

European Development Co-operation to 2020 [EDC 2020]

The EDC 2020 project combines both research and communication aspects. Its aim is to encourage close collaboration between researchers and policy makers and therefore it enhances the co-operation with reputable European Development Research Institutes such as IDS, ODI, DIE and FRIDE but also with SID¹ as a dissemination partner in order to reach practitioners directly through various policy briefings and workshops. The project is coordinated by EADI, the European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes².

Background

In Europe's relations with developing countries, new and interconnected issues of global nature are emerging. These include new players in international development, Europe's energy security and climate change. All these discussions take place in times of wide-ranging global challenges, and at a time, when questions of European identity loom large in national debates.

It is crucial that decisions and policies on emerging matters are based on good research and sound evidence. Moreover, the public debate needs to be informed by research voices. European Development Co-operation to 2020 (EDC 2020) therefore aims at improving EU policy makers' and other societal actors' shared understanding of emerging challenges facing EU development policy and external action. The project is funded by the European Framework Program (FP7) and organised around three major topics.

New actors in international development

Rapidly growing developing countries such as China, India and Brazil do not only gain economic influence but also emerge as new actors on the international development landscape. These 'new actors' follow a distinct agenda which often conflicts with OECD/DAC agreements. Thus, their engagement in least developed countries does not fulfil ODC criteria for development assistance. Instead, new actors use specific funding instruments, trade relations as well as investment in infrastructure which are often paid "in kind" with exploitation concessions for specific resources. In these engagements the boundaries between profit seeking private investment and public policy are unclear, as well as the effectiveness of the instruments for the development of the recipient country. Research regarding rationales, interest groups and policy processes of these new actors are vital in creating new tools and scenarios for European policy makers. Only with such insights can new areas of convergence be found and strategic partnerships for effective development co-operation be formed. Open questions, crucial for the EU's policy response, remain:

- Is rich country policy on poverty reduction driven by genuine concern or by self interest?
- What is the rationale of new actors in aid provision, the choice of partners and the level of aid?
- Where are challenges in partners' positions for European external relations or where might points of convergence emerge?

¹ Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK (www.ids.ac.uk); Overseas Development Institute, London, UK (www.odi.org.uk); Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik, Bonn, Germany (www.die-gdi.de); Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior, Madrid, Spain (www.fride.org); Society for International Development, The Hague, Netherlands (www.sid-nl.org).

² For further details please see: www.eadi.org or write to edc2020@eadi.org

Energy security, democracy and political development

In its 2006 Green Paper, the European Commission noticed that an increased linkage between energy policy and development policy is necessary. “Europe has entered into a new energy era” and the “increasing dependence on imports from unstable regions and suppliers presents a serious risk... [with] some major producers and consumers...using energy policy as a political lever³.” However, so far energy security remains a subject studied by energy (political) economists and is not integrated into the normal purview of work on foreign, security and development policies. EDC 2020 therefore addresses this issue and aims at correcting these shortcomings and creating scenarios to the questions:

- What are possible combinations of energy, development and Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP)?
- What is the relationship between Member States’ and EU interests regarding energy policy?
- How can a practical balance between access to energy policies of poor communities and own supply concerns be achieved?
- Is the EU striking the right balance between free market and geopolitical approaches?

European development policy and climate change

Climate change has become a considerable part of European policymaking. Much of the effort has so far been focussing on dealing with emissions from European countries, getting the EU emissions trading system to work, setting ambitious renewable energy policies, and negotiating Europe’s role in the international climate regime. However, it is only relatively recent that the relationships between climate change and development have been discussed in development policy circles. In its Green Paper the Commission emphasized in 2007 that it “is examining how to promote an enhanced dialogue and co-operation between the EU and developing countries on climate change⁴.” EDC 2020 will support European policy makers by concentrating on two policy fields.

- What are the implications of domestic policy processes (promotion of bio-fuels) which have links to developing countries?
- What are implications of policy processes designed specifically to support developing countries in dealing with climate change (financing for adaptation and mitigation, technology transfer etc)?

³ Commission of the European Communities (2006): Green Paper. A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy, COM (2006) 105, 8 March 2006, p. 3

⁴ Commission of the European Communities (2007): Green Paper. Adapting to Climate Change in Europe – option for EU action, COM (2007) 354, 29. June 2007, p. 23