

Chapter VII

Development policy of the European Union

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Representatives of the European Union often emphasize that it is the largest donor of development assistance in the world. This statement is confirmed when the sum of the ODA expenditure of the EU and the Member States is taken into account. The Union is also characterized by global ambitions that would be difficult to justify if the EU had not cooperated with most countries in the world, including countries with different levels of development. Due to the fact that these ambitions concern the normative dimension, they are realized with the help of soft power tools. One of these tools is programming and financing of development projects. Research indicates a relationship between the amount of development aid provided and the reputation of a given country in the international arena (Leszczyński, 2017, p. 94).

The EU's development policy is based on treaties, although it is included in the so-called shared competences (between the Union and the Member States). At the same time, it was expressly stipulated that the exercise of these competences by the EU "shall not result in Member States being prevented from exercising their competences" (TFEU Art. 4 (4)). The most important goals of the EU's development policy are also set out in the treaties. The implementation of these goals and the Union's activity in the area of development policy are consistent with the attitude of EU

citizens towards development aid, which is clearly positive. In mid-2019, 86% of respondents considered helping people in developing countries “important” (Special Eurobarometer 2019).

Development is a complex phenomenon with many interdependencies. Conditions for development are endogenous and exogenous and concern many different areas: economic, political, social, historical, natural and cultural. That is why, for years, research on development has been conducted in many scientific disciplines – economics, political science, sociology, history, law and pedagogy, philosophy, anthropology, geography, and psychology. As a result, the development discourse must have an interdisciplinary dimension. In the case of development research, Immanuel Wallerstein, who argues that the division into disciplines is an obstacle, not a facilitator, in understanding the world (2007), is correct.

Development is such an important goal of human activity that even theories alternative to the hitherto interpretations of development apply to it. For example, the postgrowth concept, based on a critical analysis of the Eurocentric approach to development and assuming that “the «idea» of development was a political meta-narrative which constituted a Western project of intervention and reflected the interests of its practitioners” (Payne, Phillips, 2010, p. 138). Representatives of the EU institutions implementing development policy are aware of the interdisciplinary nature of development and try to monitor both theoretical reflection and empirical research analyzing the broadly understood development and effects of development aid. However, the practice of EU action in the field of assistance to developing countries is changing slowly and gradually.

7.1. Conditions of the EU development policy

The development policy of the European Union depends on many factors. The Union is an international organization of a *sui generis* character, specific and – because of this fact – difficult to compare with other entities. One of the typologies that can be used to analyze the determinants of development policy is their division into factors resulting from the

concept of sustainable development, i.e. economic, social and environmental. The cross-cutting element that permeates all the others is the political factor in conjunction with the legal conditions.

In the individual dimension, one of the main motives for providing aid, including development aid, is cognitive dissonance. The theory of cognitive dissonance is a concept in the field of social psychology (Festinger, 1957) relating to unpleasant mental tension. Its source is the appearance of two incompatible cognitive elements. Cognitive dissonance can have various causes. One of them is, for example, the awareness of inconsistency that a person experiences when confronted with a situation that requires – in his opinion – reaction, e.g. meeting a hungry child (Carr, Eilish & MacLachlan, 1998). Such a situation reveals the incompatibility of the reality with the human notion of the expected world order, which should be universal. The occurrence of such a state leads to motivational tension and starts the process of reducing the observed and discomforting inconsistency in which a person tries to restore the coherence of their value system. Providing aid is a form of redistribution aimed at reducing dissonance and tension.

In the case of Europeans, an additional factor that strengthens the need to reduce cognitive dissonance through help is the conviction, or at least the doubt, about the responsibility for the current state of the world order. Are the present poverty, underdevelopment, and instability in many parts of the world not a derivative of the actions of European countries undertaken in the past, especially during the colonial period? Additionally, Europeans are convinced that the values promoted by the European Union are universal. If so, then the values – as summarized in the Charter of Fundamental Rights – apply to all people. And values such as: human dignity, the right to life, the right to freedom and security, equality and solidarity practically exclude the possibility of being passive in the face of extreme poverty in the world. In democratic systems – and democracy is a condition for EU membership – the feelings of citizens may have an impact on the decisions of the rulers, taking into account the public opinion. All the more so when citizens perceive that taking specific actions or supporting such actions is their moral obligation, based on religious beliefs or based on secular humanism.

In the case of countries and international organizations, the direct motive for the actions taken is not cognitive dissonance, but economic or political goals. Economic goals are most often realized by generating support mechanisms for one's own economy – stimulating one's own production and employment or gaining access to markets and resources. The European Union is not in favor of “tied” aid that brings direct economic benefits to the donor while reducing its effectiveness. However, there are more subtle forms of using development aid to achieve one's own economic goals (Kaczmarek, 2018, p. 40). The political motives of the EU's development policy are clearly visible: ensuring external security, primarily by increasing the stability of neighboring countries; limiting extremism and terrorism; reducing migratory pressure; disseminating values important for the EU and gaining influence on the policy of countries that benefit from European aid.

The political will of the member states had a major impact on the legal environment. For the first time, EU development policy was regulated by the treaty and was included in the co-decision procedure in the *Maastricht Treaty* (1992). Previously, the role of the European Parliament was limited to giving opinions on development policy. Thanks to the treaty changes, the Parliament has gained the opportunity to actually influence the legislative proposals of the European Commission. This trend was confirmed in the *Treaty of Lisbon*. Art. 209 paragraph 1 TFEU states that “The European Parliament and the Council, acting in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure, shall adopt the measures necessary for the implementation of development cooperation policy” (*Treaty on the Functioning*). Parliament's influence on development policy decisions was much greater than in some other foreign policy areas not covered by the ordinary legislative procedure (Kaczmarek, 2021).

Relations between the EU and its Member States remain more complicated. The *Maastricht Treaty* did not resolve in what specific way competences in the field of development policy were to be “divided” between the Member States and the EU institutions. This was not done in the *Lisbon Treaty* either. Art. 208(1) states only: “The Union's development cooperation policy and that of the Member States complement and reinforce each other.” (*Treaty on functioning*). Only a minimum of

coordination and consultation has been established: “In order to promote the complementarity and efficiency of their action, the Union and the Member States shall coordinate their policies on development cooperation and shall consult each other on their aid programmes (...)” (TFEU Art. 210 (1)). In practice, such measures are not easy to implement.

The objectives of development cooperation have been defined more precisely. The catalog of objectives of external actions, defined in the Treaty on the European Union, lists, *inter alia*, “fostering the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty” (TEU Article 21(2d)). In turn, in TFEU it is stated that: “Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty” (TFEU Art. 208(1)) and that “the Union and the 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.” (TFEU Art. 208(2)). As a consequence, the main reference point for the EU was first the Millennium Development Goals (2000–2015) and now the Sustainable Development Goals (2015–2030).

The goals formulated in this way indicate the global determinants of the EU development policy. The scale of poverty and underdevelopment is still large and – as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic – will increase (Kaczmarek, 2021). In order to remain in line with the values to which the Union is attached, the planned eradication of poverty cannot be limited to any group of countries or regions. This would undermine the axiological and normative foundations of the Union. The need to make the EU’s development policy global is also due to the adoption of the concept of sustainable development and the Union’s ambition to be a political leader in combating climate change. A prerequisite for the effectiveness of climate protection policy is to give it a global dimension and to program (and implement) the development of the least developed countries in such a way that will not be contrary to the climate goals. Consequently, any development program that requires changes in energy, production or agriculture must be analyzed in the context of “sustainability” and its impact on the climate. This approach raises concerns in many

developing countries, for which the priority is economic development, and not climate policy (Kaczmarek, 2018, p. 53).

The actions of the EU are also subject to geopolitical conditions. One of the countries whose policy is becoming increasingly important for everyone involved in development aid is China (Kaczmarek 2019), undertaking various initiatives in developing countries. China has already become the most important political and economic partner of the poorest region in the world – Africa. China's policy towards developing countries is fundamentally different from that of the EU in this respect. The source of the problems is, among others, the fact that China – like the EU – has normative ambitions, externalized e.g. by attempts to build a global management model alternative to universalism (Nuo et al., 2019, p. 65). For the EU, this means that a rival with great potential has emerged in development policy, with its own vision, promoting different values, not burdened by the colonial past and perceived by some developing countries as an attractive partner.

7.2. The institutional structure of the EU's assistance for developing countries

Due to the treaty-based nature of the development policy, the institutional architecture of the EU in this area is complex. Development policy is dealt with by all key EU institutions – the European Council, the Council of the European Union, the European Parliament, the European Commission, the European Court of Auditors, as well as a special service – the European External Action Service (EEAS), supporting the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the European Investment Bank (EIB) (Deszczyński, 2011b, pp. 301–315). The decision-making system in the case of development policy is similar to the mechanisms used in other areas of “shared” competences.

The European Council defines the overall political orientations and priorities. Development policy is not the most important policy of the EU, but is sometimes subject to the work of the European Council or taken into account in the broader context of the EU's international role. For example, in June 2019 it adopted the New Strategic Program for

2019–2024, which stated, inter alia: “The EU will use its influence to lead the response to global challenges, by showing the way forward in the fight against climate change, promoting sustainable development and implementing the 2030 Agenda, and cooperating with partner countries on migration.” (*Nowy program*, 2019). The Council also declares on behalf of the EU that it “will develop a comprehensive partnership with Africa. Together with global partners sharing our values, the EU will continue to work towards global peace and stability, and to promote democracy and human rights.” (*Nowy program*, 2019). One of the chapters in the conclusions of the October 2020 European Council meeting is devoted to the EU’s relations with Africa. The Council has repeatedly expressed its support for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (e.g. in its conclusions of June 2017, October 2018).

The Council of the European Union, known as the Council, is an inter-governmental institution with legislative and budgetary powers. In accordance with the treaties, the Council “defines” and coordinates various EU policies, including development policy. Its impact on this area is significant due to decision-making powers and participation in the legislative process. The body that prepares projects for the Council in the field of development policy is the Working Party on Development Cooperation (CODEV). The Council made an attempt to clarify the provisions of the treaties regarding complementarity. In 2007, at the request of the European Commission, it adopted the *Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labor in Development Policy*. In it, the recommendations, applied by the Member States on a voluntary basis, are formulated. The development policies of many Member States, however, are shaped to a greater extent by internal factors, such as national policy or historical conditions, and by international processes than by strategies adopted at the EU level.

The EU’s second legislative institution is the European Parliament. Parliament’s quantitative *acquis* in terms of development issues is significant. In the years 1958–2019, deputies adopted a total of 648 reports prepared by committees responsible for this area (Kaczmarek, 2021). In the recent terms of the European Parliament, the activity in this area was varied, as the number of legislative reports does not depend on the MEPs themselves, who are deprived of the classic legislative initiative.

Table 1. European Parliament reports on development policy

Term of office	Number of adopted reports
V (1999–2004)	62
VI (2004–2009)	42
VII (2009–2014)	47
VIII (2014–2019)	25

Source: own study based on the database of texts adopted by the European Parliament, <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/>.

The institution that performs executive and management functions in the EU is the European Commission (Deszczyński, 2011b, pp. 311–314). In the European Commission for the 2019–2024 term, no commissioner was entrusted with a department that – in its name – would directly refer to the term development. International cooperation and development policy are subject to the commissioner responsible for international partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen. The mission, entrusted to the Commissioner by Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, is very broad and takes into account the political priorities of the Commission. It includes, among others:

- developing a new comprehensive strategy with Africa (and on Africa);
- conclusion of negotiations with ACP countries on an ambitious post-Cotonou agreement;
- supporting efforts to achieve comprehensive partnerships with countries of migrants’ origin and transit;
- ensuring that Europe’s external financial assistance promotes the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals;
- ensuring that gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are a top priority in international cooperation and development policy;
- focusing on supporting civil society around the world;
- ensuring that the full potential of the External Investment Plan is used to unlock private capital and investment (*President 2019*).

Regardless of the tasks assigned to J. Urpilainen, all other commissioners are to ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals within their policy areas, and the College (as a whole) is responsible for the overall achievement of these goals. The executive aspect of EU development policy is labor-intensive. The Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DEVCO), which changed its name to the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (INT-PA) in January 2021, is the largest organizational unit of the European Commission in terms of number of employees, although the trend in the number of staff in this directorate is declining, which is interpreted as a decrease in the importance of this organizational unit (Orbie, 2020).

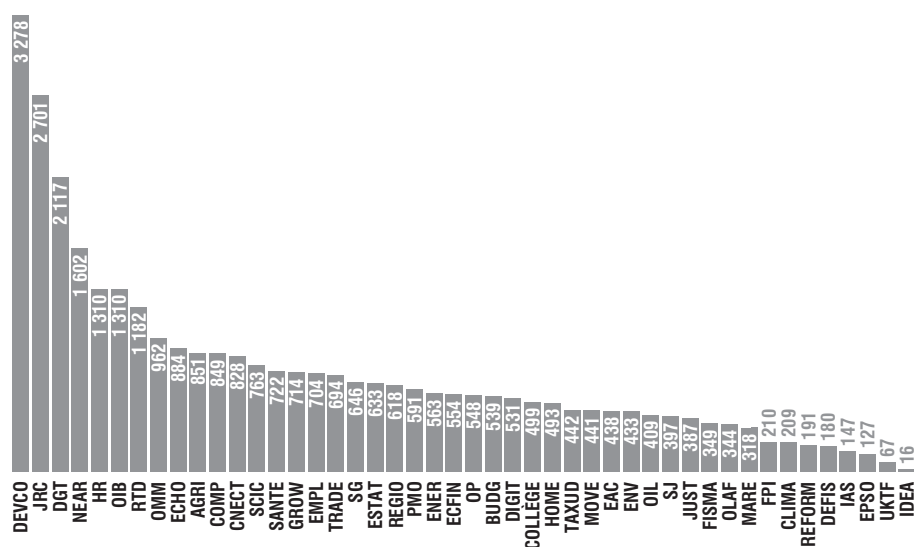


Figure 1. Number of employees in individual organizational units of the European Commission (as of October 1, 2020)

Source: *European Commission: Facts and Figures, European Parliamentary Research Service, 2021.*¹

¹ Abbreviations in Figure 1 – European Commission directorates-general and departments: AGRI – Agriculture and Rural Development, BUDG – Budget, CdP-OSP – Staff committees, CLIMA – Climate Action, CNECT – Communications Networks, Content and Technology, COLLÈGE – Commissioner’s private office staff, COMM – Communication, COMP – Competition, DEFIS – Defence Industry and Space, DEVCO – International Cooperation and Development, DGT – Translation, DIGIT – Informatics, EAC – Education and Culture, ECFIN – Economic

As early as in 2005, the Council, the Commission and Parliament elaborated on and solemnly adopted a joint declaration on development policies entitled *European Consensus on Development*. It was confirmed and amended in 2017. *The New European Consensus on Development* “*Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future*” adjusts the EU’s actions for sustainable development to the “2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”. The scope of the consensus, and therefore the thematic scope of the document, is broad and covers: development, peace and security, humanitarian aid, migration, environment and climate, and cross-cutting issues such as: youth; gender equality; mobility and migration; sustainable energy and climate change; investment and trade; good governance, democracy, the rule of law and human rights; innovative commitment to work with more advanced developing countries, and the mobilization and use of domestic resources. The difference between the EU institutions in terms of development policy is the approach to the budget allocated for this purpose. In budget negotiations – in the context of development cooperation spending – the Commission and Parliament are generally more generous than the Council.

and Financial Affairs, ECHO – Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, EMPL – Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, ENER – Energy, ENV – Environment, EPSC – European Political Strategy Centre, EPSO – European Personnel Selection Office, ESTAT – Eurostat, FISMA – Financial Stability, Financial Services and Capital Markets Union, FPI – Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, GROW – Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs, HOME – Migration and Home Affairs, HR – Human Resources and Security, IAS – Internal Audit Service, IDEA – Inspire, Debate, Engage and Accelerate Action, JRC – Joint Research Centre, JUST – Justice and Consumers, MARE – Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, MOVE – Mobility and Transport, NEAR – Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations, OIB – Infrastructure and Logistics – Brussels, OIL – Infrastructure and Logistics – Luxembourg, OLAF – European Anti-Fraud Office, OP – Publications Office, PMO – Office for Administration And Payment of Individual Entitlements, REGIO – Regional and Urban Policy, REFORM – Structural Reform Support, RTD – Research and Innovation, SANTE – Health and Food Safety, SCIC – Interpretation, SG – Secretariat-General, SJ – Legal Service, TAXUD – Taxation and Customs Union, TRADE – Trade, UKTF – Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom.

7.3. The geographic structure of the EU's assistance for developing countries

The geographic structure of assistance is related to the current architecture of financial instruments, although political factors have the strongest influence on the selection of beneficiaries of the EU's development aid. According to the declarations of the EU, the basic criteria for providing aid should be the extent of poverty and the level of development. According to OECD data, in 2019 the EU and its Member States spent EUR 75.2 billion as part of official development assistance (ODA), which accounted for 55.2% of total global aid (*The European Union* 2020). The EU has committed to jointly transfer to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) between 0.15% and 0.20% of EU GNI in the short term and 0.20% by 2030. Since 2015, in flow terms, ODA of the EU and its 28 Member States for the Least Developed Countries has increased by 25% (EUR 4.0 billion in nominal terms), but the ODA/GNI ratio increased by only 0.02 percentage points. The level of 0.15% has never been reached.

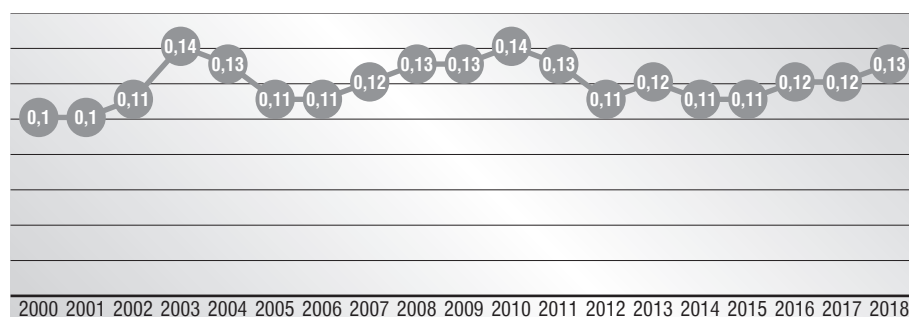


Figure 2. Collective ODA of the EU for LDCs as a share of GNI (in the years 2000–2018)

Source: Publication of preliminary figures on 2019 Official Development Assistance. Annex: Tables and Graphs.

The geographical priorities of the EU Member States regarding provision of development aid are very diversified and are related to both historical and economic conditions. The analysis of the aid provided by the Union itself is more reliable for determining the directions of allocating the EU's ODA. Almost half of the ODA provided by EU institutions goes to the

Table 2. ODA of the EU institutions (in USD million) by region

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Europe	1938.81	5090.67	5240.12	4518.51	4535.04	3630.99	4901.62	3726.91	2569.29	2179.51
Africa	5367.66	5542.99	7003.72	5564.35	6264.50	5680.55	6906.49	6707.72	6672.60	7089.80
Sub-Saharan Africa	4596.26	4145.77	4750.66	4222.6	4734.02	4266.13	4644.22	4872.87	5137.21	5174.40
America	1256.03	1196.15	1186.56	913.29	660.12	1147.68	1219.03	911.13	1354.23	812.27
Asia	2379.53	2666.42	2427.54	2639.60	2627.17	3280.27	4011.64	3941.12	4165.63	3458.01
Oceania	117.84	103.42	84.60	88.11	88.54	121.55	77.83	109.50	136.58	147.71
Undetermined developing countries	1112.59	1051.05	900.17	951.88	1063.73	1003.75	1255.36	1628.11	1859.43	1791.04
Total	12172.47	15650.71	16842.70	14675.74	15239.11	14864.79	18371.98	17024.48	16757.76	15478.34

Source: own study based on OECD.Stat.

Table 3. ODA of the EU institutions (in million USD) for individual countries

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Egypt	133.32	62.03	754.64	-1.79	284.43	161.90	337.87	116.56	276.81	565.47
Syria	50.26	28.55	22.89	170.70	159.16	243.97	355.47	375.62	569.81	459.85
Morocco	217.66	369.48	480.83	517.16	488.21	382.61	685.43	707.06	302.31	456.51
Afghanistan	277.65	333.73	251.67	234.62	333.71	211.01	436.38	439.92	460.75	431.25
Ukraine	149.06	205.59	240.49	345.81	456.04	257.73	484.27	376.93	356.53	428.61

West Bank and the Gaza Strip	429.69	365.40	309.65	335.69	447.48	445.83	455.18	308.45	290.57	242.50
Iraq	52.70	12.26	89.82	79.07	74.97	123.12	218.97	199.62	273.76	240.91
Yemen	39.68	48.66	63.03	71.37	66.25	59.04	108.42	173.29	160.66	216.18
Mali	95.97	128.93	84.06	278.31	287.13	165.49	269.79	223.15	235.00	213.95
DRC	354.84	287.82	278.78	315.07	198.08	214.53	226.3	184.41	207.97	212.79
Ethiopia	231.42	182.52	222.01	113.31	249.05	170.44	363.65	225.73	271.00	208.52
Serbia	282.63	959.53	867.59	556.99	205.12	188.47	312.72	284.22	433.4	200.61
Nigeria	58.73	47.78	122.10	121.87	107.88	110.22	170.2	294.71	295.65	193.67
India	91.82	77.90	90.80	126.64	37.38	290.48	328.36	490.30	397.21	193.46
Tunisia	89.91	406.1	548.39	411.92	420.91	354.13	361.1	361.45	240.09	189.32
Niger	146.89	124.61	219.54	171.18	242.82	249.32	252.16	255.92	239.20	179.65
Moldova	134.43	155.27	183.51	109.53	168.37	77.13	122.87	128.72	110.23	173.56
Georgia	150.69	168.16	162.57	211.69	155.43	160.56	206.39	266.12	275.48	173.08
Somalia	123.84	142.94	167.61	142.71	174.79	190.07	173.14	276.59	266.71	171.71
Bangladesh	183.77	146.10	125.75	112.53	91.33	87.19	125.64	149.99	168.62	166.79
...										
Turkey	287.52	2561.18	2858.56	2339.21	2508.91	1978.49	2898	1703.76	441.74	106.66

Source: own study based on OECD/Stat

poorest region of the world, namely Africa, with particular emphasis on sub-Saharan Africa.

An analysis of the list of countries that are the largest recipients of EU institutions' ODA shows, however, that LDCs or sub-Saharan Africa are not the ones that receive the most aid. For years, Turkey has been the biggest beneficiary. In 2019, Egypt was the country where – according to OECD data – the most ODA of EU institutions was received.

The list of the largest beneficiaries includes many countries affected by conflicts (Syria, Afghanistan, Yemen), which increase migratory pressure, as well as countries covered by the European Neighborhood Policy (both in its southern dimension – Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, and in the eastern dimension – Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia).

According to the data of the European Commission, the list of the top 10 recipients of development aid in 2019, taking into account aid from various budget lines, is similar to the OECD data, although Turkey is still the leader among the beneficiaries.

Table 4. ODA of the European Commission (in million USD) for individual countries

	2019
Turkey	1494
Syria	396
Afghanistan	372
Ukraine	249
West Bank and Gaza Strip	214
Iraq	207
Democratic Republic of Kongo	193
Mali	187
Serbia	180
Tunisia	180

Source: 2020 Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's instruments for financing external actions in 2019, 2021, European Commission, Luxembourg.

7.4. Perspectives for the EU development policy for developing countries

In connection with the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021–2027, adopted in December 2020 (with the consent of the European Parliament) by the Council, the instruments for financing the EU's external actions were amended. A new, very broad super-instrument has been established – The Neighborhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). It will replace the previously used instruments: Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), European Neighborhood Instrument (ENI) and European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). EUR 85.2 billion and EUR 12.6 billion have been earmarked for external actions and pre-accession assistance in the MFF, respectively, giving a total of EUR 98.4 billion, including EUR 70.8 billion (commitments in the prices of 2018) under NDICI.

The second key financial instrument, created in 1957, the European Development Fund (EDF), was of a non-budgetary nature from the beginning of its existence. Over the past 20 years, it was based on the Cotonou Agreement, which established a partnership between the European Union and 78 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, and which was due to expire in February 2020. In September 2018, negotiations on a new agreement, known as post-Cotonou, began. Due to the protracted talks and the lack of agreement, in order to avoid a legal vacuum in mutual relations, the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement were initially extended until the end of 2020, and then until the end of November 2021. This extension did not apply to Great Britain, which participated in the Cotonou Agreement by the end of 2020. Brexit could have had consequences for the amount of funds in EDF, as Great Britain financed 15% of the Fund, and the last, eleventh EDF (2014–2020) in which Great Britain participated was set at EUR 30.5 billion (*Regulation*, 2015). In 2020 – for the first time in the long-standing history of EDF – the Fund was included in the MFF (for the years 2021–2027). That means – postulated for many years – “budgetisation” of EDF, which at the same time reduced the risk of a decrease in the level of financing. The fund will become part of the new NDICI instrument, and the MFF

for 2021–2027 – despite Brexit – is slightly higher than it was in the years 2014–2020.

During the negotiations of the post-Cotonou agreement, the institutional situation of the ACP countries also changed. In December 2019 established a new entity – the Organization of ACP States (OACPS). In December 2020, negotiators managed to reach a political consensus on a new agreement between the EU and the ACP countries (*Post-Cotonou*, 2020)². When the final text of the agreement is ready, the European Commission will present to the Council legislative proposals regarding the signing and conclusion of the agreement.

A separate source of financing for development policy remains the European Investment Bank (EIB). In 2020, the EIB invested around EUR 10 billion in development projects outside the EU, of which 46% in Africa. In the last ten years, of the EUR 78 billion invested by the EIB outside Europe, EUR 26.6 billion went to Africa (*The EIB*, 2021). It also finances projects in other ACP countries – in the Caribbean and the Pacific, as well as in countries covered by pre-accession programs and the European Neighborhood Policy, Asia, and Latin America. The bank declares that it puts emphasis on issues related to sustainable development and refers to individual SDGs. The EIB is also obliged to do so under the treaties, as pursuant to Art. 209(4) TFEU (with reference to paragraph 1) it contributes to the implementation of development cooperation policy.

The future of the EU development policy depends on the future of the EU itself. Some events that are not directly related to development policy, but have an impact on the functioning of the EU, can also have a large impact on the EU's development policy. An illustrative example of that is Brexit. The direct budgetary consequences for the EU's development policy will probably not be large. Indirect consequences, on the other hand, may be significant. The United Kingdom was a significant member of the group of EU and non-EU countries operating under the name Nordic-plus (Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, the Netherlands,

² By the beginning of February 2021, the text of the agreement had not been released.

Iceland, Luxembourg, Ireland), which takes progressive positions on such development policy issues as: ODA/DNB levels, prioritization of the policy of gender equality, social equality and environmental goals in development programs or emphasis on increasing aid effectiveness. Brexit, by weakening the Nordic-plus group, may therefore strengthen the EU's tendency to use aid for purposes not directly related to development, such as trade, migration or security (Orbie, 2020). Regardless of Brexit, the threat to the effectiveness of development aid resulting from its political and economic instrumentalisation – although known for a long time (Deszczyński, 2011a, p. 148) – is still valid (Hackenesch, Bergmann & Orbie, 2021).

Some of the challenges of the European Union's development policy are recognized (Kaczmarek, 2018), although even those that depend solely on the EU and its Member States are not easy to solve. There is no consent, for example, to the implementation of the autonomy of development policy; the introduction of the concept of Policy Coherence for Development is very slow; there is a constant lack of consistency in many areas of development policy (political conditioning, the use of double standards, failure to keep promises made in public), and the number of geographical and thematic priorities that were and constantly are being adopted is too high from the point of view of postulates to increase the effectiveness of the EU development policy. On the other hand, some of the challenges facing the EU's development policy are highly dependent on exogenous factors. The interdependence of development and stability, for example, causes that without reducing the degree of instability in many developing countries, it will not be possible to ensure balanced and sustainable development. The EU's development policy is not very resistant to crises of a global nature (the financial crisis in 2008, the crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020) or supra-regional (the migration wave in 2015 and 2016).

Researchers present various proposals on the direction of the evolution of development policy. They often indicate better coordination of the EU policy in this field and actions taken by individual Member States (Carbone, 2011; Carlsson, Schubert & Robinson, 2009; Schulz, 2007). Regional coordination – not only in the area of development policy

– is the *raison d'être* of the EU, which is often emphasized in public discourse. This is why the European Commission is at the forefront of European coordination initiatives in the field of development (Carbone, 2017). However, the strong emphasis on coordination has been criticized for making coordination itself a “holy grail” of EU development policy (Delputte & Orbie, 2021). As a result, coordination is “too technocratic and EU-focused” and “the EU does not pay enough attention to diversity in development policy” (Delputte & Orbie, 2021, p. 154). Critics do not dismiss coordination as such, but the way it was implemented, as it marginalizes the main beneficiaries of the EU development policy. They also claim that focusing too much on the technical side of coordination resulted in ignoring the basic political issues related to the inequality of power and development vision, and allowed the original development goals to be successfully subordinated to the trade, security and migration agendas (Delputte & Orba, 2021). As a result, they propose a concept that takes into account the diversity of international development. They encourage the EU to assume a more modest role – that of a facilitator. It would consist in supporting best practices, facilitating those practices that emerged from the bottom up (Delputte, 2013), and encouraging flexible and variable geometry of cooperation between small recipients (Orbie, Delputte & Verschaeve, 2018). The role of the facilitator would also be involved in a political discussion on global justice, and even the idea of “degrowth”.

The latter could have particularly far-reaching consequences. The possible development of the “degrowth” idea may have a significant impact on the future of EU development policy, as the dissemination of this concept would make it likely that the current development paradigm would change. The interpretation of the “degrowth” concept is not unequivocal. Various similar concepts appear – based on the same source – but not identical in terms of meaning: “agrowth”, “postgrowth” or “zero-growth”. The element connecting all these concepts is the questioning of economic growth as the most important political and development goal, the criticism of capitalism as a growth-dependent system, and in practice – the rejection of GDP as the dominant indicator used in assessing welfare. In Polish, the concepts of “degrowth” are defined variously, e.g. as *post-wzrost*

(post-growth) (Łapniewska, 2017; Bińczyk, 2018). The term *dewzrost* (de-growth) was also proposed (Skrzypczyński, 2020). Due to the fact that the above-mentioned terms in the English language differ in terms of content, the use of their variants in Polish would require the introduction of four different concepts (as equivalents of “degrowth”, “agrowth”, “postgrowth” and “zero-growth”). In this situation, however, the easiest way is to use English-language terminology.

Political changes in the Member States may also be a factor influencing the EU's development policy. One of the tendencies that may adversely affect the EU's development policy is the actions of the governments of Hungary and Poland, pursuing a policy known as illiberal democracy (Szent-Iványi & Kugiel, 2020). Researchers – on the basis of the Hirschmann's concept of the voice, exit and loyalty (1970) – concluded that “a number of processes could have weakened the loyalty of Hungary and Poland to EU development cooperation, making them more prone to use extreme forms of voice, and potentially even partial exit from this policy area” (Szent-Iványi & Kugiel, 2020, 134).

The European Union has played and continues to play an important role in global development policy. However, it faces many challenges that may have a significant impact both on the shape of the EU's development policy and on the EU's place in the global development cooperation system. The factor that hinders the implementation of the EU's ambitions for sustainable development is the COVID-19 pandemic – its effects and impact on the policies of development partners in developed countries and in the countries that benefit from aid. The pandemic reversed the long-term trend of reducing the extent of extreme poverty in the world and generated new needs for assistance (e.g. access to protection measures, tests, vaccines, etc.). By the end of 2021 alone, there will be 150 million more people living below the international poverty line (i.e. on less than USD 1.90 a day).

The response of individual countries and development aid organizations to the crisis caused by the pandemic will affect their image and their role in global development policy. The European Union is strongly committed to vaccinating the citizens of its Member States, but was not among the first actors in helping to donate vaccines to developing

countries. Instead, China, Russia, India, the United Arab Emirates and Israel have done so. The first free vaccinations – as part of an international program for developing countries supported by the EU – only took place in March 2021 in Ghana. There are insufficient data to assess the impact of vaccination aid against COVID-19 on the role of the EU in development aid. The more so because the process has not finished. Nevertheless, the activity of other donors, especially China, may change the perception of individual countries and organizations in the development aid system.

An additional problem for the EU is that normative proposals alternative to European have the potential to be attractive and competitive from the perspective of developing countries. The delays in disclosing the details of the political agreement on the post-Cotonou agreement may indicate that EU negotiators have once again failed to convince ACP representatives to accept the European side's proposal on sensitive axiological issues, such as sexual and reproductive health and LGBT+ rights. The EU's ability to influence this area is also weakened by the fact that EU Member States have different views on this matter. Promoting European values at the global level will be difficult if the governments of some EU Member States try to disseminate an individual, different from the majority, interpretation of these values.