



Conference European Foreign Policy ASSESSING EU'S ROLE IN THE WORLD

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Abstract

This paper investigates the role of the European Union in Africa, both in the context and beyond the EU-ACP Partnership Agreement. Starting from the negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreements and the Country Strategy Papers (CSPs) this paper argues that the EU has imposed its interests and values on African countries, thus changing the nature of the relationship from partnership to paternalism. Since the late 1990s, the EU has also tried to move beyond the ACP and beyond its two traditional instruments used for African development, i.e. trade and aid. The deepening of the processes of integration in the European Union and its ambitions to play an important role in international politics – e.g. Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the European Security and Defence Policy (EDSP) – as well as the birth of the African Union (AU) reinforced the trends towards a pan-African approach within the EU and the inclusion of conflict management as key elements in its approaches to Africa. The first EU-Africa Summit in Cairo in April 2000 launched a comprehensive framework for dialogue. In reality it showed that representatives from the EU placed more emphasis on peace and security, while representatives from Africa concentrated on trade and aid. The EU-Africa Strategy adopted in 2005 established that good governance, peace and security are prerequisites for development, thus reflecting the EU's agenda. This situation was partially rectified by the Joint EU-Africa Strategy, adopted in the second EU-Africa summit held in Lisbon in December 2007, which tried to integrate both economic (i.e. aid and trade) and political issues (i.e. promotion of democracy and conflict prevention). The Summit in Lisbon, however, still showed many divergences between European and African representatives, notably in the areas of trade and political affairs.