Can we talk of a Europeanisation of French Development Cooperation Policy?

Corinne Balleix
CAN WE TALK OF A EUROPEANISATION OF FRENCH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY?

by Corinne BALLEIX

Having once been a great European colonial power, France was able to shape the development policy set up in 1958 within the framework of the European Community. As its global influence has declined, France has seen its development policy “normalised” since the end of the 1990s. To what extent are these efforts, which aim at making this policy more transparent, easy to understand and effective, part of a movement towards Europeanisation? France’s growing involvement in European aid, which increased from 19% to 23.1% of its official development aid (ODA) between 2002 and 2008, and represented 56.85% of its multilateral aid in 2008, means that France inevitably comes up against the European dynamic, its logic and its debates.

This article will try to answer the following questions:

Can we identify any “pressure to adapt”, exerted by the European project on French development policy? To what extent might this Europeanisation represent a resource in fostering national reforms?

Who are the “facilitators” and “veto players” in this Europeanisation process?

How far will the hybridisation of the French model of development cooperation policy go? What institutional, strategic and normative adjustments to the policy are apparent? To what extent is the French “national viewpoint” putting up resistance?

This empirical study in the field of public policy will make some reference to theoretical approaches (New Public Management, Two-Level Bargaining Game). The variables for analysis, which come under neo-institutionalist theory, will mainly be political debates, the sectoral or geographical focus of aid, legal

2. However, in 2010, French aid via European channels represented 20.71% of total French aid and 51.88% of its multilateral aid.
texts, institutional provisions, and investment in personnel. The comparative method will be applied to the sectoral and geographical focus of French and European aid, in order to reveal convergences and divergences.

I. FRANCE’S DECLINING INFLUENCE OVER EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY

France’s ability to use European development policy as a “power multiplier” and an instrument of “reincarnation” gradually declined between 1958 and the start of the new millennium.

A. 1958 TO THE MID-1970S

As a declining colonial power in the late 1950s, France managed to share the financial burden of Africa’s development with its European partners in exchange for opening up its empire to European products. The legal regime of association established under Articles 130 ff. of the EEC Treaty borrows very heavily from France’s colonial policy in its provisions on trade (system of preferences) and finance (European Development Fund). Some focal points of European aid (rural development, infrastructure and food aid) correspond to the sectors given priority by France.

With the end of the French Community in 1961, a large number of colonial administrators looking for a new job were employed in the European Commission: until 1984, all European development commissioners were French; the Directorate General for Development was also dominated by the French, and the director general of the European Development Fund (EDF) between 1962 and 1975, Jacques Ferrandi, was also French. So French firms were in a good position to take advantage of the funding handed out by the EDF.


When Britain joined the European Community in 1973, that threatened French dominance. British staff were installed at the Directorate General for Development; development cooperation practices were put on a rational, professional footing: planning, a greater drive for effectiveness, review of allocation criteria. The Lomé agreements between the European Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) likewise benefited the former British colonies, where France did not have such an established network as in French-speaking Africa. The result was an asymmetrical reduction in the influence hitherto exerted by France over European development policy.

However, French influence did not disappear: there were no changes in the system of trade preferences and EDF funding; moreover, at the Paris Summit in 1972, France successfully advocated extending European cooperation to include third countries in the Mediterranean basin.

B. 1984 onwards

France lost its monopoly over the appointment of development commissioners. Having become a more modest sponsor, it accepted the dominant view of the international financial institutions in 1994 and agreed to devaluation of the CFA franc. When the euro was introduced, the support of the CFA franc did not become a matter for the Community but remained the responsibility of the French Treasury. Under pressure from Germany, but also from new Member States such as Spain and Portugal, European aid was redeployed to Asia and Latin America, beyond the areas of France’s preferential influence, and focused on new themes (human rights, the environment, the battle against drugs, etc.) Thus, aid for the ACP countries, which had made up 67% of total European aid in 1986-1990, dropped to 29% of that total between 1996 and 1998. Finally, against the backdrop of the creation of the World Trade Organisation in 1995, trade preferences were contested and a “free trade co-regionalism” became the rule.

While France played a key role in December 2005 in the adoption of a European Union strategy for Africa, which receives half of the additional funds committed for development, it is no longer able to shape European development cooperation policy.

---

II. FRENCH DEVELOPMENT AID,
BETWEEN NORMALISATION AND EUROPEANISATION

Influenced by factors which were not specifically European, the exit from the “colonial pact” is nevertheless best understood in terms of the system of reference and operating methods of public policy that came after the “European neo-liberal turning point”\(^{11}\).

A. NORMALISATION OF FRENCH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY SINCE THE 1950S

Before the 1998 reform, French development cooperation policy, moulded by colonial history, had little concern for transparency and economic efficiency.

It is true that, in 1946, the French Overseas Ministry replaced the Ministry of the Colonies. In 1961, in the context of decolonisation, the Ministry of Cooperation was instructed to use grants to develop not only economic and cultural cooperation but also military and strategic cooperation in the “core” aid recipient countries, i.e. most of the former colonies. The Foreign Affairs Ministry also handed out grants in countries outside the “core”. The Ministry of Finance granted loans via the Caisse centrale de coopération économique [Central Economic Cooperation Fund], the successor to the Caisse centrale de la France libre [Central Fund of Free France] established in 1941; it managed the financial protocols for debt relief and held the French chair in international financial institutions. Coordination between the various players involved in French cooperation was weak; the Élysée frequently intervened in the rather unclear doctrine underpinning this policy.\(^{12}\)

When the Left took over in 1981, that did little to change the picture. Jean-Pierre Cot, a minister with a third world approach, resigned in 1982, owing to his opposition to President Mitterrand, who was still steeped in his own past experience as a former French Overseas Minister in the Fourth Republic.\(^ {13}\)

With the end of the Cold War, a reform to end Françafrique was undertaken in the context of the cohabitation that began in 1997. The aim was to make

---

French aid more coherent and effective. The main element of the 1998 reform was the integration of the Ministry of Cooperation into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where it became the Directorate General of International Cooperation and Development (DGCID).

**B. SIGNS OF EUROPEANISATION OF FRENCH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY**

Some institutional and strategic adjustments to French development cooperation policy, which had been under discussion for many years in successive reports, were finally implemented from the late 1990s. Do they point to the impact of the “European neo-liberal turning point” on French development policy, and hence to an incremental Europeanisation of French development aid?

The European Commission supported this process of Europeanisation and can be said to have facilitated it. Making use of “multi-level” governance, it took on board international work that had been conducted on aid, particularly within the OECD/DAC, and used this as a way of strengthening the Community dimension of European development policy, while also taking it upon itself to promote and later control the EU’s international commitments. Indeed, the Commission “may take any useful initiative to promote coordination [of policies]” between the Union and the Member States, including in international organisations and during international conferences (Article 210 TFEU). Producing regular communications and reports on coherence in favour of development, aid effectiveness, the monitoring of the Millennium Development Goals and the implementation of the European development consensus, among other things, it coordinates research and organises working groups which all aim at greater convergence and harmonisation of Member States’ development policies.

---


16. The unifying role of the European Community is recognised by the OECD DAC, which presents the unifying activities of the European Community as a strong point in the added value of Community aid (DAC, 2007).

17. For example, it mapped European aid to encourage a better division of labour between European sponsors. It supported a revision of the financial rules to promote co-financing.
C. ELEMENTS OF CONVERGENCE BETWEEN FRENCH AND EUROPEAN AID

First, the criteria for the allocation of French aid are steadily converging with those of the European Community. Alongside efforts to combat poverty and inequality, French aid now aims to promote global public goods (health, security, migration, cultural diversity), and to tackle transversal issues (democratic governance, sustainable development, and gender), all themes included in European aid priorities. As a result, aid was redirected beyond French-speaking Africa. A Priority Solidarity Zone (ZSP), defined in 1999, initially benefited 61 countries, then 54 from 2002 onwards.

Table 1
Change in French International Contributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organisations</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>Share of the total</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>Share of the total</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>Share of the total</th>
<th>2012</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which EDF</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which Community budget (share of ODA)</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other organisations and funds</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which World Bank</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which African Development Bank and ADF</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total multilateral aid</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CP, in € billion
n.a.: no data


19. As well as promoting the Millennium Development Goals, the EU promotes human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace, democracy, good governance, gender equality, the rule of law, solidarity and justice. Cf. European Consensus on Development, 2006.
Next, to enhance French involvement in the definition of new European strategies, the French institutional set-up changed: in 2004 a second development adviser’s post was created at France Permanent Representation to the European Union, in addition to the post of Africa adviser, which had previously been the only one to deal with all the European development issues. And from 2005 an office was set up under the sub-directorate of Development Strategies, specifically devoted to monitoring European development policy and programmes.

In addition, French cooperation became more sensitive to questions of coherence in favour of development, a subject strongly supported by the European Commission. The first thing that the reform of French cooperation achieved was institutional separation between military aspects and other aspects of French cooperation handled by the DGCID. The Secretary of State responsible for cooperation is also consulted on any decision that could affect the development of countries with which France cooperates. The interministerial committee on international cooperation and development (CICID), which meets periodically

---

**Chart 1**

Percentage of Multilateral Aid in Total ODA by Country in 2008

![Bar Chart]

under the chairmanship of the prime minister, is another body which defines coherent positions. The conference on strategic orientation and programming (COSP), set up in 2004, coordinates the work of all the ministries concerning development. France will stress all these efforts to ensure more coherent development policies in its replies to the European Commission, which was instructed to assess the progress made by Member States in this area.\textsuperscript{20} Better still, France is proud to have been the originator of the EU-Africa partnership adopted in 2004 in the cotton sector, which, by supporting the entire cotton industry in Africa, ensures coherence between the EU’s trade policy and its development policy. That partnership aims to offer the ACP countries fairer trading conditions (duty-free import of cotton from the least developed countries, reduction in subsidies for European cotton exports, technical assistance to support the exports of the ACP countries); it also aims to support ACP cotton producers (by developing innovative institutions, policies and investment in this sector); finally, it should help to reduce the vulnerability of incomes due to price volatility (via access to risk management mechanisms and the development of those mechanisms in international financial institutions). Finally, during its presidency of the European Union in the second half of 2008, France supported efforts to achieve coherence between policies on migration, climate change and energy, and European development policy.\textsuperscript{21}

D. INSTITUTIONAL, NORMATIVE AND STRATEGIC ADJUSTMENTS

France also embarked on institutional, normative and strategic adjustments to its policy which converge with European work on \textit{aid effectiveness}.

1. The 1998 Conversion of the French Development Fund into the French Development Agency (AFD)

Following the integration of the Ministry of Cooperation into the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this conversion can be interpreted in the light of the European


New Public Management movement. Developed in the 1990s, this movement led to a proliferation of agencies, often in the new Member States. Hybrid entities, part public part private, with some autonomy in relation to state control and a legitimacy based on the technical expertise of their staff, these agencies were often formed to overcome the inflexibility of national bureaucracies and to ensure the effective implementation of a policy in its European and international environment.\textsuperscript{22} The AFD took advantage of the abolition of the Ministry of Cooperation to secure its place as the institution with the greatest technical competence in the development sphere. Under the joint control of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Finance (then also the Ministry of the Interior and the Budget), the AFD became the “key operator” in the implementation of French development aid. Like other European agencies, it is steeped in a liberal reference system of aid effectiveness and selectivity, and it promotes cooperation through a combination of loans and grants, extended to include global public goods and emerging countries, thus going beyond the historical criteria of French aid.

2. Action Plan on Aid Effectiveness at the End of 2006

France adopted an action plan on aid effectiveness in line with the May 2005 agreement of the EU Council, which accepted the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness,\textsuperscript{23} adding four extra commitments by the EU.\textsuperscript{24} The June 2009 CICID also asked for finalisation of aid outcome indicators, published in French strategy and budget documents, submitted to Parliament, and to annual monitoring by the CICID.

In 2011, a framework document on French development cooperation policy,\textsuperscript{25} also aimed to reinforce the strategic dimension and effectiveness of French aid.


\textsuperscript{23} The Paris declaration on aid effectiveness aims to promote ownership (by the partner countries), alignment (with the partner countries’ priorities), harmonisation (of fund allocation procedures between donors), results-oriented aid management, and mutual accountability between donors and recipients; www.oecd.org.

\textsuperscript{24} The additional commitments made by the EU are: 1. To ensure European coordination ahead of any capacity reinforcement project, 2. To channel half of the aid through partner country channels, 3. To avoid setting up new project management units, 4. To halve uncoordinated missions.

\textsuperscript{25} Directorate General of Globalisation, Development and Partnership, Stratégie 2011, Coopération française au développement, une vision française, framework document, 72 p.
In accordance with the commitments made in May 2005 at the EU Council meeting whereby, up to 2010, between 0.51 and 0.56% of the Member States’ GNP would be devoted to financing development, increasing to 0.7% by 2015, France endeavoured to make its ODA more predictable. During the French presidency of the EU, in December 2008, Nicolas Sarkozy reiterated his commitment to development funding. In addition, for the first time, France adopted a triennial ODA budget covering the period 2007-2011. Not only did that secure France’s development funding commitments, it also brought the French programming cycle into line with the European cycle. In 2010, French ODA came to 0.50% of GNP, just below the Community target of 0.51%, as a result of debt cancellation and loan development.26

### Table 2
ODA Forecasts 2011-2013 by Type of Activity (€ million)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main types of development aid activities</th>
<th>2010 (a)</th>
<th>2011 (b)</th>
<th>2012 (c)</th>
<th>2013 (c)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bilateral aid</td>
<td>5 879</td>
<td>5 916</td>
<td>6 935</td>
<td>6 572</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical cooperation (1)</td>
<td>2 035</td>
<td>1 696</td>
<td>1 696</td>
<td>1 688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project aid</td>
<td>1 720</td>
<td>2 217</td>
<td>2 473</td>
<td>2 686</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme aid</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>218</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debt cancellation and refinancing</td>
<td>1 059</td>
<td>1 054</td>
<td>1 476</td>
<td>1 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>725</td>
<td>761</td>
<td>760</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Multilateral aid</strong></td>
<td>3 872</td>
<td>3 501</td>
<td>3 526</td>
<td>3 595</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European aid</td>
<td>2 009</td>
<td>1 759</td>
<td>1 868</td>
<td>1 912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which EDF</td>
<td>909</td>
<td>688</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of which Community budget</td>
<td>1 100</td>
<td>1 071</td>
<td>1 071</td>
<td>1 071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multilateral aid (outside EU)</td>
<td>1 863</td>
<td>1 742</td>
<td>1 658</td>
<td>1 683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>9 751</td>
<td>9 417</td>
<td>10 461</td>
<td>10 167</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Implementation 2010: France’s final ODA figures for 2010 were submitted to the OECD-DAC at the end of August 2011 and reviewed at the end of September 2011.
(b) Implementation forecasts for 2011.
(c) Forecasts associated with the draft finance law for 2012.
Source: MINEFI – DG Treasury (September 2011).

26. However, the French ODA/GNP ratio could fall to 0.35% between 2012 and 2015, and discussions have started on defining the development indicator.
In accordance with the April 2006 Council conclusions aimed at developing common joint programming frameworks for European aid, France agreed to aim at closer coordination between its national programming and that of its European partners in a number of pilot ACP countries.

Above all, following the code of conduct on the division of labour between European donors, adopted by the Council in May 2007, and the conclusions of the CICID on 5 June 2009 which set France on the road towards the sectoral and geographical concentration of French aid, four sectoral priorities were defined which largely coincide with the priorities of the European consensus. The 2011 framework document concentrates French aid on shared, sustainable growth, the battle against poverty and inequality, the preservation of global public goods, stability and the rule of law, priorities which appear in the November 2010 Commission Green Paper and in the communication from the Commission in October 2011. The geographical concentration envisaged in the 2011 French framework document, which replaces the priority solidarity zone, leads to the establishment of differential partnerships in the three groups of countries, and also converges with that of the EU.

- Sub-Saharan Africa (over 60% of aid), Mediterranean basin (20%)
- Countries in crisis (10%)
- Emerging countries (10%)

27. Namely: health, education and vocational training, agriculture and food security, sustainable development and climate; finally, support for growth. The European Consensus for Development promotes the MDGs, human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace, democracy, good governance, gender equality, the rule of law, solidarity and justice. Cf. European Consensus for Development, 2006. The Commission communication of October 2011 envisages “differentiated development partnerships” according to the country’s needs, its ability to generate financial resources, its commitments and results, and the potential impact of EU aid.


29. The European Consensus for Development states that (§ 10) “Development aid will continue to support poor people in all developing countries, including both low-income and middle-income countries (MICs). The EU will continue to prioritise support to the least developed and other low-income countries (LICs).”
At the May 2008 Council, France also joined a “fast track” initiative aimed at speeding up the implementation of the European code of conduct recommendations.

Finally, and most importantly, France signalled her readiness to integrate European thinking into the definition of French development policy by signing the December 2005 European Consensus for Development, which, for the first time, defined common objectives and action principles for the Union and the Member States in the conduct of their development policy. Lastly, at the end of 2010 it published for the first time a French strategy for European development policy, in which it noted the importance of this European policy and expressed its desire to influence future developments.

III. SIGNS OF RESISTANCE TO THE EUROPEANISATION OF FRENCH DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY

As a rule, European pressure – particularly pressure from the Commission in favour of the Europeanisation of French policy – only has an impact in so far as it represents a political resource for national authorities wishing to rationalise French aid.

Thus, following on from the 1998 reform, the General Public Policy Review launched in 2007 and intended to enhance the effectiveness of French public policies coincided with the principles defined in the European code on the division of labour among donors. The aim announced by the Minister for Foreign


Corinne Balleix

and European Affairs was in fact to modulate the French presence in the world according to French interests and changes in the international context. The Europeanisation of French development policy can therefore be mobilised in the service of a policy of staff cuts in the French diplomatic service.

Chart 2

Changes in Bilateral Aid in ODA since 1990


Apart from this particular configuration, the “national angle” on French development cooperation policy remains resistant to pressure for Europeanisation. It is true that the conclusions adopted in the EU Council, like the joint declaration in the form of the European Consensus for Development, have a political value


34. In the end, only around 30 embassies were to retain an “exceptional format”; around 100 would be devoted to priority missions, the others contenting themselves with providing a French diplomatic presence.
rather than any legally binding force. In particular, France believes that it has a specific role to play in defending Africa’s interests (Africa’s share of EU aid dropped from 44% in 2005 to 37% in 2009), as well as such themes as cultural diversity, which get less EU support. Moreover, at the ambassadors’ conference in September 2011, Henri de Raincourt announced that he wanted to increase the share of bilateral French aid compared to French aid routed through multilateral channels from the current 60% to 65% by 2013.

Chart 3  
Forecasted Share of Total ODA represented by Bilateral Aid in 2013

A. France has not renounced its “Bottom-Up” influence on European development policy

One of the aims of the French strategy for European development policy is to increase French influence over decisions by the EU Council and in management committees. One way to increase French influence is to step up the French presence in European development cooperation bodies, particularly by seconding national experts to those bodies.35

Closer coordination among French development cooperation players, who will become increasingly aware of the European dimension of this policy, should also enhance France’s ability to influence European decisions on development. In that respect, the strategic piloting of the AFD should be strengthened by the creation in November 2009 of a strategic orientation board (COS), chaired by the Secretary of State responsible for cooperation. Ultimately, the AFD might be able to give up its autonomous representatives and work under the direct control of Ambassadors.

B. French development policy continues to be institutionally part of French foreign policy, and is liable to become only a minor aspect of it

The 1998 integration of the Ministry of Cooperation into the Foreign Affairs Ministry expressed the idea set out in the White Paper on French foreign policy36 that “French official development aid is a separate component of France’s foreign policy, which must help to achieve its great objectives: encouraging balanced globalisation, strengthening peace and security by combating poverty and under-development, and supporting our strategies for securing influence”.

The diversity of players responsible for aid leads to multiple sectoral goals hampering France’s development policy.37 Even if the State secretary responsible for Cooperation is consulted on any policy that has an impact on development, he has no mandate enabling him to ensure that development concerns prevail.

35. The allocation of technical assistants to governments receiving European budgetary support should, for example, offset the disadvantages due to the untying of aid by steering calls for tenders towards European operators (rather than Chinese), and French (rather than European).
Similarly, the mandate of the CICID and the COS (strategic orientation board) are confined to the coordination of policies which interact with development policy. The Secretariat General of European Affairs (SGAE) coordinates French positions vis-à-vis the European Union, but without specifically taking account of development goals.

More recently, in February 2009, in accordance with the conclusions of the Council on the Modernisation of Public Policy, a new Directorate General of Globalisation, Development and Partnerships (DGMDP or DGM) was formed, incorporating the old DGCID and the Directorate of Economic and Financial Affairs, as well as the sub-Division of Economic Affairs within the Directorate of the United Nations and International Organisations. The above changes confirm the institutional integration of development policy into French foreign policy.

C. A DIVERGENT VIEW OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY GOALS

1. The Goal of Coherence

These reorganisations reflect an approach that is fundamentally at odds with European work on the coherence of development policies. For France, the aim of coherence between national policies and development cooperation policy is in fact confined to the coordination of national policies without any specific support for development concerns. France’s understanding of coherence is thus in line with the Whole of Government Approach, stressing the interactions between development policy and other spheres such as security or governance policy.38

In its relations with the European Union, without clearly repudiating the objective of coherence in favour of development, France has helped to limit its scope: in 2006, it backed a very broad concept of coherence in favour of development, aimed at classing twelve political sectors as coherent with development policy, and thus preventing the discussions from concentrating on such subjects as trade and agriculture. The new provisions of the Lisbon Treaty suggest that the Whole of the Union Approach derived from the Whole of Government Approach, supported by France, finally prevailed. Article 208 TFEU stipulates that “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”, which include “to preserve peace, prevent conflicts and strengthen international security.” [Article 21(c) TEU].

2. The Objective of Aid Effectiveness

On themes concerning aid effectiveness, such as the implementation of the European code of conduct on the division of labour among European donors, France – in common with its European partners – is rarely disposed to enter into “delegated cooperation”, or to withdraw from a sector or country in favour of a European partner, if it considers that prejudicial to its interests and visibility in the developing world. Thus, France has played a role in ensuring that the European code of conduct has no binding legal force, leaving Member States free to evaluate their added value themselves, and that the division of labour among European donors is subject to the principle of reciprocity in the case of withdrawal from countries or sectors. The recent geographical concentration envisaged by the June 2009 CICID means that sub-Saharan Africa can continue to receive 60% of the bilateral aid budget, thus bringing France back to its “core” countries, where its networks are well established.

France is equally circumspect about the idea of European joint programming. Since 2005 the establishment of framework partnership documents in France, which has enabled it to assert the rigour of its programming, has also limited its ability to become integrated into joint European programming.

On the issue of aid funding, France advocates financing the EDF out of the Community budget, which would mean a reduction in France’s contribution to European spending in favour of core countries (Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon, etc.). However, it proposes compensating for that reduction by increasing its bilateral aid, which is more visible to its ACP partners.

D. DIPLOMATIC POSTS AND AFD, OPPOSED TO GREATER EUROPEANISATION OF DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Two types of institutions act as “veto players”, stoutly defending France’s international influence.

39. France contributed 19.55% to the 10th EDF compared to 15.9% to the European budget.
Diplomatic posts, fighting for their survival or at least for their staffing level (draft finance law for 2010)\(^{41}\) are usually very reluctant to implement the European code of conduct on the division of labour.

The French Development Agency (AFD) is likewise strongly opposed to reinforcement of the Community dimension of development policy, doubtless because it is the AFD that has gained the most from the reform of French aid since 1998. Criticising the technocracy, and sometimes the incompetence, of the European Commission and the EuropeAid Office,\(^ {42}\) it advocates a more liberal, pragmatic approach, respecting the added value of the various European players involved in development. The AFD would like the EU Council, an intergovernmental political body – whose compromises might be less of a constraint than the aims stipulated by national authorities – to define annual guidelines on development cooperation\(^ {43}\) and it proposes that these objectives be monitored via the open coordination method. The “competitive cooperation” that this method implies should serve to establish the AFD’s position in the networks of European development agencies and operators.

**Conclusion**

Analysis of the cross-influences between French and European aid would doubtless require more detailed research which is beyond the scope of this article, but it would probably identify, in addition to the convergences, the causal links between the two policies. Up to now, it seems that, after having largely shaped European development cooperation policy in the 1950s, France is seeing a limited Europeanisation of the reference systems and operating methods of its development cooperation policy.

In terms of ideas, there have been only a few adjustments: the adoption of the liberal ideology of effectiveness, which is not specifically European, but which is supported and amplified by the European Union, can be seen as an indicator of the Europeanisation of French development policy. The adoption of the

---

\(^{41}\) “Projet de loi de finances pour 2010 : action extérieure de l’État. La réorganisation du réseau culturel”, www.senat.fr. In 2010, most of the jobs suppressed by the Foreign Affairs Ministry concerned the diplomatic and consular network (they represent the equivalent of 255 full-time jobs).


European Consensus for Development and a French strategy for the European development policy bear witness to a Europeanisation of French ideas.

However, development aid – which is vital to France’s existence on the international scene – will continue to pursue a number of objectives (trade, influence) in addition to the development of partner countries. The adoption in the Lisbon Treaty of concepts linked to the *Whole of the Union Approach* represents a success for France.

French interests have begun altering the geographical focus of their activities in order to gain access to the overall market in European aid contracts. However, since France’s presence in the “core” countries is a decisive factor in the value-added of French aid, the geographical concentration of European aid brings France back to the countries with which it has a special relationship.

The French institutions (France Permanent Representation to the EU, DGCID, later the DGM) have adapted to take better account of European development cooperation policy and gain more influence over it. However, diplomatic posts, fearing staff cuts, and the AFD, which has gained powers, autonomy and prestige since the 1998 reform, are more reticent about any transfer of powers to the Union.

Thus, since 1958, there has been little inclination to extend the process of Europeanising French development cooperation policy.