

Horký, Ondřej

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The Europeanisation of development policy: acceptance, accommodation and resistance of the Czech Republic

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The Europeanisation of Development Policy

Acceptance, accommodation and resistance
of the Czech Republic

Ondřej Horký

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DIE Research Project 'European Policy
for Global Development'

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Ondřej Horký, PhD, is a research fellow at the Institute of International Relations (Prague) since 2005. His main research area is the development cooperation of the Czech Republic and other “new” EU member states.

Email: horky@iir.cz

© Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik gGmbH
Tulpenfeld 6, 53113 Bonn
 +49 (0)228 94927-0
 +49 (0)228 94927-130
E-Mail: die@die-gdi.de
<http://www.die-gdi.de>

Preface

This joint discussion paper is a result of the cooperation between the German Development Institute (DIE) in Bonn and the Institute of International Relations (IIR) in Prague. It makes up a part of the project *European Policy for Global Development*, funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), with the participation of the project *European Integration and the Interests of the Czech Republic*, funded by the Czech Ministry of Youth, Education and Sports.

The main goal of this paper is to assess the scope of the “Europeanisation” of the Czech development cooperation. Despite the significant efforts of the “new” member states in trying to catch up to their “older” peers, their contribution to the EU’s official development assistance is significantly lower than average. However, an analysis of their particular experience can help to identify the general causes of the gap between more and less committed donors and the opportunities to overcome it.

The findings on the acceptance of, accommodation to and resistance to EU rules on the part of the Czech Republic in the area of global development are not the only outcome of the research. The Europeanisation of this issue area is quite a new research subject on the border of development and European studies. The assessment of the depth (or shallowness) of Europeanisation in a specific country has required an adaptation of the theoretical framework of Europeanisation to the field of development policy. Moreover, interviews in Brussels and Prague have helped us to identify its unwritten norms and explore the Europeanisation-related attitude of the main actors.

The paper thus contributes to the study of two scopes of the project *European Policy for Global Development*: the multilevel character of governance in the European Union, and the pitfalls and possibilities of its aid architecture. At the same time, the often-underestimated influence of foreign policy and domestic factors is relevant for the project *European Integration and the Interests of the Czech Republic* and it opens further questions on the interrelations between the interests of the member states, the EU and the South.

Upon some critical comments received on the final draft of this paper, I would also like to put my findings in perspective. I simply apply a framework to a particular member state and present the results. Since the extent of Europeanisation of other member states, both “new” and “old”, has not been studied so far, this case study is not sufficient to assess the position of the Czech Republic in comparison to other donors.

The whole endeavour would not be possible without the stimulating working conditions and friendly ambiance of the so-called “EU beacon” during my visit to the DIE in Bonn in September/October 2009. I am grateful for the great support and valuable comments to this paper during its various stages by Stefan Gänzle, Sven Grimm, Christine Hackenesch and Davina Makhan (DIE). I would also like to thank Vít Beneš, Mats Braun, Mark Furness, Petr Halaxa and Simon Lightfoot for their comments on the final draft of the discussion paper. Of course, responsibility for the final version is mine.

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Abbreviations

| | |
|-------|---|
| ACP | Africa, Caribbean and Pacific |
| DIE | Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (German Development Institute), Bonn |
| BMZ | Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (German Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development) |
| CEE | Central and Eastern Europe |
| CEECs | Central and Eastern European countries |
| CIDA | Canadian International Development Agency |
| COAFR | Africa Working Party |
| CODEV | Development Working Group |
| CzDA | Czech development Agency |
| DAC | Development Assistance Committee (of OECD) |
| DCI | Development Cooperation Instrument |
| DG | Directorate General (of the European Commission) |
| EDF | European Development Fund |
| ENP | European Neighbourhood Policy |
| ENPI | European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument |
| EU | European Union |
| GAERC | General Affairs and External Relations Council |
| GNI | Gross National Income |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| OECD | Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development |
| OMC | Open Method of Coordination |
| PCD | Policy Coherence for Development |
| PHARE | Poland and Hungary: Aid for Restructuring of the Economies |
| RELEX | External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy |
| IIR | Institute for International Relations, Prague |
| MDGs | Millennium Development Goals |
| MFA | (Czech) Ministry of Foreign Affairs |
| NGDO | Non-Governmental Development Organisation |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| PCD | Policy Coherence for Development |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| UNDP | United Nations Development Programme |

Abstract

In the first step, a framework for Europeanisation, defined as adoption of EU rules by the member states, is adjusted to the field of development policy. As the *acquis* in this field of shared competence between the Commission and the member states consists almost entirely of soft law, social learning and, to a lesser extent, global incentives and lesson-drawing are identified as the dominant models of Europeanisation. Thereafter, the attitudes of member states to the EU development policy, characterised by the normative power of the Commission and the strong influence of foreign policy, are analysed, and the informal rules of policy-making that are not enshrined in EU legislation are complemented by this section. Finally, the Europeanisation framework is applied to the Czech Republic. The shallow Europeanisation of the Czech development cooperation is explained by the differences of values and norms shared at the EU and the national level, and the difference in the perception of the most efficient level in promoting the long-term national interests. An analysis of the Czech discourse, the institutionalisation and implementation of the norms on aid quality and quantity, the “3 Cs” agenda and the focus on Africa shows that resistance and accommodation are more frequent modes of dealing with EU rules than their acceptance. The paper concludes with a scrutiny of the EU’s failure to promote its norms in development policy among the member states.

Keywords: Europeanisation, development policy, development cooperation, Czech Republic

Introduction

Despite the ever-growing research on Europeanisation since the late 1990s and the rising importance of development policy – at least in terms of the EU’s budget share – the influence of the European Union on the member states in the policy area of development cooperation has not been paid much attention thus far.¹ In the aftermath of the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty, Christiane Loquai has recorded a shift in the meaning of Europeanisation from the communitarisation of national development cooperation towards the process of coordination, complementarity and coherence between the member states and the European Commission (Loquai 1996). Some others have touched upon the topic in the margin of their accounts of Europeanisation of national foreign policy (Torreblanca 2001; Escribano / Lorca 2004).

Only recently has Europeanisation of development policy been applied to the “new” EU member states in Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) generally (Lightfoot 2010), and to Slovakia particularly (Vitek / Lightfoot 2010).² It was understood as a top-down process of the EU affecting the member states. While the transition of Slovakia from aid recipient to donor was seen as “successful” even if it was perceived that there was “still... work to do” (Vitek / Lightfoot 2010), the Europeanisation of the whole region “has tended to be shallow” (Lightfoot 2010, 345). Both studies focus mostly on the quantity and geographical distribution of aid and institution building and give credit to the important role of other external actors and internal factors that have shaped the policy, but eventually they claim that “the biggest drivers were the demands of the EU *acquis*” (Lightfoot 2010, 347).

The diagnosis of “shallow Europeanisation” (Goetz 2005) appears to perfectly suit the case of the Czech Republic. The argument will be strengthened here by showing that resistance and accommodation are more frequent modes of dealing with EU rules than their acceptance. However, there is insufficient evidence for the belief that the EU has a dominant role in shaping development cooperation in the Czech Republic and hence among the Central and Eastern European states as a whole. At least in the Czech case, there was an exceptionally early restart and institutionalisation of development cooperation in 1995, as this was a decade before the Czech Republic’s accession to the EU and as it was arguably related to the OECD accession. The dominant role of the EU is questioned by applying a rigorous analytical framework of Europeanisation to the Czech case. The often fuzzy term of Europeanisation is defined here as a process of adoption of EU rules that is adjustable to the particularly complex field of development policy and is not limited exclusively to the top-down direction. A robust framework of Europeanisation must assess all the relevant mechanisms of Europeanisation and scrutinise thoroughly the responses by the member states.

1 Especially well covered are the internal policies (see Gualini 2004; Jordan / Liefferink 2005; Faist / Ette 2007 for example) and, more recently, the external policies of the member states (Tonra 2001; Wong 2006; Bache / Jordan 2008; Versluys 2008). The member states that acceded the EU after 2004 and/or with the largest gaps in the implementation of the *acquis* have received special attention (Schimmelfennig / Sedelmeier 2005; Schmidt 2005; Featherstone / Papadimitriou 2008).

2 The “new” EU member states referred to here include ten post-communist countries: five Central European countries (Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia and Poland), three Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), and two Southeast European countries (Bulgaria and Romania).

Since the Maastricht Treaty, development cooperation has been a shared competency between the member states and the European Commission. The *acquis communautaire* is constituted almost entirely of “soft law”, i.e. by measures that have “exploded in 2000” in relation to the ambitious Lisbon Agenda for the increase of the EU’s international economic competitiveness and that do not have legally binding effects (Chalmers et al. 2006, 138). In contrast to “hard law”, which is enshrined in decisions, directives and regulations, “soft law” is created through the Open Method of Coordination and promoted through peer pressure, i.e. the naming and shaming of non-complying member states (Borrás / Jacobsson 2004). Beyond acting as the twenty-eighth EU donor, the Commission has a strong normative power to shape the EU development policy and impose its ideas on the member states (Carbone 2007), an ability that has been supported by the improvement in the implementation of its aid programmes (Grimm 2008). The states remain, however, the ultimate drivers of their bilateral policies, and their responses to the EU may be divergent and/or superficial.

The sceptical argument on the Europeanisation of the Czech development cooperation is based on the wide coverage of development policy from 1995 onwards. Rather than merely analysing the references to EU rules in official documents as a proof of Europeanisation, the paper scrutinises the translation of these rules in domestic norms and institutions, and their actual implementation. Due attention is given to other relevant internal and external actors and factors that present obstacles to the Europeanisation process. Overall, besides the specific evaluation of the Europeanisation undergone by the Czech Republic, the paper offers a more general insight into the policy-making mechanisms of the EU development cooperation and contributes to the theoretical debate on Europeanisation.

The first part of the paper presents the analytical framework of Europeanisation. It discusses the current use of the concept of Europeanisation and adjusts it to the field of development policy. The operationalisation pays special attention to the identification of the relevant types of Europeanisation processes, the problem of causality and the relation between the EU development policy and the foreign and EU integration policies of the member states. The second part is based on interviews with relevant actors at the EU level; it complements the informal rules of policy-making that are not enshrined in EU legislation. A particular emphasis is given to horizontal rules within the Council of the EU and their relation to foreign policies of member states. The final part tackles the case of the Czech Republic from the top-down Europeanisation perspective and puts the acceptance of, accommodation to or resistance to EU rules in specific policy subfields in contrast with the socialisation of the recent Czech presidency of the Council of the EU.

1 An analytical framework for the study of Europeanisation in development policy

1.1 Definition and typology of Europeanisation processes

Since the mid-1990s (Ladrech 1994), “Europeanisation” has become a buzzword in European studies. In spite of frequent criticisms, it still shows a strong vitality.³ Since the term “Europeanisation” appeared, there has been no consensus on the meaning of the concept: no less than ten different uses and meanings can be identified in three literature reviews (Harmsen / Wilson 2000; Olsen 2002; Featherstone / Radaelli 2003).⁴ An attempt at accommodating various existing theoretical approaches in a broader definition of the term proposed the definition “domestic adaptation to European regional integration” (Graziano / Vink 2006, 7). This approach would allow for integrating both bottom-up and top-down approaches, both vertical and horizontal effects, and both uniform and differential impacts of Europeanisation. It would also accept “soft issues” such as identity and it could be generalised to regional integration outside the EU. All of these aspects of Europeanisation are important.

This paper, however, adopts a narrower definition of Europeanisation: a “process in which states adopt EU rules” (Schimmelfennig / Sedelmeier 2005, 7). Since the “rules” can be formal and informal, explicit and implicit, this definition is open to both rationalist and constructivist approaches and does not exclude *ex ante* any theoretical approach. The term “adoption” is narrower in the sense that accommodation or even resistance to the rules could also be interpreted as a “domestic adaptation” to the influence of the EU. Moreover, this definition does not reduce Europeanisation to its top-down dimension, but it includes informal procedural rules of cooperation between the member states and therefore accommodates the horizontal dimension. Finally, the definition is not territorially reduced to the current EU members, and it can be applied to candidate and other countries without restriction.

Six distinct types of processes of how Europeanisation works in the EU development policy have been identified on the basis of the existing literature. They are synthesised in Table 1.⁵

3 The right term should be “EU-isation” (Schimmelfennig / Sedelmeier 2005, 1). Indeed, the coined term “Europeanisation” rhetorically excludes non-EU European countries from Europe. Since the usage of “EU-isation” is not widespread, though, I will conform to the tradition.

4 The synthesised overlapping meanings include new forms of governance, institutional adaptation, policy isomorphism, reconstruction of identities, modernisation, EU enlargement, export of the EU’s norms beyond its territory, cultural integration and diffusion, the political project of European integration, and Europeanisation as a historic phenomenon.

5 The processes were originally classed according to different criteria: “logics of action” in an enlargement-adjusted model (Schimmelfennig / Sedelmeier 2005), “mechanism” of Europeanisation (Knill / Lehmkuhl 1999; Börzel / Risse 2000), and “governance patterns” in a policy-analytical approach (Bauer et al. 2007). Despite these terminological differences, these classifications do not differ substantially and they are easily applicable to the field of development policy. As previous research did not specifically aim at external policies of the EU, an external incentives model at global level is added as a correlate to domestic competition, resulting in five distinct mechanisms.

Table 1: Typology and relevance of Europeanisation processes in development policy

| Model | Mechanism | Underlying logic of action | Relevance for development policy | Justification |
|--------------------------|-------------------|---|---|--|
| Compliance | Coercion | Logic of consequentialism with extremely high opportunity costs | Very limited | Limited hard law |
| Accession conditionality | Conditionality | Logic of consequentialism with extremely high opportunity costs | Very limited | Development policy virtually absent from EU accession negotiations |
| Domestic incentives | Competition | Logic of consequentialism | Very limited | Common market irrelevant, concerns only limited funding opportunities for particular actors |
| Global incentives | Collective action | Logic of consequentialism | Moderate | Collective action in development policy might better serve individual interests of the member states |
| Social learning | Change in beliefs | Logic of appropriateness | High | Mostly soft law, low enforceability |
| Lesson-drawing | Communication | Mix of logics of consequentialism and appropriateness | Ambiguous | Most horizontal rules (coordination among actors) included in the vertical rules (institutionalized norms of the EU) |

Source: Author's compilation and adaptation of Schimmelfenning / Sedelmeier (2005), Knill / Lehmkuhl (1999), Bauer et al. (2007).

1.2 Relevance of Europeanisation models in development policy

The identified models of Europeanisation have different levels of relevance in different policy areas, depending on whether the competence of the European Commission is exclusive or shared, whether the policy is oriented towards the inside or the outside of the Union, whether the role of the common market is important or not, whether the rules are enforceable by law or just “enforced” by peer pressure, and whether the model is applicable to member or candidate countries. The objective of this subsection is not to test a hypothesis of their respective importance against empirical data, but to derive their relevance from the structural characteristics of the policy.

Compliance

The compliance model, i.e. the conformity of a member state to the communitarian law, can be explained in a rational framework by coercion. While compliance or non-

compliance with legally enforceable hard law can be sanctioned by EU institutions, soft law can be “enforced” only by peer pressure, making it rather a case for social learning and lesson-drawing models.⁶ Therefore, in the field of development policy, the mechanism of coercion is relevant only to a very limited extent: hard law remains marginal and concerns mostly the financial perspective of common programmes. The contributions of the member states to the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) and the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI) are a compulsory part of their contribution to the general budget, and hence the governments can influence them only through standard communitarian (supranational) procedures. The EU-ACP relations under the Cotonou Agreement, for their part, have not undergone a substantial change and remain intergovernmental. Furthermore, the attempts to “budgetise” the European Development Fund (EDF) have failed and it still relies on voluntary contributions.⁷ Generally, there are no legally enforceable rules that would require the member states to provide bilateral assistance to developing countries at the height of their quantitative and qualitative commitments, which gives the compliance model very low relevance in the EU development policy.

Accession conditionality

The accession conditionality model relies on the mechanism of imposing policy changes and making them a necessary condition for the accession of a candidate country to the EU. While it has a similar logic of action as the compliance model, it is not applicable to the twenty-seven member states already inside the Union. Candidate countries, however, may be obliged to comply with the soft law that makes up a part of the accession criteria, as otherwise they could be denied membership. Again, the main driving force is the logic of consequences with extremely high opportunity costs. Conditionality is hence a powerful tool for the EU in its efforts to make the candidates accept policies that they would not be willing to adopt otherwise. Development policy, however, is generally treated as a marginal policy area; the issue of development policy was hardly raised as a part of the external relations chapter during the accession negotiations (Lightfoot 2010). This makes accession conditionality almost irrelevant in this specific policy area.⁸

6 The Open Method of Coordination (OMC) that regulates the EU development policy is a unique and hybrid supranational policy-making model that combines ‘soft’ peer pressure mechanisms at political level with learning processes (Borrás / Jacobsson 2004). Peer pressure is not coercive unless the member states deem the demand of the peers as legitimate and hence share common values. The current knowledge of the Europeanisation mechanisms does not allow for ranking the OMC under a single model, but it presents a big challenge for a new typology of Europeanisation processes since it has the potential to change the governance patterns of the EU.

7 Even though the extent of support for deeper or lesser communitarianisation of the policy varies among member states, there is a consensus on the shared competency with the European Commission. Therefore, I do not scrutinise the “vertical transfer” side of Europeanisation.

8 Unlike the multilateral and bilateral donor agencies, especially UNDP and CIDA, the Canadian Development Agency, the European Commission contributed to the emergence and institutionalisation of development policies in the new member states only with marginal twinning programmes during the pre-accession period. Despite the excellent account of the treatment of development policy in the accession process (Lightfoot 2010, 332–336), the reasons for the omission remain unclear. The tiny amount of support from the European Commission to building up development cooperation programmes in the candidate countries in the pre-accession period contrasts with the substantial amounts of aid within PHARE and other programmes that focused on reforms that would make the CEE markets compatible with the common market (Hughes et al. 2004). However, if the European Commission, along with the member states, does not neglect the development issues and agrees on minimal requirements in the negotiation process, it may be used as a powerful tool during the future enlargements.

Domestic incentives

Similarly, the domestic incentives model, based on the competition mechanism, has little explanatory power with regard to development policy. The model of “negative integration” assumes the existence of a market and domestic actors with a particular interest in adopting EU rules. On the quantitative side of EU rules, private companies and non-governmental development organisations (NGDOs) in all member states are without a doubt interested in an increase of development budgets as long as the budgets are a source of their funding. However, funding is meant to be to the benefit of third parties in developing countries; development policy is not about narrow economic self-interests, and domestic incentives are thus of limited use. On the qualitative side, policies for improving aid effectiveness, coordination and policy coherence for development (PCD) aim at reducing the role of the domestic actors by increasing the use of partner country systems; Europeanisation, with its strong aid effectiveness agenda, thus operates rather as a disincentive for actors with a narrow domestic agenda. Therefore, the relevance of the model in the field of development policy is very low.

Global incentives

The global incentives model has been newly fashioned on the external incentives model as it was applied at global level. The existing rationalist models overlooked the specificity of externally oriented policies of the EU, such as development policy, that may be motivated by the existence of external incentives at global level. Some member states assume that their long-term pragmatic interests, such as national security, are better ensured by collective EU action, the so-called “EU speaking with one voice”, rather than bilaterally. They consider that coordination between the Commission and the member states reduces individual transaction costs and eventually improves the effectiveness of the policy that produces global public goods. This rationalist view is not contrary to the perception of development policy as a tool for ensuring national economic and security interests in the long term, but the adoption of EU rules is seen as the most efficient tool to ensure a strong position of the EU, and hence of the member state, in the global arena. However, this efficiency-oriented type of calculus is built on the belief that collective action at the EU level is not a zero-sum game. This requires a previous recognition of common values, which moderates the relevance of the mechanism. Other member states may prefer the uncoordinated bilateral way of satisfying their perceived national interests and hence opposing Europeanisation.

Social learning

In contrast to the logic of consequentialism, the logic of appropriateness enshrined in the social learning model appears as the most relevant process of Europeanisation. Social learning is understood here as the process of accepting norms and values from other actors.⁹ Unless the acceptance of norms falls under the above-mentioned models, non-enforceable soft law can be implemented only through an acceptance (and gradual internalisation) of the underlying values. Some actors, such as private companies, may use the

9 This paper does not have any ambition to synthesize the approaches, or even to enter the rationalist/constructivist debate and close the divide (see Checkel 2001).

EU rhetoric to promote their particular interests (e.g. win tenders), especially increases in the development cooperation budget, but these uses cannot be generalised to the government as a whole. If the implementation of an EU rule does respond to the test of domestic incentives or if a collective action fails, the member state will not Europeanise its development policy unless it perceives the underlying values of the communitarian norms as “normal”.

Lesson-drawing

Finally, the lesson-drawing model, related to the horizontal dimension of Europeanisation and consisting in the adoption of practices by other member states, is relevant but ambiguous. As the horizontal rules concerning coordination and division of labour between donors make up a part of the *soft acquis*, they can be classed under one of the top-down models. The underlying motivation (or rather sets of motivation) for adopting an institutional model from another member state is (are) not monocausal and thus not clearly attributable to any single cause. It is already difficult to identify whether a member state builds on a model from another member state because it has adopted its norms or because it is in its interest; and it is even more demanding to assess what part the EU played in the process. These arguments are sufficient to discard the lesson-drawing model from the field of development policy as far as the study of Europeanisation is concerned. Yet, by putting aside lesson-drawing as an explanation, the existence of horizontal rules is not denied. The coordination and communication mechanisms concern procedural issues rather than content issues and are informal. Therefore, this paper pays attention to horizontal Europeanisation and procedural norms between member states, which are often unwritten and informal, without paying full attention to the fuzzy model of lesson-drawing.

In sum, the models of global incentives (and lesson-drawing if it is accepted as a separate model) are relevant especially in cases where a member state seeks more effectiveness and support for an EU collective action (or its own individual action). However, the social-learning model is identified as the most relevant here. This finding influences the attention given to the domestic level. As political will and public support are essential for internalising the underlying values of the soft norms, the social learning mechanism relates to the identity of the political elites and citizens. As Knill and Lehmkuhl (1999, 9) have put it, these “policies are designed to change the domestic political climate by stimulating and strengthening the overall support for broader European reform objectives”. The support mobilisation for domestic reforms works here as the explanatory factor of Europeanisation by changing beliefs and attitudes. This depiction perfectly fits the EU development policy. Moreover, the states are more likely to adopt norms considered as legitimate, worthy of identification and resonating in the home society (Schimmelfennig / Sedelmeier 2005). The assessment of top-down Europeanisation must therefore pay special attention to domestic values and norms and the gap that separates them from the EU level (see also Jørgensen et al. 2006, 492-493).

1.3 Operationalisation: The problematic causality and depth of change

The identification of the relevant mechanisms of Europeanisation in the field of development policy is only the first step in developing a framework for its application. The evidence of the “EU effect” can be distorted by the presence of other significant internal and

external factors that lead to the same result and to a declared conformity to EU norms, as indicated above. While the problem of causality between EU norms and their domestic implementation necessarily enlarges the scope of study, the scrutiny of the depth of Europeanisation requires a more detailed insight into the policy-making process. If both limitations are not recognised in the Europeanisation framework, an assessment of its extent is virtually impossible.

As far as causality is concerned, some have identified the European Union as the most important factor in the resurgence of development cooperation in the “new” member states (Lightfoot 2008, 2010; Vittek / Lightfoot 2010). At the same time, however, the path dependency related to the communist past and the subsequent transition experience have also been considered in the current development cooperation models in post-communist Central Europe. The countries of the Visegrád Group¹⁰ could not “simply imitate Western European practices” because of their history (Szent-Iványi / Tétényi 2008, 574). Furthermore, the EU has not been given a particularly preferential place in the elaboration of cooperation programmes: the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) were also frequently referred to.

An additional difficulty in establishing causality comes with the fact that EU principles and rules are established based on an international consensus. The EU and its member states operate in a multilevel environment and form a multilevel policy network themselves; this complicates attribution. Recommendations made by the United Nations and the OECD-promoted principles of aid effectiveness have been included in the EU rules: Jan Orbie and Helen Versluys (2008) argue that the EU development policy has been prone to an “OECD-isation” and in the case of Central and Eastern European states, the “special” reviews by the OECD of non-DAC members such as the Czech Republic in 2007 and Poland in 2010 have played a considerable role in their policy-making. At the same time, the EU and its member states have influenced multilateral rules. Therefore, it is difficult to judge whether the EU member states implement them directly or indirectly.¹¹ Globalisation as such may be another important factor in the presumed Europeanisation of the “new” EU member states (Grabbe 2003, 313), and the changes in development policy might not be necessarily induced by the multilateral bodies.

Alongside the role of other external actors, it is necessary to pay attention to the domestic context as well. Indeed, many “new” member states do not consider development policy as an autonomous policy, but as an integral part of their foreign policy with less autonomy for its particularities than in a number of the “old” member states (Orbie / Versluys 2008). In many of the latter, the development agenda has gained more independence, and development interests are represented at ministerial level alongside the foreign policy interests. In the same vein, the attitude of a country towards the European integration, more broadly speaking, makes up a part of its foreign policy and its behaviour “in Brussels”. This factor is hard to measure, but it cannot be ignored; it will impact on the adaptation to EU rules in a variety of policy areas, including development policy.

10 The Visegrád Group consists of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia.

11 Markus Haverland (2005) has advanced some proposals to avoid this trap, such as comparing the Europeanisation of member states with that of non-member states as a control group, but their operationalisation is extremely difficult.

Even if the case studies of Europeanisation take in account all these internal and external factors, they can be misleading when they do not consider the depth of the process. At first sight, the reforms undertaken by a member state may seem to go in conformity with the EU rules, but when assessing the Europeanisation of a member state, it is vital to recognise how deeply (or superficially) the norms are adopted. It matters indeed if a country only pledges to follow EU norms in its outward-oriented discourse, if it takes over the rules and integrates them in the domestic norms, or if it implements them in practice. In consequence, three levels of implementation can be differentiated:

- *Discursive level*: the actors refer to EU norms in their discourses;
- *Institutional level*: EU norms are institutionalised domestically by the member state;
- *Behavioural level*: the actors act in compliance with EU norms.

This scale of implementation does not make up a part of the mainstream Europeanisation frameworks, but it can be related to the focus on “construction, diffusion and institutionalization” in an alternative definition of Europeanisation (Featherstone / Radaelli 2003, 30). The three levels might well describe a sequence in internalisation; yet, it cannot be expected to happen automatically. While a yes-no reply in assessing Europeanisation in a specific policy area would be too simplistic, the three criteria allow us to test the rule adoption at the level of discourses, institutions and practices and recognise possible reactions to Europeanisation such as absorption, accommodation of existing policies, or even their rejection (Börzel 2005, 59).

The depth of implementation of EU rules by individual countries and the underlying catalysts and inhibitors are studied alongside the main issues of the EU development agenda as expressed in the European Consensus and other documents endorsed by the Council: commitments on aid quantity (mainly European Council 2005) and quality (European Commission 2005b); the so-called “3 Cs” agenda – coordination, complementarity of policies (European Commission 2007), and policy coherence for development (starting with European Commission 2005b) – and the geographical focus of the EU on Africa (European Commission 2005c).

Besides contributing to a detailed framework for the study of Europeanisation, a review of the existing literature and its application to the understudied field gives a more general picture of EU development policy as an area predominantly structured by soft law where social learning constitutes the dominant process of Europeanisation and where member states see their national interest in having a better impact at the global level through the EU. The gap between EU norms and their implementation by the member states can hence be explained by the differences of the values and norms shared at EU level and those shared at national level, and the differences between the national perceptions of the most efficient level in promoting the long-term national interests. EU development policy is also characterised by the presence of other normative actors at multilateral level and a strong influence of the domestic foreign policy so any scrutiny should not lose sight of any counterfactual evidence of non-Europeanisation.

2 Reasons for and obstacles to Europeanisation and informal rules at EU level

This part of the paper seeks to complement the knowledge of Europeanisation of development policy by the perception of its main actors. As this part does not directly apply the Europeanisation framework to a member state in an explicative approach, it may seem disconnected from the rest of the paper. However, there are two reasons to include this interpretative part, which is based on interviews with representatives of EU institutions and member states. Firstly, the assessment of the relevance of the concept by the actors complements the analysis of its relevance based on the structural characteristics of the policy. The additional data equally shed light on the reasons for and obstacles to adopting the EU rules. Secondly, a part of the EU rules is clearly expressed in diverse EU documents, such as the treaties, communications and working papers by the European Commission, which are approved consensually by the member states in the form of Council Conclusions. But horizontal norms of what is considered good practice, or, more starkly, what is acceptable or unacceptable among member states, are not always formalised. It is hence by interviewing the actors involved in the policy-making that these unwritten rules can be uncovered and light can be shed on the reasons behind the extent of the Europeanisation undergone by a member state.

Around a dozen semi-structured interviews with representatives of European institutions (DG Development at the European Commission, the European Council, the European Parliament) and national representatives to CODEV, the working group on development at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC), have been carried out in Brussels in September 2009. Six member states, whose identity was anonymised as a precondition for the interviews to take place, have been chosen to represent equally both bigger and smaller EU countries, and to cover different assumptions on the amplitudes of commitment to international development policy. Two out of the six member states acceded the European Union before 1980, two in the period from 1981 to 1999, and two after 2000. Each of these subgroups of two consisted of one big and one small/medium-sized member state. The focus of this research remains centred on states and EU institutions; non-governmental actors were not considered.

2.1 Assessment of the concept and its mechanisms by policy-makers

As an exercise to test the relevance and scope of the term “Europeanisation”, each interviewee was firstly asked to provide their understanding of the concept and to identify its driving forces. While the EU representatives assessed the Europeanisation of the member states as a whole, national representatives characterised the efforts and obstacles encountered by their governments and the underlying reasons for implementation in a particular field. All of the interviewees were also asked for their opinion on the informal rules and expectations in EU development policy, and the relation between development, foreign, and EU integration policy. Spontaneous references to other governance levels were noted in order to check other possible explanations of the processes at play and not to overestimate the EU effect.

Although the term “Europeanisation” has acquired the sense of “EU-isation” in the academia almost two decades ago, it has not been largely adopted by the practitioners, unlike

other concepts such as multilevel governance, which was borrowed from European Studies (Marks et al. 1996). Indeed, the low awareness of the concept among the interviewees may be due to the multiple understandings of Europeanisation. Only one interviewee (with an academic background) has proposed a definition similar to the one in this paper, and another has proposed to define it as European integration. Others have (implicitly) advanced top-down and/or bottom-up directions. In addition to that, the representatives of a big EU member state and the European Commission have mentioned the importance of the EU having a unique position at the multilateral fora, which is a coordinating dimension that is generally neglected in Europeanisation literature.

The reported reasons for Europeanisation in the area of development policy confirm the estimated relevance of models. The objectives and values of the EU development policy, such as poverty reduction, are not mentioned explicitly as the interviewees rather referred to the values of the European integration: “doing things together”, “being a good member” and “a real EU partner”, and “building of the consensus”. Nevertheless, the values underlying the development policy must be shared implicitly to give some sense to the rationalist arguments for Europeanisation. Indeed, the second group of justifications refers to the effectiveness and efficiency of development policy, including “less transaction costs” and “doing things better”. Only one interviewee has mentioned the improvement of the international image of his/her country as one partial reason for “adapting to EU standards”.

Even though the number of cases is not sufficient enough to draw far-reaching general conclusions, this mix of the logics of consequentialism and appropriateness is shared mostly by the member states that have been involved in the policy for a longer period. The representatives of recently acceded member states seem to be closer to a liberal intergovernmental approach (see Moravczik 1993). Countries which “are not strong enough” at bilateral level would have no other choice than “going European”, and the positive guidance of the EU should be carefully weighed against the limitations imposed on the bilateral policy.

Against the initial expectations, the general reasons given for Europeanisation of development policy are not necessarily specific to this policy field: to be “Europeanised” has not been identified with the values and norms as the content of development policy (e.g. poverty reduction) but rather with procedural rules and interests. The field of development may not be that different from other fields, and a general attitude to EU integration may be the determining factor, which has to be explored further. While this paper has not proposed the distinction between “old” and “new” member states *ex ante*, it appeared during the interviews as the most important dividing line among EU member states. This division between “old” and “new” member states has also been drawn in the emphasis on effectiveness as a driving force for the Europeanisation of development policy.

2.2 Reasons for and obstacles to the adoption of EU rules by the member states

The reasons given by the interviewees for the adoption of EU rules by the member states concur with both the logic of consequentialism and that of appropriateness, and they are generally specific to these issues. With the potential unwritten rules, the norms cover quantity and quality of bilateral aid; the “3 Cs” principle - aid coordination and comple-

mentarity and policy coherence for development; and the policy focus on Africa, including the EU-Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) agenda.

Aid quantity

The level of support for increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA) budgets has been unsurprisingly related to political will and public support. According to the different histories of member states, the public support is not necessarily of humanitarian nature and related to the missionary tradition, for example, but it is related to the existence of diasporas and to the perception of global problems as threats to domestic stability. Domestic economic growth and major political shifts at government level are mentioned as well. An interviewee from an EU institution has directly related the quantity of aid to the ability of the domestic development community to “mobilise resources”. In the context of the economic crisis, some member states acknowledge that the reiterated soft commitments on aid volume help to preserve domestic budgets. Another interviewee from an “old” member state has criticised the different commitments for “new” and “old” member states that were institutionalised by the European Council in 2005 since they seem to deepen the already important gap between member states created by the 2004 and 2007 enlargements.

Aid quality, coordination and complementarity

The reasons for promoting aid quality are expressed in terms of domestic obstacles and incentives: national interests undermine the efforts for strengthening the ownership of partner countries, and national administrative and legal rules are an obstacle to using partner country systems. At the same time, especially those countries that have recently and substantially increased their budgets of Official Development Assistance (ODA) lack sufficient know-how and capacities to ensure the best use of their aid. Their institutional culture is often distant from the recently approved principles of aid effectiveness. Therefore, striving for effectiveness is not necessarily perceived as an external imposition, but it is primarily perceived as a domestic need to which the rules at the EU level can respond. At the same time, following the EU framework is also seen as a goal *per se* and a “school” with an “educational function”, referring directly to social learning. Political and historical arguments enter the debate of coordination and complementarity, with an emphasis on the division of labour. The need for national visibility and the difficulty to “leave” a country have been identified as the main obstacles for aid concentration, especially in the case of the former colonial powers.

As far as these three areas are concerned, the “new” member states have given a quite different account from that of the “old” member states. Contrary to the opinion of the European Commission, the interviewees from “new” member states think that due to low development budgets they have “nothing to coordinate”, or they recognise the need for coordination and its institutionalisation at national level but at the same time they admit that there is a lack of “time and capacities” for the agenda and that “nobody cares that it is not happening” at the domestic level. Incentives were thus regarded to be working against coordination and the striving for better complementarity. While experienced donors acknowledge a gap between commitments and implementation, the representatives of “new” member states seem to be more sceptical on the coordination among donors and judge that eventually “every state will do what it wants to”. The aid effectiveness agenda is sometimes identified as a threat to the national interests of the newcomers, especially when

untying of aid is at stake: excluding domestic actors from the bilateral development cooperation would prohibit them to build up the national capacities of the development constituency.

Policy coherence for development

Despite the institutional arrangements to promote policy coherence for development (i.e. the coherence of other external and internal policies with the goals of the policy on international development) at government level in most of the states, and by the permanent representations in Brussels for some of them, very modest outcomes have been recorded. This is due to the fragmentation of power between the ministries whose policies influence the South and the more recent disagreements over the use of development finance in non-development agendas. There has recently been a struggle about the development-relevant spending in policy areas with development dimensions such as climate change and migration. This is arguably particularly difficult to manage if there is no strong administrative unit to pursue the issue of policy coherence across the board. The issue of policy coherence for development was raised by the interviewees without discrimination. In spite of their poorer outcomes, the interviewed representatives from “new” member states saw policy coherence as even more important than aid.

Policy focus on Africa

If the implementation of policy coherence by the “new” member states is hampered by the low capacities and weak bargaining power of their development constituencies, the geographic focus of the EU development policy on sub-Saharan Africa does not help them much in their efforts to become stronger either. As their foreign policy priorities and experiences are placed in Eastern and South Eastern Europe, they generally feel less concerned by the African agenda. So far, their attempts at enlarging the geographical scope of the EU development cooperation were acknowledged by some member states, but they were hampered by three circumstances. Firstly, there is at least an inherent tension in EU policy between specialisation for better complementarity of development policies, as demanded by the *EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in Development Policy*, on the one hand, and joining other member states in their cooperation with Africa, as required by the EU-Africa Strategy and the EU Consensus on Development, on the other (Grimm / Kielwein 2005). Moreover, most of the “old” member states have broader “gains” from their focus on sub-Saharan Africa since many of their national interests in the area of security, trade and energy often concur there. This is not the case of the “new” EU member states, which can “only” draw on the altruistic argument of reducing extreme poverty. Finally, the preference the EU gives to ACP countries is reflected in the division of the development agenda between the Directorates General for Development and External Relations and those for the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) respectively, which keeps the “new” member states unmotivated.¹²

To sum up the general account of Europeanisation by the policy-makers, the top-down Europeanisation of development policies of the member states is characterised by both

12 The implications of creating the External Action Services will have to be seen, but current developments have indicated a continuity.

social learning and global incentives models. While a number of references to norms and values are related especially to aid volume, the aid effectiveness agenda appears as a field where development effectiveness interests are disputed by other national interests, a problem analysed later in this paper. Similarly to the precedent general assessment of Europeanisation by the member states, there are few explicit references to the underlying goals and values of development policy, but again they could be (implicitly) shared as the interviewees pointed out mostly the obstacles in its implementation.

2.3 Informal rules and the normative power of the European Commission

The conceptual framework for Europeanisation adopted in this paper includes horizontal rules, especially those that are not explicitly mentioned in EU soft law, such as the need for coordination and division of labour. This subsection draws on the interviews to make these informal rules and norms explicit and complete the picture of Europeanisation in the development policy field. It is particularly focused on the unwritten rules in CODEV, the working party on development cooperation of the Council of the EU and its relations with the European Commission. Again, the distinction between “old” and “new” EU member states is a crucial one in this respect.

According to the interviewees, the states have different abilities to “go European” and there is a correlation between the activity of a member state in CODEV and its part of the total volume of ODA of the Union. Since the total weight of the countries which acceded to the EU in 2004 and 2007 corresponds to roughly 1% of the overall EU spending on development, their effective part in decision making is seemingly overrated, and the consensus in CODEV is more difficult to find now. A rule that sees a connection between the importance of a country and its aid performance highlights the experience and analytical capacity of the most advanced donors, which reduces further the possibility of substantial changes in the EU development policy: the member states with the largest aid volumes are likely to be more path-dependent, and the “new” member states are unable to mobilise their limited know-how.¹³ Despite the gap, experienced donors see the “new” member states as engaged in socialising norms and struggling with the domestic acceptance of the development policy, which is considered to be “only human”.

At the same time, some expertise brought by the “new” member states, mostly on democratic governance and transition, is appreciated. The Czech presidency in the first half of 2008 has been mentioned to have played the role of a catalyst for the “new” member states when they emancipated themselves and lost the fear of presenting their opinions. The dividing line should not to be exaggerated because even though new member states manage to create alliances with old member states and “do not tear the bunch apart”, the division remains relevant in the majority of issues dealt with in the Council: low aid commitments, weak interest in (and consequently low payments to) the EDF, the focus on the neighbourhood, and technical project assistance on a project basis as a main tool of bilateral cooperation. A representative of a “new” member state has admitted that sometimes the col-

13 There is generally a “paradoxical situation” where the member states with the lowest policy-making capacity in a policy area bear the highest implementation costs (Börzel 2005, 63). Its consequences are debated in the conclusion.

leagues from “old” member states unofficially agree with non-mainstream opinions of the newcomers, but they do not venture to present such opinions officially.

The accession of the new EU member states was accompanied by other substantial changes in the working of CODEV that happened in the last few years. If the pre-accession “family-like” ambiance turned into a more formal arrangement, the dominant role of the European Commission has changed. As acknowledged by both the European Commission and the member states, the Commission does not want to be a “pupil” of the member states. The role of the Council *vis-à-vis* the Commission has changed from “controlling the Commission” to the “joint approach” (see also Carbone 2007). Nevertheless, the Commission is the origin of the large majority of proposals, and the margins of individual member states (including the presidency) are very limited. If the EU development “bible” is composed of communications and staff working papers elaborated by the Commission and the political conclusions agreed by the Council, the Commission “pulls the strings”, and its position is simply acknowledged as “the big role”.

Moreover, the actors felt that once the Commission puts an issue on the agenda, it cannot be easily discarded, but at most delayed with difficulties. The member states cannot defy their precedent positions – the “agreed language” – and they can resist the progress on an agenda only by reconfirming their positions. These features give the EU development policy agenda a cumulative character: new topics are regularly added to the agenda, and the old ones remain there, which leads to its great volume, complexity and fragmentation. Since the European Council is a forum for influencing the policy framework, it does not offer any space for lesson-learning among the member states, which only underlines the leading role of the Commission in terms of the content of the policy, which is slightly balanced by the Council. The cumulative process of EU development policy-making is generally described as inertial and slow. Even though the European Commission is inspired by the practices of the best performing member states, it is rather the Commission that stands at the origin of a steady “normative power Europe” (Manners 2002) in development policy.

Other informal rules do not seem to have the same importance. As far as the content of the policy is concerned, it is not acceptable for a member state to “step” into the traditional area of expertise of another member state (even though the respective expertise is not systematically assessed). The member states are cautious to observe good practice, and, e.g., do not come up with politically incorrect or otherwise unacceptable positions. They generally follow the mainstream and try to influence the policy if their vital preferences are threatened. The limits of acceptability are defined by their foreign policy, an issue tackled in the following subsection. In these cases, they form alliances with other member states. Generally, however, their margin of manoeuvre is very narrow.

2.4 Relations with foreign and EU integration policy as a source of domestic resistance

Even though the Europeanisation of development policy tackles the processes of aid effectiveness, it does not cover the internal institutional arrangements of the member states. As there is a diversity of models in the EU of how to organise the system for providing bilateral cooperation, it is impossible to find a consensus on a single model. The main differen-

tiating feature between countries is the autonomy of development policy *vis-à-vis* the foreign policy. Even though there is not a straightforward relation between the autonomy of the development policy and the depth of Europeanisation by a member state, it is an important factor in the attitude of a member state towards the implementation of EU rules.

Among the bigger member states, Germany and the United Kingdom have separate ministries with cabinet-rank ministers, while Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands have cabinet-rank ministers without a specialised ministry. In France, Italy and Poland, for their part, foreign policy priorities are more reflected in their development cooperation. In Spain and the Netherlands, the development departments are more autonomous within the foreign ministries. Among smaller member states, Sweden – with a cabinet-rank minister and a specialised and influential international development agency – would represent one extreme of the spectrum, while the Czech Republic could be taken as the other extreme. The institutional arrangement is not the only factor to explain the commitment to EU norms; the Netherlands, for example, have been strongly defending the aid effectiveness agenda, despite the absence of a specialised ministry or agency. It has been emphasised by the interviewees that a separate cabinet ministry serves as a “logo” for protecting the quality of aid and that “development people” have a long-term vision compared to diplomats, who are subject to the use of conditionality and react swiftly to political events.

Yet, what some member states call autonomy, others criticise as depoliticisation. The autonomy may also be fictitious, as several members of the working party on development have noted that the positions defended by the UK representative in CODEV are not always in line with the positions of the British government as a whole and are hence overdriven. A representative of a “new” member state has severely criticised the depoliticisation of the EU development policy and lambasted European aid policy as misdirected in general. In fact, the representative claimed the EU would not even have any real development policy, but only “ODA”, which would be managed by the Directorate General (DG) for Development, a former administrator of technical assistance to the former colonies. It would be subject to an “NGO attitude” and living in a “ghetto” of long-term staff without experience outside the development area. The good aid performers such as the Nordic countries were seen by the representative as the victims of the humanitarian “ideology” of aid giving because they would “feel guilty”. EU development cooperation is hence seen as ineffective by this interviewee for not using conditionality as a powerful tool for domestic reforms – the same tool that the “new” EU member states had to accept in order to receive the pre-accession aid. The same representative, however, has acknowledged that his/her country did not have any capacities to put this view into practice and focus, for example, on policy coherence for development. Moreover, the EU accession “carrot” is hardly applicable to the least developed countries in Africa, for example.

Furthermore, the resistances to Europeanisation are amplified by the hesitant attitude of some member states towards the European integration as a whole. Their national positions to the proposals submitted to CODEV are predictable, with a special “aversion” to the adjective “joint”. These countries “do not want the EU flag”; they “fear losing their freedom” and simply block the proposals as consensus is the general rule of taking decisions in CODEV. That a position on foreign policy is substantially different is understood as the single excuse for the positions towards development policy that step outside the mainstream, such as Italy’s reluctance to increase development budgets with the argument that receiving immigrants would entail substantial costs.

The perceived problem of (de)politicisation of development is also reflected in the different configurations of administrative responsibility and personal representation in the working groups on development (CODEV), Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP), and Africa by itself (COAFR) within the Common Foreign and Security Policy. A view of a “new” member state was that the ACP group is “redundant” as the member states with more integrated development policies tend to associate ACP with COAFR rather than with CODEV because they put emphasis on the political aspect of the Cotonou Agreement. At a more general and substantial level, the different emancipation of development policy from the foreign policy is reflected in the critical views of the division (and duplication) of labour between the Directorates General (DGs) Development and External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy (RELEX) not only because of their historically conditioned geographical focus on the ACP countries, but also because of the already mentioned problem of coherence with foreign policy. There was a widespread expectation to resolve these problems after the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty.

Eventually, the autonomy of development policy can be related to the domestic political support for development cooperation and, to some extent, to the support for the Europeanisation of development policy, which is compatible with both constructivist and rationalist approaches. Both explanations are also valid for the support of the EU integration at domestic level. At the same time, the Europeanisation of development policy must be recognised as a process of de-linking development cooperation from foreign policy and to some extent strengthening its path dependency and historical focus on ACP, which may tone down the interest of the recently accessed EU member states in Europeanising their development policy. In this sense, the field of EU development cooperation is quite similar to the field of humanitarian aid, where the problem of national visibility was identified as a major obstacle to coherence, harmonisation and a larger consensus than on “broad objectives and general principles” (Versluys 2008, 223). The field of development policy shows, however, that even a minimal consensus may be shallow if not absent among the member states.

3 The Czech response to Europeanisation

This section applies the Europeanisation framework developed in this paper at discursive, institutional and implementation levels. Besides interviews with Czech diplomats at the Permanent Mission in Brussels, it analyses interviews with officials of the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and the strategic documents on the Foreign Development Cooperation approved by the government. The central claim of this paper is that the Czech development cooperation has Europeanised only superficially. This means that Czech actors have adopted EU rules only shallowly, which is not to deny the existence of the EU effect as such – and particularly further in the future.

3.1 Europeanisation in the discourse of policy-makers and official documents

The relevance of Europeanisation was spontaneously raised in the interviews with the Czech representatives of the MFA and CzDA. The development cooperation of the Czech Republic was defined as a new policy, determined by the EU requirements that the “old”

member states have adopted before the accession on the one hand, and the continuity of the Czech aid since the times of Czechoslovakia on the other (Interview, 26 Oct. 2007). This ambiguous position does not mean, however, that the bilateral cooperation would simply move from its post-communist past to a clearly defined European future since the EU aid is considered as “too distant from the foreign policy” (Interview, 27 Nov. 2008).

The Czech Republic’s relation to the general foreign policy is the key feature for understanding the success and failures of the Europeanisation of Czech development policy. Some examples taken from the interviews with the policymakers question the extent of the influence of the EU on the restart of the Central European countries as a whole. When criticised for the low focus on poverty reduction in the South, officials at the MFA often emphasise the official term “Foreign Development Cooperation”, which is an “integral part of the Czech foreign policy”. In the interviews, the European Union is almost always represented as an external body (they) and not as a part of the self (we). The role of the EU is often perceived as instrumental, and its normative power is highlighted as a means of promoting the interests of the MFA. The “pressure from outside, like from the European Union”, is deemed “to some extent useful” in getting other Czech actors involved in the policy. The issue of policy coherence for development, for instance, and other EU initiatives are represented as brought by the European Union and as initiating the “positive trend” in setting the agenda. However, Czech principles and goals were regarded as excluded from the EU’s influence. For example, the Czech Republic is said to be “resisting” the mainstream preference for sub-Saharan Africa and the use of general budget support as a modality since these principles would exclude the Czech entities from implementing aid. The main pressure on the emergence of the development policy was felt to be not internal but originating in the “changing position of the Czech Republic in the world”, “external pressure” related to the OECD and EU accession, and the Czech Republic’s graduation from the World Bank (Interview, 7 Nov. 2007).

As was already mentioned, the Czech Republic institutionalised the “Foreign Development Aid” in March 1995 on the eve of its OECD accession in December that year (and hence much earlier than most of the literature suggests). Even though the Czech Republic has deposited the official application for EU membership as early as in January 1996, the first government decision on the *Principles for Providing Foreign Aid* does not refer to multilateral and regional organisations other than the United Nations and OECD (Vláda České republiky 1995).

The first strategy paper, of which the government took note in 2002, includes a paragraph that summarises the preparation of the EU accession, but it mentions only the consequences of the ratification of the Cotonou Agreement and the subsequent changes in the preferential tariffs to ACP countries as well as the expected contribution to the EDF. Besides this short review of hard law, the policy only highlights the opportunities for the Czech entities to participate in the calls and tenders financed by the EDF and the influence of the Czech government on the redistribution of EU aid according to the priorities of the foreign policy; no commitments for the Czech Republic (standards or the like) are mentioned otherwise. The paper mentions the “coordination with the development activities of the EU, OECD and other multilateral institutions” among the activities of the MFA (Vláda České republiky 2002, 11) and gives an outlook on ODA flows after the EU accession, but at the same time, it aims at decreasing the part of multilateral aid to 30% of the total.

The 2004 policy update, called the *Principles of Foreign Development Cooperation after the Accession of the Czech Republic to the EU*, tackled the institutional impacts of the EU accession and started to systematically name the EU before the OECD when both were mentioned. The accompanying background report mentions that the EU “expects an active and coordinated approach from the new member states” and it quotes the 2002 Barcelona commitment to increasing the part of ODA in the Gross National Income (GNI) to 0.33% for each member state by 2006. For the Czech Republic, however, the paper recommends reaching only 0.1%, which corresponded approximately to the bottom line of performance amongst the “old” member states. Besides that, the *Principles* acknowledge the “3 Cs” agenda but from the start they reject the budgetisation of the EDF “on the financial, economic-industrial and territorial grounds” (Vláda České republiky 2004). According to the background report, the Czech Republic should follow the EU trend, but the emphasis is put on the institutional setting for bilateral cooperation that the Czech Republic should take over from “advanced donor countries” in the “EU and OECD”, which is a reaction to the fragmentation of the implementation of development cooperation in the Czech Republic among nine ministries. As the EU soft law does not require any specific institutional setting of providing bilateral cooperation, this element refers rather to horizontal lesson-drawing than top-down Europeanisation.

It is only in 2007 – three years after the EU accession – that the government agreed with the transformation of the development cooperation, which led to the centralisation of policymaking and budgeting at the MFA and the creation of the Czech Development Agency (Vláda České republiky 2007b).¹⁴ The character of the paper is hence very technical and there are only a few mentions of the EU dimension in it. The government proposal of the *Act on Foreign Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid Provided Abroad* (Vláda České republiky 2008) from the following year did not include any mention of the EU in its development section at all.¹⁵ The accompanying report of the law proposal by the MFA deals extensively but technically with compatibility with the *acquis*. The only substantial comment refers to the *European Consensus* – EU soft law quoted among other multilateral commitments and documents.

Finally, it is only with the new Strategy Paper for the period 2010–2017 that the general references to EU commitments become more detailed and translated to the national level (Vláda České republiky 2010). The result of an extensive consultation with other ministries and the NGDO and private sector platforms specifically acknowledges the EU trend to shift from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness. Furthermore, it supports the implementation of the *Code of Conduct* and Policy Coherence for Development as an EU concept, not an OECD concept. At the same time, the draft is very ambiguous since its statements on poverty reduction are still often contradicted by foreign policy priorities, which is an ongoing conflict of the Czech development cooperation.

14 After years of struggles between ministries, the centralisation of development cooperation was made possible by its inclusion in the programme declaration of the 2006 centre-right government from the electoral programme of the strongly pro-European Green Party.

15 The Foreign Committee of the Chamber of Deputies has proposed an amendment that would give the Czech Development Agency the obligation to help Czech entities in EU tenders and that would redefine the goal of development cooperation according to the *European Consensus on Development*.

In sum, the brief analysis shows that with the EU accession and beyond, there is and has been a growing number of references to the EU, but their understanding of the EU is instrumental. Most of the treatments of the EU are technical in nature; they deal with financial impacts of the enlargement and highlight the opportunities for Czech actors in EU tenders, but they came to elaborate on concrete commitments only recently. At the documentary level of EU adoption, there is no evidence of a transfer of EU values and norms to the Czech level beyond the acceptance of their existence in a policy document. On the contrary, the MFA officials downgrade the role of the EU by emphasising its external nature to the Czech interests. Even if the EU has taken over the primary references to OECD, the latter still plays an important role as a multilateral source of norms and commitments.

3.2 The shallow domestic institutionalisation and implementation of EU rules

This subsection now turns to the institutional and implementation levels of the adoption of the *acquis*. It reviews the adoption of “hard law” in the Czech Republic, as well as actions on quantity and quality of bilateral aid; aid coordination, complementarity and policy coherence for development (the so-called “3 Cs” agenda); and the development aspect of EU-ACP relations.

Hard law

There is relatively little to say about hard law. The adaptation of the diplomacy to cover the whole EU agenda was quite technical, and the institutional arrangement of the diplomatic corps was shaped after those of other member states, without interference from the political level. The ratification of the Cotonou Agreement represented the sole exception. It is worth mentioning that the goals and purpose of the EU-ACP relations were not questioned by the Czech parliament or the Czech president. The parliament has, however, reproached the government for not clearly announcing the costs related to the contribution to the EDF and for not doing so within the prescribed time limit. This might illustrate the fact that EU development cooperation was merely considered a cumbersome cost of the accession.

Aid quantity

A member state’s contribution to the EDF, the financial tool of EU-ACP relations, relates to the problem of aid quantity. While the share of the Czech Republic in the total EU population is approximately 2%, its contribution to the 10th edition of the fund will be only 0.51%, starting with the year 2011 (Vláda České republiky 2007a).¹⁶ Even though the contributions to the EDF are voluntary and fall under soft law, this result seems to be a compromise between the demands of the EU to the “new” members states to participate in the fund immediately after the accession, and the newcomers’ demand to pay as little as possible to the recipient countries located in the territories that are not among their foreign policy priorities (cf. Lightfoot 2010, 335). Real financial flows are essential here. As far as the Czech Republic does not contribute to the fund yet, the EU-ACP cooperation is not

16 The 10th EDF started already in 2008 and the “new” member states had the right to participate in its tenders since the beginning. But as the absorption capacity of the 9th EDF by the ACP countries has been limited, the “new” member states will start paying three years later.

seen as a major problem; however, there is a growing concern at the MFA and other ministries that the Czech companies, and to a lesser extent NGOs, will not be capable to participate in EDF tenders. The Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU in Brussels has to report its share in the EDF contracts to the MFA on a regular basis (E-mail communication, 12 Jan. 2010). Again, there is a very limited identification with the EU as a whole and a perceived absence of ownership of the EU policy. In this particular case, the Czech Republic has eventually adopted soft law but has not internalised its underlying values.

Another major non-enforceable document that regulates the volume of aid is the EU timetable with the aim to reach 0.7% ODA/GNI by 2015, which is to be found in the Brussels Council Conclusions of 2005 (European Council 2005). The Council Conclusions were preceded by a Commission Communication (European Commission 2005a). The “new” member states should “strive to increase” their ODA/GNI ratio to 0.17% in 2010 and 0.33% in 2015, while “old” member states should reach 0.51% in 2010 and 0.7% in 2015. The level of aid by the Czech Republic is currently stagnating at about 0.14% of its GNI. One half of this consists of the Czech participation in the EU budget, as the country cannot evade this duty.¹⁷ This relatively high figure – compared to those for other “new” member states – was facilitated by the economic recession rather than aid increases. The draft of the new Strategy Paper plans only minimal increases, which make the 2015 goal unrealistic. The existence of the 2015 target was celebrated as a success (Lightfoot 2010, 33), but the individual commitments for 2010 were initially opposed by the Czech Republic, which advocated for a collective goal only (Carbone 2007, 76). Moreover, in contrast with the Commission’s communication, the wording of the commitments was softened by the verb “strive for”. It is generally interpreted as non-binding by the Czech actors and *in extremis* as a mere “recommendation” by the Ministry of Finance. Finally, according to a senior representative of the Commission, the 2002 Barcelona commitments asking each member state to “strive to reach (...) at least 0.33% ODA/GNI by 2006” (European Council 2002, 5) were renegotiated in 2005 since the “new” member states refused to honour the 2002 commitments, as they had not participated in their elaboration at the time (before their accession to the EU).

There is probably no other instance in the *acquis communautaire* where such a gap in the commitments of the “old” and “new” EU member states was institutionalised. In addition to that, the targets diverge instead of converging in a medium term. This model of a “double speed Europe” is very far from attesting Europeanisation in the sense of adoption of – or at least adaptation to – EU rules. The agenda of aid volume attests the resistance of the Czech Republic and other “new” member states to accepting the norms. Of course the economic and social disparities between the Czech Republic and the most advanced EU donors are still large, the public awareness of and political support for development issues in new member states are low, and therefore it might also be counterproductive to require more of them if the sustainability and democratic legitimacy of their development cooperation programmes are seen as desirable (Horký 2010c). In any case, the resistance to Europeanisation in this question and the refusal of the previously agreed soft *acquis* are a matter of fact.

17 Given the compulsory contribution to the EU budget, the share of multilateral aid is higher for the less performing donors, and the increases in aid volume of the newly accessed member states must be hence put in perspective.

Aid quality

In the area of aid quality, which receives much less general attention, the Czech Republic faces a similar situation. Even though many standards are just taken over from the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), the problem of aid effectiveness is integrally raised in the *European Consensus on Development* (based on European Commission 2005b; European Parliament et al. 2005). The *Consensus* was arguably approved by the “new” EU members too soon after the accession to give them enough space to influence the process. Yet, the shortcomings in the Czech development cooperation measured against the ideal of the consensus are so numerous that they cannot all be treated here in detail. To give but a short list, Czech aid is not deconcentrated, but it is predominantly tied, non-transparent, gender blind, and driven by the supply side (OECD DAC 2007; Horký 2010b). In addition, there is a Czech consensus, coined by the recent strategy paper, on the undesirability of the general budget support and delegated cooperation.

The Czech development cooperation has not been evaluated since 2007. Motivated predominantly by the commercial interests and foreign policy priorities, its main recipients are middle income countries, especially in East and South East Europe. Its bilateral cooperation projects account only for about 25 million Euros if the extensive number of scholarships is excluded.¹⁸ There are a number of projects implemented mostly by the NGOs who advocate for a poverty-oriented development policy, and at least some of them can be expected to be effective and sustainable. Yet the absence of evaluations and the non-publication of the previous set of evaluations prevent us from drawing conclusions on the development impact of the Czech development cooperation.

Furthermore, it is not only the quality of aid that prevents an assessment of the effectiveness of the Czech development cooperation, but the multiplicity and fuzziness of its objectives, as these allow almost any project to qualify for the policy.¹⁹ While the *European Consensus* defines the “primary and overreaching” objective of the EU development cooperation as the “eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, including pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)” (European Parliament et al. 2005), the Czech law offers a broader definition that arguably allows for legitimising predominantly commercially driven projects. Even if the cross-cutting issue of gender equality, for example, was recently added to the agenda, the Czech Republic has never committed itself to untying aid for it or deconcentrating it. In sum, the Czech development cooperation puts less emphasis on poverty reduction than the *acquis* and has thus Europeanised only partially in terms of objectives, and in a very limited way also in the implementation.

Aid coordination and complementarity

A short review of the coordination and complementarity agenda, as expressed in the *EU Code of Conduct on Division of Labour* (European Commission 2007), reveals only rare

18 The scholarships actually can be criticised for contributing to a substantial brain drain from the South (see Horký 2010b).

19 The projects include “poverty reduction, economic and industrial development, gradual integration of partner countries into the world economy, development of agriculture, development and reinforcement of democracy, human rights and good governance, rule of law, migration management, sustainable development with emphasis on its environmental component and post-conflict resolution.” (Vláda České republiky 2004)

references to the document. As far as its implementation is concerned, the Czech Republic became a “supporting facilitator” in Moldova and Mongolia upon an initiative of the Commission in October 2009, and the Czech Development Agency has signed a bilateral memorandum of cooperation and complemented projects with the Austrian Development Agency in Moldova. Moreover, the Czech Development Agency is a member of the Practitioners’ Network for European Development Cooperation and it has been the network’s chair in 2009 (Interview, 29 Nov. 2009).

More importantly, the draft of the new Strategy Paper has reduced the number of programme countries from eight to five, but there remain five additional “project countries” and four “phase-out countries”, and the total number of sectors was hardly reduced. Despite these rather positive *ad hoc* steps, other forms of continuous coordination and complementarity with other donors are lacking and a delegation of implementation to another donor has been clearly ruled out by the new strategy paper.

Policy Coherence for Development

As the issues of Policy Coherence for Development for the Czech case have been dealt with elsewhere (Horký 2010a), suffice to say that policy coherence has been institutionalised as one of the two agendas of the inter-ministerial Council for Foreign Development Cooperation. Two awareness raising presentations on PCD by academia and the NGDO platform took place in 2008 and 2009 in the Council, but no further steps towards implementation have been undertaken so far.

Policy focus on Africa

Finally, the EU-ACP relations have been tackled in the beginning of this section in relation to the financing of the EU development cooperation. The general attitude towards sub-Saharan Africa may be illustrated with the example of the reasons given by the MFA for the inclusion of Ethiopia among the four programme countries: its absence would be perceived as a diversion from the MDGs agenda and a bad signal to the Czech citizens that consider Africa as a development priority, according to public surveys (SC&C 2008).

Overall, the Czech Republic has actively resisted EU soft law, especially in terms of quantity and quality of bilateral aid, but it has partly adopted the EU-ACP agenda by taking a very instrumental stance toward the EDF. The subordination of development cooperation to foreign policy has been identified as the main reason for putting forward particular interests other than poverty reduction. In contrast to the resistance to the recognised principles of aid effectiveness such as untying of aid and its deconcentration, the declared adoption of the “3 Cs” agenda seems to be less problematic. The very first individual cases of implementation do not openly contradict the interests of the Czech implementing entities and they are generally initiated by external actors;²⁰ in this regard, the very slow and shal-

20 This section did not allow for comparing the influence of the EU with that of other actors such as OECD, but even so, the review of the key policy areas leads to the confirmation of the “shallow Europeanisation” indicated by Goetz (2005) generally and Lightfoot (2010) particularly. This diagnosis can be summarised in the following way: the resistance to Europeanisation took place when a financial contribution was required, the EU norms in terms of aid quality and the EU-ACP agenda were partly refused and partly adapted to the needs of the domestic actors, and the “3 Cs” agenda was recently accepted in the discourse but not implemented yet.

low Czech Europeanisation arguably follows a pattern that is similar to previous EU enlargements such as those of Spain and Greece (see Box 1).

Box 1: The path dependency of the development policies of Spain and Greece

The research on the Europeanisation of foreign policy has mainly concentrated on “old” member states (see for example Tonra 2001; Wong 2006; Bache / Jordan 2008). Nevertheless, the available studies on Spain and Greece are particularly inspiring as they touch upon development cooperation. Both countries undertook the accession process to the EU only in the 1980s and their foreign policy priorities were different from the EU priorities. Both Spain and Greece preserved their territorial priorities in development policy that corresponded to their historical ties and their economic and security interests for a long period of time.

Greece is a small country with a similar pattern in its development cooperation with the “new” EU member states: it is modest in its disbursements and focused mainly on the neighbouring middle income countries with important Greek minorities (OECD 2006). Europeanisation enlarged the geographical scope of the Greek foreign policy mainly through Greece’s higher involvement in humanitarian and peacekeeping operations (Economides 2005, 483), and it has started to focus on Africa only recently. Greece would fail to Europeanise exactly because it did not abandon its past national priorities (Tsardanidis / Stavridis 2005, 220).

In contrast to that, the Spanish case attests the policy convergence of the national and EU foreign policy and some resignation on special relations with Latin America (Torreblanca 2001). According to Escribano and Lorca (2004) there was a substantial policy transfer to the EU, but it was accompanied to some extent by a policy substitution: aid to Latin America used to represent almost half of the Spanish bilateral development assistance, and it declined only during the last few years due to political changes in the approach to the European integration.

In 2007–2008 Spanish and Greek aid to Africa still represented only 16% and 7% of the total aid respectively (OECD 2010, own calculations). Both examples show the importance of path dependency and the general attitude of a country towards the European integration as a part of its foreign policy. The fact that both countries have been adopting EU rules for about two decades longer than the “new” EU member states puts the shallowness of the Czech Europeanisation in some perspective.

3.3 The ambiguous socialisation of the Czech EU presidency in development policy

The top-down Europeanisation of the Czech Republic seems problematic because of the absent awareness of EU values and the missing need for an EU collective action in the realm of development policy. However, the bottom-up Europeanisation, documented here through the example of the Czech presidency in the Council of the EU in the first half of 2008, shows that social learning and the recognition of interests in policy-making in the Council were articulated; less so, however, in the case of the policy towards Southern developing countries. The Europeanisation thus happened to some degree, but rather with a view on the process of defending the perceived national interests than in the area of development policy.

The presidency in CODEV, the working group on development, required neither substantial political nor public support: the presidency evolved almost exclusively at expert level. Thanks to the timely preparation and the quality of the personnel with an EU or multilateral development background, the Czech diplomacy understood well what was

expected from the presidency. The interviews with diplomats from other member states have highlighted that the presidency of CODEV is generally supposed to work with the Commission and the member states. It should not become isolated and take “unilateral steps” informed only by the national agenda. The presidency has to “deal with the issues on the table whatever its priorities are”. Once a topic is put on the agenda, the presidency “cannot kill it”; at most it can “play with delays”. Therefore there is “no space for invention”. The only exception is that the presidency is allowed to work on its national priority as a retribution “in return for loyalty”.

The main Czech priority was the *Access to sustainable sources of energy at the local level in developing countries*, a topic related to the area that the Czech Republic considers as its “comparative advantage”, where the development constituency as a whole, including the non-governmental organisations and private companies, could participate with their know-how through the involvement of an inter-ministerial working group.²¹ The second initiative, *Support of democratic governance*, responded to the declared transition experience of the Czech Republic, but it could involve only a limited number of actors, especially from the non-governmental sector. Finally, the Presidency selected the *Eastern dimension* as a cross-cutting priority that reflected the territorial priorities of the Czech foreign policy.

The peer assessment of the pre-selected Czech priorities by other member states and the Council was positive, and the presidency was seen as “just right” in terms of its aspirations. Of course, the expectations for a presidency vary according to the profile of the country: the subsequent Swedish and Spanish presidencies were supposed to be “more ambitious” and present “big things”. The Eastern priority was understood rather as an action that was intended to raise awareness of the poverty in Eastern and South East Europe since a concrete proposal was expected after the January ministerial conference. However, this step would require a readjustment of the EU aid architecture and a split between the DGs Development and External Relations and the European Neighbourhood Policy. There is a consensus in the Council that the EU should address all poor regions with its policy, so a territorial priority that was radically distinct from that of the preceding French presidency (with its Mediterranean focus) was accepted as legitimate.

Events largely set the agenda for the Czech presidency, such as the EU response to the impacts of the financial and economic crisis in the South. Even though the topic of the Southern dimension of the crisis was never raised by the Czech politicians during the presidency, its day-to-day management in the Council, in cooperation with the Commission, was appreciated, and the Czech “learning curve” was deemed comparable to those of other countries. In terms of general implementation, the presidency was assessed by the interviewees at EU level as above the expectations despite the (somehow non-admitted) very limited personal capacities. Noteworthy controversies concerned only the cross-cutting Eastern dimension that was a success for the DG External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy and the conclusion of the Eastern partnership, as it met resistance in DG Development and did not overcome the compartmentalisation of the

21 The background report on the topic was, however, prepared by a British consultancy company.

Commission in its aspiration to mainstream the “Eastern dimension” in EU development cooperation.

In line with the positive statements of the interviewees, the self-assessment of the presidency on the operational level was also positive, but the emphasis was put on different issues. The crisis has paradoxically softened the emphasis of member states on the financial commitments. Consequently, the presidency did not have to cross the only “red line” it had received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs: “No additional resources”. As a member of the permanent representation put it, “the Czech Republic will never fight for commitments”. The presidency was regarded as having an “educational function”, and it was thought that the Czech Republic, a pioneering state among the newcomers, should demonstrate that it has emancipated itself and learnt to express its opinion and promote priorities that are substantially different from the EU mainstream: minimal financial commitments, low interest in the European Development Fund, and a focus on technical assistance (and hence tied aid). The fundamental issues of aid effectiveness, (especially) the implementation of the *Code of Conduct*, and the Policy Coherence for Development were literally absent from the presidency’s agenda.

While on most issues the Czech Republic has ignored the EU priorities in development policy, on the procedural level, it was felt that the Czech Republic “socialised and did not tear the bunch apart”, as an interviewee put it. It also searched for alliances with the “old” member states that would not openly express non-mainstream opinions, but the dividing line between “old” and “new” member states remained the most relevant one to all the interviewed actors.²² Even if according to the Czech diplomats their strategies did not differ from those of other countries, their policies created a slight irritation. The other member states were allegedly surprised when the Czech Republic decided to put the Eastern dimension on the agenda of the January informal ministerial conference as “nobody actually believed that we would do it”, and the low expectations allowed them to adopt a “backwoodsman’s attitude” and promote their interests more overtly against the long-term tradition of ACP prioritisation.

The presidency of the Czech Republic in development policy expands the meaning of Europeanisation. The Czech Republic has quickly adapted to and benefited from the procedural rules in the working group to engage and promote its interests. In terms of policy content, these preferences differed from the European mainstream and thus went in the direction that was the opposite of that of Europeanisation. Rather than internalising the content, the Czech Republic had decided to aspire to a redefinition, or at least an enlargement, of the scope of the EU development policy to accommodate its own foreign policy priorities.

22 During the presidency, the Czech Republic naturally could not promote its own interests directly but only via other member states since it was supposed to remain neutral and moderate the debates in CODEV.

4 Conclusion

This paper has argued that the Czech policy of “Foreign Development Cooperation” is an example of shallow Europeanisation (Goetz 2005, 162) and that the policy was related to the Czech actors’ low political support for the focus on poverty reduction in Southern developing countries. The development agenda is explicitly regarded as a tool of foreign policy by the government. The “new” member states generally claim their Europeaness by their affirmation that they are striving to become advanced donors. They occasionally also complain of the low political support for and the missing capacities in their emerging development cooperation programmes. Contrary to this declared policy, the paper has shown that EU rules are accommodated to domestic interests; more often than not, EU norms are rejected rather than adopted. This is not to argue that the core values of solidarity, for example, are not shared by the Czech Republic. They can, however, at least in the case of the Czech Republic, be attributed to the influence of the European Union – although not unequivocally.²³

The application of the Europeanisation framework to the field of development policy has illustrated that social learning and, to a lesser extent, global incentives and lesson-drawing are the leading models of adopting EU rules in the domestic context of the member states, irrespective of their experience in development policy. In the Czech case, the values of poverty reduction in Southern developing countries are not accepted as the focus by the political elites. The sentiment of belonging to the European community is fragile, and the subordination of development cooperation to foreign policy priorities impedes a coordination with other donors. With the weak drive in the three relevant mechanisms of adopting EU rules in development policy, the bleak picture of Europeanisation in the Czech Republic, and presumably other “new” and “old” member states, is not surprising.

Even if a large amount of political support for development cooperation is necessary for a top-down Europeanisation, the successful assessment of the Czech EU presidency in the area of development policy shows that the bottom-up dimension can be ensured by the *élites* in concordance with the priorities of the foreign policy.²⁴ These findings may serve as a support for political recommendations. Considering that a better implementation of the principles enshrined in the European Consensus would lead to a more successful poverty reduction in the South, a greater role for the EU on the global scene and higher effectiveness in its development cooperation, the European Union should turn its attention to the non-Europeanisation in the area of international development policy. Particularly the high incongruence in social learning is presumably due to the absence or weakness of norm entrepreneurs and cooperative institutions (Börzel 2005); here a stronger focus on the part of the European Union is needed.

Firstly, the EU should support the political advocacy activities of the civil society, public awareness and development education campaigns. Development cooperation among the

23 This, however, may not be a rule for the other countries of the region since not all of them entered the EU with a relatively developed constituency. Some actually (re)started their policies on a green field.

24 The paper has not scrutinised the drivers that have lead to the outstanding performance of the Czech presidency at the operational level, but they seem to differ substantially from those leading to the adoption of EU norms in development policy. The interviews suggest that peer pressure from the socialised actors in Brussels and the need to defend the national prestige in Prague have probably played a decisive role.

weak performers must step out of the closed expert circles to the political level. Secondly, and this is a more difficult point, the European Union needs to overcome being perceived as a body that is external to the member states. Dealing directly with the problem of identity in new member states (and some old ones) is unrealistic. However, the EU should start by overcoming the postcolonial divide in dealing with ACP countries and the rest of the world in the Commission; this divide separates the newcomers from an occasion to give their specific inputs and does not allow for a collective action on the part of the Union. A better division of labour arguably includes different profiles and thus different priorities on the part of donors; this should be acknowledged in order to avoid alienating new member states. Finally, the concrete initiatives by the Commission and the “old” member states show that a relevant cooperation between the relatively autonomous development agencies is possible despite the different national priorities. Obviously, if these points are addressed, the effects will be tangible only in the long term.

This paper has identified the European Commission as the leading normative actor that sets the direction for the EU development policy, not least as the development agenda in the Council is cumulative in nature.²⁵ However, with regard to “new” member states, the past priorities of the Commission have failed. The Commission has only recently turned to the support of the civil society in the “new” member states. Before and during the accession, the European Commission has literally failed in promoting the development agenda in the “new” EU member states in a tangible manner, to the difference of UNDP, CIDA and other bilateral agencies. Furthermore, the Commission did not ask for political support from the “old” member states to inhibit the break through the agreed language of the 2002 Barcelona commitments and the creation of a “double speed Europe” in the development field by the 2005 Council Conclusions. The Commission will thus have to step up its efforts to defend the already existing commitments and their implementation.

Finally, this study contributes to the assessment of the EU accession conditionality. While it has been generally regarded as a success, the five year period since the first round of the “Eastern” enlargement has rather confirmed the existence of “inconsistencies in its application by the Commission over time, and the weakness of a clear-cut causal relationship between conditionality and policy or institutional outcomes in the CEECs.” (Hughes et al. 2004, 9) This lesson may be beneficial to future enlargements and possibly also to some extent to the European Neighbourhood Policy, which was fashioned according to the enlargement model. In relation to the current reforms with the Lisbon Treaty in vigour, there is still a need to overcome the historical legacy in the EU aid architecture and erase the dividing line left by the Iron Curtain. If the European Union is unable to close the gap between the “new” and “old” member states, it will hardly be able to become an effective actor in its attempts to narrow the gap between the North and the South.

25 It must be acknowledged that this accumulation of commitments leads at the same time to a high discrepancy with reality. It allows only slow reactions to the changing global environment and depoliticises development.

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