COHERENCE AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY: AN AUTOPSY WITH SOME EUROPEAN EXAMPLES

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'Coherence' or 'policy coherence' has within a few years become a key-concept within development policy. Coherence refers here to consistency within development policy itself, but also to other areas of government policy. In Swiss development policy coherence is a central concept since the Federal Council adopted the 'North-South Guidelines' in 1994. In the Netherlands the second so-called 'purple' government (a coalition government of the Social Democrats with conservative and left-wing liberals) of the second half of the 1990s made coherence between development policy and other areas of government policy a major goal for its years in government and its successor government still attaches great value to it. And in Sweden's most recent development policy white paper policy coherence is a central issue.

The most advanced debates around the concept of 'coherence' can be found in the institutions of the European Union. They circle in principle around the implementation of the development sections of the Maastricht Treaty. These discussions can be said to revolve around three Cs or Triple C: coordination, coherence and complementarity. In this treaty and the successor treaties of Nice and Amsterdam coherence is defined in Article 130 V of the Treaty on European Union. The term refers not only to the coherence of development policy but also to coherence between the development objectives mentioned in the Union Treaty and other policies of the Community.

In the first part of this article, the term coherence will be explained, the legal basis for coherence of policy described and various forms of incoherence identified. In the second part some measures taken since 1992 and the debate hitherto within the European Union will be outlined as an illustration of conflicts of interest that form the basis of incoherences. There we will describe the background to some of these conflicts in more detail.

Coherence of policy or policy coherence

Coherence is a relatively new concept both in politics and in the political sciences. There is in fact no mention of it in the standard textbooks on the social sciences.[1] Although the political science literature on policy evaluation notes that a causal link between policy and policy results is often hard to determine, it does not in general deal with the way in which other parts of government policy may interfere with the relevant results or even frustrate the policy altogether.[2] For example, the unintended results of government policy are disposed of in a few standard sentences. The literature on economic policy is an exception in this respect since here the credibility of government action is linked to its ability to ensure that policy fluctuates as little as possible. To arrive at a definition we must therefore first consult the dictionaries. These state that coherence is synonymous with consistency.[3] Consistency and coherence of thought and statement therefore mean 'free from self-contradiction' (Concise Oxford Dictionary; The Wordsworth Concise Dictionary). Coherence of policy could therefore possibly be defined as: 'The non-occurrence of effects of policy that are contrary to the intended results or aims of policy'. For this purpose coherence can be defined either narrowly or broadly. A narrow definition would be that objectives of policy in a particular field may not

1 See, for example, Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought (1987), International Encyclopedia of Social Sciences (1968, first and later editions), Political Science Dictionary (1973), Handlexikon der Politikwissenschaften (1970, first and later editions) and Piper's Wörterbuch zur Politik (1985). The same is also true of similar terms such as consistency and inconsistency. Even a search for the rather older term 'unity of policy' fails to produce any workable definitions or references.

2 One example of this is Blommenstein et al (1984). Nor is this point dealt with in recent literature on political science. See for example Van Deth, ed. (1993).

3 The Van Dale Dutch dictionary in fact regards coherence as synonymous with cohesion, which is itself defined as intrinsic harmony, this being in turn the definition of consistency. If consistency is regarded as more or less synonymous with coherence, one of the few definitions to be found in academic literature can be seen to be tautological: 'Consistency connotes the need to maintain a coherent policy course over time and across multiple measures' (Weatherford 1994: 135-64). The definitions of 'inconsistency' in the economic literature are concerned in particular with the way in which economic actors respond to a given policy. See for example: (Kydland/Prescott 1977: 473-91; Blackburn/ Christensen 1989: 1-45).

be undermined or obstructed by actions or activities in this field. And a wide definition would be that objectives of policy in a particular field may not be undermined or obstructed by actions or activities of government in that field or in other policy fields.

The broad perspective could be called external coherence, in which goals and activities in a given policy sector should not be at odds with policies in another sector, in this case development policy. Of relevance to development policy are market policies, policies that privilege certain economic sectors (for example, by means of subsidies), migration policy, and environmental policies, among others. Thus, external coherence calls for examination of relations between government bureaucracies, the hierarchy between these institutions, differences in ideology and, in the final analysis, power relations within a given context.

Table 1:
Different types of (in)coherence: institutional perspectives

Restricted (1)/ Internal			Development Cooperation: Goals, Instruments, Forms		
Restricted (2)/ Internal (2)		Foreign Policy (Human Rights Policy)	Development Cooperation	Security (alliances, arms trade)	
Broad/ External	Agricultural Policies	Fisheries Policy	Development Cooperation	Industrial Policies	Environmental Policy

This narrow perspective may be defined as internal coherence: the effects of a certain part of development policy should not be contrary to the intended results or aims of the same or other parts of development policy or foreign policy. Development policy in itself should be consistent. This need for consistency applies to a range of policy instruments, as well as levels of policy. It implies coherence in the rationale behind development cooperation, in goal-setting and prioritisation, between dialogue and implementation, between different types of aid, between various donor programmes, and between donor's policies, multilateral policies, aid recipient and NGO policies. Since development policy is part of foreign policy the second type of 'internal coherence' concerns coherence within foreign policy: development policy vis-à-vis foreign or trade policy. It is related to the place of development cooperation within the whole construct of foreign policies and within the bureaucracies that deal with foreign affairs and trade issues.

Since development cooperation is a part of foreign policy, defining 'internal coherence' is somewhat problematic. If we look at policy content, internal coherence with regard to development policy may well be found in all aspects or terrains of foreign policy; however, if we look at organisational structures it could well be argued that we are addressing matters of 'external coherence', since policy decisions are taken in different departments, often without consultation or coordination.

The legal base of policy coherence in the European Union

Although coherence might be considered as a policy goal in all fields of government policy, it does not really have a legal basis. An exception is the European Union. The concept of policy coherence gained influence or, to put it more correctly, was introduced into European policies by the Treaty of Maastricht. The Treaty referred to coherence/consistency in its foreign policy in Article C (see below), but for development cooperation policy Article 130U and 130V were in particular important. Article 130 V of Title XVII of the Treaty on European Union - the Maastricht Treaty - states that (CEC/CEC 1992, 61)

'The Community shall take account of the objectives referred to in Article 130 U in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries.'

This article could be called the Maastricht Treaty's 'coherence article' in the field of development cooperation. It was sustained in the Treaty of Amsterdam under Title XX as Article 178. Article 130V refers to Article 130U. Article 130U (Article 177 in the Treaty of Amsterdam) is the first Article with relation to development cooperation in the Treaty of Maastricht. It sets out the general development objectives for the Community (CEC/CEC 1992, 61):

'1. Community policy in the sphere of development co-operation, which shall be complementary to the policies pursued by the Member States, shall foster:

- *the sustainable economic and social development of the developing countries and more particularly the most disadvantaged amongst them;*
- *the smooth and gradual integration of the developing countries into the world economy;*
- *the campaign against poverty in the developing countries.*

2. Community policy in this area shall contribute to the general objective of developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law, and to that of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.'

With regard to this article, according the Commission (1994), a link can also be made between development policy and other policies, particularly foreign policy. In the Common Provisions of the Union Treaty it was set down in Article C:

'The Union shall in particular ensure the consistency of its external activities as a whole in the context of its external relations, security, economic and development policies. The Council and the Commission shall be responsible for ensuring such consistency. They shall ensure the implementation of these policies, each in accordance with its respective powers.'

The first part of Article C refers to 'the single institutional framework' which shall be 'the consistency and the continuity of the activities' of the Union, respecting and building upon the 'acquis communautaire'.[4] Therefore this article has been seen as 'undermining the intergovernmental element of the Union' by referring to this 'single institutional framework', which could be only the Brussels institutions. It would thus mean that these institutions would have an important role (ensuring consistency) also in the second and third (intergovernmental) pillars. On the other hand in the last part of this article the Council is explicitly mentioned as one of these institutions (and in other articles, like Article D), the Council is made the 'overriding and dynamic' force of the Union.[5] But what is true is that, also through the Maastricht Treaty, the Commission potentially has won increasing responsibilities in foreign policy.[6] It is the main and often sole, negotiator in trade issues, in association agreements, with non-member states on certain issues, and has a long list of tasks with regard to development cooperation. In the last field the Commission had, already from the beginning, a variety of tasks, belonging for the major part to the first pillar, and thus part of the 'acquis communautaire'.

In the negotiating process on the Treaty the Articles on coherence (and development cooperation) remained throughout the negotiations largely the same, although Article 130 V underwent a small change. In the Luxembourg version[7] tabled in June 1991 the last part of the article still stated:

4. Church C.H./D.Phinnemore (1994). European Union and European Community: A Handbook and Commentary on the 1992 Maastricht Treaties, 56-58, London.
5. See also: Peterson J./E.Bomberg (1999). Decision-making in the European Union, London, ch.2.
6. Nugent N. (2001). The European Commission, ch. 12., London. It is remarkable that Nugent in this chapter devotes but a single word to European development policy. Although this has been for a long time, next to trade issues, one of the few fields in which the Commission had a real say.

'The Community and its Member States shall ensure that there development policies are consistent with the common foreign and security policy.'

This meaning that Article 130 V was closely related to Article C of the Common Provisions, but probably also that coherence was originally seen in a restricted way. This sentence though was suppressed quickly, because of its superfluity with regard to Article C in which this consistency was already stated in its general form.[8]

If these articles from the text of the Treaty are put side by side, the following definition of coherence in relation to development policy can be obtained (Dubois 1994, 11):

'The articulation between different policies or actions of the Community which aim to minimise or suppress contradictory or negative effects of these policies on developing countries.'

In its Declaration on development policy for the year 2000, the EC Council of Ministers of Development Co-operation emphasised the importance of coherence of policy at its meeting of November 1992. The Declaration referred among other things to the 'linkage' between development cooperation policy and other areas of Community policy (CEC 1992: Article 27):

'The Council recognises the linkage between development cooperation policy and other Community policies. It also recognises the need to take account of their impact on developing countries. The Council urges the Commission to consider how this impact assessment might be carried out more systematically especially with regard to new proposals. It invites the Commission to report in time for the meeting of the Development Council in November 1993 on how it takes account of the objectives referred to in paragraph 18 in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries.'

The relevant report was presented in November 1994.

It should also be noted that there is already some precedent concerning this article in the form of the Commission's decision on beef export subsidies of May 1994. The Commission stated as follows in this decision:

'It is therefore necessary to take measures to end the serious incoherence that exists between the agricultural policy and the development policy of the Community. Such measures are all the more urgent because this harmonisation is a duty imposed by the Treaty on European Union (Article 130V).'

The Commission also proposed measures such as the collection of data and adjustment of the subsidies 'for the purpose of ensuring coherence between the Common Agricultural Policy and the development policy' (Commission Européene 1994). As far as coherence relating to the development objectives established in the Union Treaty is concerned, it is possible to draw a certain parallel with Article 130R. This states that (CEC/CEC 1992, 58): Environmental protection requirements must be integrated into the definition and the implementation of other Community policies'.

In conclusion, therefore, the term coherence does not appear as such in the Treaty on European Union. Instead the Treaty talks about 'taking account of'. In Article C the concept 'consistency' is used. In a later resolution the Council refers to 'the linkage that exists' and to 'the impact'. It was not until the Commission's decision on beef export subsidies of May 1994 that the terms coherence and incoherence were used.[9]

7. Laursen, F./S. Vanhoonacker (eds.) (1992). The Intergovernmental Conference on Political Union: Institutional Reforms, New Policies and International Identity of the European Community, 385; 453, Dordrecht.
8. Cloos, J./G. Reinesch/D. Vignes/J. Weyland (1994). Le Traité de Maastricht: Genèse, Analyses, Commentaires, 350, Bruxelles.
9. As mentioned in the texts of officials of (then) DG VIII (now DG Development) quoted below, article 130 V is referred to as the 'coherence article'.

Causes for incoherencies in and between policies

Notwithstanding the efforts to achieve coherence of policy, incoherence is often a given. First, as government has to deal with many parties and pressure groups, it may well be impossible to find optimal solutions that satisfy all parties concerned and achieve all objectives. This is, of course even more so in the European Union, where the number of stakeholders and parties is much larger than at a national level. Consequently, it is frequently necessary to settle for second-best solutions which may in turn lead to incoherence. Incoherence should therefore not always be regarded as a negative factor and may in some cases be seen instead as a result of clashes and conflicts of interest, in other words as a compromise in which the relative importance of the actions and actors has been duly weighed.

Second, government is not a unitary whole, but generally consists of a large number of departments, institutions and corporations.[10] These departments and institutions take a large number of policy measures, monitor their implementation and are quite often faced with conflicting interests. It is doubtful whether central government is in a position to keep a grip on the policy of all these different bodies. For example, its supervision of the outcome and results of policy is far from complete. Also this has a special dimension in the EU with an extra supranational level added. Member states are often reluctant or slow to translate European rules or regulations into national ones, and even slower to implement them.

Third, it is difficult to weigh all the factors and parties and their reactions to an initial policy decision. Consequently, it is often unclear what will be the precise effects or side effects of the policy. This is the more true if these effects situate themselves far away from the national and European borders. Finally, administrators and politicians, like academics, tend to be rather short sighted; in other words they focus entirely on the particular policy field for which they are expected to take measures at the time in question. Sometimes they are also required to be short sighted and to remedy short-term negative effects at the expense of optimal policy in the long term. It is clear that under such circumstances undesired effects in other domains of policy are easily produced.
All the factors just mentioned apply perhaps in particular to European policy, because not only is the number of parties much greater but there are also many more different types of party. In addition to the cultural, social and economic interests of particular groups or institutions, national interests, as the sum of all these other interests, also play a role in European policy in these fields. It is less easy in European policy than in national policy to find a single forum in which consensus can be reached. Helen Wallace (1996, 28) noted that there is an 'inherent instability' in European policy. By this she meant that:

'... it is rarely certain that the outcome of the policy dialogue will produce a clear and consistent line of policy amenable to a sustained collective regime. In other words, European policy regimes are conditional rather than definitive, a consequence of the continuing fluidity of the political setting of less than a policy, pulled between the political territories of the member states and the pressures of global and European influences.'

In the same volume Christopher Stevens describes this phenomenon, in an analysis of the EU banana policy, as inherent to the 'crab-like fashion' in which EU policies evolve. As he comments: 'It can easily find itself with mutually incompatible obligations' (Stevens 1996).

Nigel Nugent singles out two important characteristics of European policy: first, 'the differing degrees of EU policy involvement', and second, 'the patchy and somewhat uncoordinated nature of EU policies'. By the latter he means (Nugent 1994, 291):

'The EU's overall policy framework can hardly be said to display a clear pattern of overall coherence ... The fact is that the considerable national and political differences which exist in the EU make coordinated and coherent policy development that is based on shared principles and agreed objectives very difficult.'

This is particularly true of European development cooperation. Different forms of incoherence in this field can be found in the policy not only of the EU but also most certainly of the member states. Nugent argues that the member states think of their own interests first. Whether the relevant policy is politically acceptable is a matter that is considered later. Finally, it is decided whether the EU is the appropriate arena in which to give effect to closer relations between states (Nugent 1994, 295).

10. Weatherford (1994), emphasises that in the economic literature government is, however, often regarded as a unitary actor.

At the same time it is necessary to reconcile the differing interests of various national industries or groups. Not surprisingly, development objectives often have to take a back seat. One reason is that the cacophony generated by the member states and pressure groups tends to drown out the arguments of those advocating development objectives, whose voice may therefore be heard only indistinctly or indirectly.

This means that a series of causes for incoherencies exist. They can be grouped together in several categories: intended/unintended, structural/fictive/temporary, institutional/political. Intended incoherence would be a form of incoherence in which an authority consciously accepts that the objectives of policy in a particular field cannot be achieved because the policy involves conflicting interests and to protect the interests of one group of stakeholders might go at cost of another group of actors or stakeholders. An example of this is where a government accepts that developing countries will have restricted market access for their exports because domestic employment in certain sectors would otherwise be unduly affected. Compensation may possibly be provided in the form of limited or regulated market access, of concessions in other fields or of cash. A further distinction can be made here between an intended incoherence to correct adverse effects in the short term while adhering to the longer-term objectives and an incoherence which is intended purely to remedy certain negative effects for particular parties in the short term. To paraphrase Weatherford, one could call the former incoherence a 'dynamic incoherence' (Weatherford 1994, 139), because there is an attempt to establish a balance between two things that are to a certain extent incompatible, between what is good at a given moment and what is good in general.

In the case of unintended incoherence, policies in a particular field frustrate the objectives or results of other policies although this is not noticed because the results of the different policies are never compared. Such an incoherence could frequently occur in the field of development because policy produces results far away, which are therefore less visible or are made less visible. An example of this is the meat export subsidies: the effects of these subsidies on the West African market (negative effects from the development point of view) became apparent only when European NGOs revealed them. If, however, subsidised exports were later to be resumed again because of the growing meat mountain, this would represent a transition from unintended to intended incoherence.

A second set of causes could be described as structural, temporary or fictive. Structural are those causes in which different interest groups stand at both sides of the possible range of policies, in particular when it is difficult to find compromises, where the gain of one might be the loss of the other. Liberalisation of markets might give access to new producers at the cost of national producers and to the gain for national consumers. These causes might be only temporary if the different parties might only need time to adjust themselves to the new circumstances. They might even be called fictive if they only exist in the ideas or ideologies of some of the parties involved. Liberalisation might go at the cost of employment in one sector, but create more jobs or more sustainable employment in other sectors. The loss of employment could, in such a situation, be the only result that people see from liberalisation.

Lastly causes for incoherence can be found in institutional differences or inter-institutional competition or in politico-economic contradictions. Government institutions differ in organisational culture. Ideologies within these bureaucracies are often one-sided and not very comprehensive. Bureaucracies tend to be inward-looking and to build up arguments from within the institution alone. There is often a lack of coordination between government departments and complementarity is not a given but most often a result from inter-institutional competition. All these factors could lead to incoherencies.

Finally, to end this list of classifications we could try to discriminate between conflicting themes and conflicting issues with regard to development policy and the different types of (in)coherence (Figure 3). These conflicts could be the root cause for incoherencies. Starting from the Restricted Type (1) of coherence (the Internal (1) Type) we could see several conflicting themes. Different motives behind development cooperation could be in conflict with each other and thus be the cause of conflicting issues. Aid-tying is probably the most quoted example here, because it makes aid expensive and it leads often to 'white elephants'.

Table 2:
Causes for incoherencies

	Cause	Remedy
Unintended	• interests of developing countries not weighed/left aside • no clear representation of developing countries' interests • knowledge of effects absent	• impact study • mechanisms for better weighing
Intended	• developing countries' interests set aside • member states' interests of more importance • better lobbying by competing interests • no clear assessment available	• impact study • mechanisms for better weighing • compensation • accept incoherence
Structural **a. general**	• consumers versus producers • producers versus environment • producers versus producers	• accept incoherence • compensation
b. differentiated	• consumers versus consumers	
Temporary	• producers versus producers • producers versus environment	• compensation for modernisation • additional/flanking policy
Fictive	• producers versus producers • consumers versus producers	• mediation • information
Institutional	• cultural differences between institutions • ideological differences between institutions • compartmentalisation of policy departments (horizontal) • lack of coordination (vertical)	• transparency/information • co-ordination
Political/ Economic	• conflicting interests (inside member states, between member states, between EU and others) • complexity of issues • deregulation/liberalisation • internationalisation/globalisation	• tolerate incoherence • mitigation • compensation • additional/flanking policy

The domination of strategic interests in an aid programme is a second major example. Support for 'allies' has often led to misuse of aid funds by authoritarian regimes or leaders. President Mobutu Sese Seko could stand as primary example here. The motives could also conflict with major goals of the programmes. Economic self-interest of a donor often leads to a situation in which certain goals (economic self-reliance) overrule others (poverty reduction).

Debate and measures taken hitherto

On 18 November 1992 the EC Council of Ministers of Development Cooperation urged the European Commission to make a study of the practical consequences of Article 130 V. When the Council met a year later the study had not been presented. And six months on again, in 1994, the Commission had done no more than hold some consultations with external experts. According to officials of DG VIII, the delay was attributable to the dismissive attitude of some member states to this problem. The Commission was also said to be too understaffed to undertake the preparation of a report of this kind (Dhondt 1994, 93).

At the end of April 1993 European NGOs started lobbying against the meat exports to West Africa (or rather the subsidies on such exports). They maintained that these exports could be regarded as dumping and that they therefore disrupted the local meat markets (Eurostep 1993a; Eurostep 1993b; Klugkist 1993/1994). This was at odds both with European projects to encourage meat production in some Sahel countries and with European development objectives.[11] The incoherence between European development policy and commercial policy was expressly pointed out by the lobbying parties.

As a result of this lobbying, both the French and the German development ministries commissioned studies on the meat exports and the coherence problem. This increased the pressure on the Commission. Following urgent representations by the Netherlands and Germany, the relevant Commissioner (Marin) produced the meat exports report (quoted previously) in which the negative effects were confirmed and adjustments to the subsidies were announced. As mentioned above, this report was the first to include clear references to Article 130V. The Commission announced that it wished to 'ensure coherence' between European development policy and the common agricultural policy.

Thus it was that a report of the Commission was finally produced in which Article 130 V was accepted as the 'coherence article'. It was noted that since the Union did not have a comprehensive foreign policy, short-term considerations could often hold sway. As a result, the provision of aid could take precedence over the provision of market access. The job of the Commission in respect of coherence is above all to identify problems in good time and to minimise the negative effects. According to the report, the Commission wishes to concentrate on new policy in order to ensure that the problems remain manageable. No specific proposals were put forward in the Commission document for this purpose. In the debate on the report, the Council therefore got no further than the proposal of the relevant Commissioner (Pinheiro) to continue the study and consultations.[12] Although the Netherlands proposed that a mechanism be adopted for identifying present and future problems of incoherence, and Belgium wished to have a joint session of the EC Agriculture and Development Councils, neither suggestion has yet been acted upon. Six months later Denmark submitted a proposal for the design of a system of indicators.

The organisational structure of the new Commission under the presidency of Santer was made 'flatter' in the winter of 1994 to 1995. Different groups of Commissioners were instituted for this purpose to coordinate certain policy fields. One of these groups concerned the external relations of the Union and consisted of representatives of five Commissioners whose portfolio includes foreign policy or aspects of foreign policy. This group has above all a coordinating role. In addition, its terms of reference include assuring 'a coherent attitude on horizontal questions, susceptible to affect actions of the Commission in different geographical zones relevant to the responsibilities of the Commissioners'.[13] As far as coherence is concerned, this group is concentrating on new policy and exclusively on foreign policy. The subject of incoherence with internal European policy has not yet (May 1996) been raised.[14]

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11. A German study concluded that the meat exports of Mali and Burkina Faso in the period 1985-93 could have been 20-40 per cent higher if there had been no subsidised exports of frozen meat to Ivory Coast from the EU. See Brandt (1994).
12. Statement to the Press, 1849th session of the EC Development Council, Luxembourg, 1 June 1995. The Commission emphasised in a previous meeting of the Directors-General that they would often need to reconcile widely differing interests. The banana file was cited as an example; here the completion of the internal market had to be reconciled with relations with ACP countries, relations with Latin America and requirements in the context of GATT/WTO.
13. Groupes de Commissaires, Bruxelles, Commission Européenne, 24 janvier 1995 (O/95/12).
14. Discussions with officials of the Commission in May and June 1996.

In May 1996 the European NGOs started a fresh lobbying campaign with regard to Article 130 V. On this occasion the campaign concerned the fishing industry. The European Union was blamed for not having reduced the overcapacity of its fishing fleets, and for having simply exported the problem by concluding fisheries agreements. European fishermen, mainly from a few southern member states, are in this way being allocated free fishing rights in the waters of developing countries at the Community's expense. Although the latest generation of these agreements do contain provisions to protect local coastal fishing, there is no adequately equipped inspection service to monitor compliance. As a result, the local small fishermen are suffering. Once again the example comes from West Africa, on this occasion from Senegal.[15]

In the first half of 1997 the Dutch presidency put coherence high on its priority list. In this connection it organized a discussion on 1 March in the Amsterdam Arena on the sectors: conflict prevention, food security, fisheries agreements and migration. The goal was to bring a largely theoretical discussion back to concrete issues.[16] In the Council meeting of 5 June a resolution with regard to coherence of EU policy was adopted. The Commission was urged to report regularly on coherence issues and to present a report in 1998. Furthermore, it should describe questions with regard to coherence in policy proposals when relevant, and the council concerned should discuss these when the results might be negative for developing countries. In future Councils' trade, environment and agriculture are subjects that will be central in the discussion of coherence.

Only in May 1999, the Commission came with a reaction, a Non-Paper, to be discussed in the Council. In this Paper the Commission stated that indeed the problem of coherence should be treated under several aspects: 1. coherence between development policy and external policies of the Union (CSFP, Trade); 2. coherence between development policy and other communal policies (CAP, fisheries, environment, consumers' policies); 3. coherence between the different instruments of development cooperation; 4. coherence between development policies and the policies of a given developing country; 5. and lastly, coherence between the policies of the member states and that of the Commission (and here coordination and complementarity are mentioned). The document then starts dealing with the four themes discussed in Amsterdam, but in a very inconclusive way. Since the Council invited the Commission again to come up with some procedural arrangements to examine and deal with incoherences, the last page is reserved for that. The Commission points at Article 12 of the Lomé Convention, which obliges the Community to inform ACP-countries when measures might be taken that could effect the goals of the Convention. The Commission suggests that such an article could also be built in in other arrangements with developing countries. With regard to the internal procedures the Commission points at the 'RELEX' group of Directors Generals and supervised by the Commissioners who deal with foreign affairs.

It is clear that this Non-Paper – devoted anyway mainly to the evaluation of the different cooperation programmes of the Union – was not sufficient for the Council. But the Council had to wait till the new Commissioner for Development Cooperation, Poul Nielson, took office before new initiatives were taken. In Spring 2000 three to four proposals on coherence were tabled and finally a far-reaching document was accepted by the group of Directors General. The document contained a series of specific proposals on instruments to be instituted. They were very close to the suggestions made by the coalition of European NGOs in Eurostep. In February 2000 the Directorate General for Development circulated a first draft of a policy paper on 'coherence', called 'Towards improved coherence between the Community development policy and other Community policies'. It started with a critical analysis of several fields of policy where development policy could 'be affected or even contradicted' by other policies. It particularly mentioned the Common Trade Policy, the Common Agricultural Policy, fisheries policy and the budget policy. On the last issue for example the extensive aid to Kosovo and Turkey was quoted as example of the political focus of European financial support to middle income countries at the detriment of low income countries. Trade, agriculture and fisheries policies were and are examples of incoherent policies that have been current already for a long time in the public debate, but appeared now for the first time very critically in an internal Commission's document on development

15. See, inter alia, European Research Office (1995a; 1995b; 1995c).
16. Based on Letters to the Dutch Parliament of 26 May 1997 and 5 June 1997, containing the agenda and the unofficial minutes of the Council Meeting of 5 June 1997.

cooperation. The document further called for a 'realistic and pragmatic approach' and gave the Commission's answers to several European Council proposals.

Very quickly it appeared that this document went too far, was too critical and it was solemnly buried in the Commission. A new, really watered down version, with a title in which the word 'coherence' was substituted by the word 'consistency', was debated in the Commission's meeting half of April and then brought to the Council. A comparison between both documents shows clearly the large differences between the propositions of both Communications of the Commission. This final text, only signed by Development Commissioner Poul Nielson, was finally adopted.

The text though had little consequences. The Focal Point on Policy Consistency was never installed, although in the Directorate A and B of DG Development two of the units (Institutional development, civil society, institutional support and Development policy & coherence donor issues) on a more or less permanent basis try to follow and monitor those decisions in the Commission that have or could have effects on developing countries. This is for example true for fisheries treaties.

Also the main policy Statement by the Council and the Commission on 'The European Community's Development Policy' from 2000 has a rather tame and short text on coherence:

'There must be greater coherence between the various Community policies focused on sustainable development. Efforts must be made to ensure that Community development policy objectives are taken into account in the formulation and implementation of other policies effecting the developing countries. The way to achieve this is to make a systematic and thorough analysis of any direct effects of measures in especially sensitive areas and to take development problems into account in the Commission decision-making process.'[17]

Neither concrete steps, nor instruments are indicated. In the Council meeting though, a proposition by the Dutch to discuss coherence issues in every Council meeting was adopted, although not taken into the minutes.

Although the Commission as a whole appears to stay very reluctant to come up with proposals and go into difficult detail on communal policies that in itself are already controversial, more and more member states seem willing to discuss incoherent European policies. A case in point might be the British policy paper on globalisation, in which also the CAP and the fisheries policy are given as examples and a promise is made 'to use every opportunity to work for change to the CAP and CFP'.[18] A second example is Sweden's new development policy white paper from December 2003 'Shared responsibility – Sweden's policy for global development'. Sweden claims to be 'the first country in the world to establish a policy integrating all policy areas in the work to achieve the common goal of sustainable global development'. In other words: Sweden claims to be more coherent than any other donor and dedicates a major part of its policy paper to policy coherence.

More recently Council and Commission tried to use the Country Strategy Papers as an instrument to detect and analyse policy coherence. Coherence issues should get one section in these CSPs. It is a section in which one has also to deal with complementarity issues. The instruction of the Council however was very clear:

'include in each Country strategy paper a coherence paragraph describing the impact of different Community policies and how these could be combined to further the integration of the developing country concerned into the world economy'[19].

This was worked out rather shallow in the Commission Staff Working Paper on the Country Strategy Plans. It is important here to give the full instruction as appeared under Point 5 'The EC response strategy, coherence with EU policies, complementarity within the EU and with other donors':

'The principle of coherence or consistency with other EU policies requires attention. The linkages between external assistance and other Community policies in such fields as fishery, agriculture, commerce, conflict prevention, food security and migration should, as appropriate, be examined and dealt with in this section. Account needs to be taken of any future negotiations

17 Commission of the European Community, The European Community's Development Policy – Statement by the Council and the Commission. Brussels, 10 November 2000.

18 Department for International Development, Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation work for the Poor, London, December 2000.

19 Standard Framework for Country Strategy Papers: The Council's Conclusions. Brussels, 10 November 2000.

on regional economic partnership agreements and the need for trade aspects to be dealt with in appropriate way in this context'.[20]

So the instruction is thus very clear and it even cites a number of cases/policies that should draw the attention of the writers of the Country Strategy Papers. In the present generation of Country Strategy Papers the section on policy coherence receives on average a bit more than half a page, at least five lines and at best a bit more than two pages. The section gets more lines in the Central and South America CSPs, and less in the Mediterranean CSPs. The Sub Sahara Africa average is low because of the large number (11) of CSPs without any section on policy coherence. In general it means that in the present CSPs most sections are rather short, that they don't go very deep and that at best they only point at certain incoherencies in EU policies without any analysis. Overall the tone is very positive, indicating that programmes are coherent and that policies are well monitored.

The Doha 'Development Round'[21] of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the 5th Ministerial Conference of this organisation in Cancún in September 2003 brought the issue of coherence of trade and internal policies with regard to development policy again to the foreground. In the centre of the discussions in Cancún were the agricultural policies of the EU and the USA, with cotton as a specific example.[22] Developing countries, headed by India, Brazil and China, refused to go into the negotiation logic of the EU and the USA that dominated that dominated the 'Kennedy', 'Uruguay' and other round of negotiations in the WTO, and its predecessor the GATT, for so long. Doha and Cancún thus became the battle ground for a clash between developed and developing countries ending in a stalemate in Cancún.

The discussions were fed by critical reports of the World Bank[23] and NGOs[24]. In these reports trade distorting support for agriculture and export subsidies for agricultural products (90 % of which provided by the EC) were at the centre of the critique. The World Bank stated that the Agenda 2000 CAP reform 'marked a step in the right direction' with the reduction of export subsidies and the cutting of support prices, but it stated also that it was 'unlikely to be sufficient to eliminate the EU exportable surpluses'. The Bank report also provided the figure of 247 billion US $ in 2000 of direct support to agricultural producers in high-income countries, about five times Official Development Assistance, that was quoted broadly in the following discussions. Income losses for developing countries because of agricultural protectionism by the developed countries were calculated at 100 billion US $ a year. West African countries alone are said to have lost 250 million US $ alone due to subsidies on cotton production in Europe and the USA. The World Bank saw in general a protectionism of labour intensive export from developing countries (World Bank 2003).

In 2002 the European Commission presented proposals for alterations in the CFP and the CAP. In the context of the mid-term review of the CAP the reorientation of the agricultural policy was aimed at promoting income redistribution and a higher sustainability. It should be indicated however that products not covered by the reform are notably rice, sugar and cotton, or those products harming developing countries' interests most.

20. Commission Staff Working Paper: Community Co-operation: Framework for Country Strategy Papers. Brussels, SEC (2000) 1049, 2000.
21 See the Declaration of the 4th Ministerial Conference, Doha, November 2001.
22 The presidents of four West-African states filed a complaint against the EU and the USA with regard to their protectionist policies with regard to cotton.
23 Amongst others World Bank (2002, 2003).
24 Amongst others Oxfam (2002).

Table 3:
Proposed instruments to foster coherence in development policy

	Instrument	Advantages	Disadvantages
National Advisory Council (Netherlands)	Report annually to the EC Council and the European Parliament	• greater transparency and openness	• could be defensive and thus ritualistic • more paper work
	Complaints procedure/ Inspection Panel Screening test	• initiatives not solely by Commission and therefore wider-ranging • decisions would have to be weighed	• needs investigative capacity • red tape • window dressing • sometimes difficult to be assessed
Solagral (French Research Institute)	Working group of civil servants of different DGs Group of experts for assessment studies	• decisions would have to be weighed • better assessments • solid weighing of decisions	• lack of transparency • purely bureaucratic • responsibilities unclear • could be symbolic • could involve unnecessary paper work
Church Conference (Germany)	Regular consultations between European and ACP ministers	• greater transparency and openness	• ritualistic/not transparent • no clear procedures • private initiative left out
	System for assessment and evaluation	• better assessments • solid weighing of decisions	• no clear responsibilities • could be symbolic • could involve unnecessary paperwork
Government of Denmark	Discussions in Council	• developing set of indicators • discover unintentional concrete cases	• results unclear • behind closed doors, transparency lacking
Government of the Netherlands	Complaints procedure Commission Discussions in Council on food security/fisheries, conflict prevention, migration	• possibility to present incoherences • stimulating debate • discover unknown territories	• transparency not secured • investigative capacity lacking • results unclear • not leading to instruments/ bureaucratic procedures
Eurostep	Impact Assessments Regular Reporting Joint Council meetings Coherence Office	• better insight in results • stimulate debate • better decision making	• could be ritualistic • much paperwork
First Nielson Proposal	Coherence Focal Point	• autonomous analysis • data base • contact point	• depends on place in hierarchy
Second Nielson Proposal	Focal Point in DG Dev	• detection of incoherences	• avoiding the real issues • Not transparent
Government of the Netherlands	Discussions on coherence in every Council meeting	• stimulating debate	• could become ritualistic

Conclusions

Coherence of policy is an aspect of government activity that has hitherto received little attention, but in the last ten years attention has been rapidly growing. Nonetheless, provision was made in Article 130 V of the Treaty on the European Union, the Treaty of Maastricht, for coherence of European development policy. Despite the urging of various member states, little has been done to implement this article. The report of the European Commission on this subject is defensive and contains no specific proposals for dealing with incoherence. The same could be said about the EU's statement on development policy of 2000.

The Committee on External Relations appears mainly to be concentrating on coherence within foreign policy and coherence of new policy proposals. Consequently, it disregards both existing examples of incoherence and the coherence of development policy and internal European policy. During the Dutch presidency in the first half of 1997, an informal Council meeting in the Amsterdam Arena was dedicated to discussions on policy incoherence in several fields. The official Council meeting in June 1997 did not lead to any concrete proposals to introduce instruments to foster coherence; only new discussions were announced. In 2000 European Commissioner for Development Nielson was confronted with a clear defeat in the Commission when he, maybe overambitiously tried to change the scenes. Little happened since then.

Nonetheless, various instruments could be devised to promote coherence. Of the member states in particular the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany seem in favour of adding new instruments. In recent years they have been getting support also from the UK and Sweden. But still this seems to be very much a discussion or presentation 'for the audience' and less so one with practical consequences and policy implications.

As far as possible, the effectiveness of new instruments should be weighed in advance. Creating greater openness and fostering clear assessments with a minimum of bureaucracy could be a guideline here. First of all, the mandate of the Committee on External Policy could be expanded to include existing policy and internal policy. The most attractive of the other options would be the annual reporting system and complaints procedure, because they can be arranged with this minimum of bureaucracy. The reporting could be integrated into the existing CSPs, which should become a yearly renewed planning and early warning document. In addition, such reporting would ensure greater transparency and provide more scope for supervision.

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