



Around Europe

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No Reciprocal Trade Without Equal Partnership

In Bonn on 12 March, over two hundred participants heard debates on Africa-EU relations and the upcoming Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The conference, entitled 'Prospects for Africa - EU's Policies', took place just before the informal meeting of Development Ministers at Petersberg. This timing allowed participants to express their concerns, with the hope of impacting the upcoming discussions.

People are worried about the implementation of EPAs. They fear that reciprocal opening of markets will lead to European products flooding African markets, ousting scarce African products and breaking down the limited regional trade that already exists. Developing African economies depend heavily on import duties, something that the EPAs would do away with. Members of the audience as well as several speakers are apprehensive about the actual impact of the EPAs on fragile African economies, some even suggesting that they were fundamentally against development. "They will destroy everything small," said Tetteh Hormeku, of the Third World Network Africa. Speakers urged Development Ministers to keep in mind development goals and the targets to eliminate poverty when discussing the EPAs at the informal meeting.

Proponents of the move cite economic stagnation in African economies and suggest that this is a way to integrate them into the global economy. As the German Federal Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul highlighted, if negotiations are going to involve trade liberalising, then both trade and development ministers need to sit together to give the EPAs a pro-development thrust. There needs to be a very careful, long transition period, asymmetrical tariff reductions and equal input from both sides.

Both North and South NGOs expressed concern that African NGOs had not been consulted and that not enough time had been given to African countries for them to fully assess the possible consequences of the EPAs on Africa. Article Two of the Cotonou agreement says that ACP countries should be allowed to develop their own development policies, yet the Commission has done very little to take into

account the proposals of their negotiating partners. Instead, for many, it feels as if the Commission is letting the clock run until the ACP partners have to sign. "A partnership is a relationship, not a technical agreement," Justin Kilcullen, the President of CONCORD (a network of development NGOs) pointed out. Partnership must be done at a pace that both partners can participate in.

No one present was saying "no" to EPAs. Instead, what came through was a sense of unpreparedness. An extension of the negotiations would cost the EU money, but without an extension, the cost will fall on Africa, with devastating effects. Jacob Gyeke Buba, the Nigerian Director General of Customs, spoke of the EU working collectively, and the time it took to get to that stage; he said that Africa too needs time to be able to speak with one voice. As Agnes Abuom of the All African Conference of Churches eloquently pointed out, there is scepticism and fear surrounding the EPAs. The actual policies are well articulated, but what is happening is something different.

The disappointment of the conference was palpable - the EU appeared to be saying one thing and doing another. When Louis Michel, the Development Commissioner, spoke after a full day of discussions, he seemed to be simply reading out the Commission's rhetoric, as if he had not heard what those present had been saying. Hopefully, listening to South concerns at the conference was a first step towards Africa and the EU being able to work as real partners, to achieve pro-development Economic Partnership Agreements.

Sophie Miller

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The European Union and Conflict Prevention: Policy and Legal Aspects - A Review

It has often been said that the European Union is in itself a peace project, and a very effective one at that. As the Commission itself states "It has underpinned the reconciliation and peaceful development of western Europe over the last half century, helping to consolidate democracy and to assure prosperity." However, it is clear that the EU also seeks to project democracy and stability beyond European borders and has become a firm presence on the global stage as an international actor and donor. A hugely important factor which hinders development, economic stability and democracy across the world is conflict. The EU has acknowledged this relationship between development and conflict, and the book, *The European Union and Conflict Prevention*, explains the multiple and varied mechanisms, tools, policies and instruments the EU employs in order to tackle this issue.

For anyone who is unclear as to how the EU goes about conflict prevention, in all its stages, this book provides a wonderfully detailed critique of EU activity in this area, past and present. It begins, logically, with an introduction as to how the EU tries to identify and stabilise areas of potential conflict before they turn to violence. It then provides a historical overview of how effective EU conflict prevention strategies have been in the past and provides more detail on the sort of instruments and finances available for this sort of activity. What is perhaps most striking and refreshing about the book is its acknowledgement, and subsequent analysis, of the far-reaching effects of conflict. For example, it discusses the environmental impacts of conflict, the often neglected issue of trafficking (humans, drugs, weapons etc.) and the impact of the US 'war on terror' on countries in conflict, as well as more general implications for human rights and democracy. At the same time as offering a detailed overview of the many factors important in successful conflict prevention, this information is then linked back to the critical evaluation of EU policy in these areas. Similarly, as well as offering a Eurocentric viewpoint - an internally focused assessment of EU policy and activity - the book also offers a good overview of how the EU operates with other international actors such as the UN, the G8 and NATO.

Overall, this is a wonderfully written book. It is perhaps slightly too in-depth to be used as a general introduction to the EU and conflict prevention but, for anyone wishing to read a critical assessment of EU policy and activity in this area, to build on current knowledge, I would thoroughly recommend it.

QCEA is currently working on a project analysing the EU's approach to the mainstreaming of conflict prevention in African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, so if you are interested in learning more about the EU's international role in conflict prevention then watch this space...

The European Union and Conflict Prevention: Policy and Legal Aspects
Edited by Vincent Kronenberger and Jan Wouters ISBN 9067041718 Price £100

Sarah Barnett

QCEA STUDY TOUR 7-15 July 2007 BOOK NOW!

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* There is no upper age limit but all participants must be at least 18 by the start of the Tour

A Special Session on Democracy and Terrorism

The Fourth Annual Worldwide Security Conference was held in Brussels to review the challenges posed by terrorism. The Conference, entitled 'Democracy and Terrorism', brought together key organisations and other civil society experts in an effort to address key issues relating to terrorism and how best to tackle it.

Terrorist acts, defined as the deliberate targeting of non-combatants for political purposes, are frequently associated with al Qaeda-like extremists. The first point made by the representative of the EastWest Institute was to warn of how unhelpful these associations are. History shows us that terrorist acts have been carried out by many different people and groups, and for many different reasons. The key first step in tackling terrorism is to understand the root causes and motivations behind these acts of violence.

Discovering the root causes of terrorism is difficult. If poverty was a root cause there would be far more terrorism in the world today, and the same can be said for those suffering humiliation. As participants, we were encouraged to view these 'elements', such as poverty, humiliation, and dislocation, as risk factors.

Terrorist activity comes as a result of a lethal cocktail, made up of three crucial ingredients: a disaffected individual, a supporting community, and a legitimising ideology. Each of the three ingredients must be explored, challenged, and defeated. It is not sufficient to address the symptoms; the UK's experience in Northern Ireland, Russia's experience in Chechnya, and the US's experience in Iraq show this quite clearly.

So how do we defeat terrorism? By showing that it is unsuccessful, that the ideology behind it is flawed and that there is a real and satisfying alternative for people who may become terrorists.

It is naïve to claim that terrorism is unsuccessful, or that 'suicide attacks' have been unsuccessful, as is often claimed. Attacks in Lebanon, Somalia, and Madrid have all had direct military 'results', while the goal of planting fear and a sense of insecurity within populations, such as in the UK and the US, has been 'achieved' to a large degree. Osama bin Laden's personal ambition to drag the US into a costly and prolonged war in Iraq, with the hope of bringing about the US's demise, has already exceeded his own expectations.

We must make sure that terrorism is unsuccessful, but this is not done by refusing to talk with terrorists, by reversing our own democratic rights and values, or by introducing more short-sighted foreign policies. It is done by demonstrating that there is a superior ideology, and that there is a real and convincing alternative to terrorism.

Democracy, real democracy, is the antidote to terrorism. Fighters of the 'war on terror' must make sure that their practice is consistent with their rhetoric. It is no use flying a flag of freedom and democracy if the impact is subjugation, injustice and insecurity. Governments must not fight terrorism alongside geopolitical goals and they must fight democratic deficits within their own countries. Then a vigorous exchange of ideas can be engaged in, and the ideology behind terrorist acts can be exposed.

Outlets must be provided for hopes, beliefs, ambitions, anger, and relief. This is fundamental to real democracy. When people feel their views are listened to, the call from terrorist communities is heard much less clearly. Education is also crucial. The promoting of mutual respect and tolerance is necessary to curtail the growing number of children who are raised in an atmosphere of hate.

It is clear that without massive international cooperation there can be no prevention of terrorism. Agreeing precisely how individuals, groups, nations, or the international community can address these ingredients is very difficult; even within the Conference, views on a range of issues varied considerably.

The issue needs to be addressed in much more detail, involving a variety of members from many communities. Civil society must be actively involved in all countries to continue pursuing strategies and re-assessing their own positions. The Conference on Democracy and Terrorism was one civil society forum where interesting, well-founded contributions were made. We all hope that such contributions lead to more effective policy in countering terrorism in the future.

Matt Loffman



Calling all Quaker Peace Experts

There are many trained civilians who engage in peace missions in different parts of the world; there are mediators, election observers, accompaniers and many more people who are expert and trained in certain aspects of civilian peace service. Some of them are Friends.

QCEA is working at European Union level to further the development of civilian capabilities in this area and to further the use of civilian resources for peacebuilding in preference to military ones.

QCEA would like to get in touch with Friends (both Members and Attenders) who are trained experts and who would like to be in touch with other Friends working in similar areas. Initially, we would like to see what level of response we get; but once we see whether there is real interest, there might be a possibility of organising a way of being touch with one other, sharing experience and providing mutual support.

QCEA also hopes to gain contact with Friends with field expertise whom we can call upon occasionally to inform our policy positions.

If you would like to be part of such a network, please write to Martina Weitsch, mweitsch@qcea.org or by post to *Quaker House, Square Ambiorix 50, B-1000 Brussels, Belgium.*

Martina Weitsch

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