The Coherence of EU Policies: Perspectives from the North and the South

Background and Objectives of the Commissioned Study

Policy Coherence is a relatively new concept in political science as well as in the formulation and implementation policy itself. In recent years policy coherence in development cooperation gained new importance due to the Doha round of trade negotiations, in which developed countries policies not only in trade but as well in agriculture stood under accusation.

The objective of this report is to identify, and exemplify EU policies that are incoherent with EC’s development policy objectives, and to suggest ways of addressing this. The study also seeks to provide a framework for analysis for Country Strategy Papers, to identify potential incoherence amongst various development policy objectives.

Research framework:

‘Policy coherence’ is defined as ‘the non-occurrence of policies or the results of policies that are contrary to the objectives of a given policy’. Three types of coherence are analysed:

- Internal coherence within the European development cooperation itself.
- Internal coherence between the European development policies and other external European policies.
- External coherence between the European development policies and other EU policies.

Methodology:

- Analysis of treaties, policy documents and guidelines on the basis of text and discourse analysis. The analysis was supplemented with interviews with staff of the Commission and the European Council, members of the European Parliament and some NGO umbrellas.
- Analysis of the ‘coherence paragraphs’ of all the Country Strategy Papers.
- A case study of Morocco and Senegal to develop a framework for coherence assessment.

Research Findings

- The study shows that one of the important causes for incoherence is that the interests of important groups or consumers are at stake and that these have a heavier weight in the formulation and implementation of policies than the interests of producers in developing countries.

- EU regional programmes have a wide range of goals and objectives which create internal incoherences or incoherences within development cooperation itself. This is holds particularly for incoherence between the broad socio-economic development goals and objectives and the poverty focus of the programme.

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Main Conclusions

To get a deeper type of analysis of EU’s policy coherence with regard to development cooperation, the development of an ‘alarm-system’ or ‘indicator-system’ to monitor policy coherence is required.

Directorate General for External Affairs and the Directorate General Development should have a framework that identifies potential and actual coherence issues and proposes questions and methodologies to analyse these issues.

Staff of General for External Affairs and the Directorate General Development and the Delegations should be trained to work with such a framework. It is suggested that the workshops for the training should be offered on a regional basis.

For further information on this research project, please visit:

EC-PREP website: www.ec-prep.org
CIDIN website: www.ru.nl/cidin

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