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# RECONCILING EU INTERESTS AND VALUES A NEW VISION FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT



Autumn 2014



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## RECONCILING EU INTERESTS AND VALUES A NEW VISION FOR GLOBAL DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Policy Insight

Autumn 2014  
Brussels

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## Table of contents

Reconciling EU interests and values: A new vision for global development	7
ANNEX I - Programme	17
ANNEX II - List of participants	19

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Stephan Auer, Director for Multilateral Relations and Global Issues in the European External Action Service

## Reconciling EU interests and values: A new vision for global development

The European Union should form ambitious plans to help solve global problems, leading development policy expert [Simon Maxwell](#) told a *Friends of Europe* debate on 10 September.

“There is no ‘them and us’ anymore.  
There is only us in the modern world.”



Simon Maxwell, European Think Tanks Group

Introducing the European Think Tanks Group (ETTg) 2014 report, “Our Collective Interest: Why Europe’s problems need global solutions and global problems need European action,” Maxwell called for the new EU Commissioners to contribute to global development in five key areas: a more inclusive world economy; environmental sustainability; peace and security; democracy and human rights; and a reduction of poverty and inequality.

“We want them to stop thinking about development as being aid,” he said. “We want them to redefine the problem with a vision of what the world could be like after 2015. There is no ‘them and us’ anymore. There is only us in the modern world.”

The relationship between Europe and less-developed countries is going through big changes, as once-poor regions grow economically, creating new consumers and business opportunities.

At the same time, problems in the developing world are increasingly becoming problems for Europe too. Climate change is caused by factors such as fossil fuels, wherever they are used – and it has a worldwide impact. Inequality and failing states can spark conflict in developing countries – triggering mass migration, which affects Europe.



**“Europe’s problems need global action and global problems need European action.”**

Shada Islam, Director of Policy at *Friends of Europe*

“We can’t disconnect ourselves from what’s happening around us,” said **Shada Islam**, Director of Policy at *Friends of Europe*. “Europe’s problems need global action and global problems need European action.”

Panelists underlined the need to tackle poverty and inequality, the importance of women in development and the role of the private sector. They also called for consistent strategies from EU institutions, member states and other donors.

“The deep cause of all these issues is the failure of global governance and the failure of global institutions,” said Maxwell. “The deep solution is to be found in multilateral action. That is the barn door that can be kicked open, because that is where there is a role for the European Union.”

The new thinking on development has been reflected in the team of incoming President Jean-Claude Juncker, which includes a Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development. Previously, there was one Commissioner for Development and another for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.

“What it means is that development today is more and more global,” said **Fernando Frutuoso de Melo**, European Commission Director General for Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid.

Thirty years ago developing countries were more or less alike, he said – but today they are different. So, while traditional development policy – administered through aid – is still important, the EU is also taking a wider, more integrated approach to development. “Development aid is part of a policy to address specific long-term objectives, including equity in economic growth, job creation and fighting climate change.”

**“Development today is more and more global. Development aid is part of a policy to address specific long-term objectives, including equity in economic growth, job creation and fighting climate change.”**

Fernando Frutuoso de Melo, European Commission Director General for Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid



The Netherlands restructured its foreign relations agencies after studying the impact on development of measures related to aid, migration, foreign direct investment, tax and trade. In Ghana, between 2006 and 2011, aid and trade produced the biggest impact on development. So the Netherlands created the post of minister for foreign trade and development.

“If you want to have impact it makes sense to focus on aid and trade,” said [Jeroen Verheul](#), the Netherlands’ Ambassador for Trade and Development. “This is a reflection of the awareness that we need common solutions for common problems.”

Dutch brewer Heineken, for example, has been promoting production of cassava in Nigeria. It extracts sugar from the cassava and uses this to brew beer there, instead of importing sugar from abroad. “That creates employment and reduces import costs,” he said.

**“If you want to have impact it makes sense to focus on aid and trade.”**

[Jeroen Verheul](#), Netherlands’ Ambassador for Trade and Development.



For Europe to contribute to global change, it first needs to set a good example, said [Stephan Auer](#), Director for Multilateral Relations and Global Issues in the European External Action Service. “If we want to promote our economic and social model abroad, then we need to show that our model is a successful one, and that we can create jobs and wealth and prosperity,” he said.

**“If we want to promote our economic and social model abroad, then we need to show that our model is a successful one.”**



[Stephan Auer](#), Director for Multilateral Relations and Global Issues in the European External Action Service

One such area is trade, where the EU has maintained its global weight, unlike the United States and Japan. Another is climate change, where EU countries have shown that there is no contradiction between climate protection and job creation. Germany has created more jobs in the renewable energy sector than in the car sector recently.

“In Europe we have succeeded in decoupling economic growth from the growth of emissions and natural resources use,” said Auer. “We have a good story to tell. If you want people to sign a climate change package in Paris 2015, we need the private sector to allay the fears that there is a contradiction between climate protection measures and economic prosperity.”

However, there's some concern that climate change has faded a little from the European agenda. "Yes, we have an ambitious climate package," said MEP [Linda McAvan](#), Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Development. "But every climate change vote in parliament has been more and more difficult in the last five years. We have to get back that sense of urgency."

**"If every climate change vote in parliament has been more and more difficult in the last five years. We have to get back that sense of urgency."**



[Linda McAvan](#), Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Development.

Corporate tax avoidance through off-shoring is a problem for governments both in Europe and in developing countries, and so should be a focus for international cooperation, said McAvan. The private sector should realise that it can only flourish if governments have the funds to invest in the state, in education and in infrastructure, she said.

"We have to make corporations pay their taxes," she said. "Billions are lost in developing countries through the same problem. This is a problem for the whole world to solve together."

Another barrier to development is inequality between men and women. Joanna Maycock, Secretary General, European Women's Lobby, said this affects a

range of issues related to development. "It impacts our delivery of human rights, the sustainability of our environment and our food and energy systems," she said, speaking from the audience. "One of the core EU values is equality between men and women."

McAvan said she hoped the Parliament Committee on Development would look very positively at the Gender Action Plan. "I think we need to look at what concrete things we can do in the EU to make things change," she said.

Countries that fail to make the most of women's possible contribution will lose out, said Auer. "If you do not tap sometimes over 50% of the population's potential, then you miss a very good opportunity to develop your country sustainably," he said. It is important to point this out, because beyond the intrinsic value of women's rights, "you have to add more and create a good narrative to convince more traditionally minded people about gender equality."

He said the EU is one of the most fervent advocates of gender equality. "I think we have done quite a good job in promoting resolutions and initiatives," he said. "We have initiated United Nations Security Council and General Assembly resolutions on this subject, in particular on sexual violence against women and sexual violence in conflicts."

The ETTG report examined the underlying issues for development, but Johannes Trimmel, Board Member, European NGOs Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD), asked how far Europeans were prepared to question the deeper causes. "Are we ready to pose questions on our political and economic systems?" he asked. "Or are they a cause of the significant poverty remaining in this world? What do you think would be necessary for Europe to work on a change agenda for a systematic transformation, to really do something about the causes and not only work on the symptoms?"

Verheul said that it is hard to make a positive impact in some places. When Verheul served as Yemen, poverty was the result of conflicts – which were perpetuated by political elites fighting amongst each other. "How do you influence elites who are impervious to sanctions because they have managed their affairs very well?" he said.

And in some areas – particularly security – the EU is not empowered to take

certain kinds of action. “We think the EU can work really well in peace and security,” said Maxwell. “But the EU is never going to be NATO. The EU is never going to be the lead organisation that sends troops to sort out conflicts. But the EU can be the best supporting actor, and can play a really important part in civil protection and police missions around the world.”

### “If the European Union is not able to adopt an energy agenda or a common Russia policy, you cannot win the Ukrainian battle.”



MEP Elmar Brok, Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs

Still, the EU is often criticised for not doing enough. It should have come up with a better unified strategy over Ukraine, said [MEP Elmar Brok](#), Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs. “If the European Union is not able to adopt an energy agenda or a common Russia policy, you cannot win the Ukrainian battle,” he said. “And where was Europe in coordinating the Iraq question? There was no coordination. These shortcomings are not acceptable.”

Auer said the EU had managed to speak with a single voice on Ukraine in spite of member states’ differing interests and attempts by Russian President Vladimir Putin to sow division. When Putin wrote to some member state leaders, warning of a possible gas crisis, the EU responded as one.

“That letter was clearly aimed at driving a wedge between the member states,” said Auer. “But President Barroso coordinated a joint letter of reply in the name of all 28 member states. Then on Monday (8 September), we agreed on a new round of sanctions, even though they will hurt some member states more than others.”

To convince member states to work through the EU, rather than other international institutions, the new Commissioners need to show they can deliver better results than others, said Maxwell.

“The EU should identify its comparative advantages and sell like mad to the member states, so that they are banging at the door,” he said. “What do we have to do to turn the EU into that agent of choice?”

Europeans used to assume that they did not suffer from the same problems as less developed countries. But poverty, climate change and human rights are global problems now. “It matters that a billion people in the world live on less than a dollar a day,” said Maxwell. “It also matters that 400 million people in G20 countries live on less than \$2 a day.”



## ANNEX I – Programme

### POLICY INSIGHT DEBATE

#### Reconciling EU interests and values: A new vision for global development

In a rapidly changing and interdependent world, Europe's new leaders need to adopt a global perspective in European policy-making, a new understanding of the EU's global role, and in particular, a new approach to international development. The EU's ambitions for its own citizens – for prosperity, environmental sustainability, peace and inclusiveness – cannot be divorced from its global responsibilities and opportunities. Its future will be shaped by how successful it is in contributing towards a more inclusive, stable, prosperous and equitable world. To do this, the EU will need to promote better and more inclusive trade and finance regimes, play its part internally and externally on climate change and the transition towards a green economy, contribute towards the prevention of violent conflict, support democratic political change and respect for human rights, and understand and tackle the drivers of poverty and inequality.

Do Europe's new leaders recognise the need for a new global strategy that links internal and external action? How can Europe's policymakers ensure there will be a greater commitment to collective action at EU level? Is there a readiness to connect new ways of working with new systems and processes? How can the EU's leadership be strengthened across policy areas and institutions? Does the European Think Tanks Group's 2014 report "Our Collective Interest: Why Europe's problems need global solutions and global problems need European action" offer the sort of answers needed?

<b>Stephan Auer</b>	Director for Multilateral Relations and Global Issues, European External Action Service (EEAS)
<b>Elmar Brok MEP</b>	Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs
<b>Fernando Frutuoso de Melo</b>	European Commission, Director General for Development and Cooperation- EuropeAid
<b>Simon Maxwell</b>	European Think Tanks Group
<b>Linda McAvan MEP</b>	Chair of the European Parliament Committee on Development
<b>Jeroen Verheul</b>	Ambassador for Trade and Development and Head of the Ministry's Task Force for the Global Partnership for Effective Development, the Netherlands

Moderated by **Shada Islam**, Director of Policy at *Friends of Europe*



Johannes Trimmel, Board Member, European NGOs Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD)

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**Lars Bosselmann**, Policy Officer, EU Liaison Office, Cbm International

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