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Great Insights

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Letters from
around
the world



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Contents

3 Editorial

Letters from:

4 Judith Sargentini, MEP

Greens–European Free Alliance, 2009-2019

6 Linda McAvan, MEP and Chair of the European Parliament

Committee on Development 2015-2019

8 Japan: Aiichiro Yamamoto, Special Assistant to the President, Japan

International Cooperation Center (JICE)

10 Italy: Nathalie Tocci, Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)

12 Serbia: Milena Lazarevic, Programme Director at the European

Policy Centre

14 United Kingdom: Simon Maxwell, Former chair, ETTG 2015-2019

16 Nigeria: Obadiah Mailafia, Nigerian finance and development expert,

Former Chief of Staff of the ACP Group

18 Finland: Iina Soiri, Director of the Nordic Africa Institute

20 Belgium: Patrick Develtere, Principal advisor, European Political

Strategy Centre, European Commission

22 India: Pradeep Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS International

24 The Netherlands: Jeske van Seters, Head of Programme

Private Sector Engagement, ECDPM

26 South Africa: Elizabeth Sidiropoulos, Chief executive of the South

African Institute of International Affairs

28 Poland: Patryk Kugiel, Senior analyst, Polish Institute of

International Affairs

30 China: Jin Ling, Sr. Research fellow, Deputy director of European

studies, China Institute of International Studies

32 Germany: Imme Scholz, Acting Director, German Development

Institute

34 Switzerland: Gilles Carbonnier, Professor of Development Studies

at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies

36 France: Sébastien Treyer, Executive Director, institute for Sustainable

development and international Relations

38 Blogs on the European Elections

39 Recent ECDPM publications

Editorial

European Elections: a choice for change

For the first time since 1994, over 50% of citizens voted in the European elections which were held last month. Now that the results are in, the message is clear: European voters want change. 'Green wave' vs. 'peak populism' is how the Financial Times summarised the outcome. The two parties that for decades dominated EU politics - the christian democrats and socialists - no longer have a majority. Greens, pro-EU liberals but also anti-EU populists all gained ground. In Germany, the Greens came in second place while they reached a surprising third place in France. In Finland they had their best results ever. In total, green parties, with a political agenda focusing on environmental protection and socio-economic equality, will have 70 seats in the new European parliament, up from 51 in the last election. The liberal family will grow by 41 seats to a total of 100 MEPs. On the other hand, the far right, waving the Eurosceptic and anti-migration flag, will hold about 25 % of the seats of the Parliament. While a smaller percentage than initially predicted it is still a strong result which reflects political dynamics in several big EU countries, especially Italy, France, Poland and the UK. The big question now is to what extent the far right parties will be able to work together within the European Parliament when what each party wants above all is to advance their own national interests.

The attention has now moved to the negotiations on who should get which top job in the EU institutions. A more fragmented Parliament, while perhaps more representative of current European political trends, will make it more difficult to reach an agreement on programme and personalities, with a game of three-dimensional chess being played by member states and the European Parliament in the coming months.

While all this is going on, as a group of European think tanks focusing on foreign policy and international cooperation, we felt the need to reflect on what these new trends mean and how Europe can adapt to the demand for change expressed by its citizens, while developing its global role. We asked our network of researchers based in Europe and outside, to share their thoughts on the direction European politics should take, looking at the EU from a national perspective. Each has written a letter to the new EU leadership. Based on what is happening in their respective countries, from Italy to India, from Poland to South Africa, from Finland to Japan, they suggest key actions for supporting sustainable development globally. The letters coming from EU member countries show a composite picture, of fears and nostalgia but also of new ideas and energy. The issues related to the quality of life, such as the environment or social justice must, according to our European authors, regain centrality within European policies, with clear commitments and financial resources. Populist parties cannot monopolise migration issues that more than ever need to be addressed

at European level. This implies a European agreement on the Global Compact on migration, based on evidence and shared values. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are mentioned several times by our European authors, as a bold and transformative development agenda that still need to be mainstreamed within European policies and translated into concrete actions. The elections' results also show the need to rebuild trust in the EU project by getting real feedback on EU policies and acting on it. Listening is not enough. Subsidiarity also means a strong Union that uses its local and regional authorities to get closer to its citizens.

If the letters from European States paint a continent in search of its own identity, authors from the world are frankly dismayed at all this navel-gazing. They still see Europe as a global champion of human rights and democracy, social economy – in a world where the rules-based order is challenged from all directions.

The 'recipe' for a stronger Europe seems to be in the Union's commitment to face common global challenges such as terrorism, cyber-crime, inequalities and climate change. Africa is highlighted as a priority region for Europe, but our African authors agreed on the need to overcome the traditional donor-recipient approach and develop a true partnership with Africa, focusing on common projects and work, through incentives for joint programming. In the long run, Europeans would be wise to rethink their own role in the Indo-Pacific region – how to develop stronger ties with like-minded states in the region – India, Japan and South Korea.

Think Tanks have a big role to play in this changing EU political landscape, by challenging decision makers, offering a variety of views and filling the gap between scattered information, real needs and EU policy.

Giulia Maci, Guest editor

and **Virginia Mucchi**, Executive editor of Great Insights



Dear Europe, dear members of the European Parliament,

After two terms in the European Parliament, the moment has come for me to pack my boxes, archive my files and close the door behind me.

These have been ten incredibly interesting years. I look back with gratitude and some pride to several achievements in which I played a role, for example, on anti-money laundering, conflict minerals and of course the report on the rule of law in Hungary. The European Parliament is a place where you can make great things happen. It is technical work, it is law-making and it is politics.

It is disheartening though to see that some of the other topics I worked on relentlessly for these ten years made no progress at all. In some cases, you could even argue they moved in the wrong direction. I refer to asylum and migration policies of course. Here, things have not improved, and the political debate has hardened over the past ten years.

The challenges of migration

In December 2016, I wrote a blog for ECDPM on the challenges of migration. It was the year after the height of the 'migration crisis' and the EU was still very much in crisis management mode. Today, I stand by the analysis of the EU's response that I made back then: "The EU is moving away from policy coherence for development towards a strategy where development is used for policy coherence. A lose-lose strategy where development goals will not be reached, migration flows will not be stopped, the European Union's geopolitical ambitions will not be met, and our credibility towards our African partner countries might be lost." Less development aid is going to those countries most in need and migration routes continue to become more dangerous. At the November 2017 AU-EU Summit in Abidjan, I saw with my own eyes African countries' increasing scepticism towards the EU's migration frames.



Aerial view of the European Parliament buildings

Now, two and a half years after that writing, migration remains a top political priority, and nearly every single European law on migration has been re-opened. The motivation for reviewing these laws – the idea that more effective laws will help us cope with the "migration crisis" – at the same time has made it impossible to agree on any of them. With the sole

exception of the European Border and Coast Guard, which was successfully concluded in the very last weeks of the mandate, all pieces of asylum law remain stuck at the Council's table. It is illustrative of the state of the Union that the European Border and Coast Guard was the only piece of asylum and migration law that could be concluded. An additional 10,000 people will help guard Europe's borders. Yet, no agreement could be reached on a change of the Dublin Regulation, or to resettle the most vulnerable refugees from UNHCR camps to the EU. A law on how to measure and define migration statistics didn't even make it through. Too political. Member states don't see eye to eye. It can't be sold at home. It is the humane approach as well as solidarity among member states that keeps losing out.



Open-ended business

I spent my last months as an MEP negotiating two important migration policies. The first, a recast of the "Returns Directive", deals with the return of asylum seekers whose claim for asylum has been denied. Return is an integral part of any migration policy. Political parties differ widely, however, on how this should be organised, and these differences proved too big to overcome in election time. Experience shows that voluntary return is by far the most effective and financially sensible approach. Policies focused on forced returns sound tough, but fail to deliver, and due to the need for detention, are very costly. My proposals to invest in voluntary returns, to ensure sufficient legal redress options, to use detention only as a measure of last resort and to never lock up children proved too contentious. The next parliament will have to pick up this file. I urge you to follow a humane and evidence-based approach here, in line with human rights and international law.

We need this generation of European leaders to break through the impasses, pursuing policy coherence for development, humane and evidence-based approaches to migration, and agreement on return and resettlement policies

The second policy I worked on these past months aimed to determine how foreign affairs funds can be spent in the future, under the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). I did my best to safeguard development funds from the increasing pressure of the EU's foreign policy interests. The foreign policy interests of the Union have become more prevalent in EU development policies, to the detriment of long-term and predictable poverty eradication. In this way, the EU is discrediting itself as a champion of a norms-, values- and rights-based world and of human rights worldwide. Think about how the EU has threatened that it will reduce trade and aid if developing countries do not take their people back, and how it sends people back to detention centres in Libya.

Urgent measures needed

The negotiations with the European Council still need to start. I am wary of the direction the member states may try to push the European Parliament and I bid you to pay close attention to this. Most important is to ensure that sufficient predictable funds remain available for least-developed countries to be spent on poverty eradication. The Lisbon Treaty's article 208, my favourite article, calls for exactly this, as well as for policy coherence for development. Now that the member states want to increase flexibilities in the budget and spend ever more on migration and security, it will be a task for the next European Parliament to scrutinise the spending, to ensure the money goes to the right places and to monitor that other policies are coherent with development.

The new parliamentarians will have to take up all these challenges and new ones. We only have ten more years to go to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Also, if we want to keep global warming below 2 degrees, we need to ensure that the Paris Agreement is implemented as soon as possible. You have a chance to work on policies that make that happen over the next five years. The urgency of these goals was not felt strongly enough during my term. I sincerely hope it will be during yours. It must.

**Judith Sargentini, Member of the European Parliament
Greens-European Free Alliance, 2009-2019**





Dear future Chair of the development committee,

The EU set an ambitious global agenda this parliamentary term, from signing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to getting agreement on financing for development in Addis Ababa, standing up for gender action and leading the charge to combat climate change in Paris. The challenge for the new European Parliament, which coincides with the crunch years for implementation of these policies, is to make sure that the EU and our global partners keep the promises we all signed up to.

We know the next mandate will not be without challenges. Yes, we had some successes, but the last five years also saw more and more attacks on multilateralism. From the Brexit referendum to the US withdrawing from the Paris Agreement under Trump, and the refusal of some countries to endorse the Global Compact on Migration, populist movements across the world are trying to take apart the multilateral system that underpins global policies like development.

Institutional renewal: Development policy

When the new European Parliament Committee on Development (DEVE) forms in July, there will be four immediate priorities. The first is confirming the new Commission. DEVE will be most involved in the hearings for the Development and Humanitarian Aid commissioners, but we should also be trying to influence the policy plans of others, in particular, the new High Representative for Foreign Policy, the Trade Commissioner and the Energy/Climate Change Commissioner, as their work has a direct bearing on development. MEPs should look for candidates who believe in multilateralism and commit to delivering the SDGs and Paris agenda. The second priority is to work closely with the Committee on Budgets (BUDG) to secure a good overall settlement for development policy in the seven-year EU budget. Key here will be to uphold increases in the budget and maintain the integration of the European Development Fund in the budget. The third priority is to open negotiations with the Council on the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). I hope DEVE will defend what was agreed by this Parliament, namely proper funding for development, limits on diverting aid into migration and security policy and putting the SDGs and pro-poor policies at the heart of the EU's external policy. A final priority is to work hard with the women's committee on the Gender Action Plan (GAP), improving the EU's approach to deliver for women and girls, stopping "ticking boxes" exercises and pushing back against attacks on sexual and reproductive health rights by the Trump administration. Here I hope that the new DEVE will build on the work already done.

The SDGs

To achieve the SDGs by 2030, we need to see rapid advances in the next five years. The formation of the new committee in July will coincide with the meeting of the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF), where the EU will report on its progress towards the SDGs both inside and outside the Union. In September, DEVE and colleagues from other committees will be attending a second HLPF, where heads of state will report on overall progress on the SDGs. These two UN events give the EU the opportunity to show real leadership on the SDGs and to defend the

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concept of multilateralism. DEVE has worked hard to bring other European Parliament committees on board to push for the SDGs to be implemented universally. We have set out proposals for an annual 'whole EP' review system of the SDGs, to put pressure on the Council and the Commission to deliver, and I hope the new Parliament will support this approach. Last year the United States put the SDGs 'under review', so the EU needs to speak up loudly for the SDGs and global governance, and find allies among other countries to do the same.

Moving beyond aid: Africa and post-Cotonou

There has been a lot of focus on Africa during this Parliament – and rightly so. We need to form a genuine partnership, beyond donor-recipient relationships and discussions about migration. While member states remain committed in theory to increasing aid to 0.7% of GNI, the chance for a massive increase in development aid looks slim. So the EU will have to look beyond aid if it wants to help deliver the SDGs.

One way forward is through new funds, such as the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD), that channel investment to poor countries. The jury is still out on whether these funds can deliver the extra financing needed by the poorest and most fragile countries. But to see real development, Africa definitely needs jobs and private sector involvement. We also need more work on tackling illicit financial flows and tax evasion.

While Africa is important, we must not neglect our partnerships with other developing countries. A replacement for the Cotonou agreement, with our ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) partners, will come back to the table for ratification by DEVE and the European Parliament in the autumn. The EU could be doing much more in all its trade relationships with partners to improve sustainable development in those countries, and along supply chains to the EU. After the success of the conflict minerals laws in this Parliament, mandatory due diligence rules should now target other commodities, like cocoa and the garment sector. Similarly, we should make support for climate action a key component of any new trade or partnership agreements with third countries.

Humanitarian aid

The term 'humanitarian aid' has mainly been used in situations of protracted crises, often man-made. At the first World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul policy changes were proposed to better address protracted conflicts. We now need to implement them, starting with a funding mechanism for the development-humanitarian nexus and better protection of humanitarian workers, who have been increasingly targeted in conflicts. Last but not least, during the past five years we have seen some appalling cases of sexual misconduct by a small number of aid workers. NGOs and EU institutions have been putting in place new systems to detect and enable whistle-blowers. This too must be monitored by DEVE.

So, a lot to do! The global challenges of climate change and extreme poverty call for an EU that is serious about meeting its commitments and that leads the world in finding new solutions and a common way forward. DEVE can play a key role in helping the EU meet those challenges. I wish you every success in that endeavour.

Linda McAvan, former Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Development 2015-2019





Dear EU leaders,

When I was based in Brussels as Chief Representative of JICA to the EU, I regularly visited the EU Public Information Centre located next to the ECDPM office. One day, I picked up a pamphlet that opened with the paragraph, "After decades of war that cost millions of lives, the foundation of the European Union (EU) marked the beginning of a new era where European countries solve their problems 'by talking, not by fighting'. This struck me deeply.

Indeed, EU member states have never fought a war among themselves since the end of World War II. Some people mock the EU as a talking shop. What's wrong with that? The most dangerous thing is when countries stop talking. History tells us that it's time for a war. Were we in the Middle Ages today, British and Continental Europeans might well fight another Guerre de Cent Ans over Brexit. Thank you EU for talking and talking.

The next question is, 'talking to who?' Any organisation is susceptible to two kinds of pressures: pressure from the inside and pressure from the outside. From within, the EU is experiencing a huge surge in pressure from member states, from industries, from bankers, investors, pensioners, unemployed youth and citizens. They clamour for the EU to take more action, to display more leadership, for more democracy, transparency, or whatever they are unhappy about. I think internal pressure generally weakens an organisation, more than external pressure. Internal pressure tends to provoke an attitude of simply catering to members' concerns, to placate them, without considering long-term ramifications and inconsistencies.

Growing populism and populist policies emerging in Europe is a case in point. It shows us how internal pressure can disrupt the governance of an organisation. This is happening in the EU at present. External pressure, in contrast, tends to strengthen the cohesiveness of members, because they instinctively move to protect their organisation.

While the world becomes more and more inward looking, with the emergence and re-emergence of populism, nationalism, xenophobia and even anti-Semitism, in many parts of Europe and America, the threats we face, such as climate change, terrorism, pandemics and cyber-crime, are more and more borderless and global, ironically.

So my suggestion is that the EU should focus more on the external pressure and try to solve it. While the world becomes more and more inward looking, with the emergence and re-emergence of populism, nationalism, xenophobia and even anti-Semitism, in many parts of Europe and America, the threats we face, such as climate change, terrorism, pandemics and cyber-crime, are more and more borderless and global, ironically. To address such global threats, the EU must be more cohesive and united in its policies and external actions. The EU needs to talk more to those outside the Union sphere. Before doing so, member states must coordinate their policies and priorities. Among the member states this will help rebuild trust, which has been seriously impaired during the lengthy internal disputes and confrontations over issues ranging from fiscal austerity to democracy, immigration and Brexit.

The EU has had, until now, a wonderful instrument called *Global Europe* that third countries and international organisations do not possess. It is a budget heading with €2.3 billion earmarked for development assistance, humanitarian aid, peace and security, climate change and other international issues



Climate march in Brussels

happening in the world outside the EU. I am curious to see what will happen to this instrument in the next long-term budget.

The EU was a role model in discourses on effectiveness and coordination of development assistance, which was my previous profession. Development assistance is a typical area of shared competence in which the EU and member states can implement programmes

in parallel. But in the interest of the partner countries that receive aid from both the EU and its member states, the EU has worked hard in the past decade to coordinate its aid with that of member states through skillfully crafted coordination tools like joint programming, blending of development finance and delegated cooperation.

It is easier to coordinate member states on external action than on internal issues, because conflicts of interest between member states are less likely to occur there than on domestic issues. No member states oppose giving aid to poor countries. No member states are complacent about climate change. No member states welcome terrorism or pandemics.

Therefore, I strongly suggest that in these times of internal disruption, the EU look more vigorously towards the third world. Japan is an ideal partner to work with, if the EU wishes to become more global. The Japan-EU Strategic Partnership Agreement was concluded in July 2018. Now we have a legally binding platform to discuss and take joint Japan-EU action spanning various pressing issues.

Hey Europeans (hopefully including Brits), it's time to put quarrels about internal issues to rest and talk to people outside! Japan and the world are counting on you.

Aiichiro Yamamoto,
Special Assistant to the President
Japan International Cooperation Center (JICE)





Dear EU leaders,

Multilateralism and global governance are under unprecedented attack. The norms, rules and institutions established in the aftermath of World War II are being questioned to the core. Yet, multilateralism is needed now more than ever before.

There are no global challenges worthy of the name that can be met through unilateral or even bilateral action. This was indeed the spirit that inspired the international community to commit to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement on climate in 2015. Rekindling that spirit and propelling it forward, towards effective implementation, is the defining task of our age.

Against this backdrop, we worry that Italy's voice will not be heard globally. Only within the EU, which itself represents the most radical form of multilateralism worldwide, can we hope and expect to make our voice heard in multilateral forums at the global level.

Multilateralism means being part of an international community where common challenges are understood to need collective responses. A 'politics of belonging', as set out by George Monbiot, provides a lens for reading threats and opportunities that will confront the EU and its future leadership.

This means belonging to a community where no one is left behind, where the Union is strong enough to listen to all its citizens and member states through participatory processes while at the same time acting externally in a humble yet determined manner.

Irreversible consequences

In the words of Nigerian writer Ben Okri, "Nations and peoples are largely the stories they feed themselves. If they tell themselves stories that are lies, they will suffer the future consequences of those lies."



Refugees disembark in Sicily, Italy

Some choices faced today by the international community have intergenerational effects. Nowhere is this clearer than in climate change. Italy has maintained a balanced position in this respect, but that is not enough. Our daughters and sons are rightly making their protests heard. Our actions so far have been woefully insufficient. The EU is playing a leading role in global climate policy, but more radical approaches are needed. The Union needs to be a pioneer in this fight, harnessing the potential of external cooperation, including robust financial commitments to narrow the gap between aspiration and action.

Migration and social cohesion

Anti-migration narratives and fixations are dominating our domestic politics and public debate. Our country feels that it has been left to carry the responsibility of migration flows with little solidarity from other member states. This rhetoric is seriously imperilling

Italy's sense of belonging to the European project. The consequences could be devastating, first and foremost for Italy, but also for the continent as a whole.

The EU should do more to respond to the growing sense of insecurity and, at the same time, react to counter populist actions and responses. We understand the need to address public concerns, thereby increasing EU funds devoted to migration management. Yet, security cooperation with countries of origin and transit is but one, fairly small, component of an effective migration policy. Effective migration policy requires a complex package of agreements with countries of origin and transit, featuring security cooperation alongside development, trade, diplomacy and, crucially, labour migration too.

A 'politics of belonging', as set out by George Monbiot, provides a lens for reading threats and opportunities that will confront the EU and its future leadership.

On the Italian side, the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration – and not only of the Global Compact on Refugees – will allow us to move in this direction. Moreover, migration management is but one of the several foreign policy goals pursued in any given country or region. The aim of governing migration to the EU should not nullify or trump other foreign policy priorities, including poverty reduction, conflict prevention, peacebuilding, human rights, climate mitigation and energy transition.

The way ahead

The new European Parliament has five years of work ahead. As the directly elected voice of EU citizens, European representatives can play a pivotal role in constructing a European 'politics of belonging' as their standard way of operating, with Italian contributions. We need concrete steps. The SDGs need to become an internal and external organising principle for the future. Progress on this so far is insufficient.

A step change is necessary. The EU needs a robust budget for external action in the new multi-annual financial framework. The Commission's proposal for a €30 billion increase in funds for external action is highly welcome in this regard.

In this context, a joined up approach to development is necessary. This is what both the SDGs and the EU Global Strategy are all about. But a joined up approach does not mean the collapse of all components under a single heading, which is in turn captured politically by the issues of the day.

It involves the far more complex, lengthy and, yes, at times irksome process of working together, acting multilaterally within the EU to be an effective multilateral player on the world stage.

Nathalie Tocci,
Director of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI)
@NathalieTocci





Dear Europe,

Today, 15 years after Western Balkan countries were offered a “European perspective” at the 2003 Thessaloniki Summit, only one of them (Croatia) has acceded to the EU. The remaining six countries are still in the queue, with diverging membership prospects. In 2018, the European Commission as well as its member states reiterated a “credible” European perspective for the region, but no membership outcome is yet in sight. The protracted EU accession process risks disincentivising the Balkan people and elites from supporting reforms aligned with the increasingly rigorous membership conditionalities. Yet, incorporating the rest of the Balkans into the EU economic and political space is both a necessity and beneficial for the EU and the region alike, for numerous geostrategic, political, economic and security reasons.

The situation on the ground calls for a hard think about ways to integrate the Balkans, despite numerous challenges and doubts among many European leaders as well as citizens. What may be needed is a thorough rethinking of the EU’s approach to enlargement.

The Balkans in the EU benefits all

As put by the European Commission in its recent strategy, the Western Balkans “are part of Europe, geographically surrounded by EU member states”. We have a common heritage and history, and a future defined by shared opportunities and challenges. Moreover, without the entire Balkan region, the EU remains an unfinished peace project, with enduring risks to its stability and security. In relation to stability, we need to recognise that despite efforts to improve regional relations, sparks of tension still emerge between the Balkan countries.

Considering the crucial role that the European integration process has played in peace and collaboration between the once war-torn European societies, we dare argue that the Balkans need to be inside the Union to finally cement peace on the continent. With regard to security, fully integrating the Balkan countries into the EU’s justice and home affairs policies would significantly help in the fight against organised crime and terrorism across country borders.

Perhaps a more controversial argument for the region’s integration is the increasing presence and influence of other geostrategic actors. These are slowly filling the void left by the lack of strong European engagement in the Western Balkans. European intellectuals are urging the EU to “wake up to the new geopolitical realities”, if it wants its strategy for the region to succeed. The EU needs to unequivocally “mark its territory” in the Balkans through a much stronger political presence, in addition to the already strong economic presence.

There can be little argument that EU membership is a necessity for the region. In most former socialist countries that joined the EU, economies have grown, democracies have consolidated and overall popular support for the EU has remained high. For the Western Balkan’s weak democratic institutions and struggling economies, exposure to stronger Europeanisation influences and injections of European structural and investment funds would doubtlessly have multiple positive effects.

Rethinking enlargement policy

Yet, while the Commission enlargement strategy boldly mentions 2025 as a tentative accession year for two Balkan countries, member states remain considerably more sceptical. Even compared to the Central and Eastern European countries, which faced their share of negative opinion from the “old” member states, the Western Balkan states appear even less appealing. To begin with, the region has a lingering negative public image in Western European societies as a result of the 1990s’ wars, organised crime groups from the region spreading their influence in EU countries, and an almost-spiteful treatment of European foes as close friends, among other things. That image is worsened by the slow and protracted reforms in the region. In fact, several of these countries appear to have taken two steps forward, then one – or even two or three – steps back when it comes to democratic standards, rule of law and economic governance. It is as if Balkan political leaders are calling the EU’s bluff and, in the absence of a real membership outlook, are using the time they have in the accession “limbo” to further personal political and financial interests and embed corruption in weak institutions. Captured state is an increasingly common and widely accepted term to describe the state of play in some Balkan countries’ political systems.

When one weighs the needs and challenges of the Western Balkan countries’ EU path, it feels like the “old” approach to enlargement doesn’t quite fit: it requires full compliance with increasingly detailed criteria in order to gain full membership. One must admit that this looks like a daunting challenge, hard to achieve in the several years to come.

So, perhaps what we need is some out-of-the-box thinking that would allow us to envision a different enlargement process that would make the idea of the Western Balkan countries in the EU less of a ‘bogeyman’ for the member states, while at the same time providing tangible-enough encouragement for hard political and economic reforms in the region. Such a new enlargement policy would, like today’s policy, need to continue to insist upon and support fundamental reforms, but with a better understanding of realities on the ground, while offering stronger and more imminent reform incentives.

To make the Balkans less intimidating for the EU countries, we might think about rendering the moment of accession less formidable. For example, instead of gaining immediate access to almost all EU policies, access to specific membership benefits could be made more gradual and conditional on achievement of reform benchmarks. Such an approach is already in line with the “differentiated integration” ideas within the EU, so why not extend them to the acceding members too? To this we can add a tailor-made post-accession monitoring and sanctioning mechanism, which would allow the EU to spot and appropriately punish evidenced lack of progress and backsliding with an easily enforceable procedure (one not dependent on unanimous voting by member states).

There is space and need for much thinking and analysing to put such a new approach in place. Admittedly, there are challenges to consider, political and procedural. But there is no reason to shy away from rethinking the enlargement policy. Historically speaking, this policy has changed and been adapted as new and different candidates arrived, and as the EU learnt more about the difficulties and challenges of state, democracy and rule-of-law building. It has also changed from the realisation that fundamental reforms take time to grow roots and become embedded and irreversible. Therefore, with some bold and creative thinking, enlargement policy can be redesigned to allow the EU to accept new members in a shorter timeframe than the one suggested by the current approach.

Milena Lazarevic,
Programme Director at European Policy Centre (CEP), Belgrade





Dear Europe,

The Brexit Party won the election to the European Parliament in the UK. And we have a race underway for a new Prime Minister and leader of the Conservative Party – a race in which ‘hard’ or no deal Brexit features prominently. Many commentators think that the political situation in the UK bodes ill for future collaboration with the EU, never mind future membership. Our partnership in international development could be a victim. On the other hand, there is a silver lining in the Brexit mess. It is that our collective national breakdown has revealed a hitherto hidden well of emotional attachment to Europe and to the EU. Over a million of us marched in London at the end of March, in favour of Remain. Over six million signed a petition in favour of revoking Article 50. And pro-Remain parties performed well in the election. Certainly, at the march, there were enough EU flags, and enough blue and gold face paint, to suggest a real affection.

That is a bit of a surprise. It has often been argued that the UK differs from other Member States in its attitude to the EU. For the Continental Members, and no doubt for Ireland, membership has been seen as a matter of values, a matter of culture, a question of identity. This is deeply rooted in memories of war and dislocation, in physical proximity, in family ties, and now in shared institutions. The EU is often the default.

For the UK, membership has been seen as more instrumental, a question of calculus, part of a complex web of international alliances, in which political capital is deployed according to the objective being pursued. In that vision, the EU is not always the right answer: sometimes, NATO might be the better option, or the UN, or the Commonwealth. And sometimes, including with respect to aid, it is better to act bilaterally.

..our collective national breakdown has revealed a hitherto hidden well of emotional attachment to Europe and to the EU.

Certainly, calculus has been strongly in evidence in the UK’s approach to working with the EU on international development, including after Brexit. In a succession of policy papers and ministerial statements during the past year, the UK has been keen to explore in what areas the EU Institutions might have comparative advantage, compared, say, to the World Bank or the UN. Humanitarian aid has featured, and peace-keeping, and migration. The UK has consistently emphasised value for money. It has also wanted to make sure it has a seat at the table and a voice in decision-making.

Probably none of that will change if the UK leaves or stays. Indeed, nor should it. Comparative advantage, value for money and voice are all important. But might the pendulum shift gently towards culture, and would it make a difference if it did? Of

course, the popular mood is one thing, and the political process is, or can be, quite another. But there may be some interesting options.

Development cooperation cannot stand still. The recent foresight study published for the EU by ESPAS, the European Strategy and Policy Analysis System, points clearly to a world well on its way to a 'new geopolitical, geo-economic and geo-technological order': demography, urbanisation, technical change, and environmental pressure will all play their part.



Anti Brexit march in London

In this context, the Sustainable Development Goals provide an inspiring vision of 'the world we want', but not necessarily a high resolution road map. Development leaders will need to step away from ticking off individual, aid-funded SDG programmes. They have already begun to do so.

The EU's Global Strategy, for example, already in 2016, emphasised the importance of integrated approaches. In the UK also, new cross-government funds have been created, for example to deal with conflict and security, and with climate change.

Both the EU and the UK have supported the institutions of global governance, for example on climate change. Both have invested heavily in global research. In both cases, poverty reduction is enshrined in law as the ultimate goal of development policy – and will need to be achieved in new ways. These common interests provide the foundation for a productive future partnership.

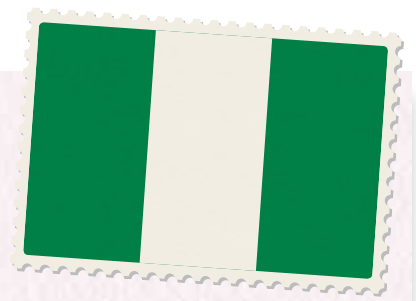
If the UK leaves the EU, at least with a deal, there will continue to be aid payments to the EU of something like £1.5 billion a year into the mid-2020s, reflecting past commitments to the current Multi-Annual Financial Framework and European Development Fund. A shift in the narrative might see those used as a platform to build further cooperative relationships, either in parallel or by means of direct contributions to Trust Funds and similar instruments. Maybe Ministers will be found looking for ways to strengthen the EU's voice as a major pillar of the development system. After all, the EU institutions spend more on aid than the World Bank, and almost as much as the whole of the UN.

If the UK stays, a more ambitious landscape opens up. A new Commission will be appointed in 2019, able to set a new course – and equally important make a new case to the public. The Multi-Annual Financial Framework will be agreed, setting spending limits, including for external action, to 2027. New trade negotiations will begin. More ambitious climate targets will be set. New partnerships will be put in place, not least with Africa. The UK has a track record in all these areas.

A UK motivated by a bit more 'culture' as well as its traditional 'calculus' could lead the EU in shaping this exciting agenda. At the London march, and also at two marches in 2018, I wore a tee shirt and carried a placard with the following slogan: 'Global Britain Needs EU Needs Global Britain'. Calculus – and culture.

Simon Maxwell,
Former Chair, European Think Tanks Group 2015-2019





Dear EU leaders,

On the afternoon of Monday 15 April, as renovation work was being carried out, a mysterious fire broke out on the roof of Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. Thousands gathered to watch the grim spectacle, most of them in tears. Something pulled at my heartstrings as I watched on TV as the spire came down amidst the dark fumes and rubble. It was deeply moving to see Christians, Muslims, Jews and even free-thinkers united in grief as they watched the conflagration engulf this monument to faith.

I have an abiding passion for medieval cathedrals. For one thing, it's their timelessness. Of all those I have seen – Clermont-Ferrand, Tours, Chartres, London, Oxford, Berlin, Warsaw, Turin, Budapest, Uppsala, Brussels, Cologne and Vienna – Notre Dame is incomparable. Paris is the city of my youth. I studied there. Every year the cathedral is visited, we are told, by no less than 12 million people.

President Emmanuel Macron has solemnly promised that a more beautiful Notre Dame will arise from the ruins. Notre Dame is a metaphor for Europe. Like the cathedral, the work of Europe will not be completed in a day. And it would be meaningless without faith. The Old Continent has been known for many things: glory and grandeur, inventiveness, science and philosophy, music and the arts, technology and industry, fanaticism and tolerance, imperialism, madmen and stupid wars. Europe is a mixed bag of the good, the bad and the ugly.



Notre Dame burning

*The New Europe as we know it represents the triumph of hope over adversity. Europe, in a sense, is a custodian of universal values. Europe invented what the Germans term the *machstaaten* as well as the “society of nations”. As in the case of Notre Dame, it would be a great mistake to imagine that a New Europe could successfully be built without the necessary scaffoldings of faith.*

The British historian Arnold J. Toynbee underlined “challenge and response” as the hallmark of “creative civilisations”. Europe stands out for its capacity to constructively respond to historical contingencies. In our twenty-first century, these challenges are increasingly complex: populism, terrorism, viral epidemics, economic stagnation, climate change, energy security and immigration. There is also the challenge of Brexit, a political tsunami that took Brits and Europeans alike by complete surprise. The tragedy of Brexit is that British youth overwhelmingly desire to remain while the oldies want out. The youth are wise enough to know where their bread is buttered. We in Africa want a stronger and more united Europe. We believe that a thriving Europe and more united Europe is good for Africa and good for the world.

The relations between our two regions date back to antiquity. The 1957 Treaty of Rome had within it an association clause with certain African colonial dependencies and overseas territories. From then to this day, there has been a succession of 'cooperation agreements' covering trade, development and political dialogue,

in addition to cultural and technical cooperation. The ten-year Cotonou agreement between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States and Europe is currently up for renegotiation. Europe has a separate strategic partnership with the African Union covering development and security.

Europe remains the most generous provider of official development assistance to Africa, ahead of all other donor countries. Without European generosity, many African countries would hardly be in a position to balance their budgets. But it would be naive to imagine that EU aid is a one-way street with few benefits accruing to the giver. EU development assistance enhances Europe's influence throughout Africa, giving it unprecedented "soft power" on our continent. It is particularly instructive to note that capital outflows from Africa to Europe and the advanced industrial economies exceed US \$100 billion annually. This is far more than all inward capital flows.

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Europe has been Africa's most important trading partner. Until recently, the EU accounted for over 60 per cent of Africa's trade, although the figure has fallen since 2011, thanks to the emergence of China as a new global player. After almost a decade of negotiations, the majority of ACP regions are either implementing or at the verge of concluding economic partnership agreements (EPA) with the EU.

As a new leadership is soon to take over in Brussels, it is our hope that they will commit to building on the foundations laid by their predecessors. Africa should have a priority place in Europe's international policy. We share a common neighbourhood and are bound together by the forces of geography, history and world economics. Europe and Nigeria need to forge a strategic partnership if Europe is to have meaningful impact in Africa's development.

My generation of leaders aims to build a rainbow continent; a prosperous and democratic Africa that is open to the world and ready to do business with Europe. But it must be on the basis of interdependence, mutual interests and shared obligations, shorn of post-colonial attitudes. Africa still has a long way to go. But on that journey of a thousand miles, we hope we can count on Europe to walk with us as a friend and partner of destiny.

Obadiah Mailafia, Nigerian finance and development expert, civil servant and statesman and former Chief of Staff of ACP Group, Brussels.





Dear EU leaders,

Africa is changing fast. Is Europe keeping up? Will we manage to forge equal, effective partnerships with Africa that respond to actual needs rather than clinging to an outdated narrative of donors and beneficiaries?

While Africa is taking huge steps forward in economic and social development, European solidarity has started to vanish from our toolbox. Parties with populist and right wing ideologies have not only gained ground in elections, but also managed to turn government policies towards more pessimistic premises rather than positive outlooks as far as African relations are concerned. Uncontrolled migration, threats to security and risks to private investment rather than development cooperation and partnership dominate discussions about the Global South. Borders have been closed, “root causes” is now the slogan guiding policies, and drastic cuts and reallocations of development aid have been introduced even in the traditionally generous Nordic region, namely in Denmark and Finland.

Can we agree that African economic and human development and social transformation have surpassed all records? Just look at the speed the African Continental Free Trade Area was approved and ratified – in less than 12 months. The digital revolution and globalisation have fundamentally changed the preconditions for development on the continent. Many African countries are calling for the end of aid, seeking trade rather than aid. This, however, is not the whole picture.

The African Development Bank and Economic Commission of Africa predict further high economic conjunctures to persist in the majority of African countries. Yet the impressive numbers are not translating into better lives for Africans, and current analyses focus more on the growing inequality, rapid population growth and unemployment. The power structures of the global economy have not changed to the Global South's advantage, and therefore Africa will not win, regardless of how fast it runs.

Borders have been closed, “root causes” is now the slogan guiding policies, and drastic cuts and reallocations of development aid have been introduced even in the traditionally generous Nordic region, namely in Denmark and Finland.

Some African leaders and intellectuals claim that despite growing ownership of its own decisions, Africa lets itself be treated as a raw material deposit. Its wealth escapes the continent's own needy and starving. They say that Africa is prevented from defending its own interests and taking advantage of its improved political position in the changing global geopolitics. This fuels old hostilities towards Europe and raises antagonism towards China, Africa's most important new partner. Critics claim that neither the reforming African Union nor its member countries can abolish colonial traumas or rid the continent of corrupt leaders and practices now well past their sell-by date. I agree with this analysis, but not with the current solution of pulling out and leaving Africa alone on the other side of the Mediterranean. My call to you, European decision-maker, is to engage more rather than less.

Meanwhile, the climate threat is changing Africa's landscape and its development prospects. Sober messages from the UN climate panel, the IPCC, have inserted a bitter note of reality into the illusion of the "global consumer heaven". Africa will not become a new China – some will exclaim "thank heavens!" – because rapidly advancing automatisisation and a growing global footprint spoil its future prospects as a rising global factory. Africa, even with its rapidly growing population, bears marginal guilt for climate change (it produces just 4 % of global emissions). But it does bear maximal consequences of the disastrous effects of our changing climate.

Climate equity and intergenerational solidarity entail that people in the Global South – young and old, women and men – also have the right to live dignified lives in a functioning society free of violence and oppression. That is where we, European citizens, particularly from the Nordic region, can play a part, offering building blocks for a good life, functional societies, and good public services in health and education as well as a prosperous and sustainable global community.

The Nordic countries in a far corner of Europe top most global rankings of wealth, welfare and happiness, and for good reason. We therefore punch above our weight in the global arena. Using soft power, the Nordic countries and its decision-makers urge Europe to return to its proactive role in global development politics, along the lines of its previous solidarity for African emancipation.

Europe, and the world for that matter, needs innovative and equal partnerships with Africa so the continent can achieve its own full potential. Equally, actions that promote Africa's position in the global arena where relevant global decisions are made are paramount for our common sustainable future.

The new European global politics can take large leaps in preventing and mitigating climate change, while also promoting equal division of public resources and goods, advancing a circular and sharing economy, and promoting renewable energy. Besides, there is one area where my country, Finland, really shines: provision and quality of education. It is given that the Finnish education system, rooted in equal opportunities and a particular historical evolution, cannot be copied or exported.



However, Europe can advance new (digital) learning solutions and applications, provide resources for research and development, and help set up and develop good e-governance. With Nordic soft power and European resources, these investments might well turn out to be best policies to address population growth on the African continent. In the continent's "survival economy", ground-breaking innovations are created by pools of young people in sweatshop-like conditions. Imagine Africa's potential if education and financing were offered? Dear European decision-maker, would you like to know more? We at the Nordic Africa Institute are at your service (www.nai.uu.se).

Iina Soiri is the Director of the Nordic Africa Institute

Dear Europe,



First, let me congratulate you on your election to one of the largest chambers of democracy in the world.

Make up your mind

When I listen to Belgian debates on the future of Europe, especially those during the election campaigns, it is difficult to get an idea of what global role Europe has to play. Of course, the European elections in our country coincided with regional and national elections. You do not have to be a political genius to know that in that kind of a situation most attention goes to national political issues. When occasionally European themes were debated, across political parties we heard rather defensive stances "We have to protect ourselves against the Chinese!", mixed with fear "How can we stop migration?" and pessimism "We won't be able to keep our level of welfare in this fast changing world!". Some had suggestions for the way forward: "We can only keep up if we do it together at the European level." "Europe should show moral global leadership." "We have to fight the root causes of migration." Hopefully, you will be aware that being part of the European leadership means that whatever subject you deal with will have an extra-European dimension.

Africa and the EU: Communities of fate

If little was said about Europe-in-the-world during the campaigns, even less discussed was our special relationship with Africa. This is remarkable. Africa and Europe are communities of fate. What happens in Africa matters for Europe, and what happens in Europe matters for Africa. As Belgians we know how intimate our relationship with Africa is. Go to the Matonge area in Brussels, look at the candidates on the electoral lists (of all parties!) and at some of our best athletes; they all have African origins. Not to mention our most astute businesses that venture out in Africa.

There are good reasons to think about our relationship with Africa in this interconnected way. There is proximity: only 14 km separate Europe from Africa. There is the environment: one of the world's biggest ecological hotspots is the Mediterranean basin. There is the issue of demography: by 2050 the African continent will be home to over 2.5 billion people. We can also add security to this list, as Africa and Europe share common threats like human trafficking. It is also about solidarity, as Europe is the source of more than one fifth of remittances. These go mainly from the African diaspora to African communities.

The Belgian federal government that is now exiting drastically changed our approach to international relations. Our relations with the DR Congo and Burundi have worsened and become quasi-non-existent. Our development cooperation apparatus has undergone profound institutional reform, aligning it more to our foreign policy and private sector interests.

You as parliamentarians now enter a completely different ball game. Africa and Europe are working on an alliance to further engage the two continents. It is a venture and an adventure. It is about intertwining the two economies and the two societies further. To construct our future together.

Whole of society approach

This alliance is a fascinating project that has to involve all the African countries, but also all the European member states. We have to look at our relationship with Africa in a different way. It is not about us and them anymore. It is now about us, Africans and Europeans alike.

*It is no longer a vertical North-South story.
It is about horizontal partnership and co-development.*

We therefore have to engage the whole of our Commission (not only DEVCO and EEAS), the whole of our governments (not only the ministries of development cooperation) and the whole of our societies (not only the non-governmental development organisations). We in Belgium are already experimenting with this. We have our development agency Enabel that works with many other Belgian ministries in its development programmes. We have what we in Belgium call "fourth pillar organisations". These are organisations that traditionally did not deal with the Sustainable Development Goals but now have discovered how important they are. Then there are the social partners, social enterprises, diasporas, schools and universities, local authorities and proactive individuals. These number in the thousands in our country.

It is no longer a vertical North-South story. It is about horizontal partnership and co-development. We swim or drown in the waters of globalisation together. The traditional deficit model, which told us that Africa needs our help, has to be replaced by an opportunity model. This means that the donor-recipient model that dominated development cooperation is being transformed into a mutual interest model where we look for win-win-win operations. We have to co-create our common future and therefore be more innovative, more entrepreneurial, experiment more and, more often than not, take risks. Fundamentally our plan-centred model of development cooperation has to make room for a more human-centred model. Because in the end it is about human development in this globalising world.

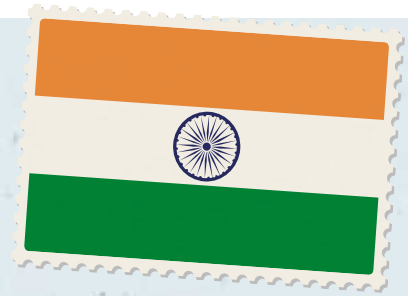


The future can accommodate the wishes of the European people and those of people in other places on this earth, including the next generations.

Good luck!

Patrick Develtere,
Principal Advisor, European Political Strategy Centre, European Commission

Dear EU leaders,



Questions related to jobs, business, security, migration and climate change have assumed enormous importance in the last decade or so. But, amidst the din of internal issues besieging the imagination of European people, it may help to look beyond your borders for opportunities to not only address internal concerns, but also make a significant impact externally.

This is particularly important because new and important actors have emerged in the global landscape. They are crucial to ensure shared prosperity and stability in today's world, which is very different from the last time you voted.

For more constructive engagement between India and the EU, collaboration on regional connectivity is a good place to start. Trilateral development cooperation, involving the EU, India and other developing countries, especially in Africa, is another avenue to foster deeper engagement.

India is one such nation with which your relationship should matter more now than ever before. We started our strategic partnership in 2004, but for many reasons have been unable to keep up momentum, particularly since 2009. A new India is emerging after a huge majority to the ruling party, BJP, in the recently held national elections on a wave of nationalism and security, which will be an important dimension of the partnership.

We have to recognise that the fulcrum of global power has shifted very rapidly to the East, coinciding with a wave of domestic

populism around the world. This has led to new strategic concepts, like the 'Indo-Pacific', which denotes the greater international influence of this region. But it has also created a sentiment of protectionism around the world.

As a result, some of the old relationships have started to shrink, and new ones are emerging. For Europe this has been a matter of consternation, especially in the context of its relationship with the United States. It was therefore no surprise when seasoned European diplomat Maurice Gourdault-Montagne said, "Europe has no choice but to actively engage in the Indo-Pacific and work closely with India."

Implicit in this statement is the fact that India is far more important to Europe now than ever before, and a relationship between India and Europe needs to be built up accordingly. This means that India and the EU need to engage more constructively in the future, which can be accomplished only if they partake equally in the rule-making process to meet their strategic and commercial goals.

Europe and India can do this by establishing a channel of dialogue on multilateral issues, and by associating foreign affairs and security aspects with trade and economic objectives. This is articulated as one of the actions proposed in 'Elements for an EU Strategy on India' unveiled by the European Commission last year.

With this being the premise to move forward, there are a number of key issues on which India and Europe can work. First, for Europe and India to generate greater synergies, the EU needs to align its strategy for India with the UN SDG framework. In doing so, due care needs to be taken to understand the relevance of the SDG framework in promoting the development and interests of both partners. This will be crucial to move from adoption to execution. In other words, there must be concurrence on the interpretation of each SDG and the expectations arising from such interpretation.

Second, India's position as a leading South Asian country can only be as strong as the region itself. Currently, the region is one of the least connected in the world. Collaboration on regional connectivity, especially among Bangladesh, Bhutan, India and Nepal, is particularly important for regional prosperity and stability. Therefore, the EU and India must develop a framework for regional connectivity and together mobilise the financing required. Such a project will benefit if coupled with similar initiatives being lead by the United States and Japan.

Third, it must be remembered that the construct of the Indo-Pacific stretches from Africa's eastern coast to the west coast of the United States. In this context, the EU and India can strengthen the future discourse on the Indo-Pacific by fostering deeper engagement with other developing countries, particularly in Africa, through trilateral development cooperation. Different models for such cooperation must be explored between India and the EU.

Fourth, India and the EU need to collaborate more closely on the Euro-Asian connectivity project. Currently, the initiative offers little scope for India's direct engagement. There is a need for both India and the EU to spell out a common vision for a rules-based connectivity model between the two and invite other countries to engage with that common vision.

Finally, while both the EU and India want a meaningful trade agreement, there appears to be a degree of stalemate on a number of issues. These include barriers to trade in the form of sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures, customs duties, data localisation, deviation from international standards and alleged discrimination based on legislative or administrative measures by India that affect a wide range of sectors, including goods, services, investment and public procurement. For India's part, a main reason for lack of progress on trade-related issues is EU unilateralism in the rule-making process. The EU's recognition of India as a co-partner in the rule-making exercise would be a crucial step forward.

Let me conclude by underlining that India and the EU face unprecedented opportunities to help create not only a better, more workable relationship within and across borders, but also in partaking equally in writing new rules for the global governance architecture. Collaboration in the areas identified in "Elements for an EU Strategy on India" could produce a comprehensive trade, development and security partnership based on principles of sustainable development. Both India and the EU, including its member states, need each other as equals. They should look towards the next decade with that as their starting point.

Pradeep S. Mehta,
Secretary General, CUTS International Jaipur, India



Mumbai skyline



Dear members of the European Parliament,



Looking at the results of the European Parliament elections, Eurosceptic parties have gained seats, even if it fell short of expectations, and the parliament has become more divided. An obvious question is, “Will the new EU leadership be able to muster enough internal strength to deal with external challenges?” And external challenges there are. Security threats are on the rise, linked to conflicts close to Europe’s borders, terrorism and cyber-attacks. Trade wars loom. The global balance of power is shifting – and not to Europe’s advantage. Our climate is changing, human rights violations are widespread, extreme poverty is far from extinguished, and inequality is increasing worldwide.

Yet, external dimensions are where the EU, in my opinion, can potentially – and will have to – show its worth, to counter Euroscepticism. Only by joining forces can we tackle global challenges that are cross-border by nature. National policies alone will not do the trick. I was glad to see that the coalition government and most opposition parties in the Netherlands agree with me, judging from their electoral manifestos. While they may favour a “smaller EU” in some areas, they call on the EU to play a stronger role on the world stage to tackle global challenges.

This call for greater emphasis on external dimensions may seem counterintuitive at first. After all, it is on global challenges like climate change, security and migration that the Eurosceptic parties are most critical of the EU, perhaps understandably. People fear carrying the burden of overly ambitious and ineffective climate change measures. They worry about social degradation spurred by unrestrained migration, and no one wants to waste precious tax money funding corrupt governments through EU development cooperation. Many are disillusioned with what the EU has done so far. Certainly the EU will have to show more concrete progress and results in terms of promoting EU values and interests through external action, if it is to stand a chance of reconquering Eurosceptic voters.

***External dimensions are where the EU, in my opinion, can potentially
– and will have to – show its worth, to counter Euroscepticism***

This will require a budget for EU external action that is ‘fit for purpose’. The European Commission’s proposals for the EU multi-annual financial framework 2021–2027 undoubtedly hold potential for a more strategic EU engagement with the rest of the world. The Commission has advocated increased funding for external action, which is in line with the EU’s particular added value in this area. It also put forward a single Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) that merges several existing instruments, as well as an off-budget European Peace Facility. As part of the NDICI, the Commission proposes expanding the European Fund for Sustainable Development, to further leverage sustainable private sector investments. These proposals reflect the ambition to be less instrument driven. They could allow the EU to act more coherently and flexibly on global challenges, pressing development concerns and the EU’s

own interests. The Commission has argued for at least 10 % of the NDICI envelope to be dedicated to addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement and to support migration management and governance, while at least 25 % of the overall EU budget would be climate-related. This shows the importance attached to these global challenges. Given the domestic political debate, it is not surprising that the government of the Netherlands has welcomed the direction of the proposals, but it wants to see an even stronger emphasis on migration.

However, it will take a robust defence to protect this part of the budget from cuts in the ongoing negotiations. We who were engaged in or followed the previous budget negotiations know that external action is prone to cuts resulting from deals in other policy areas, such as EU cohesion and the common agricultural policy. Additionally, attention will have to be paid to limiting the fragmentation of external action instruments during the negotiation process, to avoid strong deviations from the rationalisation proposal of the Commission. Safeguards need to be spelled out for specific policy objectives, and a focus on the external action heading only should be avoided. External dimensions of 'internal' policies deserve attention, as the distinction between the two is increasingly blurred.

I do concur that improving citizens' perceptions of democratic oversight of EU matters is crucial to enhance trust in EU governance and the EU at large.

Meaningful strategic oversight and influence of member states and the European Parliament in the area of EU external action need to be ensured, while keeping sufficient flexibility and preserving predictability. Currently, mechanisms for member states' involvement in fundamental strategic choices in third countries are perceived by many as exercises of rubber stamping Commission proposals, while the European Parliament has very limited scrutiny powers over financial instruments for EU external action. More generally, reforms are needed to bring EU decision-making closer to citizens. This message resonated in the European election campaigns of almost all political parties in the Netherlands, including the Eurosceptic Forum for Democracy (FVD). Proposals for reform included granting the European Parliament the authority to send a European Commissioner home (made by the Dutch People's Party for Freedom and Democracy, VVD), giving national parliaments better access to EU documents (from the Christian Democratic Appeal, CDA) and EU-wide referenda (GreenLeft and FVD).

While I'm not in favour of all the mechanisms suggested, I do concur that improving citizens' perceptions of democratic oversight of EU matters is crucial to enhance trust in EU governance and the EU at large.

Time will tell if the rise of Eurosceptic parties such as FDV in the Netherlands will be a wake-up call or kiss of death for the EU and its role in the world. Now is the time to act to influence that outcome.

Jeske van Seters
Head of Programme Private Sector Engagement, ECDPM
@JeskeVanSeters





Dear EU leaders,

You must feel the world has turned topsy-turvy in the last couple of years. Fallen from your position as the major global actor with your soft power and metrosexual approach to international relations, harassed by the shenanigans of your erstwhile close partner across the pond, beset by a grumpy and insolent bear to the east, and a new superpower further east that is wrapping the whole world in its beautiful silk of connectivity. To your south, you feel overwhelmed by waves of migrants (some of them are actually refugees) fleeing their own leaders' poor governance or the consequences of precipitous actions by your members, which created power vacuums and the chaos that follows.

You will also have to come to terms with the fact that your political and economic woes over the last decade have dented your image as an example of successful regional integration.

Europe has long been a pillar of the western liberal international order, but the rise of China and other Southern powers and the re-emergence of Russia are rattling many of your principles. You, the new leadership of Europe, will have to come to terms with this. You will also have to come to terms with the fact that your political and economic woes over the last decade have dented your image as an example of successful regional integration. How many African regional economic communities did not model themselves on the EU?

So, what does all this mean for your future as a global player? Well, first, you need to decide what the European project can deliver in the wake of Brexit, and with an expanding complement of ultra-nationalists in your ranks. These tensions within the Union deflect from the broader economic challenges you face regarding innovation and competition. They undermine the values the EU was built upon and make common external positions difficult, thus eroding your influence.

By dint of your economic muscle you will of course remain important in the medium term, provided the economic edifice does not unravel after Brexit and if US brinkmanship with China doesn't lead to retaliatory protectionism from all quarters!

Diplomatically, however, your challenges are greater in the absence of a united approach to foreign policy. Different members have different interests, often competing, thus undermining the voice of the EU in foreign policy. This is unlikely to become any easier in a climate of growing polarisation. If the EU wants to remain an influential global player it needs to develop an engagement strategy with other regions, not least Africa, by learning from past mistakes. This is an important principle to remain committed to, and on which many African countries can agree – as long as it is based on working together rather than Europe believing it knows best.

A new global order is still to be born, but values of human rights, democracy, equity and social justice should form part of the normative framework. Europe's soft power and normative projection can be significant in this uncharted phase of the evolution of the international system. In addition, this normative dimension has an important role to play domestically in Africa, where the EU's support has been significant in building robust civil societies that can hold governments to account. It has also been critical in helping societal resilience.

Europe's engagement strategy with the continent must recognise that Africa has grown in its agency. It can play a constructive role in international platforms and processes. An example is Kenya's careful steering of the SDG process. Africa also has a significant stake in a rules-based, functioning global system, as



EU member country flags

has Europe. But Europe needs to become bolder in pushing for the reforms to the multilateral system that many developing countries are rooting for. If Europe retreats into a fortress trying to protect its privileges, its influence will gradually decline as other countries and regions grow in economic and diplomatic prowess, and become less dependent on Europe.

Europe's ability to remain an influential player thus depends on recognising the limits of unilateral impact on changes in the global system. Your influence

will be linked to the countries and regions you can build common cause with. Such common cause may be with certain countries in the Global South, and not your traditional geopolitical partners. South Africa sees the value of a deep partnership with Europe. While there won't always be agreement, both of us are committed to a rules-based order. It's just that Europe will have to accept that the rules must change. The more it (and other upholders of the liberal order) resist or hesitate, the less likely it becomes that the rest will be willing to work within the system.

South Africa has just held its sixth democratic election. Its new leadership is well aware that it needs to reclaim its place as a constructive, normative actor on the global stage and in Africa. With the election of the new European leadership, it is thus a good time to re-energise the partnership, to advance a reformed system for pursuit of global good through the exercise of soft power rather than the hard might of the Great Powers.

Elizabeth Sidiropoulos is the Chief Executive of The South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA).





Dear Europe,

Recent years have proven Francis Fukuyama was wrong. History is back. And there are reasons for optimism, as we have just learned the names of the 751 members of the European Parliament who will now write that history. Looking only at the results of the elections in my own country, Poland, I can say there is wide support for an ever-stronger Union. The Polish delegation will also enhance the European Parliament's expertise on external relations, because it includes former prime ministers, foreign affairs ministers, a minister for humanitarian affairs and the head of Poland's largest NGO active in the development field, the Polish Humanitarian Organisation (PAH).

In times of rising protectionism and growing inequality, the EU needs to renew its commitment to a more inclusive, just and prosperous world.

These representatives bring not only a deep understanding of the complexities of the world and the role of the EU but also strong dedication to the cause of eradication of global poverty. As Janina Ochojska, Head of PAH, said during the election campaign: "In the EP, I want to be a voice for the poorest people on Earth... to increase assistance for them in their places of origin, in countries where they live in poverty or without access to water."

The focus on developing countries is not surprising, as many EU challenges originate there. Therefore, along with internal affairs, external relations deserve more focus by the new European leadership at this crucial moment. Among the many historic decisions to be taken are those on the next multi-annual financial framework (MFF), including the shape of and resources for new external financing instruments; an agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries; relations with the United Kingdom after Brexit; migration policy; climate change and many other global challenges. While planning EU external policy, three things deserve special attention.

Inclusive world

First, in times of rising protectionism and growing inequality, the EU needs to renew its commitment to a more inclusive, just and prosperous world. The European Parliament is the right place to ensure that the Union's relations with developing countries follow the principle of policy coherence for development. And though other instruments, such as private investment, will play a larger role in realisation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the part played by development assistance is undiminished.

It is important that EU aid reaches everyone in need, regardless of where they come from or to which statistical income group their country belongs. Many in Poland believe that the EU should retain a separate instrument for cooperation with neighbourhood countries (especially the Eastern Partnership) to secure a level of visibility, commitment and resources for cooperation with these neighbours. It is a truism that the Southern Neighbourhood is as important as the Eastern Neighbourhood, as both regions have a very strong impact on the Union's security and stability. Furthermore, while the EU plans to focus more on fragile and least-developed countries, we cannot forget that most poor people live in "pockets of poverty" in middle-income countries.

Inclusiveness also requires the broader participation of all member states and development partners across Europe in European development cooperation. New financial regulations may further empower NGOs and companies from Central Europe that have not yet been very actively engaged in EU projects. For instance, European tenders could incentivise consortia that include these relatively “new players”. Also, joint efforts of more member states and joint programming exercises are a good way to capitalise on the diverse experience and expertise of all EU donors. Greater inclusiveness at both the EU and global levels are in the Union’s best interest.

Pragmatic idealism

Second, EU foreign and development cooperation policies should be driven by pragmatic idealism. This is actually not far from the concept of “principled pragmatism”, promoted in the 2016 EU Global Strategy. To me, this means that Europe must remain a force that changes the world for the better, but it needs to do that in a more pragmatic way – so, seek not what is ideal but what is possible and most needed in the partner countries. That would entail, for instance, closer alignment of EU assistance programmes with the national strategies of partner countries.

This pragmatic idealism would also mean striking the right balance between interests and ideas in European development cooperation. We are more ready to reject the illusion of aid as an act of charity and admit it also brings benefits to the EU. It is an investment in our shared destiny. As development cooperation is being more integrated into foreign policy, we must, however, resist the temptation towards its over-instrumentalisation and securitisation. The Parliament has always stood as a guardian of principles and moral standards in external relations. It is up to the European Parliament to ensure regulations that guarantee EU aid brings added value and is not diverted to other interests, such as to stem migration in the short term or subsidise the private sector.

Sustained support

Finally, members of the European Parliament have a less debated but increasingly important role as promoters and advocates of European development cooperation. This is because aid is increasingly under attack and criticised by both the left and the right of the political spectrum, while transactionalist and protectionist trends threaten the spirit of cooperation. While there is certainly a lot to improve in terms of the effectiveness and impact of EU aid, there is no better alternative global system for the redistribution of wealth, and no better tool for the Union to tackle the global challenges that no single member state can resolve.



Therefore, there is a need for more work, not only in Brussels and Strasbourg and in dialogue with development partners, but also in home constituencies and countries, to raise awareness about EU activities. It is important to explain to all Europeans what the EU is doing in developing countries and why development cooperation matters to all of us. The EU being the largest collective source of official development assistance deserves more attention and recognition. It cannot escape more scrutiny and reform. But we must talk, and walk the talk.

**Patryk Kugiel, Senior Analyst,
The Polish Institute of International Affairs, Warsaw**



Dear European leaders,

Development cooperation is an important tool to demonstrate the EU's position as a key international player. The EU and its member states are the biggest providers of aid in the world, and this has made a great contribution to world development.

But today's context is one of global shift. EU development policy has to be readjusted accordingly, by drawing lessons from Europe's own experiences and sharing those experiences with other development partners.

More money is now allocated to fighting illegal immigration instead of poverty reduction; more aid is focused on origin or transit countries of immigration instead of those highly in need of aid to meet basic needs.

Recently, in the face of the multiple crises Europe has experienced, EU development policy has undergone a lot of visible change. More money is now allocated to fighting illegal immigration instead of poverty reduction; more aid is focused on origin or transit countries of immigration instead of those highly in need of aid to meet basic needs.

China, as one of the most important emerging players in global development area, would like to share experiences with EU to join hands and achieve the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Here are some thoughts on possible EU development policy adjustments.



New plans for Dar es Salaam port, Tanzania

First and foremost, the EU needs to deliver on its 0.7 % commitment. In 2017, only four EU member states exceeded the 0.7 % allocation, while twelve EU countries and EU institutions saw a fall in aid spending.

Secondly, the EU should reprioritise poverty reduction in development cooperation. In dealing with the refugee crisis, the EU has highly

instrumentalised its development cooperation policy to serve the purpose of fighting illegal immigration. This has diverted a lot of resources away from poverty reduction. Subordinating development policy to immigration control policy not only damages EU global efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, but also threatens its own international identity as a key development actor.

...though lack of development comes from wrong policies, imposing policy adjustments on aid recipient countries comes at the cost of ownership.

Thirdly, the EU should think again about imposing political conditionalities when providing aid. Traditional donors have learned hard lessons in their cooperation with developing countries. They generally understand that though lack of development comes from wrong policies, imposing policy adjustments on aid recipient countries comes at the cost of ownership. The fact that ownership has to be put first is based on two basic truths. First, there can be no 'one size fits all' development model. Second, any economic structural reform or political reform has to be carried out by the country itself to be successful.

It cannot be imposed externally. In a study ranking the most pressing problems in the international development cooperation system from an African perspective, donor-driven priorities ranked among the first.

Last but not least, aid alone will never achieve development. A more comprehensive toolbox is needed, including trade and investment instruments. The EU has progressively evolved to the approach of 'going beyond aid' with more focus on the role of private funds. Of similar importance is for the EU to realise the different development stages of its partners. That requires the EU to readjust its policy positions while advocating for the principle of 'reciprocity' in trade partnership negotiations.

***Dr Jin Ling, Senior Research Fellow
Deputy Director of the Department of European Studies
China Institute of International Studies***





Dear members of the new European Parliament,

When writing to Europe from Germany, the first thing that comes to mind is the many benefits that German society and economy gain from being part of the European Union. We benefit from producing within the single market, from the many European workers and academics in Germany, and the EU's global trade policies as much as European cooperation on foreign policy. We enjoy the riches of European cultures and the freedom of movement from the Nordic forests to the Mediterranean islands, from the Carpathian Mountains to the Atlantic shores. Most Germans understand that these advantages do not come for free. With more than 60 percent the turnout in Germany was the highest at European elections since 30 years. This surely can be seen as proof of an increased preparedness to stand up for the European project against all odds.

Across Europe the election showed that the EU matters for European citizens. The composition of the new European Parliament signals, on the one hand, a certain break with the past but offers, on the other hand, an opportunity for a fresh start and new dynamics. You as Members of the new European Parliament should embrace this opportunity and call also on Germany which sometimes is described as "a reluctant political hegemon and a foolish economic hegemon" to show new and ambitious leadership for Europe, not the least in its own enlightened self-interest.

One important role of the European Parliament will be to spell this out. The needs, contributions and interests of all European partners have to be heard and acknowledged – especially of those in economic difficulties, and of the smaller countries. The Parliament can and should show what working towards compromise and reform means. Cooperation towards effective reforms is not easy to achieve because of the economic and social disparities, both within European countries and between them. This is a challenge as much as an opportunity. Defining shared objectives for prosperous and sustainable societies, and formulating joint strategies to achieve these objectives in such a heterogeneous setting, is a perfect learning ground for what the EU has to achieve within your legislature. Two frameworks should guide you: the Paris Agreement on climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its social, economic, environmental, and political goals, the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Both frameworks were negotiated and adopted with significant European leadership. They now need to be translated into ambitious political action. Only when implementing them domestically Europe can credibly show leadership in its external relations. What happens in Europe is relevant also to the planet.

Two frameworks should guide you: the Paris Agreement on climate change and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its social, economic, environmental, and political goals.

These 17 SDGs are highly relevant for human prosperity in Europe. Profound changes are needed in numerous areas – particularly agriculture, energy and mobility as well as inequalities – and this will require us to align policies that we have learnt to treat separately. One positive example in this regard is the cooperation between Germany, France and Poland on climate policy. This joint effort germinated around the 2018 climate conference in Katowice and has a special focus on achieving a just transition from coal to renewable energies.

But the challenge is even larger because the EU has international responsibilities as well. As much as Germany cannot go it alone when trying to secure its own prosperity, the EU similarly needs to invest in international cooperation and in alliances with rich and poor countries to implement the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda. The EU also needs to do all it can to defend and strengthen a world order in which international law, in addition to European and national law, and multilateral organisations are respected. It is our only chance.

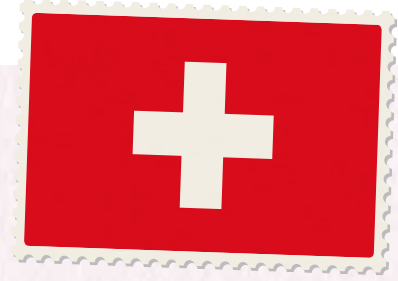
The manifestos of most German political parties for the European Parliament elections offer good and relevant starting points to help implement the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda, on which to build political initiatives and compromises across countries and political parties. Let me highlight and comment on just a few:

- There is a broad consensus for strengthening the European Parliament and for making European foreign policy more effective, e.g. by introducing majority voting or even creating the post of European foreign minister. Majority voting should indeed be introduced rather sooner than later and certainly needs to be qualified somehow. As a pragmatic first step, Germany (hopefully followed by others) could commit to not using its veto if it finds itself isolated on a foreign policy issue.
- Also trade policy is widely seen as an important field of action, though there are considerable differences on how to progress here. I think the EU should not only finalise its trade negotiations with South America (Mercosur) and Vietnam, but also ensure that such agreements are fair and sustainable. The Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and Japan as well as the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between the EU and Canada have already certain provisions dealing with sustainable development (2030 Agenda) and climate change (Paris Agreement). Trade agreements that include binding social and environmental standards, and effectively contribute to implementing the Paris Agreement, human rights and the core norms of the International Labour Organization would be a real step forward. Laws that bind European enterprises to these standards and norms, like in France, would be important, and an EU action plan on decent work in global value chains could be a move in the right direction. The EU can and should turn all its trade agreements with both richer and poorer countries into powerful means of transformation towards sustainable development.
- EU-Africa relations are a topic in most of the manifestos, and some explicitly emphasise the need to build a partnership of equals. From my perspective the EU should strengthen and work with key African institutions and base the EU-Africa partnership on an open and transparent balance of interests, human rights and coherent European policies. The new African Continental Free Trade Area should be a game changer in EU-Africa relations. Cooperation should support efforts to implement this free trade area, including investment in continent-wide institutional and physical infrastructure. Good governance, participation and rule of law will be crucial for strengthening economic development and labour markets on the continent and achieving inclusive development. This would be a better basis for cooperation than the current emphasis on reducing flows of refugees and migrants to Europe.

Dear Europe, the wellbeing of European citizens and economies requires a renewed investment of political capital in reforming and strengthening European international cooperation with both developed and developing countries. I wish you an increasing number of allies within and beyond the Parliament, as well as perseverance, open minds and creativity in pursuing these endeavours.

Dr. Imme Scholz is Acting Director of the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE).





Dear new EU leadership,

I am convinced that it is in the best interests of people in both Europe and the Global South to have the EU investing resolutely in international cooperation. What, then, should be the priorities?

The future of work and job creation

Just as in the EU, much of the political debate in Switzerland is influenced by ageing at home and a booming demography in Africa and South Asia. In this context, a first development policy priority is to support job creation and livelihood opportunities. This comes at a time when the future of work is more uncertain than ever. A simple internet search on “the future of work” yields more than 3 billion hits. Experts resort to divinatory arts to predict what labour markets will look like in a world characterised by the digital revolution, rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) and labour automation.

Techno-optimists trust that history will simply repeat itself: following Schumpeter’s theory of destructive creation, we will witness a rapid proliferation of new jobs in the knowledge economy and green economy. For example, AI tech companies have hired thousands of people in Kibera, Nairobi’s largest slum, to label and register images that are fed into databases for self-driving cars (working conditions leaving much to be desired). Techno-pessimists, on the other hand, believe that the sheer volume and abrupt pace of job destruction – hitting labour-intensive sectors particularly hard – will lead to mass unemployment and jeopardise industrialisation prospects for sub-Saharan Africa.

While the debate goes on, the EU, like Switzerland, is well positioned to invest more in potential growth sectors in Africa and beyond, such as tourism, information technology and the digital economy. At the same time, supporting education and training institutions will be key: the EU can further boost North-South scientific cooperation, investing in research partnerships to promote innovations that can be adopted quickly, even in more fragile and volatile institutional settings.

Migrant workers’ remittances received by developing countries have long surpassed foreign aid. Yet, migration concerns increasingly shape international cooperation and development policy narratives, be it in the EU, Switzerland or North America. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, adopted in December 2018, offers the best framework to collectively address the challenges ahead, which no country can address alone.

Back to the roots: Preserving peace and fundamental principles of humanity

A second priority is to address the protracted armed conflicts that are causing large-scale forced displacement and dramatic development reversals in the Sahel, the Middle East and beyond. Reverting to the origin of the European project, it is in the EU’s DNA to invest in a more peaceful world where the horrors of the two World Wars are never again to be endured.

Seventy years ago, it took less than four months for states to adopt the four Geneva Conventions that form the bedrock of international humanitarian law (IHL). While acknowledging the harsh realities of war, states decided to ensure that no civilian, injured or detained person should be bereft of humane treatment, no matter who they are and what they have done. As the depositary state of the Geneva Conventions, Switzerland appreciates the critical importance of the EU’s support for IHL. In an increasingly polarised world, where trust is eroded, these Conventions which have been universally adopted provide a common language around a few essential principles. Preserving the core principles of humanity, as enshrined in IHL and human

rights law, is crucial. Not least, it can significantly contribute to avert future conflicts, by reducing the grievances and resentments of victims of egregious violations, such as the deliberate targeting of hospitals and the widespread killing of civilians in densely populated areas.

Fast technological advances hold great promise to spur sustainable development. But they can also pose significant threats when transformed into new means and methods of warfare, even if some innovations, for instance high-precision guided weapons, might arguably help warring parties reduce so-called collateral

Curbing illicit financial flows is a top priority to enable developing countries to mobilise the domestic resources required to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which eventually will reduce aid dependency.

damages. Using its soft power, the EU has an essential role to play in promoting the proper regulation of emerging risks related to autonomous weapon systems, the use of AI and machine learning for targeting decisions, and cyber- and outer-space warfare. Fundamental principles of IHL provide the necessary guidance to avert the dramatic humanitarian consequences that such new means and methods of warfare can have.

Ensuring a level playing field for all nations and EU leadership in environmental sustainability

Thirdly, and based on its experience in building a common market in which its members can thrive, the EU has much to contribute towards a fairer world economic order, where poorer countries can develop and compete on a level playing field. This involves looking at the trade, financial and fiscal policy environment.

Many developing countries are blessed with abundant natural resources. Too often yet, commodity export has not translated into greater domestic resource mobilisation in resource-rich developing countries, not least because trade mispricing and illicit financial flows erode their tax bases. Curbing illicit financial flows is a top priority to enable developing countries to mobilise the domestic resources required to implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which eventually will reduce aid dependency. This has also emerged as a critical policy issue in Switzerland, which is a major commodity-trading and financial hub.

Lastly, climate change, biodiversity losses and environmental degradation will have dramatic consequences across the Global North and South. In the Sahel, farmers and agro-pastoralists already experience the dire impact of climate change on a daily basis.

The EU has pioneered efforts to mitigate climate change and promote more sustainable development trajectories, displaying leadership in renewable energy and sustainable cities, among other things. Youth across Europe have started to mobilise at scale and demand resolute action to counter climate change. As new leaders of the EU at such a critical juncture, you can go down in history as the leaders who succeeded in bringing Europe together as a leading force toward a sustainable future for Europeans and the planet as a whole.

Gilles Carbonnier

Professor of Development Economics at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva

Vice-President of the International Committee of the Red Cross





Dear Europe,

Most of the challenges we face as a continent, from climate change to increased inequalities, are global in nature. That means they also confront other regions of the world. To address them we need to engage actively with these other regions. Growing interdependence is a fact in today's world.

A large segment of France's citizens place great importance on the transition to sustainable development, with ambitious climate action. They care for the planet, for the well-being of future generations and for their own health. They understand that Europe, and France within Europe, will be better off if it takes a frontrunner position in this transition, be it for our own local environment, to protect the global climate, or to be better placed in economic competition with global powers like China and the United States. But their trust in political action is eroding.

Some are asking if we can really believe that the prominent international positions taken by France and the European Union, with the Paris Agreement on climate and the sustainable development agenda, and the French president's response to US President Trump's unilateralist announcements, will soon be effectively translated into real decisions. Others are asking if we can trust that the transition efforts we demand of our own citizens will be matched by efforts from other players who bear an even bigger responsibility for unsustainable practices, here and abroad.

...a long-term perspective is even more important than agility in front of crises.

The Union has to be able to present itself as a global champion of sustainability, while ensuring that all member states implement a just transition without free-riders, negotiating fair conditions of competition with trade partners and guiding allocation of its development investments outside Europe. French citizens are convinced that using French and European taxpayers' money to finance development is a good investment – though this may be because they believe that this is a way to control migration.

The increase in the budget for external action proposed by the former Commission probably seems a valid political choice for your new Parliament, and for member states like France. You will also likely applaud the flexibility of the proposed new

instrument to enable rapid reactions to crises and reshuffling financial resources when needed between border protection, diplomacy and development in neighbouring countries or in least developed countries, particularly in Africa. Certainly, crisis reaction capacity is a positive political marker in our uncertain times.

But dear Europe, a long-term perspective is even more important than agility in front of crises. It is necessary to give consistency to your policies and those of your member states. A vision of long-term sustainability will restore the meaningfulness of why you serve all your citizens, in France and in the other member states. Cooperation for sustainable development and Agenda 2030 is the long-term pillar in your external action: so be very careful to maintain it at a high level, if you want to be understood by your citizens, particularly in France.

For many French citizens, Europe in the role of a soft power is the long-term choice. They're betting on progressively nudging the much larger Chinese investment flows in third countries towards our norms and standards in terms of alignment with long-term sustainability objectives. Our common European experience, expertise and knowledge about what investing in development means is a key asset in that regard.

There are also those who believe it is actually globalisation that needs fixing, in the fight against poverty and inequalities, in efforts to turn around the degradation of the natural resources and ecosystems that so many livelihoods depend on, and in support of the resilience of all societies. It's essential that you do your part to help societies envision and implement their own transformation pathway to sustainable development in the interest of the French and all other European citizens.

There are those who see investing in development as simply a duty of solidarity, an investment with no return expected. In that case too, there is a long-term imperative: to ensure the steadiness of development funding for the most vulnerable. Here again, Europe, you have an irreplaceable role to play. Who else on the planet devotes as much public funding to this objective?

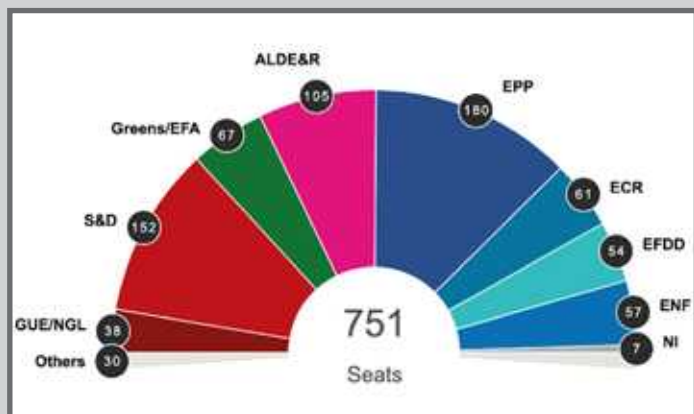
A Europe that champions the long-term sustainability transition both domestically and internationally; this is a non-partisan political imperative that needs to be negotiated. Will you seek consensus around that position, which President Juncker never dared or never managed to take? Among French political parties there are of course various versions of why this task is so compelling. But all share one conviction: Europe must retain and redouble its capacity to anticipate the long-term impacts of today's choices and decisions. The long-term needs of our citizens and of the citizens in all societies in the world is what sustainability is about.

**Sébastien Treyer, Executive Director
Institute for Sustainable Development and
International Relations (IDDRI), Paris/France**



Blogs on the European Elections

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First thoughts on the European elections and development policy

Andrew Sherriff, Mariella Di Ciommo and Alexei Jones, ECDPM blog, 27 May 2019

The European elections present a new, more fragmented, although not revolutionary Parliament. The future European Parliament will deal with critical issues such as the negotiations of the future EU budget and who will lead EU institutions.

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The elections of European Parliament and Europe's role in the world: in search of new coalitions for sustainable development

ETTg Blog, June 2019

In the years ahead, the European Union faces a number of vital challenges, and many of those lie beyond its external borders. Swift and decisive action is required in the fight against global warming, promoting sustainable development, eradicating poverty, managing migration, defending human rights and democratic values.



Dear new member of the European Parliament...

ETTg Blog by Simon Maxwell, May 2019

The new European Parliament will convene in Strasbourg in the first week of July. As a newly- or re-elected member of the European Parliament (MEP), your first priority should be to elbow your way onto the Development Committee. This is a higher priority than buying a return ticket to Brussels, finding a flat, sorting out your office, or hiring staff.

Recent ECDPM publications



Investing in Europe's global role: The must-have guide for the negotiations of the Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

Andrew Sherriff, ECDPM guide, April 2019

In 2019, a new European Parliament, new European Commission and new President of the European Council will have their hands full with the negotiations of the 2021-2027 budget. They will need to agree on the amount and the focus of billions of euros and on how to distribute these along different political priorities. There is still all to play for and these negotiations may well run late into 2020. This guide is a consolidated independent reference point for policymakers, analysts and advocates – inside and outside of the negotiating process. It provides non-partisan insight on the key challenges, issues at stake and dynamics driving change.



The political economy of Africa's regional 'spaghetti bowl'

Bruce Byiers, Sean Woolfrey, Alfonso Medinilla and Jan Vanheukelom, ECDPM report, May 2019

This report synthesises the findings of a two-year research project on the political economy dynamics of regional organisations (PEDRO). It aims to explain why African countries join multiple, often overlapping, regional organisations despite the complications this 'spaghetti bowl' of agreements creates; and what drives and constrains the regional agendas and processes of these organisations.



Sexual and reproductive health and rights: Opportunities in EU external action beyond 2020

Sanne Thijssen, Jean Bossuyt and Sophie Desmidt, ECDPM paper, June 2019

Twenty-five years have passed since the International Conference on Population and Development that laid the foundation for sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). In this paper, we review the place of SRHR in future EU policies, partnerships and funding, as the EU negotiates a post-Cotonou agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the next long-term EU budget for 2021-2027 is on the table.



Migration and the next EU long-term budget: Key choices for external action

Anna Knoll and Pauline Veron, ECDPM paper, March 2019

The rising number of asylum seekers and irregular migrants since 2015 has clearly influenced the European Commission proposal for the 2021-2027 budget. This paper explores the various positions and issues at stake in the ongoing negotiations and provides an overview of the options and risks linked to the different possible decisions.

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