda for Change.

For instance, the UK cooperation strategy has been gradually shifting away from the exclusive focus on poverty. In 2015 the Department for International Development (DFID) set four strategic objectives of its development cooperation, with security being in prominent position: strengthening global peace, strengthening resilience and response to crisis, promoting global prosperity and tackling extreme poverty and helping the world’s most vulnerable. Similar trends could be observed elsewhere too. In 2006, Ireland placed poverty at the heart of its development cooperation policy: “Poverty reduction, to reduce vulnerability and increase opportunity, is the overarching objective of Irish Aid”. In 2013 the Irish government acknowledges “the world has seen significant changes” since then and that it is facing at home “economic and financial constraints”. Following a review of its aid policy in 2012 and echoing the Agenda for Change, Ireland embraced three goals of its development cooperation: i) reducing poverty and hunger; ii) sustainable development and inclusive

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5 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark – DANIDA, Freedom from Poverty: Freedom to Change. Strategy for Denmark’s Development Cooperation, 2010. Some concerns over the orientation of the Danish development cooperation away from a “charity” model to “make explicit links to with foreign and security goals” were reported by the 2011 DAC Peer Review: “The strategy clearly anchors Danish development co-operation as an integral part of Denmark’s foreign and security policy. […]While poverty reduction remains the over-riding goal, the strategy recognises that ‘development policy is also realpolitik’ […]”.

6 Czech Republic, Act on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, and Amending Related Laws, 2010


8 Government of Ireland, White Paper on Irish Aid, 2006. See also 2104 DAC Peer Review for Ireland.
economic growth; and iii) good governance and human rights. The Belgian government for its part “sets poverty reduction firmly in the context of conflict prevention”\(^9\). However, the 2015 OECD-DAC peer review argues that its “poverty reduction focus is reflected, in particular, by its support to LDCs and fragile situations”.\(^11\)

In a similar vein, Denmark’s 2012 strategy states upfront: “Poverty must be fought with human rights and economic growth. This is the strong message from the strategy for Denmark’s development cooperation: The Right to a Better Life.”\(^12\)

Sweden keeps a strong focus on poverty reduction,\(^13\) but underlines the need for comprehensive action on several fronts to tackle world poverty. Furthermore, it introduces the notion that aid must be based on the “needs and conditions of individual people living in poverty and under oppression”\(^14\). Germany too remains very focused on ending extreme poverty and hunger, “its overriding goal”\(^15\).

Among Mediterranean countries, during the 2000s Italy referenced both the MDGs and the EDC for its strategy aimed primarily at poverty reduction, but, as pointed out by the OECD-DAC peer review in 2009\(^16\), its legal framework and policy vision needed to be strengthened. The 2014 development cooperation law confirms the goal of reducing poverty and complements it with two additional goals: human rights and peace and security\(^17\). In 2007, the political parties of the Spanish Parliament signed a Pact Against Poverty\(^18\), which was later implemented in the triennial programming of the Spanish development cooperation (2009-2012). The programming document for 2013-2016 refers to “poverty and inequalities” and states that the primary objective of the Spanish policy resides in “contributing to human development, reducing poverty and the full exercise of rights”\(^19\). However, as noted by the DAC peer review\(^20\), given its focus on middle-income countries, the Spanish poverty strategy

\(^{9}\) Government of Ireland, Irish Aid, One World, One Future - Framework for Action, n.d. [2013]

\(^{10}\) 2010 DAC Peer Review for Belgium.

\(^{11}\) 2015 DAC Peer Review for Belgium


\(^{13}\) See also the 2013 DAC Peer Review for Sweden

\(^{14}\) Kingdom of Sweden, Government Communication to the Rigsdag, Aid Policy Framework, 2013

\(^{15}\) Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), One World, Our Responsibility, Charter for the Future, 2015. See also 2015 DAC Peer Review.

\(^{16}\) 2009 DAC Peer Review for Italy. The 2014 DAC Peer Review commends Italy’s move towards “a shared vision of Italian development co-operation”.

\(^{17}\) Repubblica Italiana, Legge n. 125 dell’11 agosto 2014, Disciplina Generale sulla cooperazione internazionale per lo sviluppo, Gazzetta Ufficiale, n. 199, 28 agosto 2014

\(^{18}\) Gobierno de España, Pacto de Estado contra la Pobreza, firmado por los grupos políticos a propuesta de la Coordinadora de ONG de Desarrollo-España, 2007

\(^{19}\) Plan director de la cooperación española, 2013 – 2016.

\(^{20}\) 2015 DAC Peer Review for Spain
in development cooperation has limited reach. The Portuguese strategic document on
development cooperation “expands the overarching purpose of [poverty eradication] to
include sustainable development […] within a context of respect for human rights, democracy
and rule of law”\textsuperscript{21}.

Eastern European countries, most of which started defining an international development
policy after the Millennium Summit and the establishment of the European Consensus on
Development, and therefore had their “new” policies strongly shaped by global and European
commitments and related terminology, had from the onset a distinctive approach. Poland
considers that the primary objective of its development cooperation should be to “create
conditions for sustainable development of developing countries” and that it should therefore
promote and consolidate democracy and human rights, improve governance, promote growth
and reduce poverty, while undertaking actions in the area of health and education.\textsuperscript{22} Lithuania
assures that it “will continue to play a full part in the global partnership for development” to
ensure the eradication of extreme poverty. However, the focus of its strategy is on
“strengthening the principles of democracy, rule of law and solidarity in the neighbourhood
[…]. Therefore, Lithuania will proceed with [its] long-term policy towards Eastern Europe by
supporting democratic and economic reforms”.\textsuperscript{23} Hungary acknowledges that the purpose of
global development cooperation is to reduce poverty and inequalities, while promoting
“international security and stability, peace, sustainable development, democracy, human
rights and the rule of law.” For its part, Hungary intends to leverage its “comparative
advantage” and focus its policy “to support developing countries in their own development
efforts to achieve sustainable prosperity, human dignity, democratic institutions, civil society
development, environmental protection, peace and security.”\textsuperscript{24} The Czech Republic and the
Slovak Republic, both (recent) members of the OECD Development Assistance Committee
(DAC), and Estonia (an observer of the DAC) conform more to the traditional UN and OECD
policy discourse on poverty reduction.

The political thinking of the EU and Member States around the objectives of development
cooperation has been deeply anchored in the commitments by the international community
built around the overarching objective of combating poverty within the framework of the
MDGs. The ECD fully reflects this engagement on poverty and generally speaking Member
States share the same ambitions. Over time, the EU further shaped its policy to highlight
certain priorities (growth, security, good governance) while keeping a strong focus on poverty
reduction. MS policies also evolved partially in the same direction, but with varying degrees
of alignment, mostly due to foreign policy priorities. Thus, at the onset the ECD was a
rallying and starting point for EU and MS policies with small but noticeable deviations over
the course of the years.

\textsuperscript{21} 2014 DAC Peer Review for Portugal.
\textsuperscript{22} Polish Aid, Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme, 2012-2015
\textsuperscript{23} The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania - Development Cooperation Department,
Lithuanian Development Cooperation since 2003, 2013
\textsuperscript{24} International Development Cooperation Strategy and Strategic Concept for International Humanitarian Aid of
Hungary 2014-2020
3.2. Multidimensional aspects of poverty eradication

**European Consensus on Development**

11. Poverty includes all the areas in which people of either gender are deprived and perceived as incapacitated in different societies and local contexts. The core dimensions of poverty include economic, human, political, socio-cultural and protective capabilities. Poverty relates to human capabilities such as consumption and food security, health, education, rights, the ability to be heard, human security especially for the poor, dignity and decent work. Therefore combating poverty will only be successful if equal importance is given to investing in people (first and foremost in health and education and HIV/AIDS), the protection of natural resources (like forests, water, marine resources and soil) to secure rural livelihoods, and investing in wealth creation (with emphasis on issues such as entrepreneurship, job creation, access to credits, property rights and infrastructure). The empowerment of women is the key to all development and gender equality should be a core part of all policy strategies.

12. The MDG agenda and the economic, social and environmental dimensions of poverty eradication in the context of sustainable development include many development activities from democratic governance to political, economic and social reforms, conflict prevention, social justice, promoting human rights and equitable access to public services, education, culture, health, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, as set out in the ICPD Cairo Agenda, the environment and sustainable management of natural resources, pro-poor economic growth, trade and development, migration and development, food security, children's rights, gender equality and promoting social cohesion and decent work.

Along with international policy discussions following the MDGs, the ECD proposes a comprehensive definition of poverty, which “includes all areas in which people of either gender are deprived and perceived as incapacitated in different societies and local contexts”. Thus, “poverty relates to human capabilities, such as consumption and food security, health, education, rights, the ability to be heard, human security especially for the poor, dignity and decent work”. Such comprehensive definition widens the scope of action of the EU to include sectors such as health, education, protecting natural resources, investing in wealth creation and securing rural livelihoods. The ECD furthermore enunciates the activities of the development agenda, including those of the MDGs.

The EU Council reiterated on several occasions the importance of adopting a comprehensive approach to fighting poverty, rooted in the MDGs, whilst keeping the policy firmly focused on achieving progress in all “cross-cutting issues that are core elements of the EU development agenda”.

Some issues, such as climate change and security, became increasingly prominent over time, while others were given particular attention in given circumstances: this is the case, for instance, of food security, a topic that became particularly challenging at the turn of the decade due to extreme weather conditions and the ensuing food price spikes. In 2010, the Council stated that to achieve the MDGs, “considerable work remains to be done prioritising MDGs most off-track, notably in the regions and countries most lagging behind […]. Countries in situations of conflict and fragility need special attention”.

There was little progress on MDGs in certain areas of the world, mostly in Sub-

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25 Council Conclusions on Speeding Up progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 2008

Saharan Africa and LDCs, as well as in fragile states. Other trends or events, such as the growth in emerging economies and the Arab Spring, brought important “challenges and new realities” in the global landscape. The Agenda for Change “sets out important new directions on how to better address these challenges and deliver greater impact”. Other aspects of the multidimensionality of poverty eradication, such as human rights, democracy, governance and the rule of law, figured prominently in the strategy of the EU. Furthermore, the “Agenda” emphasised the role of the private sector and trade as important drivers for development.27

EU and Member State alignment

All EU MS consider poverty reduction as a major objective of development cooperation. Several of them go further and build the foundations of their policy on the concept of “multidimensional poverty”, either literally28 or implicitly,29 as they engage to varying degrees in addressing global issues that contribute indirectly to poverty reduction. A third group of Member States do not refer to multidimensional aspects in their strategy papers, but may have policies and/or actions in place, which address the same issues30.

Spain states that “the multidimensional notion of poverty inspires” its III Master Plan for Development Cooperation (2009-2012). With less emphasis, the following master plan upheld the focus on cross-cutting issues despite the dramatic decrease in ODA funding, which brought Spain to drastically reduce the number of partner/priority countries31. The 2016 OECD-DAC peer review praised the approach but considered that the actual implementation could suffer from the deep cuts.32 The French strategic plan published in 2011 recognised that multidimensional aspects of poverty and governance are essential for “poverty reduction policies” and for the approach to development policies at local level33. France’s 2011 strategy was considered a breakthrough by OECD-DAC peer review and the reviewers praised its sector-specific strategies. Some areas, such as gender and fragile states needed further attention though34. According to the OECD-DAC, the UK is “committed to fighting extreme poverty and responding to humanitarian disasters”, but notes that the “approach to fostering economic development should not be at the expense of DFID’s long-standing support to social development and basic services in countries with high levels of poverty”35. As for


28 AT, EE, EL, ES, FR, IT, PL, PT, RO, SE.

29 BE, DE, IE, FI, HR, HU, LT, LU, MT, NL, SI, UK

30 CY, CZ, HR, LV, SK.


32 2016 DAC Peer Review for Spain.

33 Ministère des Affaires Étrangères et Européennes, Coopération au développement: une vision française, Document cadre, 2011

34 2014 DAC Peer Review for France.

35 2014 DAC Peer Review for the United Kingdom.
Denmark, “the DAC appreciates that former cross-cutting issues – gender equality and women empowerment and environment – are recognised as core priorities for Danida”36

Overall, the effective alignment of Member States to the concept of multidimensionality has become increasingly evident since the adoption of the ECD. To fully incorporate the complexity of factors and put them in the perspective of poverty eradication at programmatic and practical level, required some far-reaching changes to the traditional approach to development cooperation. While the EU and EU MS had experience in working in different aspects of development, the new vision implied re-organising the development strategy and its implementation to take into consideration multiple factors to aim at the primary goal of reducing poverty. Through this process, the EU and Member States essentially moved from a concept of development cooperation consisting of a menu list of topics and projects from which to choose according to interests, expertise and opportunities, to a broader strategic vision that prioritises their actions to achieve the main objective based on a shared agenda. Some cross-cutting issues, such as gender and environment, also needed to be mainstreamed in Member States’ policies and strategic frameworks37. Over the course of the years, OECD-DAC peer reviews have followed and commented the definition of a comprehensive vision with clearly defined priorities, urging Member States to translate the vision in actions and policies.

3.3. Common values

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>European Consensus on Development</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. EU partnership and dialogue with third countries will promote common values of: respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace, democracy, good governance, gender equality, the rule of law, solidarity and justice. The EU is strongly committed to effective multilateralism whereby all the world’s nations share responsibility for development.</td>
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Common values are introduced in the 2005 European Consensus on Development as European commitment to “basic principles [and] fundamental values”.38 The Consensus also defines sustainable development as including “good governance, human rights and political, economic, social and environmental aspects.”39 Human rights are invoked again as a priority in reference40 to achieving the Millennium Development Goals and then again in a stand-alone section titled ‘Common Values’. Common Values are defined in paragraph 13 of the 2005 European Consensus for Development as being in the context of “partnership and dialogue with third countries [in promoting] common values of: respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace, democracy, good governance, gender equality, the rule of law, solidarity and justice [and the EU being] strongly committed to effective multilateralism

36 2011 DAC Peer Review for Denmark.

37 OECD, Mainstreaming Cross-Cutting Issues – 7 Lessons from DAC Peer Reviews, 2014

38 2005 European Consensus on Development, Paragraph 3

39 Ibid. Paragraph 7

40 Ibid. Paragraph 11 and 12.
whereby all the world's nations share responsibility for development."\(^{41}\)

The 2011 Council Conclusions on “EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness\(^{42}\)” reflects the emphasis on common values to calling for “Strengthen[ing] the engagement of parliaments, local authorities, oversight bodies, the civil society, the academic sector and the independent media as essential stakeholders in development and in promoting democracy, human rights and the rule of law.” Human rights appear again in the context of strengthening democratic ownership through “address[ing] capacity development and strengthen[ing] country systems, including institutional and human resources as well as effective institutions.”\(^{43}\) Notably, the term ‘common values’ does not feature, although the Consensus’ values do refer to it in the context of calling for more effective aid.

The 2012 Council Conclusions on the Agenda for Change, however, take a different approach to the 2011 Conclusions on Aid Effectiveness (and by implication the Busan Partnership Agreement): they go even further than the 2005 commitments to common values. A shared vision for development is put forward, in which “Relations between the EU and its Member States and partner countries are [defined as] based on and [promoting] shared values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law as well as the principles of ownership and of mutual accountability. Support to partners [is] adapted to their…commitment and progress with regard to human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance.”\(^{44}\) "The promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance and of inclusive and sustainable growth are two basic pillars of [development] policy and should receive strengthened support [because] they are mutually reinforcing.”\(^{45}\)

Furthermore, the Agenda for Change calls for a “rights-based approach, promoting in particular the right to universal and non-discriminatory access to basic services, participation in democratic political processes, transparency and accountability, justice and the rule of law, and with a focus on poor and vulnerable groups…. [supporting] and [promoting] an enabling environment for an independent, pluralistic and active civil society in partner countries.”\(^{46}\) “Empowerment and opportunities for women” are to feature in “political and policy dialogue”, as well as “the rights of, and opportunities for, young people and children [are to] be promoted as it is critical for societies to offer a future to the young.”\(^{47}\) Inclusiveness becomes a prominent commitment accompanied with “support to social inclusion and human

\(^{41}\) Ibid. Paragraph 13

\(^{42}\) 2011 Council Conclusions on “EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Paragraph 3.4

\(^{43}\) Ibid. Paragraph 15


\(^{45}\) Ibid. Paragraph 6

\(^{46}\) Ibid. Paragraph 7

\(^{47}\) Ibid.
development [being allocated] at least 20% of EU aid.”\textsuperscript{48}

EU and Member States Alignment

In terms of the analysis of policies, common values are amongst the most aligned of any feature of the 2005 Consensus. 16 EU Member States and the European Union are considered to be strongly aligned. Some of these MS go further, as is the case for Austria, amongst others, in committing to a rights-based approach in development cooperation. Belgium calls for more attention to the fight against all forms of discrimination. The Czech Republic refers to common values of human rights and democracy in its 2010 Act on development cooperation. Germany defines development as depending “on good governance based on democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, as well as on gender equality”. Denmark emphasises common values repeatedly in strategies and policies related to development cooperation. Estonia’s strategy directs development cooperation at protecting human rights and developing democracy. Greece commits to human rights as well as combatting illegal trafficking and protecting fundamental freedoms. Spain goes beyond the Consensus in calling for human development, including aspects such as equal opportunities, solidarity, peace and freedom. Similarly, social equality is embedded in the Finnish policy alongside commitments to gender equality, democratic governance and human rights. Two out of five of Lithuania’s priorities are common values. Ireland integrates common values in its policies and strategies. Italy notes that “values of democracy, fundamental freedom, human rights, gender equality, democracy and rule of law are enshrined in the Italian law on development cooperation”. For Portugal and Romania, democracy and rights are key programming priorities/sectors, and for the United Kingdom common values feature strongly as priorities. Sweden goes further in associating Sweden’s reputation/brand on the international stage to its role as a human rights defender worldwide. Common values appear strongly aligned in EU and EU MS policy and strategy documents.

3.4. Common principles

3.4.1. Ownership, partnership

\begin{table}[h]
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\begin{tabular}{|p{1.5\textwidth}|}
\hline
\textbf{European Consensus on Development} \\
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14. The EU is committed to the principle of ownership of development strategies and programmes by partner countries. Developing countries have the primary responsibility for creating an enabling domestic environment for mobilising their own resources, including conducting coherent and effective policies. These principles will allow an adapted assistance, responding to the specific needs of the beneficiary country. \\
15. The EU and developing countries share responsibility and accountability for their joint efforts in partnership. The EU will support partner countries' poverty reduction, development and reform strategies, which focus on the MDGs, and will align with partner countries' systems and procedures. Progress indicators and regular evaluation of assistance are of key importance to better focus EU assistance. \\
16. The EU acknowledges the essential oversight role of democratically elected citizens' representatives. Therefore it encourages an increased involvement of national assemblies, parliaments \\
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\end{tabular}
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\textsuperscript{48} Ibid. Paragraph 8
The ECD affirmed “EU commitment to poverty eradication, ownership, partnership, delivering more and better aid and promoting policy coherence for development”, as well as explicitly mentioning aspirations for greater “complementarity” with EU Member States. Ownership and partnership are presented in the same section and as the first of the common principles in the Consensus. The message is that “ownership of development strategies and programmes by partner countries” is the foundation for development because developing countries themselves have the “primary responsibility for creating an enabling domestic environment for mobilising their own resources, including conducting coherent and effective policies”. Ownership therefore implies that each partner country leads the formulation and implementation of social and economic development policies and programmes, with the support of EU development partners. The partnership is thus presented as a partnership of equals, albeit with different levels of resources and capacities: the partner country government contributes authority, local knowledge and relevance through being accountable to its citizens, whilst EU development partners contribute technical and financial resources.

The principle of ownership is first and foremost put to work as a call for more effective development cooperation advocating greater differentiation of cooperation to “the specific needs of the beneficiary country”. However, ownership is also the basis through which the EU invokes a narrative of “share[d] responsibility and accountability for…joint efforts in partnership” with developing countries. Inter-linking ownership with partnership puts forward the formula that effective development is contextualised and driven by developing country governments in a partnership with international development partners like the EU. At the technical level, then, poverty eradication is presented as an achievable goal, if the development partnership is “align[ed] with partner countries' systems and procedures.” Technical solutions on their own, however, are only one part of the equation, the other part being political incentives that are brought to bear through mutual (implied) accountability and “essential oversight role of democratically elected citizens' representatives…. [involving] national assemblies, parliaments and local authorities.”

The 2011 Council Conclusions on Aid Effectiveness expand and deepen the commitment to ownership including through “establish[ing] an EU Transparency Guarantee to increase accountability and predictability, strengthen democratic ownership and improve development results.” The “evidence confirms that among the five aid effectiveness principles, country ownership [had] advanced furthest” in the period to 2011. In this regard, 2011 Council Conclusions double down on commitments to ownership with an expanded definition that includes “systematic reference…to democratic ownership where partner countries are

49 2005 The European Consensus on Development Part 1: EU Vision of Development
50 2005 The European Consensus on Development Section 4.1
51 Ibid. paragraph 14/15
52 Ibid. paragraph 16
54 Ibid. Paragraph 10.
responsible for promoting an enabling environment for the civil society and multi-stakeholder consultations…strengthening the role of parliaments, local authorities, civil society organisations, national audit institutions and the media…[improving] participation of women and women’s organizations…strengthened country systems, including institutional and human resources as well as effective institutions, which respect human rights, good governance and the rule of law.”\textsuperscript{55} Donors, on their side, are called on to “provide their capacity development support according to local priorities, demand and context…[and] to increase the emphasis on harmonised and results based conditionality…[with the] fight against corruption [being] a joint responsibility of partner countries and all development partners.”\textsuperscript{56} At the same time, aid effectiveness also aims to strengthen “[wider] partnerships as well as other sources of development financing”\textsuperscript{57} such as in regards to the private sector\textsuperscript{58}, to “international CSOs and private foundations”\textsuperscript{59}. The 2015 Accountability Report\textsuperscript{60} confirms that “the role of the private sector is becoming increasingly important in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth” with “the EU and 18 Member States [by end 2014 in] regular dialogue with the private sector on development cooperation”.

The 2011 Busan Partnership Agreement strongly reflects the Council’s ambitions as regards the concept of ownership, with it evolving to a concept of ownership by “developing countries”\textsuperscript{61} (more so than ownership by just partner country governments). Busan led to a ‘Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation’, which embodied a paradigm shift in relation to ambitions for “inclusive development partnerships [based on] openness, trust, and mutual respect…recognising the different and complementary roles of all actors.”\textsuperscript{62} The global partnership was then further expanded to bring “South-South and triangular cooperation”\textsuperscript{63} into the tent, thus also opening the door to private philanthropies and the private sector.

The 2012 Council Conclusions on the Agenda for Change\textsuperscript{64} adopt a stronger language in ensuring that development cooperation is “based on and will promote shared values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law as well as the principles of ownership and of mutual accountability. Support to partners will be adapted to their development situation and commitment and progress with regard to human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good

\textsuperscript{55} Ibid. Paragraphs 13, 14 and 15

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid. Paragraph 15 and 16

\textsuperscript{57} 2011 Council Conclusions on “EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Paragraph 44

\textsuperscript{58} Ibid. Paragraph 51

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid. Paragraph 50

\textsuperscript{60} 2015 Accountability Report on Financing for Development, Section 2, Part 5.2.7

\textsuperscript{61} 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Shared Principle, paragraph 11

\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{63} Ibid. paragraph 12

\textsuperscript{64} May 2012, Council Conclusions : ‘Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change’
“Partnership’ is mentioned in the Council Conclusions by differentiating “the scope of the partnership” to the context, and in stating that “governance should feature more prominently in all partnerships”. Furthermore, 2016 Council Conclusions on Joint Programming affirm the EU’s commitment to development cooperation as a partnership based on alignment with the partner country’s development plan essentially to enable partner country ownership of programming.

EU and Member States Alignment

In this vein it is notable that a number of EU Member States are also emphasizing conditional and qualitative aspects of ownership and partnership. Sweden’s 2013 aid policy explicitly mentions how gaps in ownership can be mitigated through partnerships with civil society. In the UK’s presentation to parliament on “the case for a new strategy” (2015), partner government ownership does not feature prominently, and partnerships are referred in reference to “strengthen[ing] and expand[ing] cross-government partnerships to stamp out bribery and corruption; identify and return stolen assets; and understand and then break down international criminal networks.” The 2014 OECD-DAC peer review of the UK even notes with concern that the UK’s investment in “oversight and quality assurance should not become so heavy that they undermine ownership and learning.” Similarly, Ireland’s 2013 Framework for Action, an instrument for implementing the country’s 2013 aid policy, makes little reference to ownership albeit in recommitting to strengthening partner country systems.

The 2014 study on The Busan Commitments: An Analysis of EU Progress and Performance also confirms these findings. The study, however, is tilted towards one aspect of ‘ownership’ namely in the context of budget support, untying aid and using partner government systems. In this regard, the EU and EU MS still performed well with “18 EU Member States and the EU make use of the country systems of recipient country” and Denmark, France, Ireland and Finland being cited for directing more than 70% of their development assistance through partner country systems. Similarly, the study finds that the EU and EU MS had untied 80% of aid by 2014, although half of the EU MS still had significant portions of aid that remained ‘tied’. Still, there is some ambiguity in the details as reported in the 2015 Accountability Report on Financing for Development that explains that “budget support is still far from the norm across most Member States” with many opting for “‘alternative’ approaches that make use of partner government systems” rather than budget support. The study on the Busan Commitments notes that a significant impediment to progress is that the partnership has not successfully alleviated suspicions over the influence of corruption and political interference in

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65 Ibid. Paragraph 5
66 Ibid. Paragraph 18
67 2013 Aid Policy Framework – The Direction of Swedish Aid
68 November 2015, UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest
69 2014 OECD Development Cooperation Peer Reviews: United Kingdom
70 2014 The Busan Commitments: An Analysis of EU Progress and Performance, Thematic Paper on Ownership
71 2015 Accountability Report on Financing for Development, Part 2, Section 5.2.8
aid, both by partner governments in relation to EU and EU MS decisions, and vice versa. In relationship to building inclusive partnerships, the 2014 study notes that the EU and EU MS have made progress in strengthening the partnership with civil society, local authorities and the private sector.

Nonetheless, some impediments remain, including in relation to strengthening capacity of these actors “to effectively contribute to governance, development, and poverty reduction”, and these are highly dependent on the EU, EU MS and partner countries’ “political will” to ensure an enabling environment.

In conclusion, the analysis of the EU and Member States policies confirm that the vast majority of their policies and strategies are coherent with the 2005 Consensus for Development in echoing commitments to partnership and partner country ownership of development processes. However, the policies do evidence a notable shifting in emphasis in line with the evolutions of the concepts in the 2011 Busan Partnership Declaration and the 2012 Council Conclusions on an Agenda for Change. In principle the commitment to partner country ownership continues but it is now more frequently associated with qualifications particularly in regard to the effectiveness of partner country systems. This is associated to another qualifier in that ownership is regularly associated with the extent to which the partner country is accountable to democratic processes and demonstrably combatting corruption and other illicit activities. In reference to national interests, there appears to be a tendency to emphasise the need to improve accountability to citizens in EU Member States.

3.4.2. Political dialogue

Political dialogue is introduced as a ‘Common Principle’ in the European Consensus on Development, “an important way in which to further development objectives.” Political dialogue is referring to high level dialogue typically led by elected officials in “the Member States and by the European Union institutions (Council, Commission and Parliament), within their respective competencies” and in pursuit of “good governance, human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law”. Political dialogue is presented as having “an important preventive dimension… also address[ing] the fight against corruption, the fight against illegal migration and the trafficking of human beings.” Space is also made for civil society in

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72 2014 The Busan Commitments: An Analysis of EU Progress and Performance, Thematic Paper on Inclusive Development Partnerships

73 Ibid.

74 2005 The European Consensus on Development Paragraph 17
“political, social and economic dialogue”\textsuperscript{75}, broadly implying the need for partner countries to ensure that policy and decision-making processes enable participation of and accountability to civil society.

For the European Union, political dialogue strongly features in development cooperation with particular emphasis in the 2000 EU-African, Caribbean and Pacific (EU-ACP) Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA). The 2000 CPA, arguably, is the most advanced example of systematically transferring ownership of country-programmable aid to partner countries and/or regional organisations. The CPA essentially transfers contracting authority over European Development Fund country and regional envelopes to the partner country or regional authority. This transfer of contracting authority is accompanied with political dialogue: article 8 of the CPA explains that “through dialogue, the parties shall contribute to peace, security and stability and promote a stable and democratic political environment.” The dialogue encompasses “cooperation strategies as well as global and sectoral policies, including environment, gender, migration and questions related to the cultural heritage” as well as regular assessment of “respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance.”\textsuperscript{76} The CPA also created the space for political dialogue through article 96 consultations, when one party “considers that the other Party has failed to fulfil an obligation stemming from respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law”.\textsuperscript{77} Articles 8 and 96 essentially ensured that political dialogue is/remains a central feature in development cooperation between the EU and ACP countries. The centrality and importance of political dialogue was reaffirmed in the 2010 revision to the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

The 2011 Council Conclusions in the run-up to Busan\textsuperscript{78} make strong reference to political dialogue at the global level and in relation to the role of international dialogue in “state-building and peace-building”. Additionally, the 2011 Conclusions re-emphasise the importance of “inclusive political dialogue, transparency and the development of local capacities”,\textsuperscript{79} and explicitly mention the need to include the private sector, civil society organisations in their own right, and private foundations. At the global level, the Conclusions also draw attention “to the situation of under-funded countries [and that political] dialogue should include a discussion on the complementary roles of bi- and multilateral donors.”\textsuperscript{80}

The 2012 Council Conclusions on The Agenda for Change lay the foundation for greater investment in and attention to dialogue in development cooperation. Of primacy is the renewed commitment to using political dialogue for democratic governance and human rights. “The EU and its Member States will support and promote an enabling environment for an

\textsuperscript{75} Ibid. Paragraph 18
\textsuperscript{76} 2000 EU-ACP Cotonou Partnership Agreement. Article 8
\textsuperscript{77} Ibid. Article 96
\textsuperscript{78} 2011 Council Conclusions on “EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Paragraphs 31, 40 and 41.
\textsuperscript{79} Ibid. Paragraph 43 and in Paragraph 48 the role of dialogue with civil society and private foundations is emphasised; dialogue with the private sector features in Paragraph 52.
\textsuperscript{80} Ibid. Paragraph 31
independent, pluralistic and active civil society in partner countries, building on the Structured Dialogue”. “Successful development cooperation also requires significant progress on gender equality, empowerment and opportunities for women, including through political and policy dialogue, gender mainstreaming in policies and programmes, and specific actions”.

The introduction of policy dialogue in the Agenda for Change is a major new commitment because it expands the 2005 Consensus commitments to political dialogue (largely involving high-level representatives) into a principle feature of development effectiveness and programming. Opening the door to greater emphasis on policy dialogue implies lower level dialogue between donors and development partners at the technical and sector levels, thus engaging more in domestic policies and strategies. Paragraph 16 of the Agenda for Change explains that “the EU will continue its political dialogue on poverty reduction and the fight against inequalities with more advanced countries. Differentiation will also imply new forms of strategic cooperation based on mutual interests and allow for joint initiatives to address global challenges with more advanced partners, to whom bilateral development grant aid is being accordingly phased out.” Further, there is an added reference to the importance of “strengthening country-level dialogue [to improve] evidence-based policy coherence for development”, thus further emphasising the importance of dialogue in development effectiveness.

**EU and Member States Alignment**

EU Member States’ strategies and policies are strongly aligned to the priorities of political dialogue, namely good governance, democracy, rule of law, combating corruption and protecting human rights. Human rights and democracy appear in one shape or form in most strategies, and for many MS it is central to their cooperation, too. For example, human rights and the rule of law constitute one of three pillars in the Austrian strategy. Germany is noted in the 2012 OECD-DAC peer review for playing a central role in ensuring that democratic aspects feature in policy dialogue. However, EU MS’ policy commitments appear somewhat patchier such as in reference to illegal migration and trafficking.

The main problem is that in EU MS’ strategies that are aligned in their mention of political dialogue, this alignment is not often accompanied with an explicit explanation of how political dialogue and associated tools like policy dialogue will be used. This absence of clear indications of how political dialogue will be used is particularly notable in reference to development cooperation at the partner country level. Dialogue is more likely to be referred to in reference to promoting dialogue with different actors and stakeholders in development, whether with beneficiary countries or with international organisations and other donors.

‘Political dialogue’, however, is rarely explicitly elaborated as a priority. One explanation could relate to fears that political dialogue could potentially undermine aid effectiveness principles, especially those related to enabling partner country ownership. Another explanation is that for some EU MS the capacity to participate in, and shape political and policy dialogue is not as well developed as are their capacities to design and implement projects and programming activities. Notably, political and policy dialogue are activities that...

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cannot be outsourced to consultants or implementing partners, meaning that capacity needs to be developed in-house and cannot be ‘bought in’. It is also worth noting that, even when it comes to the EU, which explicitly emphasises the importance of dialogue at policy levels, there are signs that EU capacities for political and policy dialogue also need to be further developed, a challenge noted in the 2015 EU Accountability Report on Financing for Development82.

Denmark is a notable exception (although more so in terms of political dialogue at the global level) as it explicitly commits to political dialogue in the context of peace and state-building and the New Deal for engagement in fragile states. Spain emphasises the priority of dialogue with different development actors and stakeholders including other donors and international organisations. France puts political dialogue front and central in its strategy. Croatia and Malta both acknowledge the importance of political dialogue and call for greater attention to it as a tool. The 2006 OECD-DAC peer review of the Netherlands notes the country’s intention to use intensive political dialogue to address “human rights, democratic principles, the fight against corruption, the business climate, management of natural resources, illegal migration and human trafficking”, but political dialogue itself is only tangentially referred to in the Netherlands’ 2012 policy. Sweden has a clear strategy to political dialogue emphasising the potential added value that the European External Action Service could deliver in “development cooperation and humanitarian aid…. [giving] the EU considerable political weight in political dialogues with third countries.”

The analysis of EU MS policies for alignment with commitments to political dialogue illustrate that, whilst commitments to democracy and rights are strongly held, the role of political dialogue and how it features in development cooperation is less well elaborated. Here there is a notable risk of divergence between the aspirations for more effective dialogue (both political and policy), as enunciated in the Agenda for Change, and the approach, capacity and understanding of the role of dialogue as held by many of EU MS.

3.4.3. Participation of Civil Society

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<tr>
<td>18. The EU supports the broad participation of all stakeholders in countries' development and encourages all parts of society to take part. Civil society, including economic and social partners such as trade unions, employers' organisations and the private sector, NGOs and other non-state actors of partner countries in particular play a vital role as promoters of democracy, social justice and human rights. The EU will enhance its support for building capacity of non-state actors in order to strengthen their voice in the development process and to advance political, social and economic dialogue. The important role of European civil society will be recognised as well; to that end, the EU will pay particular attention to development education and raising awareness among EU citizens.</td>
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In the years between the endorsement of the Consensus and the year 2010, the EU used the terminology “non-state actors”. This term also encompassing civil society, was used to identify those beneficiaries of development cooperation83 as in the “EC Regulation No

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83 See also definition of “non-state actors” as used in Cotonou Revised Partnership Agreement.
1905/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation”. Their involvement in development cooperation was no longer limited to a simple participation in service delivery. The Commission’s support aimed at strengthening the capacity of non-state actors to become key actors of democratic governance processes.

Following the Fourth High Level Forum (HLF) in Busan, which put inclusiveness at the core of effective partnerships for development and encouraged the active participation of non-state actors as “full and equal participants”, the Commission has abandoned the terminology “non-state actors” and further developed its policy provisions relating to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and to Local Authorities (LAs): these two categories of actors often come associated in recent years’ EU official documents. “Support to” and “participation of” CSOs (and LAs) in pursuit of internationally agreed goals and development effectiveness are acknowledged as a core EU policy orientation. The Agenda for Change Communication, states that by “building on the ‘Structured Dialogue’, the EU should strengthen its links with civil society organisations, social partners and local authorities, through regular dialogue and use of best practices. It should support the emergence of an organised local civil society able to act as a watchdog and partner in dialogue with national governments”.

In 2012, the European Commission released the Communication “The Roots of Democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations” consequently endorsed by the Council. It proposed an enhanced and more strategic EU engagement with CSOs in developing, enlargement and neighbourhood countries, with a particular focus on local civil society organisations (in partner countries). Three priorities are put forward for the EU: “(i) To enhance efforts to promote a conducive environment for CSOs in partner countries. (ii) To promote a meaningful and structured participation of CSOs in domestic policies of partner countries, in the EU programming cycle and in international processes. (iii) To increase local CSOs’ capacity to perform their roles as independent development actors more effectively”.

The 2012 Communication introduced the “EU Country Roadmaps with Civil Society”, which are to be elaborated at country level in all EU partner countries based on the above priorities. The objective is “to activate and ensure structured dialogue and strategic cooperation, improve the impact, predictability and visibility of EU actions, and ensuring consistency and synergy throughout the various sectors covered by EU external relations”. The Roadmaps are also meant to “trigger coordination and sharing of best practices with the Member States and other international actors, including for simplification and harmonisation of funding requirements”. The Roadmap process has allowed deepening the knowledge of and cooperation with national civil society in partner countries, and dialogue between EU Delegations and Member States on support to CSO participation has been enhanced, although a stronger involvement of Member States in the process is desired (see more in the Box on the next page).

Finally, the Regulation 233/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation for the period 2014-2020, foresees a strengthened role for CSOs and LAs, so as to duly consult them to ensure that they play a meaningful role in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU aid, and to duly consider their specificities. According to DG DEVCO’s

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84 European Commission, Agenda for Change (2011).
guidelines, these funding instruments should be used by Delegations to implement the Country Roadmaps after their elaboration.

Furthermore, the EU has given particular attention to improve the dialogue among European institutions, CSOs and LAs from Europe and partner countries. In addition to existing mechanisms for consultations on policies and programmes, the European Commission has set up a consultative multi-stakeholder group allowing CSOs, Local Authorities, and relevant development actors to dialogue with the EU institutions on EU development policies. The dialogue mechanism, called “Policy Forum on Development” gathers twice a year representatives of transnational networks of CSOs (NGOs, Trade Unions, Cooperatives, Chambers of Commerce, Foundations, etc.) from the EU and partner countries. The identification of regional and global networks has been key in the establishment of this forum to encourage and foster real representativeness of participating actors.

**EU Country Roadmaps for Civil Society: coordination in practice**

Conceived as a joint initiative between the European Union and Member States, Roadmaps were introduced in 2014 to translate the ambitions of the 2012 EC Communication “The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations”, and of the October 2012 Council Conclusions, at country level. They aim at creating a EU shared framework for engagement with Civil Society Organisations (CSO) to ensure the policy shift to support CSOs as actors of governance more than as providers of aid and to improve the impact, consistency and visibility of EU actions.

According to the Capitalisation Report of the Roadmap process (November 2015), “the elaboration process of Roadmaps has been seen as a success so far, and the process itself is at least as important, if not more so, than the end product itself”. The Roadmap process has thus offered an opportunity to put into practice the paradigm shift put forward by the 2012 Communication and stop simply “doing business as usual”. When it comes to participation of Member States to the process the Report states: “The Roadmap elaboration process has also been about enhancing dialogue, mutual knowledge and even stronger cooperation between EU Delegations and Member States, as well as non-EU donors. In most countries, the process has been led by the EU Delegations, yet Member States present in the country have contributed, even if on an ad-hoc basis. Roadmaps can be understood as learning processes, as they imply a new and different way of working between the EU Delegations and Member States...” (Capitalisation Report, Page 5).

It is certainly too early to assess the implementation of the Roadmaps: so far, the findings by the Capitalisation Report show some challenges ahead in ensuring continuous collective ownership over time as well as broader EU engagement in a country. Maintaining engagement could also require stronger incentives for MS and an improved division of labour. However, as noted by the Commission in 2016 (European Commission, EU Country Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society. State of play and next steps, 16.02.2016), “Roadmaps have been instrumental in enhancing mutual knowledge and strengthening dialogue and cooperation with Member States”, even underpinning in some cases joint programming processes. The European NGO platform CONCORD in its 2015 report also echoes the important progress achieved with the Roadmaps in terms of mutual engagement between EU Delegations and CSOs. Member States involvement is too limited and more efforts should be made to broaden consultations with CSOs on broader policy issues in order to improve consistency among different tools and mechanisms. Despite the room for improvement that exists, “the drafting of Roadmaps is viewed as a major step in the right direction.” (CONCORD, Analysis of six EU Country Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society and recommendations for the future, 23.09.2015).

**EU and Member State alignment**

Similarly to the EU institutions, several EU MS have updated or developed strategies or

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guidance tailored for specific tracks of CSO engagement, while integrating civil society considerations into other policies. Finland’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for instance, has since 2010 a combined policy and guidance document entitled Guidelines for Civil Society in Development Policy, and in 2012 it elaborated a “principles and priorities” document specific to its international NGO funding. CSOs, as funding partners and as integral actors in social, economic and democratic development, are integrated throughout the Ministry’s (2013) high-level development policy, which also outlines steps to help CSOs strengthen their development effectiveness. The Netherlands’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs has undertaken a substantial evidence gathering exercise and engaged its CSO constituents in a process of dialogue toward updating its civil society policy, as are Denmark and Sweden. Some are integrating consideration for the role of civil society, both as watchdog and collaborator in the pursuit of inclusive private sector development. A number of EU MS are updating or replacing older civil society policies to incorporate lessons and ensure that the policies reflect donors’ current reality and desired directions. All MS’ policy and strategy documents, with no exception, make reference to support to civil society and are therefore aligned with the Consensus priority of “participation of civil society”. This is also the case for “new” Member States, although some of them have civil society featuring more strongly in their policy documents (Lithuania, Latvia, Malta, Romania) and some of them less (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Croatia, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia).

The new EU policy provisions have also been mainstreamed into new programmes and instruments of EU external relations valid in all regions of the world and special capacity building programmes are tailored to support specifically CSOs (and Local Authorities). The EU and EU MS, e.g Germany, Denmark, Sweden, Ireland and UK (DfID) maintain funding envelopes that continue to respect CSOs’ right of initiative. Particular attention is paid to the fact that the EU systematically facilitates CSOs oversight role when budget support is used, among others by allocating part of the budget support envelopes to capacity building for CSOs. A number of Member States also promote national dialogue mechanisms for national civil society to enhance its participation in development cooperation: development policy formulation and implementation (Austria, Belgium, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Finland, France, Latvia and Spain among others).

To conclude, the promotion of participation of civil society in European development cooperation has been strong over the past decade. EU institutions and Member States have been active in formulating policies and preparing strategies to enhance the role of civil society in development cooperation partner countries, as well as within their own jurisdiction. However, the challenge lies in ensuring that the Roadmap exercise becomes a real trigger for EU and Member States’ coordination in the support to civil society worldwide, with its particular emphasis on the participation of these actors to national and local development processes, as well as their political role in the promotion of democracy, social justice and human rights.


3.4.4. Gender Equality

**European Consensus on Development**

19. The promotion of gender equality and women's rights is not only crucial in itself but is a fundamental human right and a question of social justice, as well as being instrumental in achieving all the MDGs and in implementing the Beijing platform for Action, the Cairo Programme of Action and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. Therefore the EU will include a strong gender component in all its policies and practices in its relations with developing countries.

Following the EU commitment to include a strong gender component in all its policies and practices in its relations with developing countries, the EU has pursued a twin-track approach to gender equality in development cooperation: gender mainstreaming throughout all its interventions, and gender specific actions in a number of areas. Gender equality should also be included in the political and policy dialogue with partner countries.

The Communication on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation (2007) set the basis for a coordinated EU approach for the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment. It reinforces the twin-track approach of gender mainstreaming and gender-specific actions. In 2010, the first EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development was adopted, as part of the Council Conclusions on achieving the Millennium Development Goals. The aim was to put policy into practice and to improve the EU’s work on this crucial matter.

The 2011 “Agenda for Change” Communication stated that “gender equality and the empowerment of women as development actors and peace-builders will be mainstreamed in all EU development policies and programmes through its 2010 Gender Action Plan”.

In addition to mentioning in most crucial development policy documents of the past decade, the abundant number of EU policy and strategy documents entirely dedicated to gender since adoption of the Consensus shows the growing importance of gender equality promotion in the Union’s external policy (also reflecting the prominence acquired in internal policies). The box below contains a complete list of the policy and strategy documents, toolkits and evaluation reports of the last decade.
Gender equality in EU development cooperation: a rich policy and strategy environment

- European Commission’s Communication on Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation (8 March 2007).
- Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development 2010-2015 (GAP 2010-2015). This was a five-year common exercise that required yearly reporting from European Commission, the European External Action Service, EU Member States and EU Delegations. In 2013, reports had been received from 79 Delegations and 16 Member States.
- “Agenda for Change” Communication: the need for gender equality to be mainstreamed (2011).
- European Commission’s “Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Partner Countries” (April 2015).
- Council Conclusions on Gender in Development (26 May 2015).

EU and Member State alignment

Gender mainstreaming is mentioned by the EU and Member States in their policy and strategy documents. According to both Gender Action Plans (referred to as GAPs), gender analysis has to be done systematically for all new external actions undertaken, such as in projects, as well as bilateral and regional programming. EU actors’ reporting on these activities shall use sex-disaggregated data wherever available and concerted efforts need to be made to generate these data. EU Member States are all reporting on the OECD-DAC gender marker, which ensures that bilateral aid is screened for its gender equality focus. The EU ensures the review of the OECD gender marker use in all EU funded programmes and projects in order to ensure coherence.

The Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Partner Countries released in early 2015 focused on how gender mainstreaming has been implemented by the European Commission Services, the European External Action Services and two Member States, the Netherlands and Spain, in addition to assessing the extent to which EU/EC cooperation (policy, strategies, programmes/projects) has been relevant, efficient and effective in supporting sustainable impacts on gender equality and women’s empowerment in partner countries in the period 2007–13. According to the Evaluation’s conclusions, the EU was not delivering the strong institutional commitment on gender promotion, as set out in the 2007 Communication, the 2010 Council conclusions on the MDGs, and the (first) GAP. The Evaluation found that EC Services and EEAS have not systematically integrated gender analysis into country strategies, programme/project design and implementation, and in country and regional reviews. The limited technical capacity to commission (conceptualise the scope of work and draft Terms of Reference), manage and

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 utilise gender analysis was an important contributory factor in this. This situation was a
reflection of the low priority given to gender by EC Services and EEAS leaders and senior
managers, and weaknesses in internal accountability systems that allowed major policy
commitments to be overlooked at critical junctures in EU cooperation. Therefore, the
Evaluation concludes that gender equality commitments have remained little more than
rhetoric.89

In spite of this poor institutional and systemic environment, however, the report
acknowledges that EU development cooperation and political dialogue has nonetheless
achieved important gender equality and women’s empowerment results in some contexts,
particularly in the social sectors.89 Some recommendations were made in the report:
revitalising EU commitment to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment (done later in
2015 with approval of two Council Conclusions plus elaboration of new Gender Action Plan
2016-2020, which followed Evaluation’s recommendations); clarifying leadership and
management arrangements at EU Delegations’ level for achieving gender equality results and
delivering against GAP commitments, including complementarity with MS; prioritising
investment in gender expertise within EU Delegations.

The Evaluation also contains one recommendation for Delegations and Member States:
“Where possible gender analysis should be conducted jointly by the EU
Delegations, Member
States and other stakeholders (e.g. development partners, government). Current strategies and
gender-relevant programmes should be reviewed and their formulation amended to make
them more gender responsive. The implications for the focus and form of political dialogue
should also be made explicit. Where gender analysis does not exist or is inadequate, EUDs
should ensure that analysis is undertaken or strengthened with minimum delay. Heads of
Delegation should be required to report to the HRVP on the basis of EU country strategy and
programming in gender analysis. This should also enable EUDs to support strengthened
application of the gender marker for their existing portfolio of programmes and projects”.

As for EU MS, gender is generally mentioned as a cross-cutting item in their policies,
although some of them have made additional gender specific commitments through dedicated
action plans and/or strategies, as is the case for instance for: Sweden (2005), Spain (2007),
Denmark (2014), Germany (2016), Netherlands (2016, specifically on Women, Peace and
Security), whereas Belgium is aiming at finalising a new strategy and action plan in 2016.. In
2013, practically all EU MS reported that gender equality and women’s empowerment was
mainstreamed in their funded projects implemented by CSOs. The EU and most of the EU
MS also provide substantial support in terms of capacity building, training and mentoring90 in
gender mainstreaming.

Many recent OECD-DAC reviews, however, have found that although Member States
integrate the gender dimension as a crosscutting issue in their policy and programme
documents, shortcomings nonetheless appear in the actual integration and implementation of
gender equality in their development cooperation. This can be due to the fact that aspects

89 European Commission, Evaluation of EU Support to Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Partner
Countries Executive Summary, April 2015, pages 3-4.

90 Ibid. Page 5.

91 The Busan Commitments: An Analysis of EU Progress and Performance, Thematic Paper: Inclusive
Development Partnerships – Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment.
relating to gender equality still need to be better integrated, and/or (relatively ambitious) targets of gender-relevant projects have not been achieved (France OECD-DAC Peer Review 2013; Belgium OECD-DAC Peer Review 2015; Austria OECD-DAC Peer Review 2015), or the topic is still treated as a sector instead of being properly mainstreamed (Portugal OECD-DAC Peer Review 2010; Italy OECD-DAC Peer Review 2014). In the case of Luxembourg, “in operational terms, tools have been developed for taking systematic account of cross-cutting aspects in the programme formulation, implementation and evaluation phases (standard integration form for all cross-cutting issues, terms of reference, rules for including gender and/or environment experts in the programme formulation teams...) (...), and these initiatives now need to be pursued further”\textsuperscript{92}. In some case, it is found that this is due to insufficient leadership of the gender issue across development co-operation systems as a whole\textsuperscript{93}, similarly to EU Evaluation’s findings. In these cases, “a high-level commitment to prioritising gender equality and making it mandatory to embed gender equality results into core reporting frameworks could boost progress already made\textsuperscript{94},” and “in order to mainstream these themes throughout (...), strong leadership is needed as well as adequate resources, appropriate staff incentives and training, and accountability mechanisms for reporting on results achieved\textsuperscript{95}”. In some other cases, also: “to support this work, there is need to build staff capacity and develop tools and guidance for the practical implementation and monitoring of gender equality priorities throughout the aid programmes\textsuperscript{96}”. Only in very few cases, gender equality is mentioned in strategies, but little or nothing is put in place (Bulgaria).

We can conclude that, following its inclusion in the European Consensus, among all common principles gender equality has become one of the strongest commitment for the EU and Member States. It is reflected in basically all development policy/strategy documents, and many strategies and action documents have been dedicated exclusively to it. However, shortcomings are found at implementation level, for several reasons, which among others include weak role of leadership, lack of resources particularly human/ expertise etc. This reality is reflected similarly within Member States. The first Gender Action Plan (2011-2015) has failed to become a robust accountability joint instrument and it is expected that the reformed Action Plan 2016-2020 will put the strong commitment into practice. Also, in many countries, the EU faces constraints in conducting policy and political dialogue on gender due to political instability, lack of government commitment, or emergency situations that monopolise the dialogue with governmental institutions.

3.4.5. Addressing State Fragility

\begin{table}[h]
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\begin{tabular}{|l|}
\hline
\textbf{European Consensus on Development} \\
\hline
20. The EU will improve its response to difficult partnerships and fragile states, where a third of the world's poor live. The EU will strengthen its efforts in conflict prevention work (1) and will support \\
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\end{tabular}
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\textsuperscript{92} 2012 OECD-DAC Peer Review of Luxembourg.

\textsuperscript{93} 2010 OECD-DAC Peer Review of Germany.

\textsuperscript{94} 2015 OECD-DAC Peer Review of Germany.

\textsuperscript{95} 2014 OECD-DAC Peer Review of Italy.

\textsuperscript{96} 2011 OECD-DAC Peer Review of Greece.
the prevention of state fragility through governance reforms, rule of law, anti-corruption measures and the building of viable state institutions in order to help them fulfil a range of basic functions and meet the needs of their citizens. The EU will work through state systems and strategies, where possible, to increase capacity in fragile states. The EU advocates remaining engaged, even in the most difficult situations, to prevent the emergence of failed states.

21. In transition situations, the EU will promote linkages between emergency aid, rehabilitation and long-term development. In a post-crisis situation development will be guided by integrated transition strategies, aiming at rebuilding institutional capacities, essential infrastructure and social services, increasing food security and providing sustainable solutions for refugees, displaced persons and the general security of citizens. EU action will take place in the framework of multilateral efforts including the UN Peace Building Commission, and will aim to re-establish the principles of ownership and partnership.

22. Some developing countries are particularly vulnerable to natural disasters, climatic change, environmental degradation and external economic shocks. The Member States and the Community will support disaster prevention and preparedness in these countries, with a view to increasing their resilience in the face of these challenges.

The European Consensus on Development calls for greater attention to “fragile states, where a third of the world's poor live”97 as well as to “conflict prevention…prevention of state fragility through governance reforms, rule of law, anti-corruption measures and the building of viable state institutions”. Building on the commitments to greater ownership (see above) the focus on addressing fragility also includes a commitment to “work through state systems and strategies…to increase capacity in fragile states” and to “remaining engaged, even in the most difficult situations, to prevent the emergence of failed states.” The Consensus goes further98 in focusing specifically on the transition between emergency, “rehabilitation and long-term development…guided by integrated transition strategies” and greater attention to protecting vulnerable populations including “refugees, displaced persons and general security of citizens”. The Consensus also linked the call for greater attention to state fragility to supporting countries “vulnerable to natural disasters, climatic change, environmental degradation and external economic shocks….with a view to increasing….resilience in the face of these challenges.”99

This last point in the Consensus that expands fragility to emphasise natural disasters and climate change appears prescient in that five years later the 2011 Busan Partnership Agreement expands the concept of fragility a major step further to include “health pandemics, climate change, economic downturns, food and fuel price crises, conflict, fragility and vulnerability to shocks and natural disasters.”100 By 2011, the EU approach to conflict related fragility also evolves: in the 2011 Council Conclusions, whilst the term ‘resilience’ itself does not feature, “countries in fragile and conflict situations”101 is a major component of the conclusions including pointed criticism of “the fact that fragile states are lagging furthest

97 2005 The European Consensus on Development, Common Principle 4.5, Paragraph 20
98 Ibid. Paragraph 21
99 Ibid. Paragraph 22
100 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, paragraph 4.
101 2011 Council Conclusions on “EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness. Section ‘Countries in Fragile and Conflict Situations’
behind in achieving the MDGs”\textsuperscript{102}. The 2011 Conclusions go on to draw attention to the urgent priorities of implementing existing commitments such as on Good Humanitarian Donorship and the Fragile States Principles as well as calling on “donors to adapt their procedures for decision-making, funding and implementation to the specific challenges of situations of fragility [and] endorsement of the DAC guidance on state building, transition financing and risk management in fragile situations [as well as providing] the necessary political leadership”\textsuperscript{103}. The commitment to linking relief and recovery to development was also incorporated into the EU’s programming instructions for the 2014-2020 period.

At the same time the 2005 Consensus’ focus on transitions between emergency, rehabilitation/recovery and development grew into a high-level political partnership titled the “New Deal” and “developed by the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and State-building, including the g7+ group of fragile and conflict-affected states\textsuperscript{104}”. The 2015 Accountability Report on Financing for Development reports that by the end of 2014 already the EU and 15 EU MS\textsuperscript{105} had adapted their procedures to allow for programming in fragile and conflict afflicted states. Essentially the New Deal attempts to extract greater political concessions in exchange for donor funding for transitions: partner governments are expected to deliver “legitimate politics, people’s security, justice, economic foundations and revenues and fair services”. In return the donor community promises\textsuperscript{106} greater investments in partner “country systems” with the strong implication that if “transparency” and “national capacities” are institutionalised, donors will move more quickly towards delivering “predictability” in financing and by implication make greater use of budget support type modalities. Busan, however, goes a step further still and makes the case that corruption is causally connected with fragility putting forward the notion that the failure to address corruption directly “fuels crime and contributes to conflict and fragility”\textsuperscript{107}.

The 2012 Council Conclusions on the Agenda for Change takes a less enthusiastic\textsuperscript{108} approach, committing to “the New Deal for engagement in fragile states, as set out in the Busan Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation”. However, the Agenda for Change also capitalises on concerns around fragility to put forward more ambitious programming in the form of a “security, fragility and development nexus”\textsuperscript{109}. Similarly, resilience features but in a broader sense relating to “national and global shocks” and climate alongside continued attention to “linking humanitarian relief and development

\textsuperscript{102} Ibid. Paragraph 37.

\textsuperscript{103} Ibid. Paragraphs 42 and 43.

\textsuperscript{104} 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, paragraph 26

\textsuperscript{105} 2015 Accountability Report on Financing for Development, Part 2, Section 5.2.5

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
cooperation”110. Fragility appears again later on in the Council Conclusions but only to add texture to the policy of spending development resources where it is needed most: “Resources should be targeted at countries most in need, including those in situations of fragility, and where they can have the greatest development impact in terms of poverty reduction.”111

The 2013 Council Conclusions on EU Approach to Resilience represent a major consolidation and emphasis on “fragility” and its link to aggravating the “chronic effects of poverty”112. The conclusions affirm the need for a multi-dimensional and multi-modal approach to addressing state fragility that acknowledges inter alia the need to urgently act on food insecurity, to ensure state building and conflict sensitivity in programming and crucially to strengthen and better implement commitments to linking relief to recovery and development (LRRD), itself the subject of an influential communication113. Notably, LRRD is also enabled by the expanded use of joint programming that was also piloted in fragile states (Haiti and South Sudan, the latter of which strongly incorporates LRRD as central to the ‘joint response’) because of its potential to address state fragility such as through improving predictability and alignment with partner country development plans. The 2016 Council Conclusions on Stepping up Joint Programming, then, also mean a greater commitment to improving predictability and alignment with national development plans in fragile states.

The EU’s progressive iterations of its commitments to addressing state fragility in the decade since agreeing the Consensus represents significant high-level concern that more needs to be done better to reduce fragility. In this regard, the EU and EU Member States appear to have made a major contribution to strengthening global efforts through using integrated, more systematic and medium to long term approaches to reducing fragility whilst still being a significant financier of emergency and crisis related support.

EU and Member States Alignment

Most EU and EU MS policies are aligned or strongly aligned with the 2005 Consensus priority of ‘addressing state fragility’. A number of EU MS make explicit reference such as Austria and Germany who keep reference to conflict and peace building as essential to development cooperation and addressing state fragility. The 2015 OECD peer review114 of Germany notes that “conflict sensitivity and factors exacerbating fragility are well embedded in Germany’s country strategies. Germany co-ordinates actively with other development partners in international bodies on fragility.” Last year, Belgium published a policy paper drawing attention to the need for greater resources for fragile states and linking this to improving human rights. Denmark is commended in its OECD-DAC peer review for

110 Ibid. Paragraph 14
111 Ibid. Paragraph 15, Italics Added. Note: fragility is again presented as one of a number of criteria for identifying where development spending is most needed in paragraph 18.
112 2013 Council Conclusions on EU Approach to Resilience, paragraph 1
113 2001 COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development
114 2015 OECD Development Cooperation Peer Reviews: Germany
“cohesion between Danish foreign and security policy co-ordinated instruments (military, political, humanitarian, development) combined under one common goal” in fragile states and that almost half of the countries Denmark invests development funding in are in a state of fragility. Finland directs one fifth of its development spending to programming in twenty fragile states. Ireland emphasises its commitment to the New Deal and Fragile States Principles. The Netherlands emphasises, amongst other things, the importance of rule of law and fundamental human rights in addressing fragility. The United Kingdom puts responding to fragility at the centre of two of its four priorities, drawing attention to the need to “[strengthen] global peace, security and governance…tackle the causes of instability, insecurity and conflict, and to tackle crime and corruption…” as well as to “[strengthen] resilience and response to crises”\textsuperscript{115}.

Whilst addressing state fragility is aligned in most policy documents or strategies it is worth noting that in many cases the alignment is presented in a way that does not necessarily imply substantive commitment to programming in this space. Cyprus for example, only tangentially refers to addressing state fragility as a priority; the Czech Republic does not cover it in significant detail and Bulgaria, Estonia, Greece, Luxembourg, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia do not appear to have aligned their respective policies. This is a challenge because the Consensus highlights the importance of ensuring a continuum between short and long-term interventions to conflict prevention and crisis management, thus requiring a significant shift in programming and institutional capacity development approaches if these challenges are to be effectively addressed. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the analysis also unearths significant attention to the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid, which for example is referred to explicitly by Ireland, Lithuania and Sweden. In this regard, it is possible that ‘addressing state fragility’ is perceived as falling more under the remit of relief or humanitarian funding than development cooperation. It is also possible that in broadening the scope of programming that relates to ‘addressing state fragility’ (e.g. in including climate change, good governance and even domestic revenue collection) that it is subsumed into sector response strategies or in pursuit of global priorities. Equally, fragility can be a daunting and expensive area to work successfully in because of the security and other related costs and risks.

It is important to note though, that the EU and EU MS are acknowledged for playing an instrumental role in addressing state fragility globally. The 2014 study on EU progress and performance to meeting the Busan Commitments\textsuperscript{116} cites the EU and EU MS engagement and commitment to the New Deal for Fragile States that by 2014 was already showing demonstrable progress in Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Liberia, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Timor Leste. The EU’s 2015 Accountability Report on Financing for Development reports that already “approximately half of the EU’s development funding is channelled to crisis/conflict situations and fragile states.”\textsuperscript{117} However, fragmentation (partly combatted through joint programming), short term

\textsuperscript{115} November 2015, UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest, Foreword and Section 2: A New Strategy

\textsuperscript{116} 2014 The Busan Commitments: An Analysis of EU Progress and Performance, Thematic Paper on Fragility and Resilience

\textsuperscript{117} 2015 EU Accountability Report Financing for Development, Section 4.4.2, Commission Staff Working Document
programming horizons, partner government capacity, inclusion of non-state actors and using resilience based approaches to programming all remain pressing challenges vital to addressing state fragility.

3.5. Delivering more and better aid

3.5.1. Increasing Financial Resources

In 2000 the United Nations General Assembly approved the Millennium Declaration establishing principles, values and goals of human development to be achieved by 2015. The goals of the declaration were soon translated in eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) which have become the internationally agreed roadmap for development until 2015. Within the Millennium Development Goals, some donor countries committed to achieving a target of 0.7% ODA/GNI by 2015. In May 2005, in preparation of the UN World Summit, the European Council approved a statement on *Accelerating progress towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals*\(^\text{118}\), which not only reaffirmed the target of 0.7% (0.33% for New Member States) but also set new intermediate targets for the EU Member States. The Council Conclusions recognised the importance of long-term involvement in development finance and, having assessed that most Member States had achieved an intermediate target of 0.39% one year earlier than the 2006 deadline, decided to set the new intermediate target at 0.56% by 2010. New Member States were encouraged to achieve 0.17% by 2010. The Council also decided that the EU would “increase its financial assistance for Sub-Saharan Africa and […] provide collectively at least 50% of the agreed increase of ODA resources to the continent while fully respecting individual Member States priorities’ in development assistance.” Such conditionality, referred only to Africa and reiterated later in similar terms in the EU consensus, reflects to a certain extent the demand by some Member States to be fully autonomous in their policies towards the continent.

\(^{118}\) External Relations Council, Brussels 24 May 2005 - Council conclusions: *Accelerating progress towards achieving the millennium development goals.*
The ECD re-asserted the commitments taken by the Council in 2005 and integrated the notion that “priority will continue to be given to least developed and other low-income countries (LICs), as reflected in the high portion of EU aid flowing to these countries” and it maintained its commitment to support “the pro-poor development of middle-income countries (MICs), especially the lower MICs”. The consensus also refers to the “particular attention to be given to fragile states and donor orphans”. As to the allocation of resources, these should be “objective and transparent” and “based on the needs and the performance of beneficiary countries, taking into account specific situations”.

In addition to confirming its commitment to achieve the target volumes of ODA\(^{119}\), in 2008 the EU and its Member States made further a commitment on targeting between 0.15% and 0.20% of the EU’s collective aid to least developed countries (LDCs) by 2010.

In 2010, having acknowledged that the EU would not achieve the 0.56% target, the Council “urged Member States […] to deploy necessary efforts in order to meet 2015 ODA commitments” by taking “realistic, verifiable actions” and reporting on them to the Commission.\(^{120}\)

The “Agenda for Change” formally maintained the prior financing commitments even in the face of an enduring financial crisis, which put the Member States’ national budgets under strain and consequently determined a scale-back of the EU development finance between 2011 and 2014. The Agenda for Change itself makes only a brief mention of the financing commitments, a sign of a weakening political ambition by EU donors, and the discourse evolved in three directions:

a) A boosted resolve on performance, results, and differentiation to achieve “maximum impact and value for money”;

b) The new objective of “engaging with the private sector” with a view to leveraging private sector finance: “The EU will further develop blending mechanisms to boost financial resources for development” and;

c) The need to leverage domestic resources of partner countries to finance their “own development strategies”.

The Council Conclusions, which endorsed the Agenda for Change, reaffirmed nevertheless the EU commitment to achieve its collective ODA target of 0.7%, while also emphasising the need to “deliver greater impact” and the “role of innovative sources of financing for development”.

**EU and Member States Alignment**

The desk review of the EU and its Member States reveals a broad political alignment with the targets set out at UN and EU level. To a certain degree, all Member States mention the need to achieve their own ODA/GNI targets. Some acknowledge however that the target could not

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\(^{119}\) Council Conclusions on Speeding Up Progress Towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 26 and 27 May 2008.

\(^{120}\) Council Conclusions on the Millennium Development Goals for the United Nations High-Level Plenary meeting in New York and beyond - Supporting the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, 14 June 2010.
be met within the original timeframe of 2015, and that budgetary and economic conditions need to improve in order to meet those targets.

The current situation of the actual ODA/GNI ratios in the EU shows a considerable gap between the original commitment and the actual achievement in 2015.121

Sweden, Luxembourg, Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK have already achieved or exceeded their ODA targets.

After a few years of stagnation, in 2015 the spending trend improved slightly with the EU collective ODA/GNI growing to 0.47% (up from 0.43% in 2014). 19 countries either increased their ODA or kept it at the 2014 level. Only nine countries (including Luxembourg and Denmark, which are well over their targets) have decreased their aid flows.

Several Member States122 go beyond a mere statement of intentions, but conform to the EU Council decision of 2010 urging Member States to take “realistic and verifiable actions” and detail actual plans to achieve them. In 2013, the Austrian government makes it a priority: "Based on the Monterrey commitments, the EU also decided in 2005 on a binding phased plan to raise official development assistance (ODA). Despite the economic and financial crises, Austria is seeking to meet the Monterrey targets.” The OECD-DAC Peer review commended Austria’s efforts (2015), but pointed out that several steps needed to be undertaken, including lower reliance on debt relief to maintain or increase ODA spending levels. Belgium, like other

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countries, has enshrined the 0.7% target in its law, even if it does not provide any timeline. In the case of Germany, the 2013 coalition agreement specifies that the government plans to achieve 0.7% by 2015 through budget increases and innovative finance.

Mediterranean countries have experienced deep financial crisis, which have seriously limited their ability to reach ODA/GNI targets or even to keep their pre-crisis spending levels. To varying degrees the budgetary cuts have affected development assistance programs: Spain’s ODA spending fell from 0.46% in 2009 to 0.13% in 2015. In its IV Master plan, the Spanish government recognised that the ODA target was beyond reach but still considered it an important political aim for the future, once it has surmounted its budgetary constraints. Italy approved a new development cooperation law in 2015, which sets a general turning point for its policy and the financing for development commitment: in an effort to disjoint development financing from the yearly budgetary discussions and increase funding predictability, the law introduces a triennial budgetary planning exercise, coupled with steady budgetary increases.

New Member States have committed to reaching 0.33% of ODA/GNI and have broadly confirmed their commitment with more or less emphasis throughout the years. There is a general political alignment to these targets across the EU 12. Estonia and Slovenia registered the highest ODA/GNI ratios, however still far away from their individual targets for 2015.

The EU and Member States fell short of the commitment, confirmed by the EU consensus, to direct 50% of their aid increases to Africa: indeed only 14.5% of EU ODA growth between 2004 and 2013 went to Africa. However, the African continent remains a strong priority for many EU MS. The continent figures prominently in the coalition agreement of the German government and it is a priority region for the French and British governments. Nine out of 20 priority countries for the Italian development cooperation are in Sub-Saharan Africa and further two in North Africa. Even if Spain’s priorities are with Latin America, nine out of 23 priority countries are in the African continent nevertheless. Finland announced that it would focus its development cooperation on LDCs in Africa and Asia.

In general, East European countries do not put the same emphasis in their development cooperation policy on the African continent. The European consensus grants them ample margins to pursue other priorities by stating that it “will capitalise on new Member States’ experience, (such as transition management). The provision to direct over 50% of the aid increase to Africa also applies collectively, thus leaving individual Member States to determine their own priorities in development assistance. It comes as no surprise that East European countries’ priorities are mostly with other beneficiaries in the same regions, in neighbouring Balkan or in former USSR countries. Notwithstanding, some do mention Africa in their strategy papers. The Hungarian strategy states that, while prioritising Eastern Europe and the Balkans, Hungary “cannot neglect the development needs of Sub-Saharan Africa, which remains the furthest from meeting the MDGs.” Others, such as Lithuania, explicitly refer to their contribution to the EU development cooperation budget as a means to ensure some funding for African and other developing countries. Poland includes four Sub-Saharan African countries among its list of 10 priority countries. Slovenia committed to operate via


124 International Development Cooperation Strategy and Strategic Concept for International Humanitarian Aid of Hungary 2014-2020
the EU budget as well as on a bilateral basis with one or two Sub-Saharan countries.\footnote{Resolution on International Development Cooperation of the Republic of Slovenia until 2015, Ljubljana, 2008}

Most Member States recognise the need to prioritise support to LDCs and the poor, and several mention fragile states in their policies or strategies. In addition, emphasis has evolved over the years in connection with conflict situations in neighbouring areas. While poverty eradication and MDGs were the main drive for the EU during the 1990s and early 2000, since 2010 the impact on the local populations of crisis situations became increasingly crucial in defining policies and priorities. Fragile states, security and post-conflict situations became prominent keywords in European development cooperation. In 2005, Portugal’s strategic document mentions MDGs and fragile states in connection with Africa.\footnote{Uma visão Estratégica para a Cooperação Portuguesa, 2005}

Croatia’s National Strategy for 2015-2020 evokes that the “crisis caused by human activity are no longer simply the manifestation in traditionally fragile and unstable countries and regions, but emerge in our close neighbourhood.”. The UK Government committed in the Strategic Defence and Security Review (SDSR) “to spend at least 30 percent of aid in fragile and conflict-affected states by 2014/15”.\footnote{DFID, Bilateral Aid Review – Technical Report, 2011}

In defining their aid policy with respect to fragile states, the Danish, Swedish and Finnish governments refer to the Busan agreement on the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.\footnote{Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark - DANIDA, Together for a Better World, Strategic Framework for Denmark’s participation in EU Development Cooperation, 2013, Government of Sweden, Aid Policy Framework – the Direction of Swedish Aid, 2013. Finland’s Development Policy Programme. 2012}

The French government declared that it would “specifically focus on three regions with a high concentration of poverty, instability and security risks.”. The issue of fragile states figures prominently in its strategic paper: “For the budget triennium 2011-2013, 10% of the bilateral grants of French development cooperation will be reserved for crisis and post-crisis responses.”.\footnote{Development Cooperation : A French Vision, Strategy 2011}

Similarly the Danish government asserted that “strengthening efforts in the fragile states will be a clear priority of the Government in 2013 and in the years to come. In 2013, efforts in the fragile states are enhanced with approximately DKK 600 million, allocating nearly DKK 1.3 billion in total to fragile states through the country frames.”.\footnote{Priorities of the Danish Development Cooperation, 2013-2017.}

Denmark also considers that action to support fragile states should be done in connection with the EU: Work to ensure that the EU increases its engagement in fragile states, based on the principles in the “New Deal” regarding more effective, joined up, tailor-made and locally rooted initiatives.”.\footnote{Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark - DANIDA, Together for a Better World, Strategic Framework for Denmark’s participation in EU Development Cooperation, 2013}

Austria states that “perhaps the greatest challenge for the international community is posed by fragile situations, particularly in low-income countries.”.\footnote{Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Cooperation, 2013-2015.}
Only a few Member States refer to donor orphans in their development cooperation strategies: the Netherlands, which includes the fragility status among the selection criteria of partner countries, Italy and Cyprus.

3.5.2. More effective aid

**European Consensus on Development**

25. As well as more aid, the EU will provide better aid. Transaction costs of aid will be reduced and its global impact will improve. The EU is dedicated to working with all development partners to improve the quality and impact of its aid as well as to improve donor practices, and to help our partner countries use increased aid flows more effectively. The EU will implement and monitor its commitments on Aid Effectiveness in all developing countries, including setting concrete targets for 2010. National ownership, donor coordination and harmonisation, starting at field level, alignment to recipient country systems and results orientation are core principles in this respect.

26. Development assistance can be provided through different modalities that can be complementary (project aid, sector programme support, sector and general budget support, humanitarian aid and assistance in crisis prevention, support to and via the civil society, approximation of norms, standards and legislation, etc.), according to what will work best in each country. Where circumstances permit, the use of general or sectoral budget support should increase as a means to strengthen ownership, support partner’s national accountability and procedures, to finance national poverty reduction strategies (PRS) (including operating costs of health and education budgets) and to promote sound and transparent management of public finances.

27. Partner countries need stable aid for effective planning. The EU is therefore committed to more predictable and less volatile aid mechanisms.

28. Debt reduction also provides predictable financing. The EU is committed to finding solutions to unsustainable debt burdens, in particular the remaining multilateral debts of HIPCs, and where necessary and appropriate, for countries affected by exogenous shocks and for post-conflict countries.

29. The EU will promote further untying of aid going beyond existing OECD recommendations, especially for food aid.

The 2005 European Consensus on Development is fundamentally about improving development effectiveness whilst creating a sense of urgency and shared priorities in “poverty eradication and sustainable development”\(^\text{134}\). “Combating global poverty is not only a moral obligation; it will also help to build a more stable, peaceful, prosperous and equitable world”. The imperative for the EU and EU Member States to act together is further at the core of the consensus: “Development cooperation is a shared competence between the European Community (3) and the Member States…. working together, the EU is an important force for positive change…. [providing] over half of the world's aid.” Making development cooperation more effective is thus presented as a European priority as much as it is a moral obligation to eradicate poverty and ensure sustainable development. Here it is important to note that the Consensus is putting forward a fundamentally different perspective to making development more effective in that it is going beyond the notion that effectiveness as embedded in the 2005 Paris Declaration\(^\text{135}\) ‘Principles of Aid Effectiveness governing relations between donors and

\(^\text{134}\) 2005 The European Consensus on Development paragraph 1.

\(^\text{135}\) 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness principles of Ownership, Alignment, Harmonisation, Mutual Accountability and Managing for Results (i.e. Results Based Management).

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partner countries’. The Consensus is putting forward the notion that as a group, European donors can and should make development cooperation more effective by working better together. European donors\textsuperscript{136} “efforts at coordination and harmonisation must contribute to increasing aid effectiveness” through a “common vision that guides the action of the EU, both at its Member States and Community levels.”

Aid effectiveness\textsuperscript{137} is presented as being grounded in ownership and partnership (see above), oriented around the recognition that developing country governments are themselves primarily responsible for poverty eradication and sustainable development. “National ownership, donor coordination and harmonisation, starting at field level, alignment to recipient country systems and results orientation are core principles”. More effective aid is defined as being about “more aid [and] better aid. Transaction costs of aid will be reduced and its global impact will improve.” This was also accompanied in the Consensus with a pledge to “implement and monitor its commitments on Aid Effectiveness” and to “where circumstances permit [using] budget support…as a means to strengthen ownership, support partner’s national accountability” as well as making European aid more predictable. In relation to this last point the Consensus also emphasises the importance of “enhance[ing] … the voice of developing countries in international institutions”\textsuperscript{138} seemingly acknowledging that greater participation of partner countries in agenda setting is a key to development interventions that are more suitable and effective.

In 2009, the Council concluded an operational framework on aid effectiveness\textsuperscript{139} that affirmed the EU’s commitment to “Division of Labour (selected measures to further implement the EU Code of Conduct on the Complementarity and Division of Labour in Development Policy), Use of Country Systems, and Technical Cooperation for Enhanced Capacity Development” as fundamental steps in delivering more effective aid. The operational framework further emphasises that “joint EU approaches in the implementation of aid effectiveness will collectively leverage more progress than can be achieved individually by Member States and the Commission”, a theme that has been progressively built on and culminating most recently in the 2016 Council Conclusions on Stepping up Joint Programming (see paragraphs below).

The 2011 Busan Partnership for Development Effectiveness notably gives greater voice to developing countries and Southern actors in defining a “broader and more inclusive”\textsuperscript{140} development effectiveness partnership. In Busan, the commitment to increasing funding was reiterated, and previous aid effectiveness commitments reaffirmed, but effectiveness also becomes about “sustainable and transparent results for all citizens”\textsuperscript{141}. Development cooperation is presented as being only one of a number of means for development but playing a “catalytic and indispensable role in supporting poverty eradication, social protection,

\textsuperscript{136} 2005 European Consensus on Development paragraph 3, italics added

\textsuperscript{137} Ibid. Section 4.1

\textsuperscript{138} Ibid, Paragraph 34

\textsuperscript{139} 2009 Council conclusions on an Operational Framework on Aid Effectiveness

\textsuperscript{140} 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Paragraph 1

\textsuperscript{141} Ibid. Paragraph 6, Italics added
economic growth and sustainable development”\textsuperscript{142}. Here, Busan emphasises more the desire to avoid aid dependency, whilst making the point that partner countries are accountable for ensuring that the private sector and domestic revenues play a proportional role in development. Effective development principles evolved from being primarily about state-to-state cooperation to being in Busan an approach that embraces a wider group of actors\textsuperscript{143}. This evolution is embodied in the move from ‘aid effectiveness’ to ‘development effectiveness’. In the context of development effectiveness, ownership is reclassified as being “ownership of development priorities by developing countries”, “democratic ownership” and cooperation about “inclusive development partnerships”, opening the door for greater engagement with (and accountability of\textsuperscript{144}) civil society, the private sector and legislatures. Partner countries are still held responsible for delivering “results…aligned with the priorities and policies set out by developing countries themselves” but are pushed to do so “transparent[ly]… [being accountable] to the intended beneficiaries of our co-operation, as well as to our respective citizens, organisations, constituents and shareholders”. Equally, this last paragraph raises the stakes for donor countries in calling for them to also improve their transparency, as well as ensuring accountability to donor country constituencies.

The reformulation of the principles of development effectiveness in Busan laid the ground for a greater focus in programming that concentrates more on\textsuperscript{145} “democratic ownership”, and greater “monitoring, evaluating and communicating” for “results”. The major change in Busan, however, relates to calling for Southern actors to participate equally in national development processes, and that they too should commit to cooperation in line with the Busan effectiveness principles. Busan also makes “leverage[ing] and strengthen[ing] the impact of diverse forms of development finance and activities” part and parcel of development cooperation partnerships. The Busan Partnership is essentially a policy aspiration to graduate “from effective aid to co-operation for effective development”\textsuperscript{146} that broadens the scope to include any actor, stakeholder or financing source related to development processes, nationally and internationally, and to committing all parties concerned to transparency and results. These aspects do not supplant but rather add to the 2005 Paris Declaration commitments to Aid Effectiveness.

The 2012 Council Conclusions are not as ambitious as the Busan Partnership when it comes to development effectiveness, even though effectiveness (and relevance) is the backbone of the Agenda for Change. Effectiveness is introduced as building on Policy Coherence for Development but also about rethinking programming particularly in terms of focusing on “sectors that have a strong multiplier effect in developing countries, notably sustainable

\textsuperscript{142} Ibid. Paragraph 9

\textsuperscript{143} 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Shared Principles, Paragraph 11, a-d

\textsuperscript{144} 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Paragraph 22b under Complementary Actions; Notably Paragraph 25b makes improving the effectiveness, transparency and accountability of international organisations a development effectiveness priority that is combined with the notion that a global priority is to “reduce the proliferation” of multilateral channels, particularly those that do not work well.

\textsuperscript{145} 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Shared Principles, Paragraph 12, a-d

\textsuperscript{146} 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Shared Principles, Paragraphs 28 and 29
agriculture and energy, including natural resources management.”\textsuperscript{147} Partner countries are called on to contribute more to development financing and processes such as through providing an “enabling business environment”\textsuperscript{148} and getting partner countries to be more transparent\textsuperscript{149}. One of the most notable effectiveness commitments in the Consensus is about “working together better” both with partner countries but especially within the EU family and with like-minded donors to reduce fragmentation, improve coordination (see section below as well) and deliver better (and more measurable) results.

In 2014 the EU Commissioned a study on “The Busan Commitments: An Analysis of EU Progress and Performance”. The analysis found that the “EU and its Member States (EU MS) are front runners in improving transparency and reducing fragmentation... [and in being a] lead donor in using partner countries’ Public Financial Management systems (PFM) and procurement systems [and] in untying aid.”\textsuperscript{150} In terms of the focus on results, the authors found significant policy commitment although progress was intertwined with the need to “improve country results frameworks”. By 2014, the Busan commitment to using joint programming for more effective development had “been introduced in 40 countries”. Additionally, the study cited good progress in promoting inclusive development and particularly the roles of the private sector and civil society.

The 2016 Council Conclusions on Stepping up Joint Programming represent a major commitment to improving effectiveness through meeting commitments to making greater use of joint multi-annual programming. The 2015 Accountability Report on Financing for Development also reported that by end 2014 the EU and eight EU MS had already approved guidelines on joint programming.\textsuperscript{151} Joint programming is a major step towards improving effectiveness because it improves transparency, predictability, alignment and harmonisation. As importantly, it reduces fragmentation and transaction costs by making use of joint analysis and promoting the use of joint responses by multiple donors. Most importantly, joint programming also improves ownership and mutual accountability for results by being synchronised and aligned with partner country development plans and results frameworks.

\textit{EU and Member States Alignment}

Only three of all EU MS (Bulgaria, Cyprus and the Slovak Republic) had no evidence in their policies of alignment with the core aid effectiveness commitments. Whilst the UK scores consistently well in OECD-DAC peer reviews, the UK’s 2015 policy\textsuperscript{152} makes no specific commitment to improving its own effectiveness. However, the United Kingdom’s 2011 Multilateral Aid Review provides a much needed evidence base and represents an attempt to...

\textsuperscript{147} May 2012, Council Conclusions: ‘Increasing the Impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change’, Paragraph 8

\textsuperscript{148} Ibid. Paragraph 9

\textsuperscript{149} Ibid. Paragraph 19

\textsuperscript{150} 2014 The Busan Commitments: An Analysis of EU Progress and Performance,

\textsuperscript{151} 2015 Accountability Report on Financing for Development, Part 2, Section 5.2.3

\textsuperscript{152} November 2015, UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest
implement the Busan commitment to improve the effectiveness of multilateral channels by reducing proliferation through shifting funding away from those that work less well\textsuperscript{153}. The remaining EU MS policies and strategies show strong alignment with the Consensus commitments to aid effectiveness. A number of EU MS are noted for being world leaders in meeting their effectiveness commitments. Concord\textsuperscript{154}, for example, commends Ireland for only reporting aid that is actually available at partner country level and the 2014 OECD-DAC peer review of Ireland noted that 95\% of Irish aid was untied. Finland is another EU MS reported to have untied 95\% of its aid. Romania is also recognised by Concord\textsuperscript{155} alongside a number of other EU MS for raising their spending on aid significantly (Romania’s 65\% increase was the biggest in 2015). Sweden is another good practice in that it has expanded its commitment to aid effectiveness to build on the Busan and Agenda for Change commitments to “wider ownership and an inclusive partnership in which the role of civil society and the private sector in development”\textsuperscript{156}. Portugal, another good example, reports developing detailed action plans to improve aid effectiveness. Finland has mainstreamed aid effectiveness principles in its operation and evaluation manuals. By and large the Consensus commitments to aid effectiveness are aligned in EU and EU MS policies and strategies. However, the 2012 Council Conclusion priorities of working better together do not appear to feature prominently (see more below).

The 2014 study on EU Progress and Performance in implementing the Busan Commitments concluded confirms this analysis in stating that there is “evidence that previous achievements towards the implementation of aid effectiveness principles have been sustained”.

### 3.5.3. Coordination and complementarity

\begin{table}
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\hline
\textbf{European Consensus on Development} \\
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30. In the spirit of the Treaty, the Community and the Member States will improve coordination and complementarity. The best way to ensure complementarity is to respond to partner countries' priorities, at the country and regional level. The EU will advance coordination, harmonisation and alignment. The EU encourages partner countries to lead their own development process and support a broad donor-wide engagement in national harmonisation agendas. Where appropriate, the EU will establish flexible roadmaps setting out how its Member States can contribute to countries' harmonisation plans and efforts. \\
31. The EU is committed to promote better donor coordination and complementarity by working towards joint multiannual programming, based on partner countries' poverty reduction or equivalent strategies and country's own budget processes, common implementation mechanisms including shared analysis, joint donor wide missions, and the use of co-financing arrangements. \\
32. The EU will take a lead role in implementing the Paris Declaration commitments on improving aid delivery and has in this context made four additional commitments: to provide all capacity building assistance through coordinated programmes with an increasing use of multi-donors arrangements; to channel 50\% of government-to-government assistance through country systems, including by
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\textsuperscript{153} 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Shared Principles, Paragraphs 28 and 29

\textsuperscript{154} 2015 Concord report, Aid Watch

\textsuperscript{155} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{156} Sweden’s 2013 Aid Policy Framework
increasing the percentage of our assistance provided through budget support or sector-wide approaches; to avoid the establishment of any new project implementation units; to reduce the number of un-coordinated missions by 50%.

33. The EU will capitalise on new Member States’ experience (such as transition management) and help strengthen the role of these countries as new donors.

34. The EU will undertake to carry out this agenda in close cooperation with partner countries, other bilateral development partners and multilateral players such as the United Nations and International Financial Institutions, to prevent duplication of efforts and to maximise the impact and effectiveness of global aid. The EU will also promote the enhancement of the voice of developing countries in international institutions.

Improving coordination and complementarity features prominently in the Consensus, contributing directly to the ambitions of the Lisbon Treaty to strengthen the role of “Europe as an actor on the global stage”. Section 5.3 of the Consensus explains that “the best way to ensure complementarity is to respond to partner countries’ priorities, at the country and regional level…” thus through “[advancing] coordination, harmonisation and alignment”157

The development of Roadmaps (to prepare and formalise joint analysis and joint responses) and the commitment to “joint multiannual programming, based on partner countries’…strategies” features prominently as does the call for greater use of “common implementation mechanisms including shared analysis, joint donor wide missions, and the use of co-financing arrangements”158 and particularly in providing “capacity building assistance through coordinated programmes with an increasing use of multi-donors arrangements [whilst channelling] 50% of government-to-government assistance through country systems.”159

Similarly the Consensus is a commitment to closer cooperation with “other bilateral development partners and multilateral players such as the United Nations and International Financial Institutions, to prevent duplication…. and to maximise the impact and effectiveness of global Aid…. [whilst] also promot[ing] the enhancement of the voice of developing countries in international institutions160.”

Whilst coordination is not extensively referred to in the 2011 Council Conclusions on ‘EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness’, it could be said that it is a primary driver and even the rationale for the EU’s support to the establishment of a global partnership, which fundamentally seeks to work better in a “more complex architecture for development co-operation, characterised by a greater number of state and non-state actors, as well as co-operation among countries at different stages in their development, many of them middle-income countries. South-South and triangular co-operation, new forms of public-private partnership, and other modalities and vehicles for development have become more prominent, complementing North-South forms of co-operation”161. The 2011 Council Conclusions also do not explicitly dwell on complementarity, although they do call for “build[ing] the understanding of the respective advantages, complementarities and synergies

157 2005 European Consensus on Development paragraphs 30 through 34.

158 Ibid. paragraph 31

159 Ibid. paragraphs 32 and 33

160 Ibid. paragraph 34

161 2011 Busan Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, Paragraph 5
between South-South and North-South cooperation based on transparency regarding development financing flows.\textsuperscript{162} The 2011 Council Conclusions notably opened the door for a significantly greater commitment to joint multi-annual programming both at numerous points in the text but also in a dedicated annex that elaborates in detail the ambitions of joint programming. Joint programming is about coordinating and improving complementarity in the programming and project design phase thus meaning coherence between participating donors before the challenge of fragmentation presents itself. As such, the EU’s continued high-level commitment to joint programming should be seen as working to remediate the challenges that create the need for coordination and complementarity in the first place. Equally joint programming is a sound basis for joint implementation, which when used necessarily improves coordination and complementarity.

In a similar vein, the 2012 Council Conclusions on an Agenda for Change emphasise the term coordination itself less prominently, but only insofar as calling for more measurable commitments to “working together better”\textsuperscript{163}. Working better together\textsuperscript{164} means reducing fragmentation and taking greater responsibility for results, as well as “making concrete progress in joint multiannual programming starting in 2012 with a number of partner countries”, and in parallel implementing the EU Transparency Guarantee. It also means \textsuperscript{165} “paying specific attention to aid orphans” and pursuing “a common results-based approach”, policy coordination, improving policy coherence for development, and greater coordination between migration and development. In May 2016, the Council\textsuperscript{166} also communicated its Conclusions on Joint Programming, noting its importance as “an effective tool to enhance EU coordination at country and sector level and can reinforce coordinated policy dialogue, as well as joint analysis, information sharing, joint implementation initiatives, joint monitoring and joint evaluation.” Joint programming is now being developed or is in place in more than fifty partner countries.

\textit{EU and Member States Alignment}

Coordination and complementarity principles are largely echoed in EU MS policy and strategy documents but in many cases the commitments appear more aspirational than operational. Austria links coordination to working in areas in which it has a comparative advantage and in relation to division of labour. Belgium refers to searching for “synergies, coordination and complementarity” with other actors to improve effectiveness. The Czech Republic refers to coordination “in accordance with the principles of the EU, UN and OECD, to emphasize Policy Coherence for Development at both national and EU levels”. Slovenia side-steps the issue in explaining that it does not make extensive use of budget support. The

\textsuperscript{162} 2011 Council Conclusions on ‘EU Common Position for the Fourth High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness’, Paragraph 46


\textsuperscript{164} Ibid., Paragraph 19.

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid., Paragraphs 20, 21, 22 and 23.

\textsuperscript{166} May 2016, Council Conclusions on Stepping up Joint Programming
UK makes little reference to coordination and complementarity in its 2015 policy\textsuperscript{167}, although the 2014 OECD-DAC peer review\textsuperscript{168} makes specific note of the UK as a good practice in being a “strong supporter of joint programmes and approaches. It works closely with other development partners, often taking a leadership role in donor coordination at the country level.” Sweden, on the other hand, makes strong reference to coordination and complementarity but puts greater emphasis on its commitment to international systems than on specifically improving its coordination and complementarity with other donors (including those in the EU family). Similarly, coordination is referred to in the context of re-committing to international and/or multilateral systems by Bulgaria, Finland, Lithuania, Poland and Spain. On the other hand, Austria, Croatia, Denmark (that is noted by ECDPM\textsuperscript{169} for its commitment to coordination and joint programming), Estonia, France, Germany (with a very strong commitment to division of labour and joint programming), Italy, Ireland (in the context of citing an existing EU/EU MS joint analysis exercise in Malawi), Latvia and Luxembourg place stronger emphasis on the priority of coordination with other EU donors. Germany is well known for its high level commitments to improving coordination and complementarity through being a lead on the Fast Track Initiative on Division of Labour. The OECD-DAC peer review also notes Germany’s pledge to support joint programming in over thirty countries and that the Federal Ministry for Economic Co-operation and Development (BMZ) participates in joint financing mechanisms.

3.6. Policy coherence for development

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European Consensus on Development \\
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35. The EU is fully committed to taking action to advance Policy Coherence for Development in a number of areas. It is important that non-development policies assist developing countries’ efforts in achieving the MDGs. The EU shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in all policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries. To make this commitment a reality, the EU will strengthen policy coherence for development procedures, instruments and mechanisms at all levels, and secure adequate resources and share best practice to further these aims. This constitutes a substantial additional EU contribution to the achievement of the MDGs. \\
36. The EU strongly supports a rapid, ambitious and pro-poor completion of the Doha Development Round and EU-ACP Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). Developing countries should decide and reform trade policy in line with their broader national development plans. We will provide additional assistance to help poor countries build the capacity to trade. Particular attention will be paid to the least advanced and most vulnerable countries. The EU will maintain its work for properly sequenced market opening, especially on products of export interest for developing countries, underpinned by an open, fair, equitable, rules-based multilateral trading system that takes into account the interests and concerns of the weaker nations. The EU will address the issues of special and differentiated treatment and preference erosion with a view to promote trade between developed countries and developing countries, as well as among developing countries. The EU will continue to promote the adoption by all developed countries of quota free and tariff free access for LDCs before the end of the Doha round, or more generally. Within the framework of the reformed Common
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\textsuperscript{167} November 2015, UK aid: tackling global challenges in the national interest

\textsuperscript{168} 2014 OECD Development Cooperation Peer Reviews: United Kingdom

\textsuperscript{169} 2015 ECDPM Study: Stepping up? Best Practice in Joint Programming and Prospects for EU Joint Cooperation Strategies
Agriculture Policy (CAP), the EU will substantially reduce the level of trade distortion related to its support measures to the agricultural sector, and facilitate developing countries’ agricultural development. In line with development needs, the EU supports the objectives of asymmetry and flexibility for the implementation of the EPAs. The EU will continue to pay particular attention to the development objectives of the countries with which the Community has or will agree fisheries agreements. 

37. Insecurity and violent conflict are amongst the biggest obstacles to achieving the MDGs. Security and development are important and complementary aspects of EU relations with third countries. Within their respective actions, they contribute to creating a secure environment and breaking the vicious cycle of poverty, war, environmental degradation and failing economic, social and political structures. The EU, within the respective competences of the Community and the Member States, will strengthen the control of its arms exports, with the aim of avoiding that EU-manufactured weaponry be used against civilian populations or aggravate existing tensions or conflicts in developing countries, and take concrete steps to limit the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons, in line with the European strategy against the illicit traffic of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. The EU also strongly supports the responsibility to protect. We cannot stand by, as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing or other gross violations of international humanitarian law and human rights are committed. The EU will support a strengthened role for the regional and sub-regional organisations in the process of enhancing international peace and security, including their capacity to coordinate donor support in the area of conflict prevention.

38. The EU will contribute to strengthening the social dimension of globalisation, promoting employment and decent work for all. We will strive to make migration a positive factor for development, through the promotion of concrete measures aimed at reinforcing their contribution to poverty reduction, including facilitating remittances and limiting the ‘brain drain’ of qualified people. The EU will lead global efforts to curb unsustainable consumption and production patterns. We will assist developing countries in implementing the Multilateral Environmental Agreements and promote pro-poor environment-related initiatives. The EU reconfirms its determination to combat climate change.

Policy coherence for development features strongly in the Consensus and is a stand-alone commitment, as well as being explicitly monitored in biennial reports, the latest being the 2015 Commission Staff Working Document. Promoting policy coherence for development (PCD) is referred prominently in the introduction and vision rationalising the Consensus: “The European consensus on development sets out common objectives and principles for development cooperation. It reaffirms EU commitment to poverty eradication, ownership, partnership, delivering more and better aid and promoting policy coherence for development”. PCD is defined as “ensuring that the EU shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in all policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries, and that these policies support development objectives”. The Consensus also includes a stand-alone section on Policy Coherence for Development, which emphasises the importance of taking “account of the objectives of development cooperation in all policies that [the EU] implements which are likely to affect developing countries” thus making a substantial additional commitment to implementing the Millennium Development Goals. The

170 2005 European Consensus on Development, Part 1

171 Ibid. Paragraph 9

172 Ibid. Section 6

173 Ibid. Paragraph 35.
biggest emphasis, however, is put on the call for pro-poor agendas in trade, the regionally based Economic Partnership Agreements and international agreements such as “fisheries agreements”\footnote{Ibid. Paragraph 36.}. Most ambitiously, the emphasis on pro-poor trade is also used to complement a commitment to “substantially reduce the level of trade distortion related to [the EU’s] support measures to the agricultural sector”\footnote{Ibid.}. The Consensus commitment to PCD also emphasises the need to better address the development-security nexus and to “strengthen the control of its arms exports, with the aim of avoiding that EU-manufactured weaponry be used against civilian populations or aggravate existing tensions or conflicts in developing countries”\footnote{Ibid, Paragraph 37}. Finally, the Consensus introduces the priority of policy coherence related to the “social dimension of globalisation, promoting employment and decent work for all”\footnote{Ibid. Paragraph 38}. This last paragraph includes reference to greater coherence in addressing migration, climate change, remittances, “unsustainable consumption and production patterns”\footnote{Ibid. It is also worth noting that the issues mentioned in this paragraph such as in regards to sustainable consumption are now prevalent in the Sustainable Development Goals too.}.

The 2012 Council Conclusions on an Agenda for Change\footnote{May 2011 Council Conclusions on Agenda for Change, Paragraph 4} “[reaffirm the] commitment to improve Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) at all levels” but also call on the “the EU’s development policy [to adopt] a more ambitious approach to PCD in the twelve areas identified in 2005 and a more pro-active integration of development objectives into EU policies and external action. In the immediate future, PCD work will focus on trade and finance, climate change, food security, migration and security. Supporting knowledge sharing, including on the development impacts of other policies, strengthening country-level dialogue, improving evidence-based PCD and engaging local civil society, stakeholders and governments will be key.”\footnote{Ibid. Paragraph 22}

\textit{EU and Member States Alignment}

The analysis of the EU and EU Member States policies found good evidence of alignment. Bulgaria, Ireland, Lithuania, Poland and the Slovak Republic’s policy and strategy documents, however, did not appear to have aligned to Policy Coherence for Development. On the other hand, some other EU Member States strongly emphasised PCD in their policies and were in some cases recognised for their commitments to policy coherence in peer reviews or reports on PCD. The 2015 Commission Staff Working Paper on PCD reports that policy coherence related to trade and aid “is an integral part of the Czech Republic’s development policy…since 2013 some 16 projects have been implemented”\footnote{2015 Commission Staff Working Document Policy Coherence for Development 2015 EU Report}. PCD is strongly emphasised in European Commission policies and is followed up at implementation level,
with the European Commission monitoring and reporting\(^{182}\) on PCD both on its own practices and those of the EU Member States. The 2015 report found that PCD continues to be a “priority for the European Commission and mechanisms and procedures to avoid contradictions and build synergies between different EU policies have continued to improve since the last PCD report of 2013”\(^{183}\). Malta is also acknowledged in the Commission’s 2015 PCD\(^{184}\) report for its efforts in PCD whilst its policy was also found to be strongly aligned. Germany is another good example being recognised in its 2015 OECD-DAC peer review for “advocating for policy coherence for development within the European Union (EU), the OECD and other international organisations for many years. At home, the Federal Government continues to give high priority to this agenda. [...] BMZ is responsible for promoting policy coherence for development across the German government and the EU. [...] Having a seat in Cabinet allows BMZ to scrutinise every policy from a development perspective. [...] Looking forward, Germany is well positioned to address the SDGs as government-wide agenda supported by extensive cross-government collaboration.”\(^{185}\) Hungary also is strongly aligned with it committing to “[strengthening] policy coherence for development”. The Netherlands has embedded PCD in its 2013 Policy Note and identified three thematic key areas: trade, tax and textiles\(^{186}\). Portugal, Romania and Sweden are also noted as having strongly aligned their policies and strategies to the 2005 Consensus commitments to Policy Coherence for Development.

The European think-tank, ECDPM, however is more cautious about implementation of Policy Coherence of Development (PCD) commitments, with their heir 2010 working paper citing shortcomings. On the other hand, the 2016 German Development Institute paper\(^{187}\) on the Consensus praises the Consensus as it ensured that PCD “assumed a prominent place on the Union’s policy agenda.” Similarly, Concord’s 2015 Aid Watch commends the EU for “[pioneering] important concepts such as policy coherence for development”\(^{188}\) that Concord sees and advocates for as a tool for improving development cooperation (i.e. in calling for other donors to ensure that their respective foreign and national policies are coherent with their development policy commitments). The findings cited by the institutions listed above thus imply that PCD is seen as a particularly valuable tool in support of development cooperation.

\(^{182}\) Ibid.

\(^{183}\) 2015 Commission Staff Working Document Policy Coherence for Development 2015 EU Report, Executive Summary

\(^{184}\) 2015 Commission Staff Working Document Policy Coherence for Development 2015 EU Report

\(^{185}\) 2015 OECD Development Cooperation Peer Reviews: Germany

\(^{186}\) 2015 The Netherlands’ Reply to the 2015 Commission Staff Working Document Policy Coherence for Development EU Report

\(^{187}\) 2016 DIE Briefing Paper: The Future of the “European Consensus on Development”

\(^{188}\) 2015 Concord report, Aidwatch
4. Conclusions and lessons learned

With the approval in 2015 of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the global policy landscape of development cooperation has changed profoundly. Two major shifts have occurred: on one side, the parallel but connected agendas of sustainable development and poverty eradication merged into one single agenda. Over the next fifteen years, countries will mobilise efforts to end all forms of poverty, to fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind. On the other side, the goals of the global agenda apply universally to all and become a shared responsibility, beyond the traditional donor – beneficiary relationship. The changing landscape also involves a new orientation on financing for development that confirms the engagement of donor countries to reach ODA/GNI targets, but at the same time recognises that the sustainable development goals cannot be achieved without the involvement of all actors, enabling policies and the mobilisation of all sources of financing, domestic or international, private or public.

Against this background, the EU will have to shape its new development strategy, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the EU Global Strategy for foreign and security policy. Given that the principles and objectives enshrined in the Consensus are still largely relevant today, the latter could be a valid starting point for a renewed EU-wide policy framework for development cooperation. The progress on the following common objectives, values and principles of the ECD could be emphasised once more.

- Generally speaking, EU and MS’ development cooperation have been guided by (or, vice versa, have contributed to the drafting of) the common objectives, common values and common principles enshrined in part I of the European Consensus. This is notably more the case as regards common objectives, which derive from the Millennium Declaration (2000), as well as Monterrey and Johannesburg Sustainable Development Summits (both 2002). EU and MS strategies and policies are fully aligned with these objectives.

- In particular, EU institutions fully embrace all common objectives, values and principles and have over the last decade undertaken a number of important actions in terms of policy reform to ensure that EU development policy is fully in line with each one of them, as well as to push all MS to do likewise by playing the role of convener, e.g. through Joint Programming, the Gender Action Plan and Civil Society Roadmaps, all of them being EU-triggered processes that require action of MS as well.

- This full alignment to common objectives, values and principles is generally also tangible for most of the “older” Member States, which have been OECD-DAC members for a long time. Some Member States have adapted their development cooperation policies over time to gradually embrace the ECD principles and objectives. For many of these Member States, however, the economic and financial crisis, as well as increasing pressure on governments for justifying engagement and spending in development cooperation in times of ‘crisis’, have provoked ‘gaps’ in policy alignment and implementation.

- Common objectives, and to a different (or lesser) extent, common values and principles as contained in the Consensus, have constituted the basis for “new” Member States’ development policies, many of which started after the year 2000 (Millennium Summit). In fact, the creation itself of a development policy was triggered for many of these MS by the act of joining the EU (10 of these MS joined in...
the year 2004, three joined later). Therefore, these new development policies were built fully in the framework of the MDGs by following international and EU development policy’s standards and discourse. The new Member States, however, sometimes appear to not have the means or resources to turn the strategies and policies into practice, possibly hampered by the financial and economic crisis and related capacity challenges.

- Some ‘unexpected’ external factors and/or international events occurred since the approval of the Consensus, such as the Arab Spring, the growing threat of international terrorism and increasing migration pressure on the EU (particularly as a consequence of different African and Middle Eastern crisis). Most notable the economic and financial crisis that hit the Eurozone since 2008 has had a significant impact on EU and MS development policies and strategies. For instance, some of the common values, such as global peace and security and justice, which in the Consensus are not prominently covered (Section 3 being quite short) have gained importance in EU and some MS policies as a consequence of the international events.

- There is generally good alignment to common principles such as ownership and partnership, although there is not a consensus on what constitutes a ‘good partnership’. Ownership and partnership are described as being adhered to more so when the partner government has a good record on human rights, good governance and corruption issues. Here, it is also worth noting that the global narrative on ownership has also shifted from one that focused primarily on ownership by partner governments to now emphasise democratic ownership, thus opening the space to greater participation of civil society, the private sector, local authorities and the parliament.

- Political dialogue, good governance, democracy and human rights (i.e. common principles), as well as fragility, have also gained importance in EU and some MS policies after the Arab Spring and other crisis have shown that (economic) development alone does not ensure stability and conflict prevention, if the environment in the country is not conducive to freedom and the protection of human rights. However, whereas EU and MS have increasingly aligned their policies to these values, it is difficult to measure whether and how EU political dialogue as well as sensitive measures to tackle fragility are deployed at partner country level.

- Among common principles, inclusiveness of civil society and gender equality, have become very prominent in EU and MS strategies and policies. This growing prominence for the EU has played a trigger role resulting in growing global relevance of inclusiveness agenda (civil society, women and girls) in the context of international agreements (e.g. Busan, Financing for Development Agenda, SDGs etc.), partly due to the Consensus and the impact of EU representations and negotiations in international fora. Nevertheless, as for other policies, actual means of implementation to put inclusiveness and gender equality into practice in EU and MS development strategies have often lacked and the strong commitments in the policies are challenged by reality.

- Increasing financial resources remains an issue. The EU and all of the EU MS remain committed but many factors (economic and financial crisis since 2008, political choices of governments of different colours who feel the pressure to motivate development spending to taxpayers, new MS being less involved in development cooperation etc.) have made it difficult and near impossible for most EU MS – and the Union as one actor – to reach the 0.70% (0.33% for new MS) target of ODA spending
As a proportion of GNI by 2015. Despite the difficulty in reaching its spending targets, at the 2015 Addis Ababa Conference on Financing for Development the EU renewed its overall commitment to the targets of 0.70% ODA/GNI by 2030 and of 0.15-0.20% ODA/GNI to LDC in the short term and 0.20% within the timeframe of the 2030 Agenda. The time span for the major ODA/GNI target is long enough to plan for a gradual increase in ODA, while at the same time refocusing and reorienting the financing priorities and modalities.

- When it comes to delivering better aid, most MS and more prominently the EU Institutions are committed to the aid effectiveness, coordination and complementarity principles contained in the ECD, in line with the international commitments (Paris 2005, Accra 2008, Busan 2011). The international fora’s outcomes, particularly Paris and Busan, were heavily influenced and supported by EU actors and therefore the ECD principles gained a broader relevance. The OECD/DAC regularly and consistently reports that EU MS are amongst the “pioneers” and “world leaders” in implementing commitments to aid effectiveness, coordination and complementarity. Coordination at EU level represents a real trigger (when it works well) for further coordination with non-EU actors. However, there are signs of fatigue in regards to the technical aspects of complying with the aid and development effectiveness principles. Whilst aid effectiveness priorities such as reducing fragmentation, increasing partner country ownership or improving alignment were previously committed to in and of themselves regardless the country context, now they appear to be committed to on a conditional basis such as in reference to the partner country’s level of democratic accountability in the partner country, the strategic focus of the particular donor or the primacy of delivering value in a way that matters to the donor’s own electorate (more so than the end beneficiaries). These qualifiers need not be mutually exclusive but they do speak to a changing attitude towards aid effectiveness commitments.

- For Policy Coherence for Development, some MS and the EU as a global donor are considered by OECD/DAC as having developed ‘good practices’ recognised internationally. Regular reporting on PCD at EU level has also shown notable progress in alignment as well as in implementation. Only five MS are not fully aligned to date to the principle of PCD, all of them recent in the development world.

Lessons learned

The European Consensus on Development (ECD) is both a consensus and a valuable consensus building tool in relation to those aspects that were not uniformly agreed and understood. By giving voice to shared priorities, in the opinion of this paper’s authors, the EU and EU MS have been more successful at developing their respective narratives. Most value appears to have accrued in regards to sensitive subjects such as on the primacy of human rights, anti-corruption, democratic governance and gender in development cooperation. Similarly, the Consensus is associated to a more assertive EU and EU MS voice on the legitimate role of civil society, the private sector, local authorities and parliaments in the development cooperation relationship. The Consensus can also be associated with creating a cohort (i.e. a sense of a peer group) of EU and EU MS donors on non-contentious issues that require the engagement of multiple donors, most notably in relation to addressing state fragility, an issue that is not only aligned but has also become one of the primary focuses of the EU and a number of EU MS. Similarly, the Consensus appears to have contributed to a shared narrative explaining why EU and EU MS coordination is important and by implication,
how to work better together.

The ECD has been effective in formalising a shared vision, which created a broad framework agenda for the development cooperation policy of Member States to either speak to or comment on. This framing has been an effective agenda-setting tool even if not uniformly adopted. The consultation process leading to the adoption of the document has been arguably functional to a better understanding and acceptance by Member States. Although it is not clear whether the Consensus led to MS adjusting their policies or vice versa, it is clear that agreeing the consensus provided the basis for a consistent narrative on common values that is repeated in strategy documents, OECD-DAC peer reviews and partnership agreements with recipient countries, international organisations and implementing partners.

The consensus, however, ‘competes’ for the attention of Member States’ policy-makers. Other international agreements, such as the Millennium Declaration, the Monterrey consensus, Accra and Busan conferences have also contributed to shape the policy discourse.

The objectives, values and principles of the ECD have had a relatively long life, still being relevant and compelling a decade later. The document has a long-term vision, which was only marginally affected by external events. As such, it has value because it allows the EU and Member States to adopt a long-term platform and to minimize short-term policy shifts.

The consensus also includes statements that European development cooperation as a whole strongly emphasises today. These include political dialogue (now expanded and nuanced with reference to policy and other forms of dialogue), complementarity, and policy coherence. The desk review showed that these aspects consistently feature in Member States’ policies. The ECD was also instrumental to establish the connection between development cooperation and other important policy areas, such as migration, security, gender equality and the protection of the environment. During a decade, most Council decisions on EU policies in these areas make a specific reference to the ECD.

The consensus afforded flexibility to Member States to determine their priorities in development cooperation. The ECD did not have the objective to fine-tune the policies of Member States.

The ECD could have done more to define what was meant by complementarity and coordination even though it can be argued that the EU development cooperation at the time had just entered a profound reform process and that the implementation of several aspects was still being defined. Similarly, such valuable tools as ‘political dialogue’ and ‘policy coherence for development’ could have benefitted from greater outreach, greater conceptual clarity and advocacy.
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