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## Evolution of the EU development policy – from altruism to the interest instrumentalism and beyond

Nikolina HERCEG KOLMAN<sup>1</sup>, Goran BANDOVIĆ<sup>2</sup>

**Abstract:** The article examines the evolution of the European Union (EU) development policy, from the United Nations Millennium development goals (MDGs) and, first-ever, global attempt to end poverty, to the present day. It first gives an overview of the literature, noting it is heavily focused on the solidarity-instrumentalism dichotomy, then follows with analysis on how have major global crises, notably, climate crisis, Covid-19 pandemic, and Ukraine crisis, affected and shaped the EU development policy and its evolution. Based on that analysis and the literature, the article summarizes several categories of the factors that have influenced the EU development policy and concludes that the research must go beyond the solidarity-instrumentalism dichotomy and develop more encompassing research tools, to be able to grasp increasing complexities of the development policymaking in the contemporary world. A more appropriate analytical frame should focus on the dual role of the EU development policy, which serves as a bridge between foreign and domestic EU policy, and on its integration with other policies, especially climate, health, and peace.

**Keywords:** EU Development Policy, Development Cooperation, Millennium Development Goals, The 2030 Agenda, Climate Change, Covid-19, The War in Ukraine, Peace, Diplomacy, Stability, Security.

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<sup>1</sup> Doctoral candidate at the University of Zagreb, [nikolina.herceg.kolman@gmail.com](mailto:nikolina.herceg.kolman@gmail.com), ORCID: 0000-0002-3171-8985.

<sup>2</sup> Full Professor, Head of International relations and sustainable development university department at the University of Zagreb, [gbandov@unizg.hr](mailto:gbandov@unizg.hr), ORCID: 0000-0002-3171-8985.

## **Introduction – evolution of the EU development policy at a glance**

The EU is the world's largest official development aid (ODA) donor. Commitment to the international aid goes long way back to the very beginnings of the European unification. The development policy was first introduced at the European Union (EU) level of the policymaking at the Paris Summit in 1972, but first normative definition came twenty years later, with the Maastricht Treaty on the European Union (TEU). The Article 21, paragraph 2 of the TEU states that the EU will “foster the sustainable economic, social, and environmental development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty” (TEU 2012, Article 21, para. 2).

The more rapid development came with the 2000 United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These goals represented the first ever global sustainable development effort, which defined eight goals to be achieved by 2015: 1. Eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2. Achieve universal primary education, 3. Promote gender equality and empower women, 4. Reduce child mortality, 5. Improve Maternal Health, 6. Combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, 7. Ensure environmental sustainability, 8. Develop a global partnership for development (UNGA Res. 55/2). Ending extreme poverty and hunger was the primary objective of the Millennium development goals and this priority was also mirrored in the goals of the EU development policy. The first EU document that dealt specifically with the development policy, European Consensus on Development defined eradication of poverty as the primary goal, with the principle of partnership and ownership of the recipient countries as guiding principles for the EU development cooperation (EU 2006).

After the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009 development policy has become an integral part of the EU foreign policy. The article 208 of the Treaty on the functioning of the European Union (TFEU) declares: „Union policy in the field of development cooperation shall be conducted within the framework of the principles and objectives of the Union's external action. The Union's development cooperation policy and that of the Member States complement and reinforce each other“ (TFEU 2012, Article 208). Furthermore, the Treaty puts poverty eradication at the very heart of the EU development policy: „Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty. The Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries“ (TFEU 2012, Article 208). The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

(The 2030 Agenda) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) have introduced comprehensive sustainable development global plan (UNGA Res. 70/01) and the EU has become global frontrunner in the attempt to fulfil the Agenda's goals. The SDGs have been mainstreamed into every EU policy, including the development policy, and the progress towards the 17 goals and over 100 indicators is regularly monitored, evaluated, and published (see, e.g., Eurostat 2022).

The financial crisis of 2008 and the austerity response had put a lot of strain on both the EU and the member states' budgets, also affecting their respective development policies and international aid and cooperation. That was, however, only the first in the line of crises that would challenge the EU; migration crisis in 2015, Brexit, Covid-19 crisis, and finally Ukraine war have all since shaken the very core of the EU. Amid these immediate threats lies an ongoing crisis, which is, while low-intensity in comparison, the most perilous one – the climate change crisis. All these crises, as well as internationally adopted sustainable development documents, have shaped the EU development policy, both in approach and in scope. This article will examine that influence and offer conclusions on the evolution of the EU development policy and its motives in the face of crises, with suggestions for potential approaches and directions for further research.

## **Theorising the evolution of the EU development policy – from altruistic spirit of the Millennium development goals to the multi-facet instrumentalism in the face of crises and chaotic reality**

The literature identifies several groups of motives for the development aid. The first group includes altruistic motives, solidarity, and charity, with goals such as poverty eradication. The second group defines motives as driven by interest, which can be “enlightened” interests (promotion of human rights, democracy, peace) or political, strategic and security interests – political influence, economic interest, fight against terrorism (see Gupta and Thompson, 2010). The third group of motives is environmental, which can be of both altruistic and interest nature, driven by certain political, economic, or strategic interest (Gupta and Thompson, 2010). The discussion on the evolution of the EU development policy in literature follows that typology, and the debate is mostly concentrated on the dichotomy between “moral” and “selfish” motivation, or between “solidarity” and “instrumentality” (see, e.g., Furness et al. 2020; Fukuda-Parr and McNeill 2019; Delputte and and

Lighfoot 2019; Holden 2020; Szent-Iványi and Kugiel 2020; Babarinde 2019; Hadfield 2007).

The debate is focused on whether development assistance can be integrated with other policies and into certain domestic goals without compromising its central idea – helping the poor and achieving prosperity for everyone (Lumsdaine 1993). This dilemma, in other words, concerns the balance between solidarity (development aid) and instrumentality (other policy and goals) (Furness et al. 2020). Instrumentality is described as an approach to development policy which sees development aid as an instrument for achieving certain national interests or even some interests within the donor country (Asongu and Jellal 2016). Indeed, member states do have much interest in shaping the EU development policy and adjusting its goals to their national preferences (Orbie and Carbone 2016), and those interests can and do shape the EU level policy to a certain extent.

In any case, instrumentality in this sense is perceived as incompatible with development policy (Furness et al. 2020). However, every crisis the EU had to face brought its development policy closer to the instrumental understanding and further away from the core notion of the altruistic approach. Another aspect that followed this process was an increasing politicisation of the development policy, which means it became more and more a subject of the debate, polarised opinions and widening of the circle of actors involved in debates and decision making (Koch et al. 2021; Hackenesch et al. 2021). This evolution from domestically low-impact policy relevant to the small circle of EU development policy makers to policy that was more and more matter of debate and conflict also influenced the shift to more instrumentalised approach (Koch et al. 2021). For example, austerity measures after financial crisis in 2008 led to ODA cuts in almost all member states. Politicisation process led to further ODA cuts because of public debates on the justification for funding international development assistance in the situation of economic crisis and major domestic cuts (Koch et al. 2021).

At the EU level the process led to a debate on the reform of the EU development policy, predominantly on the idea to exclude middle-income countries from the EU aid recipient list (Koch et al. 2021). Another reform was underway, which introduced the conditions to meet certain political criteria to receive EU assistance (Faust et al. 2012). Agenda for Change, introduced by the European Commission in 2011, as a policy developed based on European Consensus on Development (2006), introduced stricter conditionality for recipient countries, linking development assistance to political criteria, especially with respect of human rights and good governance. Another novelty was the concept of differentiated development partnerships, which considered EU impact and

interest, giving priority to Sub-Saharan Africa and the EU Neighbourhood. (EC COM[2011] 637 final: 9).

Koch et al. (2021) noted that the Agenda for Change also reformed the scope of the development policy itself by shifting the focus from poverty to broader agenda aligned with EU foreign and security policy. Migrant crisis in 2015 prompted EU member states to use EU development policy to stop the flow of migrants and refugees, which shifted focus on the “root causes” of migration (Rozbicka and Szent-Iványi, 2020). This resulted in both geographical and programmatic shift in EU development policy goals and increased European ODA in 2015 and 2016 (Knoll and Sherriff 2017, 17).

Koch et al. (2021, 9) claim that this response to the migrant crisis led to the transformation of the EU development policy into “jack of all trades” covering a vast number of issues that were outside its traditional role, such as migration, conflict, corruption, and political repression. This process was furthered with the incorporation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs into the EU development policy (Fukuda-Parr and McNeill 2019). The 2030 Agenda was unprecedented document in terms of its scope and ambition and it covered virtually every aspect of development. Many of the SDGs and its targets already had been a part of the EU development policy, especially those concerning environment, poverty, women and girls’ empowerment and education. Nevertheless, the EU incorporated the SDGs into its development policy, which resulted with the adoption of the New Consensus on Development: “Our world, our Dignity, our Future” (EU 2017).

The rise of populism in member states instigated by financial and migrant crises affected unfavourably many national and EU policies, including the development policy. This led some of previously very generous donors, such as Netherlands, Sweden, and Denmark, to revisit and restrict their development policy, making it more interest driven (Elgström 2017). Illiberal governments in Poland and Hungary also had influence on the EU development policy, especially with their anti-immigration sentiments (Koch et al., 2021). Szent-Iványi and Kugiel (2020) analysed how Poland’s and Hungary’s populist governments changed their countries development policies and attempted to “upload” them to the EU level, especially during the 2015 migrant crisis. They argue that the growing instrumentalization of the EU development policy during that crisis might have been due to the policy’s relative weakness, given it is defined in the TFEU as a competency shared between the EU and the member states (Szent-Iványi and Kugiel 2020). This gives member states a lot of space to shape the EU development policy and to align it with their national interests (Szent-Iványi and Kugiel 2020). Holden (2020) also argued that the rise of illiberalism led to the use of development policy as a tool to meet political and economic interests. Holden examined how this shift influenced the

EU development policy observing that, although there is a development towards more instrumentalization, the EU is, nevertheless, less susceptible to this process than its member states, or other nation-states and that solidarity will remain an important feature of the EU development policy (Holden 2020).

Keijzer and Lundsgaarde (2018) argue that financial and migration crises prompted the EU to pursue “mutual benefit” in development policy, which represents a substantial shift from the proclaimed priority in the EU treaties – eradication of poverty. This shift is also evident in the 2017 New Consensus on Development: “Efforts will be targeted towards eradicating poverty, reducing vulnerabilities, and addressing inequalities to ensure that no-one is left behind. By contributing to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda, the EU and its Member States will also foster a stronger and more sustainable, inclusive, secure, and prosperous Europe” (EU 2017, 4).

However, the literature also offers some differing points of view. Bergmann et al. (2019) discursive analysis showed that, even though the EU development policy was almost exclusively framed through a moral motivation during the 2000s, this was not the case before this decade. The analysis demonstrated that the EU development policy has always been framed through both moral and more self-centred frame, which means that growing instrumentalization does not mean breaking with the past, but rather making a “full circle” (Bergman et al. 2019). Bergman et al. (2019) further argue that the EU policy was originally framed as a supplementary policy, and that it operated mainly through financing. As the process of European integration moved forward, the development policy evolved into a self-standing policy (Bergman et al. 2019).

With the Lisbon Treaty, which incorporated EU development policy into the EU external action, there was a shift back to framing the development policy again as a policy facilitating other policy goals. Therefore, they conclude that policy framing in 2000s was a temporary phenomenon, and that the recent reforms represent, in fact, “the return to form” (Bergmann et al. 2019, 553). Discourse on sustainable development has opened a new space for instrumentalization of the development policy, especially with the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. SDGs have been mainstreamed into every EU policy, including development policy, which is now also perceived as a policy with task to contribute to the sustainable development (Bergmann et al. 2019).

There seems to be a consensus in the literature that with the end of 2000s the EU development policy has become increasingly more instrumental, especially since the Lisbon treaty. This evolution is thought to be mostly the result of the crises the EU faced, primarily financial and migrant crises. The global sustainable

policy and climate change efforts played an even more significant role in the evolution of the EU development policy, especially with the adoption of all-encompassing 2030 Agenda.

However, as Bergman et al. (2019) have demonstrated, EU development policy was exclusively justified morally only during the 2000s. This means that the EU development policy has always been, in fact, viewed as more than helping the poor out of the pure altruistic motives. It has, in fact, always been a tool for achieving goals in many policy areas, albeit not excluding the moral, altruistic component. In that light, Delputte and Lightfoot (2021) offer a different view on the evolution of the EU development policy, arguing that the debate in literature “suggests a false dualism between a ‘morally good’ and a realist ‘selfish’ approach to development “and call for a new critical perspective to „engage in a more profound assessment of how fundamentally EU development policy is really changing” (Delputte and Lightfoot 2021). They conclude that this ongoing dualism between solidarity and instrumentality has evolved EU development policy into highly complex arena of competing norms, practices, and institutions, which opens many questions for further research (Delputte and Lightfoot 2021).

## **EU development policy in current crises**

### *Global Challenges*

#### *Covid 19 pandemic*

The Covid 19 pandemic was arguably the biggest crisis that the EU and the world had to face since the World War II. To curb the detrimental effects of the virus to the public health, the EU countries, as well as others, had to implement extreme, never used measures. Economic activity had to be drastically limited, which caused existential threat to many EU citizens, all the while the pandemic put extreme pressure on health systems in all member states. The EU reacted promptly, in an unprecedented speed and consensus level, with trillions of euros worth emergency and recovery funds. The fact that the pandemic also had to be detained outside the EU, brought to front the EU development policy.

On 8 April 2020 the EU launched Team Europe package, as a support mechanism for partner countries in their fight against Covid-19. Team Europe gathered EU, EU financial institutions and member states in a joint effort to aid the fight against Covid 19 globally with joint priorities, a joint financial package, support

for global preparedness, and the promotion of global coordination and multilateralism (Burni et al. 2022). Through this mechanism the EU, EU member states and European financial institutions, have disbursed 46 billion euros to over 130 countries (EC 2021).

Most of the funds were allocated to the European Neighbourhood, Sub-Saharan Africa, Turkey, and Western Balkans. Initially, 20 billion euros was pledged for this purpose, but this amount doubled by January 2021, and further increased to 46 billion euros (EC 2021). The focus of this support mechanism was on emergency response and immediate humanitarian needs, strengthening health, water, sanitation, and nutrition systems, and mitigating the social and economic consequences of the pandemic (EC 2021). Aside from this effort, the EU also took a leading role in setting up of the initiative for global fair distribution of vaccines, COVAX Facility. Team Europe contributed to the COVAX Facility with over 3 billion euros (EC 2021).

Team Europe was also a long-term strategy for EU international cooperation and aid, which was outlined in the letter addressed to the EU Delegations, member state embassies and the offices of EU development finance institutions and agencies and signed by European Commissioner for International Partnerships, the High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy and 25 member states ministers in charge of the development policy (Burni et al. 2022). The letter entitled "Team Europe approach for COVID-19 and beyond" gave a vision of the long-term transformation of the Team Europe into EU action for green and sustainable recovery (Burni et al. 2022). Keizer et al. (2021) note rather unusual ability of the Commission to mobilise all EU institutions and member states for this cause and attribute this to less formal and less bureaucratic decision-making process, but also to the nature of the crisis itself, its profoundness and severity, which called for a swift and joint action.

The EU response to Covid 19 crisis in terms of development policy was quick and quite substantial. As far as motivation goes, it was without a doubt motivated by the need to contain the pandemic, which would, consequently, mean it was instrumental and guided by self-interest. Furthermore, discourse used to present Team Europe, especially the explanation of its long-term role, emphasized once again sustainable, green development. This further supports the claim that Covid crisis reinforced instrumental notion of the EU development policy, the one serving to the EU interests, and as supplementary to other policies, namely sustainability policy and the implementation of the European Green Deal. Burni et al. (2021) found another interesting motivation for the EU response to Covid 19 pandemic. They argue that the Team Europe was motivated by desire to strengthen



development policy cooperation between member states and EU institutions (Burni et al. 2021).

During the Covid-19 crisis, more than during any crisis before, interests were shared globally. Even more so is the case with the climate change crisis. Both crises prove that the research of the EU development policy must go beyond reductionist dichotomies and oversimplifications. As Delputte and Lighfoot (2021) rightly argue, a new critical approach is necessary to explain the EU development policy evolution in the complexity of the today's world, which seems to jump from one crisis to another, with profound effects on all area of human activity.

### *Climate change crisis*

In 2003 the European Commission presented a Communication on Climate Change in the Context of Development Cooperation (European Commission, 2003), which proposed an integrated strategy for climate change and poverty eradication and called for more effort for integrating the environment component into the EU development policy (Etty and van der Grijp 2010). The European Security Strategy (2003) also affirmed that global warming would exacerbate competition for natural resources, potentially spurring instability in vulnerable regions (Michel, 2021).

Strategy on Climate Change in the Context of Development Cooperation was also adopted in 2003, along with the Action plan 2004-2008. The Strategy stated: "Climate change is a risk to development. Adaptation strategies should seek to manage the risk, thereby supporting developing countries in building resilience to climate change impacts and protecting national and EU efforts to eradicate poverty" (EC COM [2003] 85 final). In 2007, the Commission proposed building a Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) between the EU and the poor, most vulnerable developing countries (Etty and van der Grijp 2010), while the Foreign Affairs Council called for "mainstreaming" climate into EU security, development, and humanitarian agendas at all levels (Michel 2021).

The 2017 Consensus on development set following goals for sustainable development and climate change in development policy: "addressing the lack of energy access; increasing energy efficiency and renewable energy generation to achieve a sustainable balance between energy production and consumption; and contributing to the global fight against climate change in line with the Paris Agreement and the related NDCs presented by the Parties" (EU 2017, 23).

As an answer to the climate change crisis, in late 2019 the EU launched the European Green Deal, the most ambitious and comprehensive EU plan to date, both in terms of planned achievements and investments. It is, first and foremost,

a green development plan for the EU and its member states, with the aim of climate neutrality by 2050. However, the stakes involved, and the fact that greenhouse gases emission need to be curbed everywhere in the world, not just the EU, make the European Green Deal a matter of both EU foreign and development policy. As Teevan, Medinilla and Sergejeff (2021) point out, there is no integral strategy that would combine all policies of concern to the European Green Deal - trade, foreign, and development. Council Conclusions on climate diplomacy offer some insight into the effect of the European Green Deal outside the EU and on climate in development policy (CoEU 2020). Conclusions mention Green Deal and European Climate Law, stating that the EU external climate efforts „rely on the strength to fit its domestic policies and innovative solution by EU industry and business“ (CoEU 2021, 3).

Conclusions also address climate in the EU development policy, recognizing lack of finance for „resilient and just“ energy transition in middle and low income countries and stating that „the EU will continue, amongst others through the Global Gateway, to provide a sustainable, green and positive offer to partners for the development of trusted climate resilient energy, transport and digital infrastructure, whilst at the same time contributing to a predictable investment environment and international stability“ (CoEU 2021, 7). Council invited EU institutions and member states to consider opportunities for partnerships for just transition with low and middle-income countries, especially those heavily reliant on coal. As with development policy in general, African, West Balkan and Neighbourhood countries are specially emphasised (CoEU 2021). Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument - Global Europe (2021-2027) set a 30 percent target for climate finance, and additional 4 billion euro was committed by Commission (CoEU 2021).

Teevan, Medinilla and Sergejeff (2021) detected three approaches to climate and European Green Deal in foreign and development policy: a collaborative approach, a coercive approach, and a diplomatic approach. In most cases, EU uses the first approach, especially in development policy. Climate and Green Deal in development policy are implemented through regional strategies, financed by IPA and Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument Global Europe (NDICI) (Teevan, Medinilla and Sergejeff 2021). Strategy for the Western Balkans, and 8 billion euros Economic and Investment Plan and Green agenda for the Western Balkans include 5 pillars: climate action, circular economy, biodiversity, fighting air pollution and sustainable food systems (Teevan, Medinilla and Sergejeff 2021).

Long-term goals of the Team Europe, initially designed as a tool for Covid-19 support and relief, also include green transition and climate. Many of the so far

published initiatives for regions and countries include projects supporting green transition. As Teevan, Medinilla and Sergejeff (2021) observe, the EU is aiming to link the countries from Western Balkans, Neighbourhood and Africa to its own green transition as earlier as possible in the process. In the years to come Team Europe initiatives will be the most concrete EU external action for green transition through development policy.

The immediate neighbourhood, especially countries in the process of EU accession, are understandably, most involved, with largest overall investments. However, initiatives include countries around the world, from all the major regions (Teevan, Medinilla and Sergejeff 2021). This proves the EU commitment to green transition, both at home and abroad. Development policy in this case serves as the most important tool in the EU contribution to the global fight against climate change.

### *Peace and stability*

#### *The war in Ukraine and future peace building efforts*

Of all the crises mentioned, war in -e is the one that has shaken the EU the hardest. Aside from the most imminent threat to peace, the war caused many other crises and shocks, especially in energy and food supply. The war in Ukraine is far beyond development policy and out of its reach, considering geopolitical relations and the interests of the invading country, Russia. However, the fact that the war is happening once again on the European continent, after the Western Balkans in the 90s, will, without a doubt, urge EU to reconsider the approach to peace-building efforts both in its neighbourhood and beyond. Since the Russian aggression started the EU has mobilized 4,1 billion euros for Ukraine's economic and social resilience (EC 2022). In addition, The Commission has proposed to establish "RebuildUkraine Facility", a legal EU instrument which would financially support Ukraine (EC 2022). However, the EU has provided a substantial assistance to Ukraine for a long time before the Russian invasion, and, as we have witnessed, it hasn't secured long-term peace and stability. This is the area of external action where EU has traditionally been the least active and not very successful. External evaluation of the EU's support to conflict prevention and peace-building between 2013 and 2018 has shown that with substantial investment of 5,6 billion euros much more could be achieved with integrated approach to peace-building,<sup>3</sup> which would include all relevant policies, as well as conflict-sensitive approach (EC 2020).

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<sup>3</sup> Evaluation was conducted by Particip and ECDPM, commissioned by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO).

David Michel (2021) examines the link between climate change and peace-building. Michel (2021) notes that the 2016 EU Global Strategy recognizes that climate change cuts through all other security threats and acts like a “threat multiplier”. Thus, the effects of climate change negatively affect the social cohesion, cause population displacements, and generate instability which further fuels conflicts (Michel 2021). For this reason, the Global Strategy calls for integrative policy approach and use of all possible policy tools in alleviating climate change effects on developing countries (Michel 2021).

Another consideration and lesson from this conflict stems from the sluggish EU attitude towards the Western Balkan region and its EU accession. The never-ending process of EU accession has already put some of the countries from the region onto the road of dangerous regression and made them vulnerable to the outside influence and even aggression. The EU enlargement policy is separate from the EU development policy, however, its effects, with the EU values and standards’ implementation, are similar to the effects of the development policy. Yet, when the process of EU accession becomes a lapurlative exercise, all the development achieved is at risk of being reversed. One possible step in the right direction is the reform of veto system in the Council when it comes to the EU foreign policy, which has lately come into consideration with the Conference on the Future of Europe. However, that reform is not to be expected in the foreseeable future and the EU needs to find a way to fully integrate Western Balkan countries rather sooner than later. That is by far the most certain and effective way of securing long-term peace in that region.

The 2017 Consensus on Development put special focus on connection between development policy and peace and security policy, stating that the EU and members states will use all possible policies and instruments to help resolve crisis and build lasting peace (EU 2017, 34). This comprehensive approach “recognizes the nexus between sustainable development, humanitarian action, peace and security” (EU 2017, 34). Building on this connection, strengthening it, and coherently combining both policies, while also integrating other policies that address today’s pressing issues, especially environment and health, is the most daunting, but crucial task for the EU development policy in the future.

### *Evolution of the EU development policy – main influences*

Three categories of influence on the evolution of the EU development policy can be derived from the discussion in the literature: 1. structural issues; 2. multilateral processes and documents; 3. crises and challenges.

*Structural issues.* The evolution of the EU development policy has been influenced by several structural challenges. The first one stems from its normative definition – the treaties define the development policy as a mutual competence between the EU and the member states. This definition gives member states a lot of influence on the creation of the policy, making the process itself highly complicated, with results often adjusted to national interests. It also brings other challenges, both during formulation and the implementation of the policy (Koch 2015). Second challenge concerns policy coherence, both in relation to other EU policies and to the policies of member states (Adelle and Jordan 2014; Carbone and Keijzer 2016; Furness and Gänzle 2017).

*Multilateral processes and documents.* During the 2000s the EU development policy was strongly influenced by the Millennium development goals and its commitment to the poverty eradication. This was mirrored in the EU development programs at that time, especially 2006 Consensus on Development and, subsequently in the Lisbon Treaty, which defined poverty eradication as the priority of the EU development policy. The 2030 Agenda and its comprehensive SDGs shifted the EU development policy from the position of self-standing policy concentrated on the poverty eradication to the multi-faceted policy, which serves as a tool for the achievement of the SDGs and policy goals in its many areas. As Fukuda-Parr and McNeill (2019) argue, this process made virtually any policy area relevant for development policy.

*Crises and challenges.* Crises have shaped the EU development policy both short-term and long-term. The biggest shift facilitated by crises, often debated in the literature, is the shift from altruistically motivated policy to more instrumentalised policy, guided by self-interest. There is a strong agreement in the literature that every crisis pushed EU development further in the direction of instrumentalism (see, e.g., Furness et al. 2020; Fukuda-Parr and McNeill 2019; Koch et al. 2021; Hackenesch et al. 2021; Keijzer and Lundsgaarde 2018; Burni, Erfort, Friesen et al. 2022). However, some studies demonstrated that altruistic framing of the development policy was short-term and lasted only through the 2000s (Bergmann et al 2019). Financial crisis in 2008 affected the development policy in the short-term by cutting the investments in that area.

However, it didn't last long, as investments returned to the pre-crisis level soon after. In the long-term, as a result of the crisis and austerity measures, development policy became politicised, the matter of dispute and often debated in the public. Similar long-term effects on the dynamics of the policy process of development policy were brought about by the migrant crisis in 2015 and the rise of populism in the member states (Szent-Iványi and Kugiel 2020; Holden 2020). Climate change crisis and Covid-19 crisis, to extent, have turned the development policy into the

supplementary policy, a sort of a “jack of all trades”, assigning it with many tasks, relevant to both the EU interests and international development (Koch et al. 2021).

*Beyond discussion on altruism and instrumentalization  
– crises as a roadmap for the EU development policy*

The debate in the literature on the dualism of altruistic development policy on one side and instrumentalised, interest-driven development policy on the other, is as oversimplified as is misleading (Delputte and Lightfoot, 2021). Interests and needs in the contemporary world are mutually interconnected, especially in major crises, which makes evaluations based on that criterion practically impossible. That is why any policy, especially development policy, cannot be reduced to such simple and rigid explanation based on altruism-interests dichotomy.

Likewise, not every display of interests and shift of development policy towards instrumentalism is the same and we can't put them all in the same basket. Hence, interests of Hungary's and Poland's populist governments in the wake of migrant crisis are in no way comparable to the EU and member states' interest to detain Covid-19 pandemic or to stop climate change. These are interests common to all mankind and one could argue that the EU is working in everyone's interest while taking care of its own interest to cut greenhouse gas emission. Therefore, a more suitable research framework for the EU development policy in today's circumstances should focus on how crises and challenges shape EU development policy beyond the narrative on altruism and self-interest and what challenges and opportunities they generate for that policy. In that sense, all three of the current crises offer much to work with, especially health and climate crises.

Climate change crisis has reshaped the EU development policy the most profoundly. The broader idea of sustainable development has been a part of all EU policies for a long time; it gained special prominence with Millennium development goals and even more so after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda. Both of those documents shaped the EU development policy in the long-term, giving it a new, more visible, more influential, and more successful face to the world and making more policies than ever relevant to the development.

The 2017 Consensus on Development incorporated the 2030 Agenda into the EU development policy and, thus, paved the way for that evolution. We argue that it was exactly that encompassing feature that gave the EU development policy more prominence. With this evolution the EU development policy became number one EU “export” product, dealing with many acute maladies of the developing countries, and on an unprecedented scale. And all those problems are simultaneously the result and the cause of poverty.

That role of the EU development policy became even stronger with the European Green Deal and the EU transition to the climate neutral economy. In the case of climate change crisis, the EU “self-interest” is to save the planet. No amount of investment and effort at home will do the trick unless the rest of the world follows. And it is exactly that self-interest that is the biggest motivation point for the EU to help the developing countries on the way to the green transition. In that process, the component of just transition to the green economy should be given a much more prominent place in the EU development policy. The Mechanism for just transition and the “no one left behind” principle should guide all EU international development projects. The next step for the EU development policy should also include a strategy for the implementation of the European Green Deal in the external action. The Team Europe initiatives are a good step in that direction, with many projects involving green transition. Another important step forward is also building stronger connection between development and security policy. Contrary to the belief that the development policy is becoming weaker and further away from its core values and tasks with more complexity and in nexus with other policies, it is exactly that feature that gives it what it takes to succeed, especially in the face of profound crises.

## **Conclusion**

The EU development policy has always been a bridge between foreign policy and internal EU policies. The adoption of the Millennium development goals and later the Treaty of Lisbon made this dual role the most prominent feature of the EU development policy. All major crises, from 2008 financial crisis, migrant crisis in 2015, and current health and security crises, have all served as a channel for further transformation of this twofold character. However, the crisis that has transformed and influenced the EU development policy the most profoundly is climate change crisis. Climate change policy has been mainstreamed into every other EU policy, including development policy.

In 2015 the EU adopted the New Consensus on Development and integrated the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals into its development policy. This document made clear that the EU development policy will in future be completely aligned with the 2030 Agenda goals, and many indicators measuring the implementation of the Agenda. Likewise, the 2020 response to the Covid-19 crisis, the Team Europe, also incorporated sustainable development and climate change goals into the long-term vision of recovery.

Global crises and the international response to those crises, have, thus, become, the primary factor for the transformation and the evolution of the EU development policy. This evolution has further strengthened the connection between the EU development, foreign and many domestic policies. The discussion in the literature is often focused on the moral justification of this evolution, questioning the authenticity of the development policy when it serves interests and goals that go beyond altruistic motivation to help the poor countries.

As discussed in this article, interests and needs in the face of major global crises have become highly interconnected and some of them run across even the most and the least developed countries. Furthermore, while fighting those crises has made the EU development policy function ever more as a means for attaining domestic goals, it has never swayed from its core role - aiding developing countries on their path to prosperity and stability.

The solidarity-instrumentalism dichotomy of the EU development policy, often theorised in the literature, is, therefore, ill fitted and of very limited use when considering all the complexity of the contemporary world. Research agenda for the EU development policy must, consequently, go beyond that dualism and focus on the dynamic role of the policy in general, and in any of the policy nexuses, especially climate, health, and peace. To address intricacies of today's world, the EU development policy must be integrated with all other relevant policies. This has especially become relevant after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. Crucial question for tomorrow's research should, therefore, be how to make that entangled web of policies, interests, and needs a coherent, efficient meta-policy, equipped with all the tools for delivering sustainable development in today's chaotic reality.

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**Nikolina HERCEG KOLMAN, Goran BANDOVIĆ**

**EVOLUCIJA RAZVOJNE POLITIKE EVROPSKE UNIJE  
– OD ALTRUIZMA DO INTERESNE INSTRUMENTALIZACIJE**

**Apstrakt:** Rad ispituje evoluciju razvojne politike Evropske unije, od milenijumskih razvojnih ciljeva Ujedinjenih nacija i (prvog ikada) globalnog pokušaja iskorenjivanja siromaštva, do aktuelnog perioda. Najpre se u okviru prikaza literature konstatuje značajna fokusiranost na dihotomiju između solidarnosti i instrumentalizacije, nakon čega se prelazi na analizu na koji način su velike svetske krize – poput klimatske krize, pandemije Kovida-19 i ukrajinske krize - uticale i oblikovale razvojnu politiku EU. Na osnovu relevantne literature i analize, u članku se objedinjuje nekoliko kategorija faktora koji su uticali na razvojnu politiku Unije, uz zaključak da istraživanje treba da prevaziđe dihotomiju između solidarnosti i instrumentalizacije i razvije obuhvatnije analitičke alate, kako bi se adekvatnije razumeli pojačani izazovi pri kreiranju savremenih razvojnih politika. Radi unapređenja analitičkih okvira neophodno je fokusiranje na dvojnu ulogu razvojne politike Evropske unije koja služi kao most između spoljnog i unutrašnjeg domena, kao i na integraciju s drugim politikama, posebno onima u oblastima mira, klime i zdravlja.

**Ključne reči:** razvojna politika Evropske unije, razvojna saradnja, milenijumski razvojni ciljevi, Agenda 2030, klimatske promene, Kovid-19, rat u Ukrajini, mir, diplomatija, stabilnost, bezbednost.