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**From Unity, Opportunity and other Challenges**

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Explaining the EU's Performance in International Aid Negotiations

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## 1. Introduction

The European Union (EU) collectively with its member states is the largest aid donor in the world and has emerged as a significant player in the global aid and development system. In this context, many observers (Carbone, 2007, 2012; Concord, 2011a; Keijzer, 2011; Holland and Doidge, 2012) agree that the EU - throughout the past decade - has significantly contributed to the international agenda on global aid effectiveness pushing other donors to join the EU's drive for constituting a more effective global aid architecture, thus taking on a key role in international development efforts (Hedger, 2009). However, at the last global summit on aid effectiveness in Busan the EU was accused of being a "ghost" (Concord, 2011b) missing out to show leadership. Instead of progressively driving the agenda forward the EU was criticized for observing the scenery rather than pursuing an ambitious new aid effectiveness deal (Concord, 2011b; Oxfam, 2011). This change in the EU's performance in international aid negotiations raises the question of why the EU has not been able to drive the agenda this time and more importantly under what conditions the EU actually *can* shape the agenda.

Questions on the EU's ability to act on the world stage and its potential to influence global politics have always attracted a great deal of attention among scholars of European Studies trying to find explanations for why the EU is able to successfully exert influence in some cases, while it fails to leave conceivable marks in others. Over the past decades, scholars have identified various factors influencing the EU's international behaviour, which are still subject to academic debate and remain to be evaluated against the background of different settings.

It is in that light, and with particular consideration of the EU's shift in performance - from an influential player to a marginalized role in the global aid negotiations - which, as yet, has not been structurally examined, that this dissertation tries to identify those internal and external factors that might have enhanced or constrained the EU's ability to exert influence in the global aid governance system with the aim to answer the final research question under what conditions the EU is most likely to shape the international aid agenda. By answering this question, this dissertation serves two strands of literature. On the one hand, by reassessing concepts of actorness, effectiveness and performance literature this dissertation not only aims at providing a better

understanding of the concepts themselves and how they are interrelated but also tries to examine the explanatory value of the underlying assumptions with regard to aid and development negotiations. On the other hand, by investigating the EU's performance in international aid talks and analysing its ability to shape the international development discourse light is shed on the EU's influence as a global development actor and potential leader in the aid effectiveness realm, yet constituting a research area, which has only "received scant attention" (Carbone, 2007, p. 1). In order to examine the conditions (independent variable) under which the EU is able to shape the outcomes of international aid negotiations, the High Level Fora (HLF) on Aid Effectiveness in Paris (2005) and Accra (2008), as cases for successful performance (dependent variable), and Busan (2011), as an example for poor performance (dependent variable), build the empirical setting of this dissertation.

In regard to the theoretical assumptions on the EU's internal and external effectiveness and supported by empirical evidence, this dissertation suggests that in order to shape the international aid agenda and, more importantly, to make a substantial contribution to the global development agenda the EU needs, above all, unity, opportunity and the willingness to influence the global aid effectiveness discourse. In this context, the dissertation argues that the EU's future ability to shape the global aid and development agenda ultimately rests on the EU's and member states political will for coordinated action in development policy and an increased integrative role played by the European Commission, a clear European vision on development effectiveness, and a strategic engagement with new actors in the global aid architecture in order to regain the ability to shape the agenda.

The EU's poor performance in Busan has cast doubt on the EU's overall ability to translate its structural weight as the world's largest aid donor into effective influence on the international aid and development discourse and thereby revives questions on the EU's international actorness and effectiveness in multilateral negotiations in general. Following Smith's (2005) suggestion that academics and policy-makers alike should not primarily focus on what the EU is and presents in international affairs but actually concentrate on what it *does*, this dissertation takes a closer look at how the EU behaves in international aid negotiations and what problems it faces when trying to shape the agenda. In this context, the remainder of this dissertation is organised as follows: chapter 2 undertakes a literature review of the concepts of actorness, effec-

tiveness and performance and identifies internal and external factors that enhance (constrain) the EU's ability to influence global politics, thus establishes an analytical framework for the empirical analysis and outlines the methodology to answer the research question. Chapter 3 presents a detailed empirical-analytical examination of the three case studies as well as short summaries of the findings. Chapter 4 provides the final answer to the research question by setting the findings of the empirical analysis into a broader context, thereby identifying future challenges that will determine the EU's ability to shape the aid and development agenda. The final chapter (chapter 5) briefly concludes the findings of this dissertation.

## **2. Literature Review and Analytical Framework - Conceptualising the EU's Performance in International Affairs**

The theoretical literature evaluating the EU's activity beyond its own borders and its performance in multilateral organisations and international negotiations mainly draws on concepts of actorness, effectiveness and performance theory. While the early studies (Sjöstedt, 1977; Hill, 1993; Jupille and Caporaso, 1998) attempted to examine the EU's international role and abilities as a global actor by mainly focusing on its unique internal characteristics as determinants of its external policy, later approaches (Ginsberg, 1999, 2001; Bretherton and Vogler, 1999) acknowledged the need to go beyond examining the EU's internal ability to act towards assessing the EU's actual impact in the global arena. It is in this context that academics (Laatikainen and Smith, 2006; Jørgensen et al., 2011; Dee, 2011; Thomas, 2010, 2012, Groen and Niemann, 2012) have started to focus on both "internal effectiveness" and "external effectiveness" (Laatikainen and Smith, 2006, p. 10), thereby exploring factors that affect the EU's capacity to act as well as its ability to translate its actorness, i.e. to function "actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system" (Sjöstedt 1977, p.16), into effective policy making, thus factors that determine its performance.

To account for the great scholarly debate surrounding the EU's internal and external effectiveness and to develop an analytical framework that helps to understand the EU's change in performance in the global aid effectiveness talks, while ultimately yielding explanations for why the EU succeeds or fails to shape the global development discourse, this chapter revisits and re-evaluates scholars' theoretical assumptions

on what determines the EU's actorness and subsequently its influence in international politics. By reflecting on the literature on actorness, effectiveness and performance light will be shed on those EU-internal and external factors that scholars perceive as most likely to constrain or enable the EU's ability to play a significant role internationally, i.e. to exert influence in international negotiations. The next section starts off where the scholarly debate on performance-influencing factors had its beginning: the EU's capacity to act.

### *Internal effectiveness as a prerequisite for influence*

The importance of intra-European dynamics has long been recognised by scholars for explaining the EU's ability to act internationally (Sjöstedt, 1977; Hill, 1993) and as a prerequisite to exert influence on the international stage (Laatikainen and Smith, 2006; Bretherton and Vogler 2006; Thomas, 2010, 2012). The idea that the EU's ability to act externally depends on, as Bretherton and Vogler (2006, p. 29) point out, the "internal context of EU action or inaction - those aspects of the policy process which constrain or enable external action" was first introduced in the work from Gunner Sjöstedt in 1977 who tried to systematically examine the degree to which the European Community (EC) is an actor in global politics by identifying those properties of the EC and of its relations with the outside world, which influence its so-called actorness.

The concept of actorness emerged as a conceptual tool, which recognises the multi-level character of the EU and enables scholars to account for the EU's sui generis qualities and its distinctive role in global politics (Ginsberg 1999, p. 447). Actorness, as Hill (1993) points out, leaves behind the neo-functional focus on European integration and the discussion over whether or not the EC is a superpower in the international sphere, instead it allows scholars to grasp the changing role of the EU in global politics and to analyze its ability to act (actorness) on the global stage. Sjöstedt's (1977) work constitutes an important and enlightening attempt in the literature, which conceptualises the EC as an international actor and highlights EC-specific internal dynamics that determine the its external action. "To be an actor is the same thing as to possess a quality, which is here called actor capability", Sjöstedt (1977) believes. According to Sjöstedt (1977, p. 15), the EU needs "actor capability" in order to func-

tion as an actor in the international arena and to carry out external action. It is in this sense that Sjöstedt (1977, p. 14) suggests that “[...] actor capability is, in principle, a measure of the autonomous unit’s capacity to behave actively and deliberately in relation to other actors in the international system”. In other words, the EU’s activity as an international actor depends on the internal capabilities it possesses to act as such (Hill, 1993). Sjöstedt (1977) identifies - among a broad range of other criteria - *autonomy* and *internal cohesion*- as necessary conditions and prerequisites that the Community needs in order to act internationally.

However, regarding the model’s “tentative character” (Sjöstedt, 1977, p. 126) as well as its specific focus on the EC, which limit the concept’s applicability to the internal dynamics and external activity of the contemporary EU, scholars have started to improve the concept of actorness and to develop new frameworks for assessing the EU’s international activity. Thus, since its first prominent appearance in 1977, the concept of actorness and its underlying assumptions have been revisited, augmented and further developed thus have been subject to intensive scholarly debate (Hill 1993; Jupille and Caporaso 1998; Ginsberg 1999; Bretherton and Vogler 1999, 2006). In that context, a very influential framework in the actorness literature has been developed by Joseph Jupille and James Caporaso (1998) who analyse the EU’s role in international environmental politics. Revisiting Sjöstedt’s complex actorness concept and the proposed prerequisites for being an international actor the scholars (Jupille and Caporaso, 1998, pp. 214-221) present four clear criteria which determine the EU’s “capacity to act” on the international stage. According to Jupille and Caporaso (1998), the EU’s international actorness all depends on its external *recognition* by outsiders, on its *authority* referring to the EU’s legal competence to act, its *autonomy*, which refers to the EU’s institutional set up and the European Commission’s ability to act independently from the member states and on its degree of *cohesion*. External recognition, as Jupille and Caporaso (1998) believe can exist either formally, meaning that the EU is an official member in organisations and multilateral settings or informally, simply through being accepted by other international actors as a player on the global stage and partner in international issues. Following Sjöstedt (1977), Jupille and Caporaso (1998) identify the EU’s degree of unity which they equalize with the term cohesion as another important prerequisite for actorness. In this light, Jupille and Caporaso (1998, p. 219) remark that “[a] complex International Organization as the EU can act in varying de-



degrees of cohesion”, whereby less cohesion or unity constrains the EU’s ability to act internationally and vice versa. According to Jupille and Caporaso (1998) the higher the EU scores on recognition, authority, autonomy and cohesion the more actorness it possesses.

Apart from the factor of recognition, which is exogenously determined by the outside world, Jupille and Caporaso’s model (1998) largely contributes to an understanding of the internal dynamics, which determine the EU’s external activity. However, some scholars (Laatikainen and Smith, 2006; Thomas, 2012; Groen and Niemann, 2012) question the relevance of some of the outlined factors by Jupille and Caporaso (1998). For instance, Thomas (2010) believes that recognition does not constitute an important component of actorness since even actors, such as militant groups, which are not officially recognised, are indeed international actors. Similarly, Laatikainen and Smith (2006) point out that there is no real correlation between supranational policy-making i.e. authority and internal effectiveness. Instead, the EU can highly score on actorness even in policy fields where there are shared competences such as in environmental politics, if member states have the will to establish a common voice. This view is also shared by Groenleer and Van Schaik (2007) who find that an intergovernmental set-up does not prevent the EU from having substantial international actorness. Confirming this, Groen and Niemann (2012) point out that neither recognition nor authority, are necessary components of international actorness and thus do not constitute crucial parts of the analysis. They (Groen and Niemann, 2012) believe it is the factors of cohesion and autonomy that determine the EU’s capability to act externally.

The importance of *cohesion* for the EU’s actor capacity is also stressed by Bretherton and Vogler’s (2006) actorness framework. In accordance with other scholars (Sjöstedt, 1977; Hill 1993; Jupille and Caporaso, 1998), Bretherton and Vogler (2006) believe that in order for the EU to engage in international affairs, it must be highly internally capable of doing so. Similarly to Sjöstedt (1977), Bretherton and Vogler (2006, p. 35) argue that the EU’s actor capacity is high when there is a shared commitment to a set of *overarching values, consistency, coherence* and the availability of policy instruments. These criteria together construct a favourable “internal context” for external action, as the scholars (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006, p. 29) argue. However, discarding the strong internal focus of previous actorness concepts (Sjöstedt, 1977; Jupille and Caporaso, 1998) Bretherton and Vogler (2006) have developed a framework that

not only draws on the EU's internal capabilities to act but goes beyond the focus on internal effectiveness towards considering the EU's actual effectiveness i.e. "impact" (2006, p. 12) on international politics, which is highly influenced by external factors.

*Beyond actorness, towards effectiveness*

In their book "The European Union as a Global Actor", Bretherton and Vogler (2006, p. 24) identify three factors namely *opportunity*, *presence* and *capability*, which affect the EU's international actorness and ultimately determine its impact on the international stage. According to the scholars (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006, p. 24) opportunity thereby refers to the structural context of external action, while presence is defined as the ability to influence the "perceptions, expectations and behaviour of others". Moreover, the EU needs the capability to use its internal dynamics and processes to exercise its power effectively. Following Bretherton and Vogler (2006, p. 24), for the EU to exert influence on the global stage it not only has to be capable of doing so but it must also have the presence and be given the opportunity to translate its ability to act into impact (2006, p. 24).

The notion of presence, which in its original meaning refers to the influence the EU has on others outside of the EU simply through its being, goes back to the works of Allen and Smith (1990, 1998). While in the early years it was believed that the EU exerts influence automatically simply through its existence, a later version of the concept is all about "making one's presence felt" and taking on "responsibility" (Allen and Smith, 1998, p. 47). Thereby, according to Allen and Smith (1998, p.57), the "collective will" is a crucial precondition for taking on responsibility internationally. Confirming the importance of the EU's collective willingness to actively contribute to international events and happenings in order to exert influence, Dee (2011, p. 12) identifies "ambition" as a necessary condition the EU needs in order to take on a leadership role in negotiations. In other words, the EU needs presence or, more actively defined, the willingness to act, as Bretherton Vogler (2006) also remark, to influence its outside world and in order to have an external impact.

Apart from presence and internal capabilities the so-called "opportunity structure" matters when the EU wants to influence international politics (Bretherton and Vogler,

2006, p. 24). According to Bretherton and Vogler (2006, p. 24) apart from those factors arising within the EU, it is contextual factors such as “ideas and events” that enable or constrain the EU’s international actorness. Therefore, the broader environment thus the external factors that emerge from it can prevent the EU to make use of its presence and capability to influence global affairs (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006). It is in that light, that Bretherton and Vogler’s (2006) conceptualisation of actorness clearly goes beyond the assessment of the EU’s internal capacity to act externally, stressing that the EU’s external activity can only be captured when taking external factors into account.

In accordance with Bretherton and Vogler (2006), other scholars have gone beyond assessing the EU’s actorness towards examining its external effectiveness arguing that any comprehensive analysis of the EU’s external activity and performance in international negotiations needs to include an exploration of the EU’s ability to act as well as an assessment of the EU’s external effectiveness, thus considering all factors that affect these two dimensions.

#### *From internal effectiveness to external effectiveness*

Several scholars (Jupille and Caporaso 1998; Ginsberg 2001; Laatikainen and Smith, 2006; Thomas 2010, 2012; Groen and Niemann, 2012) have argued that the concept of actorness only helps to assess the EU’s ability to act, i.e. to grasp the potential influence, but does not assist in measuring the EU’s real influence on global affairs. While in early years only few scholars have recognized the limitedness of the actorness concept and have started to “[...] move from establishing the EU’s existence as an important international phenomenon to evaluating its effectiveness”, as Ginsberg (1999, p. 448-449) remarks, nowadays scholars almost consensually agree that in order to make any substantial statement regarding the EU’s performance in international negotiations there is a need to go beyond assessing pure actorness towards considering issues of EU policy effectiveness. Hence, linking the concept of actorness with that of effectiveness brings together the “internal” and “external dimension” of the EU’s ability to act internationally and enables to draw a comprehensive explanation for the EU’s behaviour in international relations (Groen and Niemann, 2012, p. 4). Thereby, effectiveness is often equalized to the EU’s ability to reach its goals and objectives in

international negotiations, thus its influence on outcomes (Van Schaik, 2010; Groen and Niemann 2012; Thomas 2012).

In order for the EU to reach its goals and be an effective actor in international negotiations Van Schaik (2010) argues that member states need *the will* to actively support the agreed common position and policies during the actual negotiations process. Since the pure agreement on general goals and objectives does not prevent member states from having strong divergences about the issues at stake, as Smith (2011) remarks, Van Schaik (2010, p. 5) believes that “[i]f the EU unites, it can be more than the sum of its parts, but only if these parts accept and support this”. Hence the willingness of member states not only to agree on, but more importantly to unitedly stick to the established common goals and objectives and actively support them, is an important factor that can determine the EU’s ability to translate its actorness into effectiveness, thus global influence. Supportive of this view, Jørgensen et al. (2011, p. 604) argue that the EU’s overall performance and thus influence in international negotiations depends on the degree of *relevance* the EU is given by its member states, which strongly embraces questions of unity, coordination, representation and delegation. More precisely, divergent domestic policy-making among member states can hinder the EU to establish a *substantial common voice*, as opposed to an official EU voice, thus to act effectively in international negotiations (Jørgensen et al., 2011, p. 613). Moreover, Thomas (2012) argues that the EU’s coherence, i.e. its prerequisite to be externally effective and influence the negotiations, is higher when EU actors comply with and support the common policy that has been agreed (political cohesion).

However, even if the EU speaks with a common voice confirmed through the strong willingness and commitment of member states for coherent action, the EU’s external effectiveness in international negotiations may face challenges that lie beyond the EU’s sphere of influence, as some scholars (Van Schaik, 2010; Thomas, 2012) point out. While EU academics and politicians alike frequently point out that the EU’s effectiveness in multilateral negotiations is guaranteed when the EU possess actorness, i.e. has the ability to speak with one voice, some (Van Schaik, 2010; Thomas, 2012) question the automatic positive relationship between unity and effectiveness. Challenging the widely shared assumption that more coherence always leads to higher effectiveness, Thomas (2012) points out that there is a great possibility that even if the EU achieves to establish coherence, it is faced by other actors, which might not share

the EU's preferences and hence possess the power to discard them, thus to undermine its effectiveness despite the presence of strong unity. Similarly, when the EU acts united in international negotiations it can face strong opposition by developing countries, which feel being dominated by the North (Laatikainen and Smith, 2006, p. 17). Strictly speaking (Thomas, 2012, p. 472) "coherence may be necessary for the EU to exert influence abroad but it is clearly not sufficient in a multi-centric world order where many others do not share the EU's collective policy preferences and are ready to deploy vast resources in pursuit of their goals". In other words, achieving actorness does not automatically allow the EU to "punch its weight politically" (Thomas, 2012, p. 472), but nevertheless certainly is a prerequisite for the EU's effectiveness, hence influence at multilateral negotiations. In this sense, only if the EU has the capacity to act i.e. is internally effective it has the potential to be externally effective, hence to shape multilateral negotiations (Laatikainen and Smith, 2006; Dee, 2011). It follows that *speaking with one voice* certainly is a requirement for influence but no guarantee for effective negotiating on the global stage. Instead, exogenous i.e. contextual factors, which influence the EU's internal and external effectiveness such as the "broader political constellation" that can undermine the EU's relevance for its member states, as Jørgensen et al. (2011, p. 601) remark, can decrease the EU's influence in international negotiations. In this context, to comprehensively understand the EU's performance there is an urgent need to consider *exogenous factors* embraced in the wider opportunity structure that enable or constrain the EU's influence in international negotiations (Bretherton and Vogler, 2006; Van Schaik, 2010; Jørgensen et al., 2011; Groen and Niemann, 2012; Thomas, 2012).

*Combining actorness and effectiveness: internal and external factors that explain the EU's performance in multilateral negotiations*

What are the main factors that determine the EU's performance on the international stage and why does the EU succeed or fail to influence international negotiations and thus to shape the global discourse? This chapter has made clear that there is not one single theory or approach that can be used to explain the EU's performance in international affairs. However, by reflecting on concepts of actorness and effectiveness, overlapping assumptions were detected and a more precise picture can be drawn regarding

factors that might affect the EU's performance, thus enable or constrain the Union to exert an influential i.e. leading role in multilateral negotiations. By revisiting the scholarly work that has predominantly influenced the actorness, effectiveness and performance literature it has become clear that the EU's ability to influence multilateral negotiations mainly rests on three factors: *unity*, its *willingness to act*, and the *opportunity structure*.

Following the outlined scholarly assumptions, unity refers to the EU's ability to speak and act with one voice ahead and at negotiations. For the EU to act as 'one', cohesion seems to be a necessary condition (Sjöstedt, 1977; Jupille and Caporaso, 1998; Bretherton and Vogler, 2006; Laatikainen and Smith, 2006; Van Schaik, 2010; Thomas, 2012). Cohesion thereby is not only the degree to which the EU as a whole is able to agree upon common positions and statement resulting from similar initial preferences (Laatikainen and Smith, 2006; Groenleer and Van Schaik, 2007) but also measures the extent to which EU actors comply with and support the common policy that has been agreed upon during and after the negotiations (Thomas, 2012; Van Schaik, 2010). In this context, Thomas (2012, p. 459) believes that the less "determinate" the common position and objectives are, the more space there is for EU member states to deviate from the common voice. In this sense, cohesion among EU member states is higher when positions clearly articulate goals and set specific measurements and targets (Thomas, 2012). Thus, a determinate official common stance is a prerequisite for unity, thus influence at the negotiations.

The literature review has made clear that unity itself is positively related to the degree of relevance member states attribute to the EU. In other words, the EU can be an influential player when member states show the political will for collective coordinated action and European solutions. Moreover, when there is shared competence, not only must member states have the will to coordinate but also does the Commission's role in pushing member states to coordinate their action become crucial (Damro, 2006).

Apart from unity, the EU as a whole needs the will to influence the international negotiations and to actively contribute to the summits with the aim to drive the international agendas forward (Allen and Smith, 1998; Bretherton and Vogler, 2006; Dee, 2011). Thus, not only the EU member states but also the Commission as well as the EU Presidency must show their ambition to significantly contribute to the interna-

tional discussion in order for the EU to exert influence. The EU can demonstrate its will to shape the international agendas through adopting ambitious targets and by proactively, opposed to reactively, engaging in the international negotiations, as Jørgensen (2009) points out.

The literature review has also illustrated that the EU's ability to shape international agendas depends on the opportunity it is given to do so. Just as broader political and geopolitical shifts in the external environment, such as crises and a variation in international power relations, informal rules and procedures can cause changes in the opportunity structure, thus enabling or constraining the EU's ability to shape the agenda.

Having laid the theoretical foundations for the empirical analysis, the next section provides a brief overview of the methodology used to answer the research question of this dissertation.

### *Methodology*

This dissertation combines theoretical assumptions on the EU's internal and external effectiveness as an international actor with empirical evidence, thereby investigating if and to what extent theoretical predictions hold also explanatory value for the EU's ability to shape the international aid discourse. The High-Level-Fora on Aid Effectiveness<sup>1</sup> - which evolved from the necessity to respond to the increased complexity of the international aid architecture and to enforce global responsibility to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) - in Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011) provide an ideal setting for the empirical analysis first, because the OECD-convened global aid summits constitute an important part of the global governance system on aid and development (Keijzer, 2011, p.2) providing a crucial discussion platform for aid effectiveness, thereby present an optimal chance for the EU to shape the international agenda. Furthermore, and quite interestingly, despite the high importance these global summits carry, they have received only minor attention in the academic and public debate in contrast to extensive coverage of the EU's performance in development-related institutions. Examining and comparing the three case studies will

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<sup>1</sup> The 1st High-Level-Forum in Aid Effectiveness took place in Rome (2003). However, since it marked the first occasion where the principles for aid effectiveness were outlined in a concrete declaration (OECD, 2012) the summit has not received as much attention as the other three, thus was not chosen for investigation.

allow exploring the intra-European and external factors that have affected the EU's actorness and external effectiveness, which in the case of development policy refers to the extent to which the EU contributes to the improvement of global development and aid effectiveness, thus drives the agenda forward instead of reaching its own goals (Carbone, 2012).

Based on the analytical framework derived in the previous section and in regard to the research question under what conditions the EU is able to shape the agenda on aid effectiveness it is expected *that the EU's ability to play an influential role at the international aid negotiations is positively related to its unity, opportunity and willingness to act*. Consequently, it is expected that *the change in the EU's ability to influence the aid negotiations is attributable to a variation in any of these three factors*. The empirical evidence will show if these expectations hold true.

With regard to the empirical analysis this dissertation draws its findings from primary sources such as EU official documents, speeches and press statements and DAC Peer Reviews. In addition, and due to the high informality of the HLF and thus its poor online documentation, further information and documentation on the EU's and other actors' behaviour surrounding the summits is taken from NGO statements and reports, official blogs, (online) newspapers such as the European Voice, Agence Europe, New Europe and the Guardian. By triangulating the information this study seeks to increase the validity of the findings.

Regarding the inevitable use of non-scholarly papers and opinions to support the analysis and concerning the fact that only the three HLF are subject of investigation, the overall findings of this dissertation may neither allow for extensive generalization nor offer a definite answer to the question under what conditions the EU is able to shape the international aid discourse. However, being aware of these potential shortcomings, this dissertation must be valued for its unique attempt to analyze the EU's performance in the HLF on Aid Effectiveness, a research topic that is, as yet, highly underexplored.



### **3. From Success to Failure - The EU's Performance in International Aid Negotiations**

This chapter in an empirical-analytical way investigates EU-internal and external dynamics surrounding the three HLF on Aid Effectiveness that either enabled, in the case of Paris (2005) and Accra (2008), or undermined, in the case of Busan (2011), the EU's ability to play an influential role at the respective summits in order to find explanations for the EU's change in performance. Ultimately, the findings will allow identifying conditions under which the EU is able to shape to international aid and development agenda.

#### **From Paris to Accra - Examining the EU's successful performance**

##### *The EU in Paris - an influential player*

During three days of negotiations in February and March 2005 over 100 donor and partner countries endorsed the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (PD), setting up a “milestone” in the global aid effectiveness debate (Picciotto, 2011, p. 51; OECD, 2012). Building on the first HLF on Harmonisation in Rome (2003) the heads of developed and developing countries re-affirmed the need for a significant increase in the quality and quantity of global ODA spending (OECD, 2005). By agreeing on five concrete effectiveness-principles namely ownership, alignment, harmonisation, managing for results and mutual accountability, the donor community and recipient countries aimed at increasing global aid effectiveness, thus the impact of development assistance on global development (OECD, 2012). While ownership and alignment stress the fact that partner countries need to exert leadership over their own national development strategies and donor countries' supportive role in helping the partner countries to implement their own development strategies (OECD, 2005, p. 3), the principle of harmonization requires that “donors' actions are more harmonized, transparent and collectively effective” (OECD, 2005, p. 6). Mutual accountability on the other hand emphasises that donors and partners are both accountable for development results, while managing for results seeks to ensure an effective use of resources to reach the desired results. In that sense, the Paris agenda, which still guides current donor activity, constitutes a “threefold commitment” stressing the importance of recipient owned development strategies, the use of national administration systems and enhanced co-

ordinated and predictable donor activity in developing countries (Rogerson, 2005, p. 531).

After having provided “essential input and momentum” (Council, 2004a, p. 4) at the Monterrey Conference in Paris the EU was keen to re-affirm its influential role in the aid negotiations (European Commission, 2006a). In the run-up to the 2nd HLF in Paris the EU member states, with the initiative of the Belgian Development Commissioner Louis Michel, agreed on several comprehensive commitments in order to collectively contribute to the summit’s outcome and reduced transaction costs in delivering EU development cooperation (European Commission, 2006a). The process for establishing this common position began early.

In the aftermath of the Monterrey Conference and in response to the European Commission’s communication (European Commission 2004): “Translating the Monterrey Consensus into practice: the EU’s contribution”, the Council established an Ad-hoc Working Party made up of experts on donor harmonisation (AHWPH). The experts were meant to examine the Commission’s proposal on translating the Monterrey Consensus into practice and by doing so to provide a substantial basis for the EU’s collective contribution to the global aid effectiveness agenda. The report highlights concrete steps to make European and international aid efforts more effective, such as establishing roadmaps in partner countries, which outline the steps to be taken by the member states and the Commission in order to improve the implementation of the Rome Declaration and enhancing the untying of Official Development Assistance (ODA) (Council, 2004a). Furthermore, in view of the HLF II the AHWPH remarked (Council, 2004, p. 5) that the EU is offered a great chance to advance international commitments on aid effectiveness at the HLF II since it lays emphasise on donor coordination so that the EU’s experience in the field of harmonisation and donor cooperation “can be shared” with other donors. In that light, the output document of the AHWPH was sought to guide the EU’s participation in Paris and to ensure its contribution to the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), which emerged as the agenda setting body of the HLF bearing responsibility for the preparatory work for the global aid summit in Paris. Since the drafting of the PD was mainly done by the DAC, with only marginal input by other countries (European Parliament, p. 31) the EU member states, constituting half of the DAC members, were offered a vantage point for shaping the outcome document.

In this light, the Council of the European Union (2004b) adopted the EU's common position on the 23rd of November 2004 through endorsing the report of the AHWPH to provide the EU with a common position and a comprehensive input for the following summit in Paris. Since the position was based on the detailed report and proposals made by the AHWPH, the common position contained concrete steps and commitments. Sharing this view, Manning (2008, p. 14) remarks that the HLF II resembled an "interesting example of EU members coming to a DAC-hosted event with a clear common position".

At the negotiation tables, this common position was coordinated and presented by the Luxembourg Presidency on behalf of the EU. Jean-Louis Schiltz, who held Presidency of the Council in the first half of 2005, already played a "prominent role" in the preparatory process for the Paris HLF (DAC, 2008, p. 14). By co-ordinating member states' positions and proposals on development cooperation and aid effectiveness, the Luxembourg Presidency significantly contributed to the establishment of the EU's common position for Paris, thus helping to "move forward the European and international agenda for development co-operation" (DAC, 2008, p. 22). Armed with comprehensive commitments made by the member states and an increase in EU aid levels from 2004 to 2005 by more than thirty per cent (Europeaid, 2012), Jean-Louis Schiltz emphasised the EU's drive to move the international development agenda forward: "We do not want the EU to be shy. We recognise our responsibility and we are ready to act. We look forward to work hand in hand with all of you to improve our development cooperation by more harmonisation, more coordination and more alignment", the Presidency (Schiltz, 2005) stated during its speech on the last day of negotiations.

Likewise the Presidency of the Council, the European Commissioner clearly demonstrated his will to improve global aid effectiveness. Not only did the Commission provide significant input in formulating proposals for more effective European aid ahead of the summit (European Commission, 2005a) but also did the European Commission take on an active role at the HLF in Paris. It was in this context that in the final stages of the negotiations on the PD, the European Development Commissioner Louis Michel, reminded the other donors on the importance of sticking to the commitments made. At the negotiations Michel (European Commission, 2005b) urged the other OECD-donors to set out clear, targeted and realistic objectives instead of outlining all-embracing commitments that lack substance and are not achievable (European Com-

mission, 2005b). Against this background, the PD strongly reflects most points outlined in the EU's common position from November 2004 (Carbone 2007). Shortly after the summit, the European Commission launched a series of three communications, known as the 'MDG package', which not only thought to review the EU's progress made so far on the MDGs but also proposed new strategies to make EU aid more effective. In that light, the Commission (European Commission, 2005c) called on EU member states to further coordinate their aid activities in order to ensure complementarity, to put the Paris principles into action and for an increase in their aid levels from 0.39 to 0.56 in 2010 and 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) in 2015. It is in that light that on the occasion of the HLF II the EU showed "strong leadership" to make global aid more effective (Ferrero de Lomo- Osorio, 2010, p. 1).

#### *Shaping the agenda - the EU at the High Level Forum in Accra*

In September 2008, civil society organisations, foundations, multilateral organisations, donors and partner countries, took part in the Accra forum organized by the OECD, World Bank and hosted by the Ghanaian government (New Europe, 2008) that marked the "half-way" between the PD and the year 2010, which constituted the due date for the implementation of the commitments made in Paris (OECD, 2012). Evaluating the global progress made on the PD, the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) constitutes a "full agenda" (Keijzer and Corre, 2009, p.91) proposing that strong improvement was needed in the fields of country ownership, inclusive partnerships, delivering results and capacity development.

The EU has taken on a significant role in the preparatory process leading up the aid effectiveness summit in Accra (New Europe, 2008). In April, the Commission (European Commission, 2008, p. 3) launched a communication in order to contribute to the establishment of a common EU voice in view of the Accra summit and to confirm the EU's "key role on the international scene and its commitment to the MDGs". The Communication (European Commission, 2008) reflects on the EU's undertaken efforts to advance the international aid and development agenda since endorsing the PD. In that context, the European Commission greatly acknowledged the EU's collective achievement to adopt a European Consensus on Development (ECD) in 2005 as well

as its progress made on donor coordination by adopting the Code of Conduct on the Division of Labour in May 2007.

The ECD, which was adopted jointly by the Commission, the Council and the Parliament (ECD, 2006) in December 2005, marked a milestone in the history of European Development Cooperation since it provided the EU - for the first time in over 50 years development cooperation - with a common vision on how to eradicate global poverty. While the EU (Council, 2005, p. 3), shortly after signing the PD had agreed to increase to raise its “collective EU target of 0, 56 % ODA/GNI by 2010” the ECD reaffirms the EU’s collective commitment to “more and better aid” (ECD, 2006, p. 2) by outlining “common objectives and principles for development cooperation”.

To underline the EU’s commitment to implement the PD the Council and the member states (Council, 2007), in response to the Commission’s communication (European Commission, 2006b) from March 2006 and February 2007 (European Commission, 2007), adopted the EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labour in May 2007. The EU voluntary initiative on a better division of labour aims at reinforcing the objectives laid out by the PD as well as presenting “operational principles with a view to ensuring better division of labour between EU donor” (European Commission 2007, p.8). The Code of Conduct contains some “unambiguous” and “strong commitments”, as Keijzer and Corre (2009, p. 92) remark.

In regard to these ambitious European undertakings in the aftermath of the PD the European Commission (European Commission, 2008, p. 3) called on the member states to “adopt an ambitious position at Accra in favour of a real division of labour, more budgetary aid, and an inclusive approach that promotes gender equality and involves civil society and local government” strongly emphasizing that “Europe must create a dynamic that will galvanise international efforts to take specific measures” (European Commission, 2008, p. 5). In response, European development ministers and the representatives of the EU member states in May 2008 agreed on various actions, which they identified as essential to drive the global development and aid agenda forward (Council, 2008a). The ministers and representatives agreed that in Accra their special focus lies on improving the division of labour and the predictability of aid - which has essentially been influenced by the Commission’s proposal for MDG contracts launched in early 2008 (Keijzer and Corre, 2009; Holland and Doidge,

2011) -, strengthening the use of country systems, enhancing mutual accountability for development results and advocating less conditionality (Council, 2008a, p. 3). The EU commonly agreed on ensuring an “ambitious action-oriented response before, during and after [...] the III High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness”. On the basis of this conclusion, in 22 July 2008, the Council adopted the final guideline-document for the united participation of the EU in Accra (Council, 2008b).

The Council conclusion is a comprehensive 22 page document, which resembles the EU’s “progressive stance” (Alliance 2015, 2008) on enhancing the impact of global aid on development. The document (Council, 2008b, p.2) strongly reveals the EU’s determinacy to improve the global aid architecture and clearly reflects the EU’s will to continuously play a leading role in the global governance system of aid effectiveness. In this light, the member states’ governments collectively confirmed that they are willing to “replicating its instrumental role at the 2005 Paris conference by ensuring a strong presence, a European ‘critical mass’ at the Accra Summit, speaking with one voice, rallying behind the same goals” (Council, 2008b, p. 2).

To ensure the EU’s influence on the AAA, the European Commission had undertaken efforts to increase its cooperation with the OECD in the run-up to the forum (European Commission, 2009a). In this context, European Commissioner Michel, who already functioned as a driving force at the Paris HLF, held a speech at the annual High-Level Meeting of the DAC urging other donors to meet their commitments made and emphasised the need for a strong outcome document at the HLF III in order to achieve the global development targets (European Commission, 2009a). Moreover, the Commission, among other representatives and experts from EU member states, was offered the opportunity to participate in a reflection group that was meant to draw out a new mandate for the DAC, strengthening its role and relevance in a changing global development landscape (European Commission, 2009b; OECD, n.d.). In addition, the Commission was invited by the DAC to help creating the DAC’s regular Peer Reviews of its member states and to comment and review traditional and current strategies on the delivery of aid (European Commission, 2009b). Through the intensified cooperation between the DAC and the Commission and the Commissioners ambition (Agence Europe, 2008a) to make Accra a success, European ideas on effective development cooperation, especially on the division of labour found entry into the multilateral negotiations in the pre-Accra phase (Meyer and Schulz, 2008, p. 8). NGOs (Alli-

ance 2015, 2008) confirm the EU's significant influence in the pre-Accra negotiations by observing that the EU even achieved to alter the World Bank's conservative stance pushing the Bank to adapt a more progressive view on aid effectiveness.

At the negotiation tables in Accra, the Council's French Presidency Alain Joyandet together with the Development Commissioner Michel, on the basis of the Council Conclusion from July 2008, presented the common position on behalf of the EU (Agence Europe, 2008b). Already during the preparatory process leading up to the aid effectiveness negotiations in Ghana, the French Presidency has taken on a significant role and demonstrated its drive to make the negotiations a success for global aid effectiveness (New Europe, 2008; Agence Europe, 2008a). In the run-up to the Aid Effectiveness summit, Alain Joyandet (French Presidency, 2008) affirmed his commitment to enhance the progress on "improved aid complementarity" between member states and the European Commission. Moreover, the Council Presidency made clear that it is highly ambitious to play the driving force behind a strong and progressive outcome document (Brunsden, 2008; French Presidency, 2008) by "showcas[ing]" European endeavours to make aid more effective. Through the Presidency's ambition and the Commission's progressive voice in the run-up to the negotiations, the EU was able to play "a progressive role" at the negotiation tables in Accra (Alliance 2015, 2008). Moreover, due to the French Presidency's efforts the Nordic+ Group, which had negotiated separately at other global events, had decided to fully join the European negotiations group (Schulz, 2008; Alliance 2015, 2008), thus significantly contributing to a strong common voice of the EU at the negotiations (Brunsden, 2008). It was in that light that right from the beginning of the negotiations the EU strongly urged for more "ambitious reforms" than set out by the draft of the AAA and demonstrated its collective readiness to release its own commitments if the AAA would suffer from strength (Tomlinson, 2008, p. 5). Thus, shortly before the Accra summit seemed to reach a dead-lock the EU achieved to re-open the negotiations of the agenda in order to draw out a more ambitious agenda for action after the first version failed to satisfy all participants (Keijzer and Corre, 2009; Keijzer, 2011; Davies, 2011). Thus, through the EU's and member states efforts to coordinate their position before the summit and the EU's determinacy to push for a strong outcome document (Agence Europe, 2008b) the EU was able to prevent the status quo from "being negotiated down" by other countries (Keijzer, 2011, p. 4; Oxfam, 2008 ).

The Accra summit was much more inclusive than the Paris HLF. However, although there was a dialogue between the DAC Working Party on Aid Effectiveness (WP-EFF) and non-DAC countries before the Accra summit to reach a consensus on the global aid effectiveness principles and the negotiations themselves, the final AAA did only take limited account of non-DAC countries' concerns (European Parliament, 2012). In contrast to the limited influence of non-DAC members, the EU's influence within the DAC and on the aid effectiveness principles has, as shown above, significantly grown in the pre-Accra period, enabling the EU to shape the final outcome document. In this context, Manning (2008, p. 14) remarks that the "EU's adoption of ODA volume targets in 2005, [its] statement of development policy in 2006, and [the] Code of Conduct on Division of Labour in 2007" significantly contributed to the DAC's work on aid effectiveness, hence offering an explanation for why the AAA "suits well with the EU's own aspirations" (European Commission, 2009b, p.12). It is in that light that the EU's "impact" on the AAA is clearly evident as the outcome document puts special emphasize on donors division of labour, a concept which can be traced back to the EU's origin (Carbone, 2012, p. 7; Grimm et al., 2009a). Thus, the EU successfully contributed to the final document significantly shaping the agenda on global aid effectiveness (Carbone, 2012; and Keijzer, 2012; Keijzer and Corre, 2009; Schulz, 2008).

#### *Summary of findings - Why did the EU succeed in Paris and Accra?*

Due to a strong coordination process in the pre-run to both summits actively driven by the ambitious Development Commissioner Louis Michel and with support from the highly committed 'europhile' Luxembourg and experienced French Presidencies the EU went well-prepared, determined and with a common position to each of the summits. This pre-agreed common stance was then, in both cases, effectively translated into a substantial European voice at the summits, not least through the efforts of the Commission and Presidency. At the occasion of Paris, the Working Party on Harmonisation provided clear advisory ensuring the EU's strong contribution to the DAC's preparatory work on donor coordination. In Accra, the adoption of the EU Code of Conduct on the Division of Labour and the intensified cooperation between the DAC and the European Commission ensured that EU ideas on donor harmonisa-



tion found entrance in the outcome document already at an early stage (Meyer and Schulz, 2008). Moreover, since both the PD and the AAA were mainly products of the DAC the EU was given the opportunity to highly influence the agendas. By setting itself high standards in aid effectiveness and increased aid volumes and living up to its own expectations surrounding both summits, the EU as a whole demonstrated its collective will to “make a difference” (Dee, 2011) at the negotiations and particularly in Accra and acted as driving force in the re-negotiations of a more ambitious agenda towards the end of the summit directly confronting other donors, which were not willing to make strong commitments (D+C, 2008; Keijzer, 2011; Tomlinson, 2008; Keijzer and Corre, 2009; Schulz, 2008). Moreover, the adoption of the ECD shortly after the Paris summit not only demonstrated the EU’s collective commitment to translate the principles into action and provided the EU with a clear vision on common development policy but also highlights the high relevance member states subscribed to the EU at that time. Similar remarking was the great “degree of consensus and ‘integration’ in the field of development” on the occasion of Accra (Keijzer and Corre, 2009, p.97). Due to a high consensus on the concept of division of labour, the EU was able to speak with a collective voice in Accra (Ruck, 2008) as previously done in Paris (Manning, 2012, p.11).

### **The EU in Busan - Examining the EU’s poor performance**

The three day fourth conference on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, Korea, with more than 3000 participants aimed at reviewing the global progress made on the implementation of the Paris principles for aid effectiveness (OECD, 2012) and sought to develop a Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation that goes beyond the pure focus on aid effectiveness and towards a more inclusive and broad framework for global development helping to keep up the relevance of global aid effectiveness in a shifting development landscape (OECD, 2012). The HLF IV took place at a time when Western donors and developing countries alike were struggling with the negative impacts of the economic and financial crisis (European Parliament, 2012) and the global implementation process of the PD still being far from satisfying (Klingebiel and Leiderer, 2011), thus marking a critical event for ensuring that international ef-

forts to increase the quality and quantity of aid are kept up by the donor community in the future (Falletti, 2011).

In the light of the severe European debt crisis, EU member states started to cut back on aid spending (Concord, 2012), adopted inward-looking perspectives with national interests and priorities becoming more important in development thinking (Koch et al., 2011a) leading to strong divisions among EU member states over what to focus on in Busan (Consolo, 2011), with some member states even arguing against further deepening of the aid effectiveness agenda and for a renationalization of aid policy (Keijzer, 2011). Moreover, the management of the debt crisis has taken up room for formal political discussion among EU Ministers on the EU's future work on aid effectiveness prior to the Busan summit (Keijzer, 2011).

Especially on the issue of untying aid, transparency and budget support the divergent positions of member states revealed ahead of the Busan meeting. While the UK, as a forerunner in transparency matters, argued for a bride endorsement of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI) in Busan (UK Parliament, 2011), Portugal and Austria expressed their opposition to greater transparency ahead of the summit (Kicullen, 2011a). Similarly, Germany, France and Italy have shown strong reluctance towards proposals made to untie all aid (Kicullen, 2011a; Concord, 2012). Highly divided in the pre-Busan month were EU member states also on the issue of budget support, which implies to provide money directly to governments to enable them to work on projects and programmes and which had been prominently promoted by the European Commission (Donnelly, 2011a; Maxwell, 2011). In this context, the Commission has been strongly criticised by some member states for widely promoting this instrument despite of member states' doubts (Koch et al., 2011a). With many EU member states calling for a streamlined aid effectiveness framework that suits their own political priorities (Concord, 2011a; Keijzer, 2011; Aprodev, 2011) the EU's preparations for the global aid conference in Busan progressed at slow pace (UK Aid Network, 2011a) and a European consensus was difficult to find (Koch et al., 2011a; Keijzer, 2011).

In early September, the European Commission, which had - due to the Lisbon Treaty - undergone significant structural changes since the Accra summit with led to reduced personnel (Ellmers, 2011a), launched a proposal (European Commission, 2011a), with

the aim to provide an impulse for agreeing on a common EU position for the upcoming aid negotiations. In its communication the Commission (European Commission, 2011a) remarked that the EU's collective efforts made on aid predictability, transparency and aid fragmentation were moving slowly. Although the EU (Council, 2009) had adopted an Operational Framework on Aid Effectiveness in 2009 to collectively deliver on the commitments made in Paris and Accra and accelerate their implementation process in the view of the HLF IV in 2011, the EU had not only missed their collective intermediary aid target of 0.56 per cent of GNI in 2010 but also did the progress made by member states on the aid effectiveness principles remain strongly uneven (European Commission, 2011b). Against this background, the Latvian Commissioner Andris Piebalgs proposed to re-affirm, prioritise and deepen the key policy commitments made in Paris and Accra as well as to extend the aid principles to include the new emerging donors and the private sector (European Commission, 2011a). Furthermore, the European Commission believed that the EU should continue its leadership in global aid effectiveness especially through establishing an 'EU Transparency Guarantee', which ensures that all EU member states will publish all information on aid programmes to allow for easy access for other donors and partner countries to share information among each other (European Commission, 2011f).

However, the communication fell short of clear guidance on how the EU member states can "lead by example" (Concord, 2011c, p. 1). Moreover, the document suffered from "contradictory messages", as Ellmers (2011b, p. 1) confirms, which strongly weakened the proposal. While the Commission emphasised the importance of fully implementing the Paris and Accra principles for an increased impact on development, it only chose six issue areas to concentrate on (European Commission, 2011a). Especially on the controversial, though important, issues of untying aid and the use of conditionality the European Commission (European Commission, 2011a) remains almost silent. Against this backdrop, there was only "cautious optimism behind the scenes" in regard to the Commission's ability to positively influence the ongoing debate on global aid effectiveness (Donnelly, 2011b).

The EU's common position (Council, 2011) for Busan was established only two weeks ahead of the negotiations. In the document from 14<sup>th</sup> November the EU member states (Council, 2011, p. 1) stress the importance of establishing an inclusive Partnership for Development and to strengthen "aid as a catalyst for effective delivery of

development results". The latter point had been already addressed by Commission's Agenda for Change (European Commission, 2011c), which was released a month before the ministers conclusion and aimed at boosting the collective development action and in order to equip the member states with good development practice and a vision for future development cooperation, however, has been criticised (Koch et al., 2011b) for not really setting out an "EU wide strategy for global development" but focusing on improving the effectiveness of aid in order to attain the best development result.

It is in that light and in contrast to the comprehensive commitments and clear priorities agreed on by member states before the summits in Paris and Accra, the common declaration formed under the Polish Presidency ahead of Busan contains only few concrete commitments (UK Aid Network, 2011a). While the member states committed themselves to increase aid transparency by establishing the Commission's proposed Transparency Guarantee and promised to strengthen Joint Programming, a tool for enhanced donor coordination that had evolved within the EU's Operational Framework for Aid Effectiveness and is meant to strengthen the Code of Conduct, the common position (Council, 2011) makes no reference on how the EU will ensure to collectively reach the 0.7 per cent in 2015, in fact an reinforcement of ODA promises was absent from the conclusion. Moreover, different than in Accra where the member states strongly expressed their aim to take on a leadership role ahead of the negotiations, there is no such comment made in the common position for Busan (Council, 2011). Similarly silent remains the document on those issues where member states had been highly divided on during the last month (Donnelly, 2011a) such as tied aid, budget support and to some extent predictability. Overall, the conclusion presented a rather weak document which does not strengthen the Commission's vague proposal (UK Aid Network, 2011a; Keijzer, 2011).

Moreover, the late conclusion provided limited time for a collective European input into the preparatory meetings for drafting the Busan outcome document (BOD). Thus, when the first framework for an outline of the Busan outcome document emerged in an Executive Committee (ExCom) meeting in March 2011, some EU member states including the UK, Nordic+ countries and Germany in line with the European Commission, who had also worked closely together with the WP-EFF in the previous two summits (European Commission, 2011d, p. 25) submitted their own comments on the narrative to the WP-EFF, thus proving individual inputs to the discussion (WP-EFF,

2011a). While the common position was meant to function as a guideline for France, the UK and the European Commission, who presented three of the eighteen Sherpas developing the outcome document in the pre-Busan month, by the time EU member states had agreed on their common position, the preparatory process was already in its final phase, thus making it hard to articulate the EU's mandate (UK Aid Network, 2011a). Moreover, during the preparatory meetings, divergences and different priorities revealed.

In a pre-conference meeting the European Commission and France refused to include a concrete target date for untying all aid, which was suggested by the developing countries, in the Busan document (Tran, 2011a). In contrast, the UK, who represented the Nordic+ countries, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (WP-EFF, 2011b) urged that it is highly important to go beyond the commitments made in Paris and Accra on untying aid and set clear time bound targets (WP-EFF 2011c, p. 6). While the UK, laid special focus on results and transparency, France's primary goal was to enhance the dialogue with the new emerging donors (UK Aid Network, 2011b). Thus, in a meeting (WP-EFF, 2011c, p. 3) France opposed strong proposals made by other donors on human rights arguing that there is a need for a "balanced statement" that could be accepted even by China. Hence, with individual representation of EU member states in the Sherpas preparatory meetings, the EU's collective input remained limited. Illustrating that, France made clear during the final WP-EFF meetings that it did not "see itself as bound to represent the EU common position" (UK Aid Network, 2011b, p.3). Against this background, the EU's internal division remained present during the negotiations at the HLF in Busan (Oxfam, 2011; Manrique, 2011). At the summit it was the Development Commissioner who presented the EU's common stance (Agence Europe, 2011), while the Polish Presidency took part in the climate negotiation conference in Durban. However, the collective EU agreement established ahead of the summit did not prevent some EU member states as well as the European Commission from "separate representation" when negotiating the final BOD at the HLF (DAC, 2012, p. 41).

In contrast to the EU's fragmented representation in Busan, the developing and emerging countries, who for the first time were invited as official donors to the negotiations (Birdsall, 2011, p.1), collectively defended their interests at the aid talks. While traditional donors, and in particular the European Commission, viewed the

Paris and Accra agendas as the best way to ensure global aid effectiveness arguing against a modernisation of the aid effectiveness agenda, emerging countries such as Brasil, China and India blamed these principles for being a clear symbol of North-South development cooperation (Sohn, 2011; Glennie, 2011), which would not apply to the South-South cooperation (SSC) they are pursuing. Meanwhile, the African partner countries, who, for the first time, agreed on a common position and vision for development and aid effectiveness ahead of the summit (NEPAD, 2011, p. 4) clearly expressed their support for the SSC, which they view as the “most promising partnership approach”. Shortly before the end of the negotiations the new donors successfully pushed for an additional paragraph in the Busan outcome document, which allows non-DAC donors to stay away from concrete donor commitments (Tran, 2011b). It was especially in the presence of China’s threat to stay absent of the negotiations and the aid effectiveness agenda that the emerging countries achieved to influence the BOD (Ellmers, 2011c; Manrique, 2011). While the US, which participated for the first time ever in a HLF on Aid Effectiveness (Kharas and Unger, 2011a), Canada and Australia strongly pushed China to endorse the fundamental aid effectiveness principles, the EU member states did not stand up for the basic aid principles such as transparency and untied aid (Tran, 2011c; Birdsall, 2011). In contrast, USAID, alongside AUSAID and Canada, had taken on a “leadership role” to push all donors to commit to higher standards (Birdsdall, 2011).

Already during preparatory meetings for the HLF IV the US, suffering from a unilateral doctrine under the Bush administration explaining why the US government did not participate in any of the roundtables in Paris or Accra (Brookings, 2008), has revived its multilateral engagement especially in the field of effective global development under the presidency of Barack Obama (Unger, 2011). The new role played by the US on the global development stage was reflected in the re-launch of the EU-US Development dialogue in 2009, which led to enhanced cooperation on aid effectiveness issues between the European Commission and USAID before the summit (European Commission, 2011e). It was in that light that the US came well prepared and with a “high power delegation” led by Hillary Clinton (Kharas and Unger, 2011b) to the conference effectively negotiating particular on the issues of transparency and gender (Oxfam, 2011; Kharas and Unger, 2011a,b). With this new “enthusiasm” (Unger, 2011) to shape the global development agenda, the US challenged China.

After extensive discussion, China agreed to further participate in the negotiations but only under the condition that an additional paragraph was added to the BOD (BOD, 2011) stating that the “commitment, principles and actions agreed in the outcome document in Busan shall be the reference for South-South cooperation on a voluntary basis”. With the new condition in place, China, India and Brazil signed up to the new partnership, however accepting the new aid agenda only on “vague terms”, as the Guardian (Tran, 2011c) and Alden and Sidiropoulos (2012) remark. Following the two successful aid summits in Paris and Accra most observers regard the BOD with mixed feelings. While the Busan summit has been accredited for bringing new actors to the global aid agenda and bridging the distance between traditional donors and new actors in the development landscape (Manrique, 2011) this inclusion of emerging donors came at the cost of stronger commitments for global aid effectiveness (European Parliament, 2012). Although EU priorities are indeed reflected in the BOD, as the European Commission (2011c) rightly claims, many observers (Banks, 2011; Manrique, 2011; Oxfam, 2011,) agree that if the EU had shown leadership at the fourth HLF Busan could have delivered much stronger results for the global aid and development effectiveness.

*Summary of findings – What explains the EU’s poor performance at Busan?*

Due to highly divergent developmental interests among EU member states in the light of the European debt crisis, the weak leadership shown by the Commissioner Andris Piebalgs and an rather invisible role played by the Polish EU Presidency ahead and at the negotiations, the EU, despite of establishing a formal common position, was not able to speak and act with one voice at the negotiations, thus to push for stronger commitments at the negotiations. The re-orientation to national interests in the light of fiscal austerity which lowered the EU member states will for a collective European contribution at Busan prevented the EU members states from strengthening the already low input provided by the Latvian Commissioner ahead of the summit hampering the EU to come to the aid negotiations with a well prepared, visionary and determined common position, thus leaving it to “observe” (Rabinowitz, 2011) the scene instead of actively contributing to the agenda. The EU’s ability to speak with one voice at the negotiations was further undermined by separate representation of the

European Commission and some EU member states during the preparatory process and at the negotiation tables themselves. Finally with emerging economies, who did not share the EU's preferences and the US coming to the aid discussions with determinant voices and concrete proposals the fragmented EU found itself sidelined (Oxfam, 2011; Manrique, 2011; Rabinowitz, 2011; Kicullen, 2011b).

#### **4. The EU in International Aid Negotiations - What Makes the EU to Shape the Agenda?**

Most scholars nowadays agree that the EU certainly is an important international actor in international development cooperation. However, there is still controversial debate as to what extent the EU can actually influence global development policy making. While some scholars believe that since the beginning of the 21st century the "EU was a leading voice" in shaping the global development agenda in the multilateral fora (Holland and Doidge, 2012, p.214) others yet so often argue that the EU only aligns itself to already existing development targets and aid effectiveness principles established by other actors and institution (Farrell, 2008). The empirical-analytical findings in this dissertation have made clear that the EU indeed is able to shape the international development and aid discourse and has emerged as a key player in the global aid and development governance system since the beginning of the 21st century, thus clearly refuting scholarly perceptions that the EU simply is a 'norm-taker'. However, the EU's most recent performance in the global aid talks has revealed the fragility of the EU to changes in internal and external dynamics that can have significant influence on the EU's ability to shape the agenda. In a nutshell, the question is not whether the EU *can* shape the global aid debate but rather under what conditions it is able to do so.

Analysing the case studies has shown that the EU's change in its ability to shape the international aid agenda went along with a strong variation in the EU's ability to speak and act with one voice, its ambition to contribute to the global aid discourse as well as with changes in the broader external environment, thus confirming that the three factors identified in the theoretical framework namely unity, willingness to act and opportunity indeed hold explanatory value for the change in the EU's performance in



international aid negotiations and thus determine the EU's success and failure to shape the global aid agenda.

The EU's success in shaping the agenda first and foremost depends on the EU's ability to present itself as a united actor ahead, at and in the aftermath of the negotiations, thus to build up a substantial common voice (Jørgensen et al., 2011). In the successful cases, the EU and its member states showed strong political will for collective action, which was also reflected in the high degree of relevance member states attributed to the EU on the occasion of Paris and Accra. The establishment of unity was in particular attributable to the European Commission, which played a proactive role by launching various initiatives to coordinate EU member states ahead of the summits. In contrast, where the EU was less successful in shaping the agenda, a lack of relevance, cohesion and coordination, which the incumbent Commission was unable to tackle not least due to its limited experience in the development sphere and constrained resources due to institutional changes (Orbie, 2012, p. 33) left the EU being a "mosaic" of its parts (Schulz, 2010, p. 3).

Over the years, the divergence with regard to commitments and competences between more advanced EU member states such as the Nordic+ countries and the less experienced ones, particularly the new member states, has increased, leading to a two-speed EU in aid and development issues (Klingebiel and Leiderer, 2011; Schulz, 2010). Moreover, European 'flagship' initiatives such as the Code of Conduct on the Division of Labour suffer from poor implementation not least due to shortcomings in coordination between EU donors (Schulz, 2010). Furthermore, the creation of the European External Action Service might have eroded the power of the Development Commissioner (Orbie, 2012, p.33), who has always been of vital importance for coordinating EU aid effectiveness efforts (Carbone, 2007). In the light of geopolitical changes, Europe's position in the global governance system seems to be becoming more defensive (Grimm, 2012 p. 11) making EU internal coordination more important than ever. Hence, without the political will of the EU member states and a "soft integration process" (Orbie, 2012, p. 20) led by a strong European Commission the EU's ability to shape the global discourse is likely to remain limited. Especially in field of aid and development policy, which is marked by shared competence, the Commission has a crucial role for coordinating the common position and pursuing cohesion among EU member states (Damro, 2006). In that sense, only when the EU presents itself as a

collective actor of its member states, thus is more than the sum of its parts, it has the ability to shape the global aid and development discourse (Grimm et al., 2012, p. 1).

Second, the analysis has illustrated that where the EU as a whole lacks the willingness to influence the global development agenda and falls short of a clear European vision to drive the global discourse forward, its scope for influence is limited. The empirical findings indicate that EU and its member states effectively contributed to the aid agenda when they shared a common progressive understanding on European principles in development policy, such as reflected in the adoption of the ECD and the Code of Conduct. In contrast, the Agenda for Change provided only limited ideas on unique future global development effectiveness beyond aid, and the EU's engagement with new development actors, thus not offering strong EU input for the negotiations on the new Partnership for Development (Koch et al., 2011b). Moreover, by setting itself higher standards on aid effectiveness, adopting ambitious targets and initiatives ahead of the summits and sticking to them afterwards the EU was able to significantly contribute to the discussions (Carbone, 2012). In contrast when the EU failed to collectively commit to stronger aid effectiveness principles, implementation was poor and ODA volumes low, the EU's ability to contribute to the agenda was highly limited. Overall, when the EU as a whole fails to agree on concrete achievable commitments and initiatives before the aid negotiations and lacks a clear 'enlightened' (Grimm et al., 2012) vision how to drive the aid discussions forward, the EU's shaping power remains low. With regard to future, the EU needs to establish a "distinct policy framework" to present itself as a leader, thus to significantly shape the agenda in a changed development landscape (Furness and Makhan, 2011).

Third, the empirical findings have confirmed that the opportunity structure holds significant explanatory value for the EU's changing performance in international aid negotiations. In this context, when the EU failed to shape the agenda, not only its actor-ness was highly affected by the broader political dynamics such as the economic crisis which led to a re-nationalization process of EU development policy and a wider international 'aid fatigue', but also has the changing development landscape constituted a challenge towards the EU's power to drive the international agenda forward (Keijzer and Corre, 2009). In the light of rising new emerging donors who bring their own ideas into the development debate (Grimm et al., 2009a) the DAC, which has always functions as an entrance gate for European ideas and concepts on aid effectiveness,

and in particular the WP-EFF seems to be “losing momentum” (Schulz, 2011) as the main agenda setting body. Similarly, with the “new assertiveness of the South” (Alden and Sidiropoulos, 2012) and in the absence of a comprehensive EU strategy to address the new actor constellation (Schulz, 2010) the EU was caught in a “trade-off” between widening and deepening the aid agenda, forced to react instead of progressively shaping the agenda (Bader, 2011). The re-occurrence of the US to the global aid discourse brought another significant traditional donor to the global aid discussions challenging the EU’s key role in the aid negotiation. Faced with an ongoing decline in its structural power, Europe’s future ability in shaping the global development discourse totally depends on the EU’s ability to respond to the new dynamics in the international development landscape and in particular to overcome a “Western-centric” perspective on global aid governance (Keukeleire and Bruyninckx, 2011) and to start engaging with the new emerging powers, building up “innovative partnerships” (Schulz, 2010, p. 5, Grimm et al, 2012). Similarly, a new partnership with the US in global development issues can provide an opportunity for increased influence, however avoiding feeding into a new North-South split.

The global debate on aid effectiveness became prominent when traditional donors dictated the development scene (Hayman, 2012). By sharing a common vision on North-South cooperation and effective aid reforms, Western donors and at the forefront the EU, have set the international agenda for global aid effectiveness (Hayman, 2012). Since then, the global aid architecture has dramatically changed. Now it is to the EU to accept these changes and collectively find a way to actively use the new development landscape in order to make most of this new era of development effectiveness. Instead of abandoning these external challenges, the EU must actually engage with them in order to secure a strong European-Say on the global aid and development governance system. However, to do so, the EU needs not only to restore its actorness but also regain the will to make its ‘presence felt’ in the international aid effectiveness arena.

## **5. Conclusion**

Puzzled by a significant change in the EU’s performance in international aid negotiations- from an influential player in Paris and Accra to a low-profile role in Busan- this

dissertation's aim was to explain this change in performance and ultimately to identify conditions under which the EU is able to shape the global aid and development discourse. By reviewing scholarly work on the EU's actorness, effectiveness and performance, key factors which are widely believed to affect the EU's internal and external effectiveness were identified and built the theoretical foundation of this dissertation. By exploring the 2nd, 3rd and 4th HLF on Aid Effectiveness light was shed on the EU's performance in international aid negotiations, detecting reasons for failure and success in the light of the theoretical framework. By comparing two cases where the EU was influential with one where it was less successful in driving the agenda forward, this dissertation found that widely cited factors by leading scholars, namely unity, willingness and opportunity, hold strong explanatory value for the EU's change in performance in global aid negotiations, confirming that the EU's ability to shape the agenda is positively related to these factors. Moreover, by setting the findings into a broader context and providing a future outlook, this dissertation has suggested that the EU will most likely be able to shape the international aid and development discourse when its member states (1) share a strong political will for collective action supported by a proactive European Commission taking on a coordinating role in aid and development issues, (2) share the willingness to actively shape the global development agenda by setting itself high standards in aid effectiveness and by adopting a distinct European vision on development effectiveness and the EU as a whole (3) strategically engages with new actors in the global aid governance scene in order to regain the ability to influence the agenda.

It is in that light that this dissertation has not only contributed to a better understanding of the EU's ambition, behaviour and challenges in the international aid negotiations but also, more broadly, confirmed the theoretical assumption that the EU's influence in international negotiations is largely dependent on its internal effectiveness as well as the opportunity structure surrounding it.

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