



Briefing No. 44

Five compelling reasons why the EU's development policy needs to remain outside the Europe's diplomatic service

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1. The roles of development policy and diplomacy are different. They should be complementary but each needs to be pursued according to its own logic

The EU's Development Policy is defined in the Lisbon Treaty (Art. 208) as a distinct external policy area for which the principal objective is the eradication of poverty. The Treaty gives the Commission competence for development policy, shared with the Member States. The overall purpose of the EU's Development Policy is to promote the sustainable and equitable development of developing countries, in which the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals is a key part. **As such the Treaty established the EU's Development Policy as the principal framework for the EU's cooperation with developing countries.**

The character of the European External Action Service (EEAS) will be that of a diplomatic service. Its role will be to strengthen the EU's representation for its common political external policies and priorities that are primarily derived from protecting the EU's own interests in the world.

Each of the EU's external policy areas is defined in the Lisbon Treaty, with equal standing. To ensure that none of the policy areas is effectively subordinated from another it is important that each policy area has its own dedicated administrative capacity that has equal status in the overall institutional structures of the EU.

2. EU Development Policy aims to promote the interests of developing countries

Development Policy seeks to promote development in developing countries. Its primary orientation is towards promoting the interests of developing countries and their people.

The current development policy framework established at the level of the international community, which the EU and its Member States have endorsed, seeks to operate on the principal that development strategies are owned by the developing country concerned, and are pursued in a partnership between the EU and developing countries. **This means that development policy should be responsive to the interests expressed by developing countries.**

In contrast, a primary function of the EU's Foreign Policy is to promote and protect the interests of the EU and its citizens. At times it can be expected that the two policies may have conflicting interests. Mechanisms need to be put in place to ensure that the resolution to such conflicts does not compromise the overall effectiveness of either policy. This is more likely to be the case if the implementation structures of the two policies are distinct and established around their own distinct policy logic.

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3. Democratic scrutiny needs to be strengthened

The role of democratically elected parliaments is essential to ensure accountability of policies and their implementation. The European Parliament should have a central role in overseeing the evolution and implementation of all of the EU's external policies. This should be both in the overall context of Europe's principles and values as set out in the Treaty, as well as in relation to the specific objectives of the different external policy objectives.

While the Parliament as a whole has the role to ensure that there is consistency in its approaches towards the different external policy areas, its ability to do so depends on its own capacity to effectively scrutinise the different policy areas according to their specific purpose and objectives. In this context the differentiated roles of the Parliament's Committees with an external focus of specific policy areas is important – Development, External Relations, and International Trade in particular. **Parliament's ability to do so will be impaired if there is no clarity in the management of the different policies, both inside the parliament itself as well as within the other institutions of the EU.**

For the implementation of development policy the role of democratically elected parliaments in developing countries is also critical. Democratic accountability of national development strategies is a fundamental requirement for ownership by countries of their own strategies.

4. Financial resources provided for development must support development objectives

The EU collectively accounts for 59% of global official development aid (ODA). The development aid budget managed by the European Commission constitutes around a fifth of the EU's aid. This resource is provided to promote the achievement of the EU's development policy objectives.

While the Lisbon Treaty makes provision for the personnel of the EEAS to be financed from the EU's administrative budget there is no extra provision for the financing of common foreign policy actions envisaged in the Treaty from within existing EU budgets. Member States are expected to contribute additional funds for this purpose. However, it is clear that most Member States would prefer to reduce their existing commitments, rather than increase them. **In these circumstances the substantial EU development budget can be seen as a potential source of finance for activities that are not primarily focused on development.** Therefore the inclusion of development policy within the EAS could jeopardise the effective use of the development budget.

5. A development administration with high degree of independence is optimal

According to assessments that compare the different models of Member State institutional structures for managing its development policy, **the most effective are those with a dedicated service established within the overall official structure of the country concerned, but with a high degree of independence.** Headed by a development minister or secretary of State such administrations are more able to effectively pursue the policies development objectives without undue interference from other external policies being pursued by the government.

This assessment, commissioned by the European Parliament's research department, was produced to help inform the European Parliament's debate on the establishment of the EEAS (PE 388.939 – 0).

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Eurostep is a network of autonomous European non-governmental development organisations working towards peace, justice and equality in a world free of poverty.

Eurostep's Vision of a Responsible Europe in the World:

The European Union is a community, born of a desire for peace and stability, and based on a commitment to the values of democracy, equality, solidarity, social justice, human rights, tolerance and the international rule of law. It is also a unique model of cooperation amongst states, and a testament to the importance of recognising strength in diversity, fostering common interests, increasing collective prosperity and building strong and secure relationships. As it evolves in size and stature, these shared values must continue to shape Europe's cooperation both within and beyond its borders.

As a global player and as the largest provider of development aid, Europe now has both the opportunity and the mandate, to articulate an alternative to the increasingly unilateral world order by rooting its Foreign Policy in positive values. It should become the advocate of people living in poverty by fighting harder in favour of a fairer world in which injustices and inequalities are abolished, women are empowered, human rights are respected and the environment is protected.

Our Vision of Europe is a community of states, which honours our shared values and recognises our shared responsibilities - a Union that manifests itself in word and deed as a Responsible Europe.