

**Future prospects for the Belgian Presidency of the EU :
global challenges in a new institutional era**

***Workshop on
The EU in Africa and the Mediterranean Region :
challenges of Development and Migration***

Security and development in fragile states

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2 sets of instructions :

- *Belgian vision, inputs and prospects for improving European efficiency*
- *Focus on current challenges*

Introduction : First of all, my apologies for the strong statements I may have to make... I've been working on policy support documents on several occasions for the last six years, and I know statements must be harsh if they have to draw attention. Moreover, as I understand the current event, it is designed to bring forward ideas to discuss so I won't keep to historical descriptions even if they will be part of my speech.

General structure : Today, Development is shaped around the paradigm of Statebuilding. The declared objective is to eradicate poverty, but the channel to achieve it lies in the State as the main actor of its own development (it used to be quite different but things tended to change after the end of Cold War). Southern States that are unable or unwilling to fight poverty within their own boundaries have been labelled as fragile. The so-called fragile states —of which Africa is mainly composed— require a specific approach in terms of development cooperation, but also imply specific challenges. Since most of these countries are in a post conflict situation, or are prone to fall into conflict due to their fragility, the main challenge is to address the link between security and development in order to succeed.

I will start by a quick overview of the so-called security and development nexus, and of the idea of state fragility. Then, I will discuss how security and development objectives may lead to contradictions and dilemmas in fragile states. After that, I will give a short summary of the EU position on State fragility. And I will end my speech with an overview of the main issues to address, by BE as presiding the EU, re. the Fragile States agenda.

1. The nexus

At the end of the Cold War, an international discussion was generated around the concepts of development and security as being *human*. It reflected a new focus on the individual rather than on the State in a decade where international public law was, at last, perceived as an achievement (President Bush's New World Order). In terms of international relations, it implied a change of paradigm : from a strictly military security designed to protect international boundaries, we came to a vision of security as a set of rights or possibilities open to a specific population. In the North/South relationship, it implied the idea that development required security in order to happen, and that security required development in order to sustain.

Even today, security is considered a prerequisite to sustainable peace and development and a whole set of methodological tools and strategies of intervention have been shaped around that so-called "nexus" (DDR, SSR, CSA, etc.). It also blurred the limits between the 3D's : diplomacy, development and defence, since all of them were required in order to produce a coherent action on that question.

2. State fragility

At the same time, development cooperation faced another shift of paradigm during the 1990's. The previously leading vision of Southern States being an obstacle to development because of corruption and patrimonialism, that led to massive privatisation of previously State-controlled sectors such as health or education, had shown its own

weaknesses and failures. Gradually, the problem of failing states, then of failed states, was publicly addressed, mainly to justify US and Western intervention in key geostrategic locations... but also opening room for further thinking on the question.

In 2005, the development community jumped in and adopted the new concept of State Fragility, rather than failure, since fragility implies a potential solution ; two rationales were mobilised to develop the concept : a security trend (post 9-11 idea of weak states being a danger for the international security since they are more prone to harbour international terrorist or rogue regimes) and a more development-oriented trend (based on Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness, basically implying that fragile states were generating a huge waste of money (ODA) because of their weak absorption capacity.

Fragile States do not meet any global consensus in terms of definition, neither do they fit a globally agreed list of criteria in order to be defined. Nevertheless, some countries are generally considered fragile no matter the criteria (Haïti, Somalia, the DR Congo, etc.)... and the very concept is linked to a current leading paradigm of development assistance or cooperation, namely State Building, now the keystone of donors engagements in the so-called partner countries. Through various channels and means, the idea for development cooperation is to strengthen Southern States in order to make them able to lead their own development.

3. Contradictions and dilemmas

Now the so-called nexus between security and development is rather uneasy to be achieved on the ground. It may generate a whole range of contradictions and dilemmas, the security dimension focusing on shorter term results directly targeting the local population, while the development dimension focuses on longer term results indirectly focusing individual beneficiaries through local state reinforcement. It

also asks the question of the level of independence of development cooperation towards foreign affairs departments.

4. EU position on State Fragility

The EU position on State Fragility is very much linked to the OECD work on State Building through one of the subsidiary bodies of the DAC / Development Aid Committee. EC takes a very proactive role as an “observer” in those discussions happening in a technical level. To make it quick, the EU adopted the vision of the link between security and development in various documents such as the EU consensus on development, or the EU strategy for Africa ; the concept of fragile states has been used in the European security Strategy. Both trends are followed in the various documents (security trend and development trend), and a new document tries to reconcile them in a coherent approach : the EU action plan on conflict and fragility.

This plan was supposed to be adopted last year, but the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty put a temporary end to that piece of work because of the uncertainties around the sharing of responsibilities in the implementation. Today, the situation hasn’t moved an inch... a political leadership could unlock the situation and get the plan out of the dead end...

<Something on the plan as such>

5. Main issues to address

If BE carries on with its objective to add the Action Plan to its agenda for the presidency, a couple of issues will have to be carefully addressed (not to mention the first one : who does what in the new post-Lisbon architecture) :

1. First of all, the question of EC as the last chance for aid orphans (usually) => how to keep that specificity, and maybe how to draw other actors / member states ?

2. FS = tricky concept ; use with care not to hurt local sensibility ; balance hard to find between PC DevCo tools (indirect help, substitution, short term impact on local population) and back-to-normal-situation DevCo tools (budgetary support, capacity building of central administration, and longer term impact on local population through institution building).
3. make donor coordination a reality... role for EC but requires more HR on the ground ; strengthen dialogue between HQ and ground, especially when there is a gap between decentralised procedures (EC and member states such as UK, GER, etc. ... and centralised procedures such as FR and to a certain extent BE). Maurizio Carbone will talk about this.
4. Implies also EU single actor face to other multilateral actors also playing in the competition for local leadership, namely IFI (WB) and UNDP.
5. Implies a real WoGA, which I arguably see only possible through a strong leadership, in the member states (BE first) at Head of Gvt level (unless subordination of devco under foraff), or maybe through an extended role (requiring an extended interest) for the Parliament and political parties. At the EU level, a clear division of labour and responsibilities. Also means necessity to acknowledge the political nature of development cooperation, and the necessity to deal with borderline partners : SSR/SSD and the lot...

As early mentioned, the key issue in this debate may well be to solve the contradictions and dilemmas in Post Conflict State Building. On the ground, SB is mainly a Frankenstein Creature, bits and pieces hung together by an external will... but there is no coherence, no agreement of donors on what to do exactly, neither is there any shared vision of the model of State to be build through external support.

S&D objectives must be reconciled ; for a bilateral donor (esp. for BE), it implies a better coordination of the 3D'sn a real WOGA, and some clarification in the relationship between development and foreign policy. For the EU, it means clarifying the role of the EC vs. the Council, and the external service could be the solution as well as the battleground...

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The author welcomes any comment.