Changing European concerns: security and complex political emergencies instead of development¹

Gorm Rye Olsen

Introduction

In February 2000, the High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the European Union, Javier Solana, declared:

The European Union is the only institution in the world which has all the instruments to cover all aspects of crisis management – both the military and the civilian ones. We can handle humanitarian missions, economic aid, trade initiatives, police deployments and military actions and when everything has fallen into place, we will be the most complete organisation for crisis management. (Solana, 2000a: 13)

And, Mr Solana continued: ‘the EU has at its disposal crucial instruments for conducting a credible foreign policy in the field of economics and trade. Now it wants to be able to develop these instruments if and when it is necessary, with the possibility to use force where its vital interests are at stake’ (Solana, 2000: 14). The EU CFSP High Representative is no unimportant person. Recalling that Mr Solana is directly appointed by the Council of Ministers, it seems likely that when he airs his opinion on the potential international role of the European Union, he probably expresses the prevailing views found among the most prominent European politicians engaged in foreign policy making. Based on his remarks as quoted above, there cannot be much doubt that the European Union strongly seeks to establish itself as an important international player in its own right. The Helsinki Summit of December 1999 contributed considerably to speeding up the process of giving the Union a much stronger international role.

The ambition to develop ‘Europe’ into a significant foreign policy actor has existed ever since the start of the European Community (Cafruny and Peters, 1998: 1ff; Cameron, in Rhodes, 1998: 20). The possibilities for realising this aim have increased considerably due to the ending of the Cold War and not

least because of what happened in the Balkans during the 1990s, including the events in Kosovo in 1999. It is often forgotten that the Community's development policy was actually one of the first common policies which had consequences for the position of the EC as an international actor. From the late 1950s until the early 1980s, it was even considered as one of the 'cornerstones' of European integration (Lister, 1997: 22). As late as 1996, the Commission described the Lomé Convention as 'one of the most important facets of the European Union's external activities' (CEC, 1996: 1). Even though the Lomé Conventions and the more recent Cotonou Agreement cover countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, there is no doubt that Sub-Saharan Africa is the most important of the three regions for the EU. This is reflected in the holding of the first joint EU–Africa Summit which took place in Cairo in April 2000.

This chapter argues that the Third World in general, and Africa in particular, are becoming more and more important components in the EU's efforts to develop into a significant international player. This does not mean that Africa *per se* has moved up the list of foreign policy priorities of the Union. It only implies that Africa is becoming instrumental to another, and partly new, set of European interests which have been strengthened by the recent crucial changes in the Union's external environment, especially the dissolution of the bipolar international system and the Balkan crises of the 1990s. The changes in European interests in the developing world during the 1990s are manifested in a shift in Europe's policy towards Africa, from the initial focus on development issues towards increasing concern with so-called 'complex political emergencies'. As a consequence of the latter concern, the Europeans have reflected more and more on conflict prevention and crisis management in Africa. It is hardly a coincidence that the Portuguese Presidency in January 2000 issued a so-called 'Reflection paper' which stressed that:

development priorities should also be thought of in the context of ongoing European dynamics, namely those related to the reorganisation of external relations (in the Commission) and the building of a European CFSP [Common Foreign and Security Policy]. Being realistic about development means thinking in an integrated manner about politics, security and trade as well as development aid itself. (Cardoso *et al.*, 2000: 12)

The fundamental argument of this chapter is that it is possible to identify a change in Europe's Africa policy from development towards emergencies and conflict. To substantiate this position, it is necessary to analyse the shifts in Europe's development aid policy, to look into the issue of European humanitarian assistance, and to reflect on crises and conflicts in Africa. Therefore, the chapter is structured around these supposedly important dimensions of Europe's policy towards Africa. Firstly, it looks into the changes which took place in the volume of aid which was channelled to Africa during the 1990s. Secondly, the issue of humanitarian aid in emergency situations is scrutinised.

This section includes a separate discussion of the role of the mass media because the media are supposed to play a unique role in encouraging political reactions to humanitarian emergencies. The third section deals with aspects of the foreign and security policy that relate to development and crisis management.

In order to have a framework for interpreting Europe's Africa policy of the 1990s, apart from a short description of the Union's foreign policy decision-making structure, the next section contains a brief general presentation of some theoretical reflections on policy making within the European Union, and some remarks on the role of the European Union as an international actor.

European interests and policy making on international issues

The focus on three more or less separate policy fields (development cooperation, emergency aid and foreign policy) makes a thorough analysis of the European Union's policy towards Africa quite comprehensive. The analysis necessarily has to take into account that different interests and different actors are involved in each of these policy fields. Roy Ginsberg argued that decisions are brought about by different elites, both national ones and those based in Brussels, who are engaged in 'bureaucratic politics' (Ginsberg, 1989). Characteristics of bureaucratic politics are that 'the decision is formulated through bargaining and compromise', and that 'numerous individuals and organizations, with varying interests, are involved for any single issue, without the predominance of any participant' (Rosati, 1981: 238; see also Ginsberg, 1989; Peters, 1992 and Peters, 1997). Apart from the bargaining among a large number of actors, there are at least two other relevant and characteristic features of European decision making. On the one hand there is 'an apparent fragmentation . . . of policy making within the Commission'. On the other hand there are 'increased linkages of the components of the Commission to the components of national bureaucracies' (Peters, 1992: 76–7).

In spite of the considerable changes during the 1990s with the Maastricht and the Amsterdam Treaties, decision making on EU external relations is still based on the principle of intergovernmentalism. The CFSP continues to be clearly intergovernmental and thus open to separate actions from individual EU member states parallel to the common or multilateral policies. According to the Maastricht Treaty (Title V, Article J), the CFSP is mainly a matter for the Presidency of the Council. The Treaty does not describe an explicit role for the Commission. Irrespective of this, the Commission has become more and more involved in day-to-day foreign policy making, and has actually developed an institutional role that is not sanctioned by the different Treaties (Peters, in Cafruny and Peters, 1998: 11–33). So, the Maastricht Treaty established a dual structure among the EU institutions involved in external affairs. It created

formal predominance of the Council vis-à-vis the Commission, which previously had an important role and expertise in this field.

The Union Treaty sets out the general objectives for development policy; that is, for the Commission, which has the competence to implement its own development programmes. However, this competence is complementary to that of the member states, which all have their own bilateral development aid programmes. Within this framework of dual competence, the Treaty sets out a number of objectives, which include the aim to achieve more coordination with the member states' programmes, greater coherence between different policies carried out by the Community, and effective complementarity between the Community's and the member states' bilateral programmes.

The organisation of Europe's humanitarian assistance is no less complicated as this kind of aid comes from three sources: first, some assistance is channelled through 'ECHO', the Union's own special branch for humanitarian assistance. Secondly, humanitarian aid is also financed by so-called 'other Commissions' (which in the past referred to different Directorates-General, such as DG I and DG VIII). Thirdly, humanitarian assistance is disbursed bilaterally by the member states.

The institutional structure for European Union policy making on external affairs consists of the Council and the Commission, plus, to some extent, the European Parliament. Until the spring of 1999, no less than four Commissioners plus the President of the Commission were involved in European foreign policy making (Peters, 1997: 25). There was pronounced competition between the different Commissioners, and thus between the individual Directorates-General, which all had their own ambitions and their own agendas. This can be understood as an example of the notion of 'bureaucratic politics', as referred to above (Peters, 1992: 75–122; Peters, 1997: 22–36). In addition, the national bureaucracies of the fifteen member states are also common European institutional actors. In most cases they are split into several government departments which either take care of development issues or foreign policy, with the consequent problems of coordination.

This chapter understands the external actions of the Union as the outcome of a number of bargaining and decision-making processes, which take place both in the individual member states and in Brussels. This is sometimes called 'two-tier bargaining' (Ginsberg, 1999: 442–3) or a 'two-level game' (Moravcsik, 1993: 473–524). The notion of two-tier bargaining raises the question of which interests are involved at the different levels of decision making, and also whether these interests are in conflict. This chapter assumes that a thorough understanding of Europe's Africa policy has to be founded on an analysis of the national interests of individual member states. Based on the realist assumption that states have some more or less well-perceived national interests and preferences, it is argued that the bilateral Africa policies of the member states are basically determined by a more or less clear conception

of what is the national interest of each individual country. The conception of the national interest is the result of a domestic bargaining and negotiation process which involves coalition building among local political actors. The individual national interests are then carried on to the European Union level, where there is yet another round of negotiations, bargaining and coalition building before a European position is reached. As Andrew Moravcsik pointed out, however, such a common agreement requires that the 'interests of dominant domestic groups in different countries converge' (Moravcsik, 1993: 487).

The chapter's understanding of decision making within the European Union is basically in agreement with Moravcsik's 'liberal intergovernmentalist approach', which argues that the EC/EU can be analysed as an intergovernmental regime (Moravcsik, 1993). This approach is in line with Thomas Riese-Kappen, according to whom the individual member states are still the dominant actors in Europe's foreign policy, and therefore their interests and preferences to a large extent influence European foreign and international actions (Riese-Kappen, 1996). Christopher Hill found that European foreign policy is the result of a bargaining process of the dominant states within the Community (Hill, 1993; Hill and Wallace, 1996), implying that the actual policy has to be understood as the outcome of the different interests and positions of the dominant states. Finally, a slightly different position is found with Cafruny and Peters, who argue that the policy preferences of the EC/EU are the result of a hybrid process reflecting different types of interest, which diverge depending on the specific issue which is to be decided upon (Cafruny and Peters, 1998: 16ff).

Irrespective of the minor differences between these authors, here it is maintained, as for Andrew Moravcsik, that it is both possible and fruitful to understand European interests as something different from the result of a bargaining process among the fifteen member states. Thus it is argued that it is possible to talk about 'European' interests, meaning common interests which might very well be different from the interests of the individual member states. So, on the one hand there are the national interests of the fifteen member states, which might very well differ from the interests of the European Union. Special 'European' interests are supposed to be related to the idea that, based on values, Europe has a special role to play in the world (Hill and Wallace, 1996: 9). According to Roy Ginsberg (1999: 436), such principles and values are 'democracy, soft-edged capitalism, a zone of peace among members, and diplomatic mediation between third parties to undercut the causes of major conflict'. In order to pursue such aims, cooperation among the member states and common policy initiatives achieve a value in themselves, as they might promote the creation of common interests and eventually also the establishment of a common identity in world politics.

Based on these reflections, it is the hypothesis of this chapter that the attempts to form a common European policy towards Africa have a dual

purpose. First, they seek to take care of the special 'European' global interests. Secondly, they achieve a value in themselves, as such endeavours might contribute to the creation of a common European identity. As a consequence of both these purposes, European foreign policy initiatives towards Africa in reality would become symbolic policy.

European development aid to Africa

As outlined above, development aid is the first of three important dimensions to be analysed. This section presents the main changes in EU aid to Africa during the 1990s. As a starting point, there is no doubt that development aid was the most important policy instrument in Europe's relations with the ACP countries in general and with Africa in particular (Riddell, 1999: 309). France is the only EU member state where foreign aid has had a similarly unique position in its relations with Africa. This has to be explained by the remarkably high priority of the region in the overall foreign policy strategy of France (Brüne, 1995; Marchal, 1998; Martin, 1995). Irrespective of this high foreign policy priority, or maybe exactly because of this position, French aid to Africa has been conspicuous as far as the absolute amount of aid is concerned. Thus in the 1990s French aid was greater than that from all European donors, including the EU itself (OECD, 1997).

During the 1990s, EU aid to the ACP countries underwent considerable changes. First and most manifest, the real value of the available financial envelope decreased. This occurred both in 1995, in connection with the so-called 'mid-term review', and in 2000 by the financial protocol of the Cotonou Agreement (Crawford, 1996; *Financial Times*, 10 December 1999; interviews, November and December 1999, Brussels). The decline in the real value of aid allocated under the Lomé and Cotonou arrangements becomes even more conspicuous when compared with the growing percentage of total EU development aid that went to other regions. Lomé's relative share of total EU development aid went down from 66.3 per cent in 1989/90 to 42.8 per cent in 1996/97, whereas aid to other areas grew from 33.7 per cent to 57.2 per cent during the same period (OECD, 1996; OECD, 1998). The reductions in Lomé aid become even more striking against the background that in January 1995 three affluent countries, Sweden, Austria and Finland, joined the European Union.

Secondly, and just as important, during the 1990s a growing number of conditionalities were added to the Lomé aid package, such as structural adjustment, adherence to democracy and human rights, and anti-corruption. These conditions were combined with a number of explicit control measures, such as trenching of the downpayments agreed upon. Finally there was the 'political dialogue', which to a large extent was equivalent to giving the EU an institutional possibility for continuing critique of the ACP countries for lack of adherence to the principles of good governance.

The apparent strong scepticism towards giving aid to the ACP countries, especially to Africa, under the Lomé treaty was also manifested in the bilateral aid policies of the fifteen EU member states. Thus the total net disbursements to sub-Saharan Africa fell from 50.7 per cent of the members' total aid budgets in 1986/87 to 43.9 per cent in 1996/97 (OECD, 1998: table 33). The cuts were particularly remarkable for the big donors, which reduced both their aid budgets measured as a share of GNP and the share of their budgets directed towards Africa. France, the biggest European donor, reduced its total Official Development Assistance (ODA)/GNP aid commitment from 0.63 per cent in 1992 to 0.41 per cent in 1998 (DAC, 1999). Measured at 1996 prices and exchange rates, the share of the shrinking French ODA going to Africa was reduced from 49.6 per cent in 1993 to 45.4 per cent in 1997 (OECD, 1998: table 29). Accordingly, Africa received less and less aid from France during the 1990s. Measured at 1996 prices and exchange rates, it fell from 3,496 million US dollars in 1993 to 2,450 million dollars in 1997. Germany, the second biggest European aid donor, reduced its ODA as a percentage of GNP from 0.38 per cent in 1992 to 0.26 per cent in 1998 (DAC, 1999). At the same time, the share of German aid to Africa fell from 28.9 per cent in 1993 to 25.4 per cent in 1997 (OECD, 1998: table 29). The same picture appears as with France, namely shrinking net disbursements to Africa, which fell from 1,514 million US dollars in 1993 to 1,057 million in 1997. The British ODA as a percentage of GNP came down from 0.31 per cent in 1992 to 0.27 per cent in 1998, while the share of British ODA going to Africa remained more or less stable at around 32 per cent of the total budget.

Some of the smaller European donors, such as the Netherlands and Denmark, did not reduce their ODA as a percentage of GNP during the 1990s, even though both countries reduced the share of their total aid going to Africa, which is important for this discussion. The slight reduction in the relative share of Dutch aid to Africa was outweighed by the growth of the general aid budget, resulting in a minor growth in the net disbursements of the Netherlands to the region from 588 million US dollars in 1993, compared with 644 million in 1997. The same picture is repeated in the case of Denmark, with a slightly higher amount of aid going to Africa, in spite of a relative decline in the share of its ODA to Africa that was reduced from 45.7 per cent in 1993 to 38.2 per cent in 1997 (OECD, 1998: table 29). For the purposes of this chapter the relative decline is the most interesting change to note. The aggregate result of these changes, and especially of the reductions in most European aid budgets during the 1990s, is that net disbursements to Africa declined markedly. Measured at 1996 prices and exchange rates, the total bilateral aid from the fifteen EU members went down from 8.609 million US dollars in 1993 to 6.816 million dollars in 1997. While the fall in the total amount of aid was significant, for the future of the aid relationship between Europe and Africa it might be more significant that, apart from the UK, all bilateral donors mentioned here reduced the shares of their aid budgets that were allocated to Africa.

It is obvious that the reluctance to finance development aid for the ACP cannot be isolated from trends in individual EU member states' aid policies. Within the framework of interpretation of this chapter, it points to shrinking national interests in most EU member countries engaging in development aid. The decreasing national interests are also clearly manifested in the reductions of the common European aid programme. This can hardly be seen in isolation from other developments in the 1990s, where scepticism increased among donors as regards the effectiveness of aid to promote social and economic development in Africa, which has been perceived as a particularly difficult case (Riddell, 1999; Walle, 1999; Thérien and Lloyd, 2000).

European humanitarian assistance to Africa in the 1990s

The end of the Cold War, and especially the frustration over the lack of a European capability to deliver efficient humanitarian assistance during and after the crisis following the war liberating Kuwait in 1991, led to initiatives to establish an EC office with special responsibility for humanitarian assistance. The organisation became known under the name of ECHO. There were at least three motives for establishing this specialised European unit with such responsibilities. One was simply for the Community to have such an organisation within this particular field. The second aim was to put the organisation into a position to coordinate better and more efficiently the bilateral European humanitarian contributions. Both purposes aimed to fulfil a third motive, which had nothing to do with the sufferings of the victims in the numerous emergency situations. It was to give the European Community much more international visibility in a policy field that is very often in the focus of the media (interview, Brussels, 16 November 1999).

The combined resources from ECHO and other Commission and bilateral contributions made 'Europe' the biggest provider of humanitarian assistance in the 1990s as it accounted for 53–4 per cent of global humanitarian aid on average (ECHO, 1998: 29). ECHO as a separate donor accounted for around one-third of this amount (ECHO, 1998: 29). It is worth noting that, during the 1990s, the bilateral contributions from the EU member states apparently grew, compared with the allocations to ECHO. Thus in 1996 the member states contributed 45 per cent of total European humanitarian aid, while their share had grown to 54 per cent in 1998. The aid of ECHO from 1996 to 1998 fell from 55 per cent to 46 per cent of total humanitarian assistance (ECHO, 1998: 29).

For the purposes of this chapter it is of particular importance to establish a trend in European humanitarian disbursements during the 1990s. Based on the available figures, the total amount of humanitarian aid financed by ECHO clearly reached a peak in 1994. Since then, there has been a downward movement where the amount seems to stabilise at a lower level than the peak year of 1994. Thus, in the second half of the 1990s, the share tended to stabilise

at around 14 per cent of total EU aid (i.e. development aid and humanitarian assistance combined) (OECD, 1998: table 14). Still, compared with the 1980s, the amount of European humanitarian aid in the second half of the 1990s was considerably higher. It reached a peak in 1999 because of the massive aid to Kosovo.

Within the total amount disbursed by ECHO, Africa received roughly 40 per cent in the first half of the 1990s. In the second half of the decade, the relative allocations to Africa were, however, somewhat lower. They were reduced to around 30 per cent in 1996 and 1998, to reach an absolute low point in 1999 with a share of 17 per cent. No doubt, the year 1999 was in a number of respects an exception from the general picture of the 1990s because of the massive European preoccupation with the situation in Kosovo and in the Balkans in general. No less than 55 per cent of total ECHO aid went to 'former Yugoslavia'. This necessarily had to show in the statistics for the total aid to Africa (ECHO, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1998).

The 1999 situation underlines a general point about humanitarian assistance, which is that it is virtually impossible to predict where the next human disaster will happen. Therefore, it is impossible to predict how the mass media will react in such situations, and consequently it is difficult to predict what kind of pressure there will be on the European authorities to act. The situation in the Balkans in 1999 illustrates that humanitarian emergencies close to the EU countries attract much media attention and thus much popular attention. This may subsequently lead to more humanitarian assistance than for emergencies in, for example, Africa. On the other hand, it is not to be forgotten that during the 1990s in general there was considerable European willingness to contribute humanitarian aid to Africa.

Complex political emergencies and the mass media

This readiness to give emergency assistance no doubt had its background in a public which was clearly in favour of this kind of involvement in Africa in the 1990s. Because of the strong emotions involved when the TV shows human sufferings on a massive scale, there was a popular expectation and thus pressure on the European governments to act. Here, there is no doubt that to European policy makers the symbolic value of emergency aid has been particularly important, not least because of the massive media coverage which a number of the complex emergency situations have received.

During the 1990s, considerable focus was on the possible influence of the electronic media in relation to international crisis situations, and to the decisions which were taken during such events (Shaw, 1996). It is a common assumption that the media play a crucial role in such situations. The phenomenon has become known as the 'CNN effect', which is expected to explain the course of development in a number of international crisis situations (Robinson, 1999). Among the frequently quoted examples of the CNN effect

are the international intervention in Iraqi Kurdistan in the spring of 1991 and the US intervention in the Somali famine in December 1992.

However, it is an open question whether the relationship between media coverage and political decision making is as simple as the CNN effect indicates. At least, the issue of the possible influence of the mass media on humanitarian emergencies involves a whole range of other questions. First of all, is it correct that European reactions to humanitarian emergencies depend on media coverage? And secondly, does this mean that if there is no media attention to an emergency situation, there will be no humanitarian assistance to such a crisis?

Concerning the claim that the media have immense influence on the foreign policy agenda in Western societies, and thus indirectly on the political initiatives of these countries, there is no firm basis for arguing that such a CNN effect exists in general. The state of knowledge concerning media influence on international events claims that the media only have an effect in situations where governments lack a clear policy (Gowing, 1994; Robinson, 1999). On the other hand, in situations where governments have a policy, the media do not have such an influence. Rather, there is a tendency of politicians and governments turning the media into their 'servants', communicating the message of the government to the public (Robinson, 1999).

This is the situation in general, but if the focus is on humanitarian emergencies and the possible influence of the media in such cases, it might very well be different. Thus Lionel Rosenblatt claimed that 'in a narrowly focused situation such as humanitarian emergencies, the media play a decisive role in informing the public and stimulating action' (Rosenblatt, in Rothberg and Weiss, 1996: 140, 139). There is general support for the point that media coverage is important for promoting political action in relation to humanitarian emergencies (Rothberg and Weiss, 1996). Nevertheless, it is not to be forgotten that Piers Robinson claims that the existing research on media influence in humanitarian disaster situations fails 'to clarify the significance of media impact on humanitarian intervention decisions' (Robinson, 1999: 308).

If media coverage is important as far as securing humanitarian assistance from Europe is concerned, what then is required to ensure that the press is on the spot when a crisis arises? One precondition is geographical accessibility, which means airfields, roads, and so on. If logistical difficulties in reaching disaster areas are too big, there will be no or only very limited media coverage. A classic example of geographical accessibility is Somalia in 1992, and a case of the opposite is Sudan over most of the years of civil war. A second precondition for media coverage has to do with the personal security of the reporting journalists, who for obvious reasons are hesitant to report from emergency situations that involve considerable personal security risks. Sudan, Liberia and Sierra Leone are cases in point. A third precondition, and probably the most important one, is that an emergency has to be 'news'. Basically, it is no news

if Africa experiences yet another humanitarian disaster. At least that seems to be the most important media-related explanation for the limited news reporting on the civil wars of Sudan and Angola, which have both dragged on for decades. It is simply no news that Africans kill Africans. Furthermore, the African crises also have to compete with emergencies in other parts of the world. This last point has to do with what is sometimes called the 'news attention cycle' or the 'issue attention cycle', which argues that some issues, particularly distant ones that do not directly affect people, invariably receive attention on a cyclical basis. That is what is sometimes formulated in more popular expressions such as 'the world does not have an appetite for more than one crisis at a time' (Livingston, in Rothberg and Weiss, 1996: 83–4). This statement implies that if complex emergencies in Africa are to receive media attention, and thus subsequently hope for emergency assistance from Europe, they either have to contain an element of news or, as a minimum, a 'new' angle to the 'traditional' negative stories from Africa. Somalia in 1992 got media attention, among other reasons because it was a unique case where a society was falling apart. Likewise, the Kosovo crisis of 1999 contained an element of news combined with a strong element of self-interest because of geographical proximity to the EU.

If an emergency situation contains no news, it has to be framed in the right way in order to create a public opinion for action (Robinson, 1999; Girardet, in Rothberg and Weiss 1996: 58). The need for framing is connected with the fact that 'media reports do not objectively report on humanitarian crises. Rather, they report crises in particular, and often very different ways' (Robinson, 1999: 306). Sometimes they tend to advocate action, and in other instances the media do not advocate action. The differences in media framing can explain why the Western powers acted in the cases of Kurdistan and Somalia. It was because the media simply presented it as a necessity. Most importantly, framing may also explain the lack of action towards a number of humanitarian crises in Africa, such as those in Rwanda, Liberia and Sierra Leone during the 1990s. These countries, and what happened there, were largely pictured as the 'Heart of Darkness' (Robinson, 1999). Therefore, there were no reasons nor advocacy to react. The tremendous international support for Mozambique in March 2000 can likewise be explained by framing and not necessarily by the magnitude of the disaster. The framing in the Mozambique case related to images of South African helicopters rescuing people who had sought refuge in the treetops.

In summary, media coverage is crucial to promote political initiatives in Europe towards humanitarian emergencies. But putting an emergency situation on the agenda is one thing. Making sure that public awareness leads to political action is quite another thing. Because the topic is so emotional and so dependent on media coverage, public opinion is crucial in this context. There are no indications that European public opinion has changed from its traditional values, which evolve around the feeling of humanitarian responsibility

to help people in dire need. As Ian Smilie put it: 'Little has changed since the conclusion reached in 1983 . . . on the subject of public opinion and development assistance: the rationale for aid in the public mind was and remains emergency relief' (Smilie, 1996: 28). Furthermore, there seem to be indications that 'humanitarian appeals' from NGOs in disaster situations did not lose ground in the 1990s, stressing the point that there is a widespread humanitarian attitude in all, or at least in most, European countries (Smilie, 1996: 32).

Common Foreign and Security Policy

This chapter assumes that the relationship between the ACP countries in general and Africa in particular cannot solely be understood on the basis of an analysis of (humanitarian) aid policy. A thorough understanding of the priority of Africa within Europe's external relations is necessary too. However, it is not possible to make a sharp distinction between foreign policy and development aid/humanitarian aid. Therefore, this section is structured along a rather arbitrary line, which first looks into what happened within the Commission during the 1990s on issues related to conflicts and conflict prevention. Then, the changes and developments in the CFSP, with special reference to Africa, are analysed. Because the development of the CFSP is mainly the responsibility of the Council of Ministers, the Council has to be analysed, too.

Kjell Eliassen argued that the end of the Cold War changed the security framework of Europe in fundamental ways, as new and 'softer' security issues moved to the top of the agenda for foreign policy and security thinking in Western Europe (Eliassen, 1998). Interlinking economic, political and security issues became the order of the day, which created a pressure to find new roles and new responsibilities for the Community in ways which 'approximated to "real" foreign policy' (Smith, 1996: 250ff; Eliassen, 1998: 5). The new security environment also stressed the need for a 'new' European policy which, with civilian means, could take into account the non-military threats and challenges which characterised the post-Cold War situation in Europe (Schirm, in Rhodes, 1998: 76). This intertwining of the old civilian agenda of the European Community and the new high politics of peace and security was particularly outspoken in the 1990s (Smith, 1996: 253). This new momentum in Europe's foreign relations was not only manifest in relation to the near-abroad. For most of the 1990s, the European Union was concerned with the issue of violent conflicts in developing countries, not least in Africa, as former EU Commissioner for development aid Joao de Deus Pinheiro stated (Pinheiro, 1999).

In spite of the reluctance of many member states to give too much power to the CFSP (Cafruny and Peters, 1998: 299; Rhodes, 1998), the Union Treaty introduced a new element in European foreign policy making with the system

of 'joint actions'. This opened a door to closer cooperation by creating a possibility of common European foreign policies on selected issues and in areas where the member states share important interests. The important point about joint actions is that, once agreed upon within the Union, the member states are bound by them and have to ensure that their own policies accord with them (Piening, 1997: 40–2). For the purposes of this chapter, it is worth mentioning that the only out-of-area joint action adopted in 1993 was directed towards Africa, namely South Africa (Holland, 1997: 174).

The issues of crisis management and conflict prevention in Africa have been treated differently by the EU Commission and by the Council of Ministers. The institutional division was particularly pronounced in the second half of the 1990s when the establishment of the CFSP was speeded up, and conflict prevention became an important element in this endeavour of the Council. At the same time, and parallel to this exercise, work continued within the Commission to stress the potential key role of development aid and related instruments for peace building and conflict prevention. In spite of this split between the two European institutions, during the 1990s European perceptions on conflict prevention and foreign policy changed, and the EU was pushed towards taking a much more coherent approach to these issues. It is hardly a coincidence that the Portuguese Presidency in January 2000 issued a so-called 'Reflection Paper', which stressed that

development priorities should also be thought of in the context of ongoing European dynamics, namely those related to the reorganisation of external relations (in the Commission) and the building of a European CFSP. Being realistic about development means thinking in an integrated manner about politics, security and trade as well as development aid itself. (Cardoso *et al.*, 2000: 12)

It is interesting that the reflections on conflicts and conflict prevention in Africa started early in the 1990s within the Commission, and that they took place before most other development organisations acknowledged the significance of the issue. At the time, the initiative to focus on conflict prevention came specifically from the Directorate-General for Development, DG VIII. For example, Martin Landgraf pointed out that the first EC initiative on 'peace-building, conflict prevention and resolution in Africa' can be traced back to early 1993, which was before the real growth in the number of violent internal conflicts became part of the general perception of Africa (Landgraf, 1998: 103). Therefore, it seems reasonable to accept the point of view that the focus on conflict and conflict prevention had its roots in the good governance debate, which was triggered off by the 1989 publication of the World Bank Report on *Sub-Saharan Africa. From Crisis to Sustainable Growth* (World Bank, 1989; interview, Brussels, 15 November 1999).

Viewed from this perspective, it is also worth noting that the debate within the Commission was intimately related to the issue of development aid. Parallel to the focus on development aid and conflict prevention, DG VIII also aimed

at strengthening the African capability for conflict management. This was manifested in a number of initiatives to develop closer relations between the EU and the Organisation of African Unity (OAU). From the very start, the main theme of the dialogue with the OAU was that conflict prevention and conflict resolution were primarily the responsibility of Africans themselves. Therefore, the EU Summit in Essen in December 1994 called for 'an intensive political dialogue between the EU and OAU in particular regarding conflict prevention in Africa' (Landgraf, 1998: 105).

In March 1996 the Commission issued a Communication on conflict and conflict prevention in Africa, which stressed that the use of development aid and related instruments was considered important by the European Union. In June 1997 a Common Position on these issues was issued, clarifying that conflict prevention was a priority of the EU. The Common Position also contained a reference to 'implementation of the defence implications of EU actions within the initiative on conflict prevention by the WEU' (Landgraf, 1998: 110). A few days later, the Council of Development Ministers agreed upon a resolution that clearly signalled that conflict prevention, which until then had been discussed within the framework of the CFSP, was now a main concern of the European Community in general (Landgraf, 1998: 110). However, there were considerable problems in defining which activities could be considered as peace building and conflict prevention. According to the Commission, 'every project or policy measure is a peace-building measure' if it is designed and implemented in such a way that it 'addresses the root-causes of violent conflicts in a targeted manner' (Landgraf, 1998: 114). In line with this understanding, the Commission took a number of initiatives in order to implement the guidelines and declarations. Firstly, it tried to identify potential trouble areas. Secondly, the Commission established the research and fact-finding Conflict Prevention Network. Thirdly, it secured the elaboration of a whole series of practical conflict prevention instruments (Landgraf, 1998: 114). This exercise resulted in a publication that, in a quite detailed way, discussed topics such as: why do violent conflicts occur?; what could be possible EU measures?; are they viable?, and so on (Lund and Mehler, 1999).

It can be argued that the debate on good governance and democracy, which was highly profiled as early as 1991, signalled the beginning of a serious European commitment to the (soft) security problems of Africa. Nevertheless, it was not until the end of 1995 at the European Union Summit in Madrid that the Heads of State and Prime Ministers made the security problems of Africa a public concern of Europe, too. It has to be noted, however, that the declaration on African security problems was not part of the main text from the Summit. The texts related to Africa and Africa's security were placed in a special annex (Conclusions, 1995). In spite of the low public and political awareness with regard to these issues, it is worth noting that back in 1995 and parallel to the Madrid Summit declaration, the Western European Union (WEU) started to identify national forces which could be made available for preventive opera-

tions in Africa, and for supportive actions. Since then, the WEU has sought to establish some kind of multinational military formation, together with an adequate command structure (Lenzi, in Khüne *et al.*, 1995: 48).

Apart from these minor initiatives, it was not until the end of 1998 that a real change in the European attitudes towards conflict prevention in Africa took place. The first step, which was a rather indirect one, came with the declaration at the EU Summit in Cologne in 1999. That declaration made the formal decision to transfer to the EU the right of the WEU to carry out peace-keeping operations. The Cologne decision meant that the European Union acquired the right to make decisions on the so-called 'Petersberg tasks', which include 'humanitarian and rescue tasks, peacekeeping tasks, [and] tasks of combat forces in crisis management, including peacemaking' (Lenzi, in Khüne *et al.*, 1995: 48). According to Guido Lenzi, sub-Saharan Africa was important because the region 'is an area for Petersberg missions'. And, on the other hand, it is important because it can contribute to 'a global affirmation of the European Security and Defence identity' (Lenzi, in Khüne *et al.*, 1995: 64, 63).

An important step towards developing a CFSP with relevance for Africa came at the French–British Summit in St Malo, France, in December 1998. Here, the crucial decision was the open British support for the plans to establish a so-called European defence dimension. Closely related to the decisions on the CFSP was the recognition by both France and Britain that the time had come to end the contest for influence in Africa between the two old colonial powers (*Financial Times*, 10 March 1999). That the two former colonial powers were serious about their intentions to leave behind the past became clear in March 1999, when the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hubert Védrine, and the British Foreign Minister, Robin Cook, made a historical trip to Africa. Together, the two Ministers visited both Ghana and the Ivory Coast, which was seen as an expression of their strong wish to create a 'historic new partnership with Africa . . . Mr. Cook said that the two countries acting together could help Africa to boost trade, reduce debt and find solutions to its conflicts' (*Independent*, 12 March 1999). Africa's potential function as an element in the ambition to establish a CFSP was also pointed out by Ian Black, who noted that 'Africa provides a handy platform for high-profile cooperation between Europe's biggest military powers at a time' (*Guardian*, 12 March 1999). This statement is basically in agreement with the remarks of Guido Lenzi, which were made four years earlier.

It is interesting that the two old rivals suddenly took steps towards having common positions on Africa, and also that they took a bilateral rather than a common European approach. One of the reasons for this seems to lie in the hands of technocrats, who were suspicious of sharing influence with countries with little or no history on the continent (*Financial Times*, 10 March 1999). Also, an important common goal for Paris and London was to control, or at least to have the upper hand in, the multilateral policy of the EU towards sub-Saharan Africa. Thus closer cooperation between the two countries was

perceived as a precondition to overcome the traditional reservations of important European actors such as Germany and Italy. A final and partly idealistic motive might have been to avoid a total marginalisation of sub-Saharan Africa vis-à-vis Eastern Europe and North Africa. The risk of total marginalisation of sub-Saharan Africa vis-à-vis Europe and the rest of the world was definitely imminent in the 1990s. First of all, there was a strong focus on the dramatic changes in Eastern and Central Europe and in the former Soviet Union. Then came the violent wars and armed conflicts in the Balkans. The widespread political and social instability combined with population growth in North Africa forced European foreign policy to give some priority to these geographical areas (interviews, Brussels, 15 November 1999). The combination of these circumstances would almost inevitably lead to a situation where Africa south of the Sahara would receive less and less attention from Europe.

In summary, by the end of the twentieth century there were a number of signs that Africa had a position, even though it was clearly a minor one, on Europe's foreign policy agenda. This might be a little surprising considering the other priorities of the Union. On the other hand, it is obvious that Africa's security problems were taken more and more seriously by the Europeans. Here, Alvaro Vasconcelos argued that:

although no vital security interests of the European Union or of individual member states are apparently at stake in sub-Saharan Africa, there are a number of reasons, quite apart from any sense of responsibility . . . why the Union and WEU should adopt a common policy on conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. These reasons are . . . values, security concerns and a mixture of national and EU interests linked to Europe's search for a role as a world power. (Vasconcelos, in Khüne *et al.*, 1995: 4)

During the 1990s, there were two processes going on within the European institutions which might very well have an impact on Europe's Africa policy in the current decade. First, there was the drive towards establishing a viable and strong CFSP, which placed the Council of Ministers in a crucial position within the Union. It seems as if the Council thinks in very operational terms about preventing conflicts by military means, which is perceived as having positive consequences for the foreign policy profile of Europe. This means that one of the reasons for Africa to have a position on the list of European foreign policy priorities is tied to the ambitions to establish a CFSP and thus to give the European Union a role in world politics. Interpreted in this way, Africa can to a large extent play a symbolic role for Europe. This statement can be backed by the attempts of the Council, with Javier Solana as the main actor, to establish a coherent European strategy for Africa which to a large extent focuses on conflict management and conflict prevention, and much less on development policy instruments such as aid (*Berlingske Tidende*, 20 March 2000).

The second trend was related to the development prospects of the region and especially to the concerns that conflicts and crises could hamper the devel-

opment efforts of the continent (Cardoso *et al.*, 2000: 2ff). This trend was carried by the Commission and especially by DG VIII. The core of the thinking of the Commission was probably expressed by the former Development Commissioner, Joao de Deus Pinheiro, who wrote that: 'development cooperation is indisputably the single most important instrument for an effective policy of peace-building in developing countries' (Pinheiro, 1999: 5–6).

In summary, Africa is of very limited national interest to Europe, apart from, perhaps, France and to some extent the UK. This may explain why the two old colonial powers apparently joined forces towards the end of the 1990s. If Africa is going to have another, more important position within Europe's overall foreign policy priorities, it has to be explained by the possible symbolic value of the ambitions of making Europe an important and significant player on the world scene. It is possible to argue that this great power ambition is within the realms of the 'national interest' of the European Union as a separate entity. Africa's place in this context is to play the symbolic role of a continent with enormous human suffering where the EU tries to prevent and manage conflicts. If this is correct, the development of the CFSP directed to Africa will depend on a bargaining process between actors, mainly within the Council of Ministers, favouring a prominent international role of the EU, and other actors, both in Brussels and in the member states, that do not share this ambition of using Africa as a symbol of the EU's international role.

Conclusions

A basic theoretical assumption of this chapter was that decision making within the European Union is highly fragmented. Furthermore, it was assumed that it is possible to distinguish between the individual national interests in Africa on the one hand and the European Union's interests in Africa on the other. Apart from the section on development aid, the analyses of the chapter concentrated on decisions related to the Common European Position on humanitarian assistance and on the CFSP. The dual analysis of development aid indicated that the national interests in giving development aid to sub-Saharan Africa diminished during the 1990s. This led to dramatic cuts in most bilateral aid budgets, and also in successive cuts in the common aid budget under the Lomé Conventions. The decreasing European interests in giving development aid to Africa did not repeat themselves in the humanitarian aid policy. There it was concluded that this special form of aid should remain a considerable size, among other factors because of the combination of a positive popular opinion and strong media focus on crises and emergencies.

The strong media focus and the strong emotions involved in emergency situations more or less forced politicians, both at the national and at the EU level, to react. Because of the immense symbolic value attached to acting in complex political emergencies, the political benefits from giving humanitarian aid to Africa were much greater than the benefits from giving development aid.

Thus the growing European foreign policy attention to Africa during the 1990s is explained by the real concerns in Europe for the security situation in Africa, combined with need and interest to develop the European Union into a strong international actor among certain groups in Europe and also certain member states, such as France. So, if there a European prioritisation of Africa in the future, this will be because the continent can play a role for European ambitions to become a significant player on the international scene. Based on the analysis in this chapter, this symbolic role of Africa can most adequately be fulfilled by the European initiatives on conflict prevention and crisis management. That is in line with the efforts of the Council and the High Representative Javier Solana to establish a coherent Africa policy of the European Union, as was argued before the first EU–Africa Summit in Cairo in the spring of 2000.

Even though military intervention under some kind of humanitarian heading will be the most spectacular instrument to be used, its effectiveness is highly questionable, as was underlined by the situation in Kosovo in the spring of 2000. This recognition of course opens space for the massive use of emergency aid as a supportive means for European efforts to manage and prevent crises in Africa. Also, and most significantly, it opens the door for a new role for development aid, in line with the proposals of the Commission. The latter point does not imply that there will be growth in European development aid to Africa. Rather, it means that development aid as we know it today will change quite considerably in order to buttress the endeavours of the Council to manage future conflicts in Africa. Such a conclusion seems to be in agreement with the arguments in the Reflection Paper presented by the Portuguese Presidency at the informal summit of the Development Ministers in Lisbon in January 2000. This says, among other things, that ‘the creation of the CFSP brings to the debate the need to consider the European–African policies in a context that is broader than the traditional development aid framework’ (Cardoso *et al.*, 2000: 1). That things have moved in that direction within a few months was partly confirmed by the debate in the Council of Foreign Ministers on 22 May 2000, where the situation in Sierra Leone was on the agenda. The Ministers agreed that it was urgent ‘to consider what practical support the Union can give for helping the UN to fulfil its mandate. Also, there was considerable agreement that political solutions in Africa can only be found if the EU is ready to use the big pools of aid money to motivate the countries to find peaceful solutions’ (*Politiken*, 23 May 2000).

Note

- 1 Some of the information presented in this chapter was obtained via personal interviews carried out in Brussels in November and December 1999. Because of requests for anonymity, these are only indicated by the date of the interview involved.

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