

# EDCSP Opinion

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## Two mottos for the new leadership team in Brussels

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**A**s a new European leadership team takes office in Brussels, two mottos should be carved on every desk. The first is that our well-being at home depends increasingly on doing deals abroad. The second is that the Lisbon Treaty will be empty unless European countries work better together. Ordinary people – citizens, voters – are entitled to ask: where is our global climate change agreement? Where is our trade deal? Where is better regulation of banks? Where is the international framework for managing risks like food or fuel crises?" "These are all global problems which impact overseas but also at home. Fighting poverty, disease and instability in developing countries is a good example. It is a moral outrage that half a million women still die in childbirth each year, or that over 150 million children are affected by hunger. However, progress overseas is also in our collective self-interest if disease threats, migration, drugs and security are to be managed.

European leaders need to be reminded why they need to work more effectively together, and about their power when they do. They need to be realistic and hard-headed about Europe's comparative advantage: in values, range of instruments, partnership structures, and resources. If China and other emerging powers are to be coaxed to a climate deal, then the instruments deployed will need to be both many and weighty: not just the intellectual arguments, the financial inducements or the offers to share technology, but the full panoply of diplomatic and economic incentives. No other agent in the multilateral sphere has the range of opportunities available to the EU. The United Nations has the political role, but not the capacity to disburse on the scale or with the variety of instruments available to the EU. The World Bank and the other multilateral

development banks have the financial resources, but not the voice on trade, nor the role in foreign and security policy. This gives the EU a unique role.

National and EU leaders then need to deliver five priorities.

First, new leadership in thinking about how development cooperation can help deal with shared global problems. The trade talks will continue this year at the World Trade Organisation in Geneva. The UN will convene a Summit in New York on the future of the Millennium Development Goals. The climate change negotiators will reconvene at the Conference of the Parties in Mexico. And the G-20 will meet to discuss recovery from the financial crisis. Can we hope for strong, unified EU leadership on all these topics?

Second, meeting promises on aid and improving the targeting and effectiveness of aid spending. Never mind tripping over each other in Africa, EU countries are currently falling €20 billion short of pledges already made. Furthermore, less than half of aid spending by Brussels is spent in the poorest countries, compared to around two thirds for all aid donors. There are real fears also that aid money will be raided to fund climate projects in the developing world.

Third, ensuring that all EU policies contribute to development goals. Climate, trade and migration are all examples where the EU runs the risk of giving with one hand and taking away with the other. The EU calls joined-up thinking Policy Coherence for Development – and needs to give it higher priority across the development and security space.

Fourth, investing in new development partnerships which provide real voice to

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developing countries and mutual accountability between rich and poor countries. The EU will be tested this year, in reform of the UN, the Bretton Woods Institutions, and the G-20. What lessons can be learned from the EU's partnership agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries?

Finally, improving cooperation between Member States. This means giving life to the new European External Action Service, designed to be staffed by diplomats from Member States as well as EU institutions. It also means supporting the new EU President and Foreign Minister as they test the limits of their new authority.

Europe can inch forward, as it has done for sixty years, celebrating the avoidance of war in Europe, and tinkering with the single market. Or it can become an effective global actor. That is no choice at all. Read the carving on the desk.

The views presented in this paper are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of ODI.

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