



Guaranteeing Policy Coherence for the Development of Family and Peasant Farming in the South

Family and peasant farming is by far the main form of production in the global food sector. Not only does it supply 70% of the world's food and represent 40% of the planet's labor force, but it is also a major tool for fighting poverty and inequalities as well as achieving human rights. In fact, it is an essential and oft-acknowledged lever in the effort to reach the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. In particular, family and peasant farming can help eliminate extreme poverty, eradicate hunger, ensure food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture, use the planet's resources sustainably, and strengthen local economies.



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To achieve the SDGs in a context in which several countries of the planet, notably in Africa, will have to meet major demographic challenges, many international donors have made the strengthening of family and peasant farming a strategic priority. However, field analyses show that this strengthening is hindered by many aspects from outside the countries concerned, especially the implementation of economic, trade, and environmental policies by third-party actors that have a direct impact on their development. This situation is all the more paradoxical because these actors

are often the countries or from the countries that finance the vast majority of programs targeting the development of family and peasant farming.

Moreover, recent initiatives within the framework of the EU development policy itself may have a negative impact on family and peasant farming if they are not sufficiently supervised and participatory. An example is the EU External Investment Plan, which seeks to support investments by European companies in Africa and in the countries concerned by the EU Neighbourhood Policy.

In the light of this issue of policy coherence, Coordination SUD has formulated several recommendations targeting the French public authorities so that public policies do not harm family and peasant farming in the South. Several major policy developments are underway or will occur soon both in France and at the EU level: French Interministerial Committee for International Cooperation and Development; revision of the Common Agricultural Policy; and drafting of the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific agreement, which will succeed the Cotonou agreement after 2020, etc. These must be the occasion for the French government to make long-term commitments to strengthening coherence between its policies and development.

The necessity for development policy coherence is late to be acknowledged

The European Commission and the EU Member States as a bloc represent the biggest development assistance donor in the world, the number one trade power (in goods and services), as well as one of the two main global exporters and importers (along with the United States) of agriculture and food products.¹

While the NGOs working in agriculture and food security started denouncing the impact of certain French and European policies on the countries of the South as early as the 1980s, the EU and France have taken into account development policy coherence more recently. For example, the Lisbon Treaty, which came into force in 2009, takes up previous commitments by stipulating that “[European] Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty. The Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries.” In this matter, five areas are judged as priority for the European institutions: trade (an exclusive competence of the Union), food security, climate change, migrations, and security.

It was not until 2014 that France adopted a legislative text that included obligations with regard to development policy coherence. Article 3 of the French Orientation and Programming Law on Development and International Solidarity Policy (LOP-DSI) stipulates that “coherence shall be sought between the objectives of the Development and International Solidarity Policy and those other public policies likely to have an impact in the field of development, especially policies regarding trade, agriculture, taxes, migration, social issues, as well as policies relative to women’s rights, research and higher education, basic education, culture, health, environment, energy and the fight against climate change, peace and security, social and solidarity economy, and overseas territories.”

Finally, the adoption of the SDGs in 2015 “universalized” the necessity for coherence in sustainable development policies, by encouraging States to set up guarantees to

improve policy coherence (Target 17.14²) via taking into account the different pillars of sustainable development (economic, environmental, and social). Accordingly, the donor countries are invited to better monitor coherence between their internal public policies and their development assistance policy.

Policy coherence in the EU Member States

The national NGO platforms of the EU Member States, which are united within Concord, carried out two comparative studies on making development policy coherence operational³ and on the state of the Agenda for Sustainable Development implementation in the Member States two years after its adoption⁴. The first study revealed that, while France mentions development policy coherence in laws and in its international solidarity strategies (as is the case for the majority of Member States), there is no inter-ministerial or parliamentary mechanism that openly ensures supervision of the coherence of public policies. France’s level of awareness in development policy coherence matters is judged to be one of the weakest of the EU, as much at the ministry level as at Parliament level.

The situation is changing in some countries, which look to adopt the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In contrast, the lack of strategy to implement the SDGs in France two years since their adoption helps explain the lack of progress observed in coherence matters. In this respect, Finland is the most advanced country of the EU: following the adoption of the SDGs, members of Parliament and other state and civil-society actors sit on a national sustainable development commission with expanded powers. Finland has thus revised its impact analysis mechanism so that it takes into account all the dimensions of sustainable development, and it has undertaken to carry out exhaustive evaluation of how its foreign policy contributes to the SDGs in its partner countries.

1. World Trade Organization, *World Trade Statistical Review*, 2017

2. United Nations Economic and Social Council, *Report of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators*, 2016

3. Concord, *Operationalising Policy Coherence for Development*, 2015

4. Concord, *Monitoring Agenda 2030 implementation across the EU*, 2017



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Insufficient implementation of development policy coherence

The EU and certain Member States, especially in Northern Europe, have started to implement their development policy coherence obligations, albeit in a very perfectible way. In contrast, France is lagging behind.

Since 2007, the European Commission has been publishing a biennial report dedicated to development policy coherence. European Parliament has taken up this issue and in 2010 appointed a specific and permanent rapporteur to deal with it. This rapporteur publishes a biennial report that is often much more critical of the EU's actions than the Commission's report, which is put into question by NGOs for too often seeming like an exercise in self-satisfaction. The rapporteur can give opinions on the Commission's projects. A unit for ex ante evaluation of policy impact has been created within European Parliament. Any parliamentary commission can now refer a case to it, in terms of both form and content. In France, the LOP-DSI law provided for the creation of an observatory dedicated to development and to international solidarity issues. This multi-stakeholder observatory, which would have helped make the law operational, has never met, due to lack of mobilization of members of Parliament before the last legislative elections.

The evaluation of European policies including trade agreements, which takes place before their adoption or during and after their implementation, should help to analyze their impact on development. At the EU level, the system to improve regulation ("Better Regulation Package") provides for two distinct tools that can be used to study the consequences of European policies on human rights and on development countries. Presently, this process is criticized for its lack of objectivity and its lack of systematization. Indeed, some analyses completely ignore impacts on third countries.

For example, a recent Concord analysis showed that, in 2016, only 24% of initiatives with possible impact on developing countries were subject to an impact analysis deemed to be credible in this matter.⁵ Furthermore, in the majority of cases, the economic impacts expected to benefit the EU are focused on more than are the social, environmental, economic, and human rights impacts in the partner countries. The analysis of the impact of EU trade policies is very much based on the principle of full free trade (which creates distortions in competitiveness that are unfavorable to smallholder producers in the countries of the South), without taking into account the impacts on the rights of the populations of the partner countries. Due to lack of political will, the analysis thus remains largely superficial or even nonexistent in terms of consequences on the developing countries.⁶

The only aspect in which France has a lead compared to its EU counterparts is its Loi sur le devoir de vigilance (corporate duty of diligence law), adopted in 2017. This law obliges parent companies and contracting companies that have more than 5,000 employees in France (including in subsidiaries) or more than 10,000 employees in France and abroad to establish and implement a corporate duty of diligence plan for their sourcing and subcontracting. The plan should seek to identify and prevent risks in terms of human rights and fundamental liberties, serious personal injuries or environmental damage, and health risks, etc. These risks may stem from the company's activities or those of their subsidiaries, subcontractors, or suppliers on which they have significant influence. Victims, associations, and labor unions can file a legal complaint, and the court can order and oblige a company to publish and effectively implement a corporate duty of diligence plan.⁷ This positive development is supported by NGOs, but its effectiveness is still limited due to the narrow field of application (only 150 companies are concerned by this obligation according to the French Ministry of Economy and Finance).

5. Out of the 61 impact analyses conducted in 2016, 17 dealt with policies that can have an impact on development countries. However, only 4 of them were subject to a satisfactory analysis, according to Concord

6. To go further on the impact analysis tools at the EU level in the light of concrete cases: Concord, *The Impact of EU Policies in the World*, 2017

7. ActionAid France, *Devoir de vigilance : le Conseil constitutionnel valide l'essentiel de la loi - Un pas historique pour la protection des droits humains et de l'environnement, un signal fort pour l'Europe et l'international*, 24 March 2017

Proposals by Coordination SUD to the French government

In terms of governance:

- Set up a specific office within the French administration to ensure development policy coherence, like the unit at the European Commission, hosted by DG Devco. This office should work closely with civil society.
- Create a Rapporteur for Development Policy Coherence position in the National Assembly and in the Senate, which would deliver opinions, with the participation of civil society, on all the legislative bills with impacts on development countries.
- Promote the Loi sur le devoir de vigilance at the EU level and within international and multilateral bodies, in accordance with the recent commitments by the Minister of Europe and Foreign Affairs, and support, in consistency with the commitments made in this law, the efforts to have the United Nations adopt a binding treaty on the actions of companies and human rights.

In terms of tools:

- Have independent impact analyses carried out, with the participation of civil society in France and in the countries concerned. These analyses will evaluate the impacts of French policies and French proposals related to European policies on sustainable development and human rights in the countries of the South. These analyses should be carried out before the adoption of these policies and during their implementation.
- To carry this out, the French diplomatic authorities and the overseas offices of Agence Française de Développement

should be made aware of and involved in this issue. This will make development policy coherence more operational, especially during the conducting of analyses on the impacts of policies and projects on people and sustainable development.

- Participation by the profit-making private sector in development programs financed by France should be made conditional upon: 1) the setting up of corporate duty of diligence plans in compliance with French law, 2) compliance with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises,⁸ and 3) compliance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, which France has incorporated in a national action plan to be implemented.⁹



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8. OCDE, *Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises*, 2011

9. French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development, *Plan national d'action pour la mise en œuvre des principes directeurs des Nations unies relatifs aux droits de l'Homme et aux entreprises*, 2017

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The C2A is in charge of the representation of Coordination SUD to institutions dealing with agriculture and food, such as the Interministerial Group on Food Security (GISA) and the Civil Society Mechanism (CSM) for the Committee on World Food Security (CFS).

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