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Migration, Development and the EU Trust Fund for Africa

Since 2000 the EU has emphasized the need for its development cooperation with the African states to contribute to the reduction of irregular migration flows into the EU. As a consequence, not only the EU-Africa development cooperation was directed to addressing the root causes of migration from Africa, but the EU has also tried to make the disbursement of its development aid conditional upon the fight against irregular migration from the continent, with disappointing results. As some scholars criticized the growing subordination of the EU development cooperation to the fight against irregular migration from Africa by arguing that development is positively associated with migration, others insisted on the need to delink security and migration from development. This chapter takes a different view. By analyzing the evolution of the EU-Africa cooperation on migration and development during the last two decades in general, and the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa established in 2015 in particular, this chapter shows that while on the one side the structural imbalances of the African economies remain one of the main causes of migration (in and) from the continent, on the other side the ideological vision at the core of the EU-Africa development cooperation prevents it from addressing the root causes of underdevelopment in Africa, with negative effects on the EU's potential contribution to both an effective management of migration flows (in and) from the continent and global justice.

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Introduction

Today the management of migration flows is one of the main priorities of the EU-Africa partnership. Historically, security concerns have shaped the EU's approach to migration (Furia 2012: 88). More recently, the creation and consolidation of FRONTEX and the EU's efforts to conclude bilateral agreements with third-countries to fight irregular migration have clearly shown that a securitarian approach to migration still prevails within the EU (Guild 2006; Ceccorulli 2013: 94; Morone 2018). Thus, it was probably inevitable for the EU to come to view development cooperation as a tool for

strengthening migration governance. Since 2000 the Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) committed the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries to cooperate with the EU on migration. The inclusion of the latter among the priorities of the Africa-EU partnership reinforced the trend toward imposing political and economic conditionality on EU development aid to African countries. Since the end of the Cold War, its disbursement has been gradually subordinated to respect for democracy and human rights (Olsen 1998; Brown 2005; Crawford 2005), the implementation of neoliberal economic reforms (Parfitt 1996, Brown 2001; Montana 2003) and cooperation in the fight against terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (Hadfield 2007).

This chapter shows that the EU's emphasis on promoting economic development to discipline migration flows between Africa and the EU risks not only adding to the confusion about the real priorities of the EU's development cooperation, but also undermining the EU's efforts to control migration flows from Africa, since the root causes of poverty and migration have been left unaddressed.

In so doing, this chapter calls into question the mainstream view according to which economic and social development is simply going to augment migration flows from Africa. In the words of Ronald Skeldon: "rising prosperity brings increased population mobility and migration" (Skeldon 2010: 156). This mainstream vision not only risks undermining political support for development cooperation at the international level, but also underplays the complexity of the causes of underdevelopment and the multiple linkages between the latter and migration. As de Haas observed: "migration can have a crucial insurance function in protecting people from the destabilizing and exclusionary effects of absent or ill-functioning markets, high inequality, corruption and authoritarianism, failing state policies and lack of state-provided social security and basic public services such as education and health care" (de Haas 2012: 16). As these political and economic conditions are found in many sub-Saharan African states, addressing them is imperative if the EU and the international community more generally want to secure better living conditions in the African countries and turn migration into an opportunity for both the sending and receiving countries.

The limits of Africa-EU cooperation on migration raise important questions concerning the EU's contribution to global justice. According to Eriksen (2016), this contribution can be conceptualized in three different ways.

In the first place, the EU could promote global justice "in line with the principles of justice as non-domination", by implementing a foreign policy "restricted to upholding the institutions of international law, criticizing illicit interference in spheres of

sovereignty and state autonomy and seeking fair terms for cooperation with states external to the EU” (Eriksen 2016: 12). In fact, by increasingly making the disbursement of its development aid conditional upon the fight against irregular migration, the EU has been imposing its own political agenda on African countries. However, ‘domination’ does not go without potential contradictions. This chapter shows how the development vision at the core of EU-Africa cooperation leaves unaddressed the complex causes of underdevelopment in Africa and, paradoxically, risks undermining international efforts aimed at better managing migration flows in and from the continent.

Secondly, the EU could contribute to global justice by pursuing a foreign policy “in line with justice as impartiality [by] upholding human rights and promoting an international order in compliance with the cosmopolitan law of the people” (Eriksen 2016: 16). However, this chapter shows that the emphasis on the protection of human rights notwithstanding, EU-Africa cooperation on migration has failed to effectively support freedom and human dignity in Africa, due to the EU’s overarching concern for its border security and, more generally, the lack of attention to the specific development needs of African countries.

Thirdly, the EU could contribute to global justice by pursuing a notion of justice as mutual recognition by establishing “cooperative arrangements and active dialogues with affected parties in order to determine what would be the right or best thing to do in any given circumstance” (ibidem: 20). However, the EU’s determination to act quickly to stem migration flows from Africa has not only legitimized the exclusion of African governments from the selection of some of the development projects funded by the EU on the continent, but has also led to a further narrowing of the political dialogue between the EU and African states concerning the complex relationship between development and migration.

After analyzing the evolution of Africa-EU cooperation on migration during the last two decades in light of the EU’s potential contribution to global justice, this chapter examines the EU’s Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) established in 2015, to understand if it represents, as the EU official documents claim, an innovative development tool, and if it could effectively contribute to better managing migration flows between Africa and Europe.

1. EU-Africa cooperation and the migration-development nexus

In 2000 the CPA introduced migration into the framework of EU-Africa development cooperation. Negotiations on the content of article 13 of the CPA saw the emergence of a trade-off between the promotion of development in the ACP countries so as to stem migration flows to the EU on the one side and a commitment to fight irregular migration on the other side (Crush 2005: 47). After expressing a general consensus on the need “to ensure respect for human rights [and] the fair treatment of third-country nationals”, article 13 of the CPA listed the political concerns of both the ACP countries and the EU. Thus, it committed the parties on the one hand to implementing “strategies aiming at reducing poverty [in order to] contribute in the long term to normalising migration flows” and, on the other hand, to cooperating in the fight against irregular migration (European Commission 2003: art. 13). Not only were the ACP states required to “accept the return of and readmission of any of [their] nationals who are illegally present on the territory of a Member State of the European Union, at that Member State’s request and without further formalities”, but article 13 also envisaged the possibility of concluding bilateral agreements that could contain an obligation for any ACP government to also readmit third-country nationals (*ibidem*).

Initially, article 13 remained little more than a statement of intent. Except for the EU’s efforts to conclude bilateral readmission agreements with the countries of North Africa, in the early 2000s the attention of the European institutions and African governments was mainly focused on the process of reciprocal trade liberalization set in motion by the CPA (Stevens 2006; Pallotti 2011).

It was only in 2002 that the EU Commission offered some reflections on the migration-development nexus. In its communication: “Integrating Migration Issues in the European Union’s Relations with Third-Countries”, the EU Commission embraced an instrumental view of the relationship between economic development and migration, arguing that: “the long-term priority of the Community should be to address the root causes of migration flows. [...] Development resources should concentrate on this objective” (Commission of European Communities 2002: 4-5). Although it recognized the potential benefits of migration for both the sending and receiving countries, the Commission stressed the fact that:

the expected continuation, or even acceleration, of international migration flows will have major consequences for both the European Union and the third countries, including developing countries, from which these migrants originate. To successfully address these consequences, it will be necessary to strengthen policies that focus on the root causes of international migration

while – at the same time – working towards a further strengthening of the migration management capacity of both the European Union and the countries of origin (ibidem: 7).

To this end, the EU Commission suggested not only the conclusion of readmission agreements with third-countries, but also the implementation of development programs aimed at addressing “the number one push factor of international migration: unemployment and lack of economic prospects” (ibidem: 21). According to the EU Commission, while “outsourcing arrangements” could prevent foreign workers from migrating into the EU, their return to the countries of origin could be promoted by offering them incentives in the labour market (ibidem: 24). The EU Commission also urged the integration of the developing countries into the world trading system (ibidem: 22), without giving any consideration to the potentially negative effects of market liberalization and foreign competition on their economies (Langan 2018: 33-60, 119-148). In the 47-page document (annexes excluded), only a few lines were devoted to rural development, in spite of both its central place in contemporary debates on pro-poor growth in Africa (Odusola 2017), and its relevance among the root causes of migration trajectories in and from the continent (Stocchiero 2016).

Due to the sensitivity of the migration issue within the EU (Koebe, Hohmeister 2010: 2), it took three years for the EU Commission to publish a new document on the migration-development nexus. However, in 2005 the EU Commission provided a different view of it, focusing its analysis on the benefits of migration for developing countries and, in particular, on the conditions under which remittances could stimulate economic growth in the sending countries. According to the EU Commission, such conditions included good governance, the rule of law, the enforcement of property rights and “a sound macro-economic framework” (Commission of European Communities 2005: 20).

The 2005 communication put EU development policy in line with the emerging donor consensus on the benefits of migration for development. As Wright and Black have noted, while “until the end of the 1990s, it was common amongst policy-makers to consider underdevelopment as the primary cause of migration [...] since 2000 there has been a shift in focus [and] governments, donors and academics are beginning to see migration as an opportunity to promote development or to see migration as a route out of poverty” (Wright, Black 2011: 549). However, this new consensus, with its emphasis on the benefits of remittances and circular migration (a selective, temporary and precarious form of migration) (Hansen, Jonsson 2011: 267), reflects a neoliberal

view that fails to consider how governments should address the structural obstacles to pro-poor growth in sub-Saharan Africa, and the potentially negative effects of migration on the sending countries (de Haas 2012: 19-20).

While in the early 2000s the EU adopted only a few programmatic documents on the migration-development nexus, the tragic events in Ceuta and Melilla in October 2005 (Collyer 2009: 281) pushed both the EU and African governments to look for more effective ways to govern migration flows.

The “Global Approach to Migration” adopted by the European Council in December 2005 pointed to the fight against irregular migration as a central priority for the EU. The document emphasized the need to reinforce “monitoring and surveillance of the southern maritime border of the EU” and to strengthen dialogue with African governments on the basis of article 13 of the CPA so as to guarantee the “effective implementation of readmission obligations” (Council of the European Union 2005: 5). In spite of its title, the document did not pay any real attention to the complex relationship between economic development and migration. So, by trying to impose its own political and security concerns on its development cooperation with the African states, the EU jeopardized its potential contribution to global justice as non-domination.

Concerned about the growing number of African migrants who were trying to enter the EU and their “inhuman and degrading treatment”, in June 2006 the Executive Council of the African Union entered the debate on the management of migration flows between Africa and the EU by adopting the African Common Position on Migration and Development. Noting that “the emphasis on addressing illegal or irregular migration has been only on security considerations rather than on broader development frameworks and on mainstreaming migration in development strategies”, the Executive Council stressed the need to consider migration “an effective tool for development”, rather than a cost for the African countries (Executive Council of the African Union 2006b: 2, 4). Given the positive impact of remittances and “skill and technology transfers” on the economies of the developing countries, new channels for legal migration to the industrialized countries had to be opened (ibidem: 8). Despite its emphasis on poverty as a root cause of migration (ibidem: 4), the Executive Council of the African Union did not spell out how to reduce it in Africa, and just appealed to more FDI and official aid to the continent.

Surprisingly, the “Migration Policy Framework for Africa”, a second document adopted by the Executive Council of the African Union at its June 2006 meeting in Banjul (The Gambia), espoused a very different view of migration, as it emphasized

the risks it posed to national and international security and the need to combat “irregular migration and [establish] comprehensive migration management systems” (Executive Council of the African Union 2006c: 19). Since the document aimed at promoting African inter-state cooperation on migration, border security took precedence over all considerations concerning the potential development benefits of migration (Guazzini 2018: 144).

Renewed African and European interest in migration led to the convening of the Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development in Rabat in July 2006 and then the EU-Africa Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development in Tripoli in November of the same year. Both conferences pointed to the need to overcome a narrow securitarian approach to migration and consider the benefits of a well-managed migration system for both origin and destination countries. Emphasis was also put on the need to address the socio-economic drivers of migration flows from Africa. However, scant attention was paid to defining measures that could be adopted to address the root causes of migration. Thus, while the Rabat declaration just mentioned the need “to strengthen an environment favourable to development [by promoting] good governance [...] trade and [...] peace and stability” (Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development 2006a), the Rabat Plan of Action did not go beyond a commitment to reducing poverty, implementing “projects which generate employment”, and “granting technical assistance to migrants willing to develop entrepreneurial projects in their countries of origin” (Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development 2006b: 2).

Like the conference in Rabat, the one in Tripoli also recognized that migration from Africa had multiple causes, such as poverty, demographic growth, “unequal terms of trade” and the “uneven impact of globalization”, but it did not clarify how pro-poor economic growth could be pursued on the continent (African Union, European Union 2006: 2). Thus the EU and African governments missed an opportunity to critically reflect on the contradictory nature of the economic growth recorded in Africa since the late 1990s (Pallotti 2013: 121-156; Watkins, Quattri 2016), and the limits of the development vision of the EU-Africa partnership. Instead of laying the basis for a more effective framework for development cooperation and, within it, for a mutually advantageous migration regime between the EU and Africa, the Rabat and Tripoli conferences consolidated the trade-off between development cooperation on the one side and the fight against irregular migration (an issue of interest also for the African states, as observed above) on the other side. So, it could be argued that the Rabat and Tripoli conferences undermined the potential contribution of the EU-Africa cooperation to global justice as impartiality. While on the one side African

governments were able to rebalance the focus of EU-African cooperation on migration from border security to development, on the other side they did not address the political and economic conditions that lie behind “real human powerlessness and indignity in Africa [that are] the very causes of the illegitimacy of the African state” (Mutua 2008: 35). This “depoliticized” development vision (Ferguson 1994) also raised some questions concerning the contribution of the EU-Africa partnership to global justice as mutual recognition, since formal respect for this principle seemed not to guarantee the establishment of the “cooperative arrangements and active dialogue [necessary] to determine what would be the right or best thing to do in any given circumstance” (Eriksen 2016: 20).

While in the late 2000s the EU and African governments reiterated their belief that development could help reduce migration (African Union, European Union 2007b: 64-70; Conseil de l’Union Européenne 2008: 110-118), the surge in migration flows to Europe after the fall of Ghaddafi’s regime in Libya in 2011 led the EU to impose its own security concerns on EU-African development cooperation.

2. Re-securitization of migration

The apparent change in the EU’s original “securitarian approach to migration” in the first decade of the new century soon proved to be “more rhetorical than practical” (Lavenex, Kunz 2007: 446, 551).

During the negotiations for the first revision of the CPA, some possible amendments to article 13 were discussed and there was even a proposal to rename the article “Migration and development”. However, as the EU insisted on introducing a binding readmission clause, it was decided not to change the original formulation of article 13 (Koebe, Hohmeister 2010: 7; Knoll 2017: 242-243).

The political turmoil in North Africa since 2011 and the migration crisis that followed aroused the concern of EU governments. The failure of the policy previously pursued by the EU in the North African region (Bicchi 2014) reinforced the subordination of development cooperation to the control of migration flows between Africa and the EU. In the “Global Approach to Migration and Mobility” (GAMM) adopted in November 2011 the European Commission stated that: “migration is now firmly at the top of the European Union’s political agenda”. The comprehensive approach devised by the EU to address the challenge of migration rested on four pillars: improving migration governance, fighting illegal migration, securing the protection of asylum seekers, and “maximising the development impact of migration and mobility” (European

Commission 2011a: 6). The GAMM explicitly conditioned opportunities for legal migration into the EU on third-countries' effective cooperation in the fight against irregular migration, as it stated that: "without well-functioning border controls, lower levels of irregular migration and an effective return policy, it will not be possible for the EU to offer more opportunities for legal migration and mobility" (ibidem: 5). The GAMM also stressed the need to use "a 'more for more' approach implying an element of conditionality" in the negotiations for the new Migration Partnerships (ibidem: 11).

While the GAMM paid only cursory attention to the linkage between migration and development, the staff document on "Migration and Development" published with the GAMM not only emphasized the benefits of remittances and circular migration for the developing countries, but also raised some important issues concerning migration between the latter and the EU. On the one hand the European Commission noted that "the current narrow avenues of legal migration towards the EU" could hamper cooperation with third countries in the management of migration flows (European Commission 2011b: 5). On the other hand, it suggested that migration could have negative effects on development. According to the European Commission, migration could delay the adoption of much needed economic and political reforms within the developing countries and thus cause further migration flows (ibidem: 14).

After the adoption of the GAMM, the dialogue on migration between the EU and African governments mainly concerned technical issues, such as the reduction of the costs of remittances, visa procedures and the implementation of readmission clauses (Knoll 2017: 244). According to Mangala, given its sensitive nature, both African governments and the EU preferred to approach migration as a technical issue. Thus they neglected to address hard questions such as the ones raised by the 2001 Staff document on "Migration and Development", opening the door to a securitarian view of migration (Mangala 2013: 214).

More concretely, the EU tried to promote more effective management of migration flows in Africa through the European Development Fund (EDF). Some projects were also funded under the umbrella of the Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment (Knoll 2017: 247). However, as Mangala remarked, while "migration-related projects and activities – especially in the fight against illegal migration [...] – have received the most attention and attracted the lion's share of funding [...] the implementation of the mobility and employment components of the partnership has been, to say the least, totally overlooked" (Mangala 2013: 216).

In the wake of the armed conflicts in Syria and Libya and the EU's perception of a serious threat to its border security, the Fourth EU-Africa Summit held in Brussels in

2014 focused almost exclusively on the fight against irregular migration. Once again, the summit failed to suggest any concrete measures to boost the development potential of migration between Africa and the EU or to address the root causes of migration from Africa. On the contrary, the EU-Africa Declaration on Migration and Mobility adopted by the summit indicated combating trafficking in human beings and fighting irregular migration as top priorities of the EU-Africa partnership in the field of migration (African Union, European Union 2014). While a similar approach inspired the European Agenda on Migration adopted in June 2015, which “no longer spoke of a positive connection between migration and development” (Kipp 2018: 8), when the EU and African governments met in La Valletta in November 2015 the former offered the latter new development aid in return for their cooperation in the fight against irregular migration. Thus, while the EU was determined to sacrifice its contribution to global justice as impartiality and non-domination on the altar of its security concerns, African governments seemed satisfied with the EU’s promise of some extra aid they could use to strengthen their national security apparatuses. Once again, questions could be raised about the effectiveness of the EU-Africa political dialogue in light of the notion of global justice as mutual recognition, given its failure to critically consider the structural causes of poverty and inequality in Africa.

Generally, the EU has not concealed its disappointment about the persistent difficulties it has encountered in managing migration flows from Africa. In their evaluation of the CPA published in 2016, the EU Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy noted that:

Migration and mobility can bring important benefits to the EU and partner countries, if properly managed. The CPA has been lacking sufficient rapid responsiveness and decisive action on this key challenge. The obligation of readmitting nationals in an irregular situation on the territory of the other party remained to a large extent unimplemented (European Commission, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2016b: 11).

For this reason, the European Commission listed migration among the priorities of the post-CPA cooperation agreement with Africa. Since, in the words of the European Commission, “order in migration flows must be restored”, it was suggested that the new cooperation agreement should focus on strengthening the dialogue on migration, fighting irregular migration, addressing the challenge of readmission, and promoting

circular migration between Africa and the EU (European Commission, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2016b: 12).

Thus, while the EU today seems determined to make development cooperation with the African states conditional on their effective cooperation in the management of migration flows, a lively scholarly debate has emerged on the causes of the disappointing results of EU-African cooperation on migration.

According to some scholars, the cause of the difficulties the EU-Africa partnership has faced in effectively addressing migration is to be found in the “lack of coherence between different areas of competence” within the EU (Van Criekinge 2009: 174). Since the European External Action Service, the Directorate General International Cooperation and Development and the Directorate General Migration and Home Affairs have different political and institutional visions and follow different approaches to migration, it has been difficult to clearly define how development cooperation should contribute to migration governance. Hence a securitarian approach to migration has prevailed in the EU-Africa partnership.

Other scholars have pointed out that historically the EU has considered the security of its borders as the main priority, embracing an instrumental view of development cooperation. This has had negative effects on the achievement of both border security and development (Lavenex, Kunz 2007). Others still have put emphasis on the need “to make migration work for development” (Koebe, Hohmeister 2010: 8).

Missing from this scholarly debate on the shortcomings of the EU-Africa cooperation on migration is an analysis of the potentially contradictory relationship between the neo-liberal development vision promoted under the umbrella of the EU-ACP partnership and the root causes of migration in and from Africa. As de Haas observed, “if economic growth — whether driven by aid, trade or remittances — is accompanied by increasing income inequality, relative deprivation might further increase people’s incentives to migrate abroad, even if absolute incomes increase” (de Haas 2007: 836).

Given its ideological assumption of a positive relationship between trade liberalization and poverty reduction (EC 2001: 8), as previously noted, the EU-Africa partnership has neglected to consider the limits and contradictions of the development model pursued by African governments during the last two decades, and its negative impact on both the social fabric of the African countries and migration flows in and from the continent.

Therefore, it is no small wonder that in spite of all the emphasis on fighting poverty to reduce migration between Africa and Europe, the EU’s contribution to the fight

against poverty in Africa remains somehow uncertain. Although the European Commission recently argued that: “The CPA has contributed positively to the reduction of poverty, this particularly through its efficient BS [budget support] aid modality” (European Commission, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2016a: 93), some analyses have shown that poverty reduction has never been a central goal of EU budget support to the African states. On the contrary, the delivery of the latter was made conditional on the implementation of further measures of trade liberalization (Langan 2014). Moreover, the sector allocation of the resources of the 9th (2000-2007) and 10th EDF (2008-2013), with a strong focus on transport infrastructure and budget support (European Commission, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy 2016a: 21), raises serious doubts about the impact of EU development aid on poverty reduction in Africa. These doubts seemed confirmed by a recent evaluation of the EU’s development assistance for the period 2000-2015, which concludes that “in general the CPA, for objective difficulties and probably also for its nature of inter-government agreement, hardly considers the political economy implications of its support and the need of putting in place growth distribution policies, based on access to assets and not only to services by the poor” (European Commission 2016b: 56).

While it remains to be seen if and how the priority given to supporting agriculture in the 11th EDF (2015-2020) will effectively translate into poverty reduction (Herrero *et AL.* 2015: 29-30), the evidence suggests that the EU-Africa partnership has (at best) marginally contributed to cushioning African citizens from the negative effects of the economic transformation under way within their countries. The role of the EU-Africa partnership in reducing global inequality should also be put under close scrutiny.

Despite the economic growth recorded by African states since the late 1990s, huge disparities in both GDP per capita and Human Development Index rankings remain between the latter on the one side and industrialized countries and other developing regions on the other side. According to Milanovic, in the period 1970-2013 Africa recorded no “income convergence with the rich world, and even with other regions” (Milanovic 2016: 173), a problem compounded by the disarticulation of African economies and their dependence on exports of primary commodities (Taylor 2016).

The process of trade liberalization between the EU and small groups of African states set in motion by the CPA could make it even more difficult for the African countries to catch up with the more developed economies. The surge in imports from the EU following the removal of tariffs and duties could both accelerate the process of deindustrialization and deepen the crisis of the agricultural sector in many African

countries. Moreover, the fall in tax revenue could result in a reduction of state budgets for social services (Langan, Price 2015: 274).

In this regard, while Van Criekinge has pointed to the “missing link between trade and migration” within the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) under negotiation between the EU and small groups of African countries (Van Criekinge 2009: 188), others scholars have argued that the EPAs have laid bare the contradiction between the “security-oriented fight against illegal migration” by the EU and “its neoliberal fight for growth and competitiveness” (Hansen, Jonsson 2011: 267). This contradiction is at the core of the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs inaugurated by the EU Commission in 2018, which is not only defined as “an essential part of [a] joint approach to migration”, but aims to pursue a thirty year-old development model with evident limitations (European Commission 2018b).

3. New wine in old bottles? The EU Trust Fund for Africa

The “EU Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displaced Persons in Africa” (EUTF) was established in 2015 within the context of the EU’s growing concerns about the increase in migration flows from Africa and the Middle East.

The EUTF for Africa was presented by the EU as an innovative development instrument that could address the root causes of migration from Africa, strengthen the security of the EU’s borders and protect the lives and rights of African migrants. While the creation of the EUTF for Africa seemed in line with notions of global justice as mutual recognition and impartiality, in fact the goals of the new instrument left no doubt about its subordination to the EU’s security concerns. According to the EU, the “overall objective” of the EUTF for Africa was:

“to address crises in the regions of the Sahel and Lake Chad, the Horn of Africa and in parts of North Africa. It will support all aspects of stability and contribute to better migration management as well as addressing the root causes of destabilisation, forced displacement and irregular migration, in particular by promoting resilience, economic and equal opportunities, security and development, and addressing human rights abuses” (European Commission 2016a: 2).

Critics soon pointed to the fact that the EUTF for Africa aimed at tackling too many issues with very different causes in just five years (Castillejo 2016: 5; Kervyn, Shilhav 2017).

The activities of the EUTF for Africa were to develop along four lines of action: promoting “greater economic and employment opportunities”, “strengthening resilience of communities and in particular the most vulnerable including refugees and other displaced people”, reinforcing “migration management in countries of origin, transit and destination”, and improving “governance and conflict prevention and reduction of forced displacement and irregular migration” (European Commission 2017: 8). No doubt, achieving these goals would be a big challenge for the EU, as it would require not only a very ambitious development effort, but also strong political action aimed at promoting democracy and preventing and resolving violent conflicts in Africa.

The development vision of the EUTF for Africa aimed, on the one hand, to build entrepreneurial capacities at the local level so as to promote stability and social cohesion and resolve the “grievances arising from economic and social exclusion” and, on the other hand, to strengthen the resilience of local communities in transit countries so as to support the economic and social inclusion of migrants and refugees and, we can add, prevent them from trying to reach the EU in search of economic opportunity.

The programs and activities of the EUTF for Africa focused on three regions: the Horn of Africa, the Sahel/Lake Chad region and North Africa. For each geographical area specific goals were listed. In the case of the Sahel/Lake Chad region the priorities were “preventing illegal migration [and] facilitating better migration management” and “building a comprehensive approach for stability, security and resilience” (European Commission 2016d). In the Horn of Africa the EUTF for Africa would aim at “strengthening migration management” and supporting stabilization efforts so as to create “the circumstances for situations of protracted displacement to evolve into durable solutions addressing refugees’ long-term development needs, be that through return to their areas of origin, integration into their host communities or resettlement in a third country” (European Commission 2016c). The political priorities for North Africa were “improving migration governance”, “advancing mutually beneficial legal migration and mobility” and “addressing the drivers of irregular migration” (European Commission 2017: 39-41).

This list of regional priorities clearly subordinated the promotion of economic development to the fight against irregular migration and the strengthening of the EU’s border security. Once again, conceptions of global justice as impartiality and mutual

recognition were sidelined by European security concerns within the context of the EU-Africa partnership. In 2018 the Strategic Board of the EUTF for Africa defined some further priority areas for the activities funded by the trust fund in the Horn of Africa and the Sahel/Lake Chad region as well as in North Africa (European Commission 2019: 8-9). Given their focus on border security, the fight against irregular migration and the return and reintegration of migrants, the new priority areas further narrowed down the possibilities for devising and implementing innovative development solutions in Africa.

This outcome is even more paradoxical if we consider that the EUTF for Africa is mainly funded through EDF resources. In spite of the initial promises, the financial contributions from the EU member states were quite limited. In 2017 of the €3.3bn allocated to the EUTF for Africa, €2.9bn came from the EDF and the EU budget and the rest from EU Member States (European Commission 2018b: 10). In 2018 of the €4.2bn pledged to the EUTF for Africa, only €489 million came from EU Member States (European Commission 2019: 44-47).

In order to show European public opinion that the EUTF for Africa could effectively restore order in migration flows between Europe and Africa, EU leaders opted for a rapid and flexible fund allocation mechanism, outside the purview of the European Parliament. This choice was criticized not only for the resulting lack of transparency (Kervyn, Shilhav 2017), which contributed to “water[ing] down the quality standards of the EDF” (Bartels 2019: 14), but also because led to the EU funding too many projects, putting at risk the sustainability of the EUTF for Africa. As the European Court of Auditors remarked:

The political imperative to provide a rapid response to the migration situation prompted the EUTF for Africa to launch projects quickly. Its objectives have been kept as broad as possible, so that most actions can be considered eligible. All kinds of development projects (e.g. food and nutrition, security, health, education, environmental sustainability, etc.) and implementation methods (indirect management, budget support, etc.) can be used and indeed have been used under the EUTF for Africa. While this has made it a flexible tool, it has come at the expense of having a strategy that is focused enough to ensure impact (European Court of Auditors 2018: 12).

According to some analyses, the development projects funded by the EUTF for Africa were not only highly fragmented, but also very “traditional” (Castillejo 2016). This led the European Court of Auditors to note that: “the comparative advantage of funding projects through the EUTF for Africa was not always well explained and we found examples of projects addressing similar needs as other EU instruments” (European Court of Auditors 2018: 32).

In particular, the EUTF for Africa failed to establish linkage between the pressures exerted on African countries by foreign powers and international financial institutions to open their markets to foreign trade and investment and the pattern of “growth without prosperity” (Lewis 2008) recorded in Africa during the last two decades, with its resulting effects on migration in and from the continent. On the contrary, development is conceptualized under the EUTF for Africa as a process that has to take place strictly within the borders of each single African country, as if the effects of the neoliberal economic reforms implemented by the African governments and, in particular, the process of “gradual liberalisation of trade in goods and services [aimed at facilitating Africa’s] integration into the world economy” (European Commission 2010a: 15) could be contained within national borders.

The development impact of the EUTF for Africa is further limited by the fact that part of the projects it finances aim at strengthening border security in Africa. Moreover, while the largest share of the funding in sending countries has been allocated to the promotion of economic development, in transit countries most resources have been used for migration management. If we also consider that “more than half of all projects are implemented along the main migration routes in the Sahel and Lake Chad regions” (Bartels 2019: 22), it can be concluded that the EUTF for Africa is less oriented to addressing the development needs of the poorest and most vulnerable people in its three regions of operation than to “European political priorities” (Kervyn, Shilhav 2017: 6). It is also not surprising that the opening of legal migration channels into the EU is almost completely missing from the activities of the EUTF for Africa (Bartels 2019: 19).

Doubts about the potential development impact of the EUTF for Africa are compounded by the fact that “the Commission did not comprehensively analyse the needs to be addressed by the TF or the means at its disposal. When needs were identified, we found that they were not quantified, just as a critical mass of funding had not been defined” (European Court of Auditors 2018: 31).

Lastly, African governments have not been actively involved in the selection and implementation of the projects funded by the EUTF for Africa. As a consequence, the

partnership principle at the basis of the EU-Africa cooperation was abandoned (Castillejo 2016: 14). This has negative implications for both the EU's potential contribution to global justice as non-domination and mutual recognition and the sustainability of the projects implemented under the EUTF for Africa. An external evaluation of the 11th EDF noted that: "the role of the PC [partner country] (...) is reduced from that of equal partner in the EDF to that of an observer", and concluded that:

Compared to standard EDF projects, the shortened preparation and approval time, the indirect involvement of the EU in project implementation and the fact that these projects originate from EU priority concerns rather than as a response to PCs' long-term objectives, all raise concerns over the likely effectiveness and sustainability of EU TF projects and over the ability of the EU to closely monitor their implementation (DAI *et al.* 2017: 9).

At the same time, the securitization of development cooperation under the EUTF for Africa, with its emphasis on short-term measures to fight irregular migration and secure European borders, undermines the EU's contribution to justice as non-domination, since it strengthens the political conditionality imposed by Brussels on development aid to Africa.

4. Conclusions

Although the EU portrays itself as "Africa's most important political ally and a reliable trade and development partner" (EC 2010b: 2), and is, together with its Member States, the largest aid donor to the continent, the EU-Africa partnership today faces a number of political challenges. In particular, there is a growing consensus about the fact that during the last two decades cooperation between the EU and African states on migration has had disappointing results.

This chapter has analysed how since the early 2000s economic development has been conceptualized and promoted within the framework of the EU-Africa cooperation on migration. The analysis has shown that while economic development has been considered by the EU and the African governments both as a possible outcome of migration and as a tool to reduce migration flows from Africa, it has been the latter view that has increasingly prevailed in parallel with the EU's growing concern for its border security. However, paradoxically, the more development has come to be seen

as a tool to prevent irregular migration flows, the less the EU and African states have been able to critically question the contradictory outcomes of their development cooperation on the economic and social fabric of the African countries and migration dynamics in and from the continent.

Thus, while some scholars have explained the disappointing outcomes of the EU-Africa cooperation on migration by pointing to the lack of policy coherence or the need for the EU to refocus its cooperation with Africa on fighting poverty, this chapter has shown that the ideological vision of development at the basis of the EU-Africa partnership has prevented the latter from effectively promoting inclusive growth and reducing poverty and inequalities in sub-Saharan Africa. Thus, during the last two decades while jobless growth, social marginalization, state fragility and authoritarian practices have created a breeding ground for rural-urban migration and international mobility in many sub-Saharan African countries, EU-Africa cooperation has seemed unable to provide effective solutions for the structural causes of poverty and underdevelopment on the continent.

The contradictions in EU-Africa cooperation on migration not only point to the need for a more critical analysis of both the limits of the neoliberal development paradigm currently implemented in the sub-Saharan African countries, and the causes of the economic gap between the latter and the rest of the world, but also raise serious doubts about the EU's contribution to global justice as non-domination, impartiality and mutual recognition.

The increasing subordination of the goals and agenda of the EU-Africa development cooperation to the EU's concerns over the security of its borders has contradicted the notion of a "partnership of equals" between the EU and the African states (African Union, European Union 2007a), undermining the EU's contribution to global justice as non-domination. Given its emphasis on the fight against irregular migration and the lack of attention to the complex causes of poverty and underdevelopment in Africa, the EU-Africa cooperation on migration has also failed to uphold the principle of human dignity and weakened the EU's role in fostering global justice as impartiality. More recently, the EU's decision to start implementing development projects under the EUTF for Africa without involving the host states in the project selection process dealt a fatal blow to the EU's contribution to global justice as mutual recognition. However, previously the inability of the political dialogue between the EU and African governments to bring to the surface the specific development needs of the latter had also raised serious doubts concerning its role in fighting poverty and destitution in Africa and thus in promoting global justice.

In spite of the EU's rhetoric, this chapter has also shown that the EUTF for Africa did not represent an innovative development tool to address the root causes of migration in and from Africa. Not only did the EUTF for Africa subordinate development cooperation to fighting irregular migration and securing the EU's borders, but its development vision was no different from the one prevailing within the context of the Africa-EU partnership since the end of the Cold War. Thus, the potential role of the EUTF for Africa in addressing the root causes of migration from Africa and in fostering the EU's contribution to social justice remains, at best, uncertain.

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