

The European Security Strategy formulates effective multilateralism as method of European foreign policy. What it has in mind is goal-oriented cooperation with other actors, states and international organisations, which governs the coexistence of nations through binding norms. The European Security Strategy lists a number of policy areas to be managed by the European Union: first, clearly definable threats such as international terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; second, the creation of a secure environment for Europe; and third, Europe's integration into a system of multilateralism. More specific developments are already underway in the areas of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, both of which are issues of a EU strategy developing European policy against these threats.

By the EU Strategy for Africa, drafted by the Commission in October 2005 and adopted by the European Council in December 2005, the EU has made Africa the first geographically confined 'testing field' for the practical feasibility of this effective multilateralism. The various European foreign, security, trade and development policies vis-à-vis the neighbour continent are now to be coordinated within the framework defined by the Commission. The actual necessity of a coherent approach is underscored by the ESDP operation in the Congo and efforts to thwart illegal immigration along the outside borders of the EU.

The hitherto confused and unsorted canon of the EU's and its individual member states' policies towards Africa is now to be controlled by the Commission in order to achieve better efficiency of employed means, more efficient efforts and thus a quicker accomplishment of set goals.

Working Group on European Integration *

The EU's New Strategy for Africa: Real and Effective Multilateralism?

1. Characteristics of the Strategy for Africa

The Strategy for Africa exemplifies how an ideal-typical European foreign policy should function:

a) Embedding into a web of international legitimacy

The Strategy for Africa centres around the Millennium Development Goals adopted by the UN General Assembly in 2000. They form the core of European policy towards Africa by which the EU aims at implementing the MDGs as a whole but especially focuses its policy on the areas of education, health and the struggle against HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis, food security, access to vital resources such as water and energy, as well as sustainable use of the environment. Concrete steps have been taken in the area of education. The Commission has established a European-African university exchange programme and assists the AU in developing an inter-African exchange programme named Nyerere and modelled after the ERASMUS Programme. In addition, the instrument of budget support is to be increasingly applied in this area. Besides, broad space is given to the two aspects which are regarded as central preconditions for the implementation of the MDGs: security and good governance on the one hand, and a positive economic environment on the other. By its commitment to continually raise European ODA levels up to 0.7 per cent of GNP by 2015 and its declared intention to employ these resources efficiently, the EU follows the international milestones of development cooperation over the last years. Recent developments in Africa, such as the establishment of the African Union (developed out of the Organisation of African Unity), NEPAD (New Partnership for the Economic Development of the Continent, initiated by South Africa and Nigeria) and APRM (African Peer Review Mechanism, see below) are also taken up in the Strategy and are to serve as a point of departure for European-African cooperation.

* The Working Group on „European Integration “exists for more than ten years. Its members include experts from European institutions, Federal Ministries, *Länder* representations, associations and science.

b) Integrated pursuit of security and development

Already before the dramatic incidents in Ceuta and Melilla and the emergence of massive refugee flows from Africa, the consciousness had been sharpened in Europe that development and security are closely inter-related. Consequently, the Strategy states that safeguarding security and good governance is a precondition for successful development cooperation. Thereby, the causes of the migration flows which are increasingly regarded as threatening also are to be countered. Besides the dreadful economic situation, these causes are seen in the precarious security situation in many sub-Saharan states.

By the Peace Facility for Africa, now secured for three years (but still endowed with insufficient funding), and a planned Governance Facility in the framework of the Neighbourhood Instrument, the first steps in this area have already been specified. Especially by the Peace Facility, the EU has taken up African initiatives in the area of peace and stabilisation and responded to a specific request from the AU. Thereby, African capabilities and capacities of securing peace are to be strengthened. The EU takes up the positive democratic developments in Africa and makes use of the AU-initiated APRM mechanism which provides for self-regulation of member states' governance through independent African experts. This mechanism is to be strengthened by a Governance Initiative planned by the EU.

c) Stronger gearing of development and trade

From the perspective of the Strategy for Africa, the second precondition for successful development is a functioning economic environment which can achieve steady growth and will thus appear more attractive for foreign direct investments, make better use of the abundance of natural resources and provide a basic infrastructure. Negotiations on an Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) are not only to strengthen Africa's trade with the EU but also to intensify intra-regional trade which is still much more obstructed by tariffs and charges than trade with Europe. The Commission is negotiating these agreements in the framework of the Cotonou Agreement with four regional blocs, pressure from the WTO and the schedule set by the Cotonou Agreement necessitating a quick conclusion of the talks. The EPAs are also to contribute to an improvement of the chances of African producers on the European market and an intensification of intra-regional trade in order to strengthen Africa's economy.

The Strategy for Africa simultaneously pursues three priorities designed to serve the establishment of an economically prospering environment. First, it suggests the creation of a EU-Africa Business Forum which could bring together private investors, business entrepreneurs and public clients and is to contribute to the stabilisation, harmonisation and better efficiency of the legal conditions for the economy in Africa in order to achieve more legal security for investments and companies. The second priority set by the Commission lies in the agricultural sector. This branch – which continues to be the most important for the states of sub-Saharan Africa – is to be made more productive and competitive in order to fare better on the world market. The Commission's first step to successively abolish its own export subsidies by 2013 is a step in the right direction but comes much too late. The maintenance of internal subsidies and the high food safety and environmental standards remain hurdles for African exporters. The third and as yet most specific priority is the improvement of the infrastructure, thus directly taking up the MDGs which aim at better access for the people to water, food and energy. The infrastructure initiative of the Commission shall serve to facilitate access to water, telecommunication and energy for companies as well and improve transport connections. The lack of competitiveness due to bad or missing access to transport networks is thereby to be removed.

By its Strategy, the EU makes clear that now, the increased attention Africa has received in 2005 is to be perpetuated in order to achieve sustainable development. The principle of African ownership, emphasised together with a commitment to partnership, also expresses itself in the taking-up of African efforts in the areas of the AU and NEPAD which are explicitly cited by the EU as partners and impulse givers. In so doing, the EU sets appropriate priorities in the area of the MDGs, security and the economy which meet the requirements in Africa on the one hand and are in accordance with the EU's capabilities on the other. At the same time, the EU seems to depart from the geographically broad but exclusively economy and trade-based approach it has pursued for decades, for instance, with the agreements of Lomé and Cotonou. The Strategy for Africa also implies a focus on this one continent – initiating a departure from the inter-continental approach of ACP policy – and a parallel expansion of issue areas. Now, development policy is also to accommodate security and trade policy; conditionalities in the areas of the promotion of democracy, human rights and other aspects are becoming ever more important. At the same time, resources are to be

spent more efficiently, and initiatives from African partners are to be taken up and supported.

2. Problems of the Strategy for Africa

a) Imbalanced partnership between Europe and Africa

Central to the Strategy for Africa are the words “partnership” and “African ownership”. However, the concepts for successful development and the main actors of common efforts are being sought in Europe. Thus, the Strategy suggests that the AU and its regional structures are sufficiently developed as to be regarded as partners on an equal footing with the EU. At least, the AU is repeatedly cited as the EU’s main partner, but at the same time it is stated that successful integration concepts are to be imparted to Africa. At the present, however, the AU and the regional African organisations do not present themselves as equal partners for the EU. For most part, they are still under construction and – especially the regional organisations – only partly able to act. Furthermore, the Strategy’s objective of a long-term increase of development assistance funds takes it for granted that these additional funds will have a positive effect on Africa without considering the recipient countries’ capacity to make use of them. Already now, some African states have problems to make use of all available funds. This is not least a consequence of missing structures in the administrative and economic sector. The problem is further aggravated by the emphasis on budgetary assistance as a new instrument for which the Union strives to develop own-standing criteria focusing on the needs of the population. The far-reaching re-transfer of responsibilities strengthens the aspect of „ownership“ but simultaneously reduces EU influence. At the same time, funds for the sector of securing peace are clearly tied so that the revenues of the Peace Facility must not be spent on weapons and pay or training of troops but only on health, transport, logistics, and the like. This holds at least for the current three years already approved since for this time, the funds for the Peace Facility are taken from the European Development Fund (EEF). Thus, the EU undermines its integrated approaches under the Strategy for Africa by its own guidelines for assistance. Furthermore, low funding of the Peace Facility indicates that the EU’s confidence in the AU may be somewhat shaky since – as visible in Sudan and the Congo – in the context of a UN operation, it relies on its own troops or NATO units if in

doubt.

b) Coherence and coordination

The new Strategy for Africa is to integrate the development assistance of the EU and its member states into one framework and make it more coherent. This is one of the core aims of this document which takes the commitment to good governance seriously inasmuch as it seeks to do away with lack of coordination, coherence and complementarity on the European side. But the two central frictions of European policy towards Africa are thus only slightly covered up:

First, the Commission should better coordinate member states’ policies in Africa in line with the objectives agreed upon in the Strategy. By adopting the Strategy for Africa, the Heads of State and Government have approved this step at the December 2005 Summit. However, this is a declaration of intent only without any binding force. It is to be feared that national idiosyncrasies, especially those of the former colonial powers, will continue to leave their imprints on the respective national development policies in competition with EU policy towards Africa. The sometimes fierce struggles over troop contingents to be contributed by member states to European operations (the Congo being the most recent example) expose the weaknesses of a coherent policy towards Africa. A success of a multilaterally coordinated European policy towards Africa is decisively dependent on a consequent implementation of governments’ declarations of intent in the sense of the pursuit of common objectives.

Second, the allocation of competences within the EU with a view to Africa is confusing beyond the normal bureaucratic level. Northern Africa is part of the European Neighbourhood which in all respects falls under the competence of the DG RELEX and is funded from the regular EU budget. All other African states are dealt with by the DG DEV in the framework of ACP policy, and funding comes from the European Development Fund. In addition, there exists a special agreement with South Africa. The Directorates-General for fisheries and agriculture and SANCO, but especially the DG Trade, in charge of negotiating the Economic Partnership Agreements and thus playing a decisive role for the consequent implementation of the Strategy, have up to now been rather pursuing their own agendas and are only marginally considered in the Strategy for Africa.

c) Civil society involvement

Despite the Commission's emphasis that it will put the people at the centre of its Strategy for Africa, the whole orientation of this document is biased in favour of governments. Civil society and political actors such as political parties, parliamentarians or representatives of minorities, are hardly considered, if at all. In the face of Africa's massive governance problems, the intransparency of decision-making processes or the exploitation of profits from the few lucrative economic branches by a small group, this approach misses the realities of the African continent. The EU instruments already in existence or in planning are hardly able to alleviate this shortcoming and to adequately promote actors who are not in government, exert pressure from within or seek to control elected representatives. Strengthening civil society, including an independent press (whose situation differs strongly across individual countries), is indispensable for correcting despotism and corruption. But it is also indispensable for citizens' participation. The African Peer Review Mechanism also is an instrument in which governments participate voluntarily and which is thus unable to fulfil the expectations linked with it. A harmonisation of member states' development assistance in terms of coordination and a strict commitment to the Commission's instruments would grant the governments in office in Africa a key role in the economic, political and administrative building-up of their communities, a task in which they for most part have failed over the last decades to the disadvantage of their citizens.

d) Lack of a strategy vis-à-vis China in Africa

The EU Strategy for Africa only marginally considers the fact that the increased worldwide demand for resources has brought about stronger engagement in Africa by international actors. Whereas cooperation with the US is largely uncomplicated due to its long-term tradition and similar (though not identical) objectives, China now is an established actor in Africa which pursues a different strategy: The EU views Africa primarily from a donor perspective and only secondarily as a development-oriented trading partner, whereas China is predominantly interested in resources, trade and political influence. As a consequence of this competition, African partners are confronted with a wider spectrum of partners, offering them „multiple choice“ i.e. the opportunity to choose those partners who offer the best prospects for profits and impose the fewest conditions. This constitutes a lasting danger to the relations between the EU and Africa which have devel-

oped over many years because China, like Africa, can posture itself as a victim of colonialism and, beyond that, has found a model of development for itself which has made it a successful national economy.

Somewhat simplistically, China's engagement is commonly regarded as a provocation to idealists because Beijing at any cost purchases the resources in Africa it needs to establish itself as a great power. Actually, it is true that the Chinese government encourages companies to purchase oil, metals, minerals, wood, cotton and other raw materials everywhere in the world because the Chinese economy is dependent on imports of these resources. However, it is thereby ignored that Western companies participating in the exploitation of Africa's raw materials are also interested in profits and not in objectives of development policy. At any rate, for countries rich in resources, Chinese competition has brought an unexpected influx of money. The causes of the lack of progress in the development of African countries despite these incoming funds, however, lie not with other countries but with the way in which this new potential is used by the countries affected for their own economic development and the struggle against poverty.

As the main problems for the EU in regard of China's growing influence in Africa, the following areas can be identified which may be added to the EU Strategy for Africa:

- political differences and lack of coordination of strategies with a view to conflicts in African countries or failed states (Sudan, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, Somalia);
- misjudgement or ignorance of Chinese interests and opportunities of influence in Africa;
- lack of transparency of Chinese loans (e.g. to Angola) and development cooperation (China stands outside the OECD – DAC);
- lack of regulations or respect of rules of competition and governance problems;
- insufficient dialogue about the objectives pursued separately by both sides: the EU and China each support the AU and efforts to secure peace, promote dialogues with African companies or chambers of commerce and the building-up of infrastructure;
- different „conditionalities“ of development cooperation; this enables African governments to play their partners off each other.

3. Approaches to Develop Europe's Policy towards Africa Further

EU documents on foreign policy bearing the name „Strategy“ in their title are growing in number, the Strategy for Africa being just one of the most recent examples. However, a set of common objectives is discernible only in small part. While the European Security Strategy's goal is effective multilateralism, the Strategy for Africa goes one step back and seeks to describe how a European development policy for Africa which is multilaterally coordinated and makes more efficient use of applied means could look like. It appears central that the EU and its member states, which together are the largest donors in Africa, apply their instruments in a concerted, coordinated and coherent fashion in the future, and thus far more efficiently. Foreign and security policy-related aspects of policy towards Africa, even the issue of energy safety increasingly discussed within the EU, and cooperation with other partners such as the US, China, India and others in Africa are not sufficiently considered in this Strategy.

A strategic policy towards Africa should consider the following aspects:

1. One of the EU's objectives, implementation of Good Governance, should start with the EU itself. Coordination and complementarity of nation-state policies would be the first necessary step. National governments play a key role for achieving this, for their preparedness to accept such coordination will be decisive for a success of the Strategy.
2. Trade policy could much better be brought in line with development objectives. For this, Europe should analyse and reduce its own protectionism and its effects on developing countries and thus achieve substantial coherence across its policies. To train its African trade partners up to a level enabling them to effectively assert their interests is an essential component of keeping the promise of African „ownership“.
3. The introduction and enforcement of environmental or food standards must be accompanied by a communication strategy vis-à-vis partners in developing countries which also makes offers to promote and adapt the existing production. This is the only way to avoid sudden turnover losses or even the collapse of companies.
4. Focusing on the AU is certainly correct, but its presently limited capacities should not be overestimated. Incongruent parallel structures of development cooperation in Europe and Africa (e.g. ACP institutions in which Northern Africa is not represented) should be reconsidered and be brought into synergy with the new AU structures.
5. Beyond that, a stronger focus should be put on seeking cooperation with non-governmental actors, business and labour associations, as well as consumers and groups either benefiting or suffering from trade and investment; more flexible and less government-focused development cooperation should be the objective.
6. With a view to cooperation with China, a dialogue on Africa already begun on an ad hoc basis could be intensified and move beyond the level of senior officials. Besides obvious differences of interests, the political problems mentioned above for most part result from mutual ignorance and divergent perspectives. They thus can only be solved by intensified, Commission-coordinated dialogue with China and the AU which as yet exists only punctually. China has signalled its preparedness for such a dialogue, though restricted to five areas of development cooperation (participation in EU calls for tenders, vocational and administrative training, struggle against HIV/AIDS and Malaria, struggle against illiteracy and joint ventures in the textile industry). Of course, this is clearly insufficient. Therefore, Europe should go on the offensive in these dialogues, making demands with a view to the governance and human rights areas cited in China's own documents on Africa and combine this with concrete proposals for Chinese participation in European initiatives.

4. Conclusions

The European Strategy for Africa is only partly suited as an application of the European Security Strategy vis-à-vis a larger region. Hence, the EU as an actor in Africa has been unsuccessful in globally and effectively embedding its policy in a multilateral framework because it pursues its relations predominantly bilaterally and from a development policy perspective. European interests are hardly articulated in the Strategy whereas other actors behaving strategically, especially China, but also the US, which are exerting increasing economic and political influence in Africa (partly at the ex-

pense of the Europeans), are not considered. This reflects a certain naivety or narrow-mindedness, as well as unrealistic expectations with a view to the EU's partners in Africa – especially the AU. The EU is having a hard time in areas where power and influence rather than economics or international norms and governance are at stake. However, in some areas, such as the „struggle“ over Africa's resources, this is the reality with which the EU has to cope if it seeks to effectively act as an international actor. Bringing this „struggle“ back into regulated competition would already be a success.

However, the European Strategy for Africa also shows some home-made shortcomings with a view to the interior dimension which endanger its long-term success. The frictions between the Commission and individual member states will surface even more evidently in political action „in the field“ than in agreeing on the main guidelines in Brussels. The governments of African partner countries will further be able to play the different European positions off against each other and to exploit these differences since the decisive actors reside in the national capitals, not in Brussels. First and foremost, the coordination aimed at necessitates the improvement of intra-European processes. The Commission can disclose differences make adhortations and propose new orientations, but this will only marginally influence the direction of local actors. The approach to leave decision-making to the Commission delegation or a member state on the spot as „lead donor“ hints at the way which would enable the EU to make use of member states' experience, their traditional ties and developed structures.

All too often, the effective multilateralism envisaged by the EU and now also set to be cast in a new Strategy (sic!) „Europe in the World“ by an expert working group of the President of the Commission, runs aground on intra-European arrangements or the (lack of) preparedness of member states to stick to made commitments. This even applies to areas in which one would assume that the long-year experience gathered in the context of EU treaties and institutions should make an unproblematic European policy possible, e.g. in development policy. If the declarations of intent in the area of development assistance are not transformed into effective cooperation on the spot, the cacophony of European policy towards Africa will continue –the only difference being that there is now a conductor desperately struggling to bring some order into chaos.