

EU – A stronger global actor: new contexts for EU-Korean relations

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Abstract

European Union (EU) is currently confronting a series of challenges to its internal dynamics as well as its position on the international arena. However, EU continues to rely on its normative power in order to influence international order and build on its image as a strong global order. Our research therefore aims to contribute to the debate on the concept of Normative Power Europe, by analysing EU-Korea relations. In this manner, the framework emphasizes EU's role as a global actor, in three main areas of interest for both strategic partners: economy and trade, development cooperation, peace and security. As such, the main findings revolve around maintaining a sound cooperation in the three areas analysed – and reflect, on one side, a strengthening of the “global actor” main trait of the EU, and on the other side, a consolidation of Korea's position in world politics.

Keywords: development aid, European Union, Korea, normative power, peace talks

Introduction

Europe faces now testing times: the rise of nationalist parties with increased share of votes in EU member states 'elections, an inflow of refugees in need of international protection, UK's negotiations to leave the EU, a U.S. President which only recently showed slight commitment to Europe, deteriorating relations with Russia, and what was, until very recently, a precarious security situation in the Korean Peninsula, due to North Korea's nuclear weapons program. Therefore, faced with both internal and external pressures, the European Union is searching for an institutional solution – member states are debating on whether flexible cooperation is the answer, while others fear that cooperation may result in dominance of powerful countries inside the EU framework.

All of the internal disagreements and domestic pressure had negative consequences for the EU as a global actor, yet it did not affect that much its foreign policy (Grigonis, 2016). When faced with challenging environment, the EU can act relatively fast if it manages to foster a common will among

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its member states and EU institutions (Vimont, 2015). It might seem that joint action in answering to global challenges is still one of EU's key strength and it can therefore be argued that the quest for political global order demands for a stronger, united EU – as only together, the EU member states might have a chance to make a difference and contribute to global order. In this sense, it can be seen that, in what regards EU's relationship with other regions, the EU mainly prefers regional entities and interregional agreements (Hettne and Soderbaum, 2005). Taking the case of the EU-Asia relations, the EU has established interregional relations and, despite the geographical distance, cooperation with Asia - in particular with ASEAN - has been done under the promotion of integration, peace and reconciliation of inter-Asian conflicts. The EU's approach in foreign policy has therefore embraced a vision of promoting regional integration, which is seen as “natural” (EEAS, 2013). However, this is not the only essential element on the EU foreign policy agenda.

Due to the relations between regional actors and crucial involvement of the United States as an extra-regional hegemon, the (Northeast) Asian security dynamics greatly influence the global order. Moreover, Northeast Asia accounts for more than half of the global economy. Having this in mind, the European Union took up the role of a player in Asian regional affairs as it is seen by the fact that the EU is currently one of the largest trading partners for key regional actors as China, Japan and Korea. To give an example, according to the latest data published by the European Commission, in 2017, EU is China's biggest trade partner, while China is EU's second biggest trading partner, with both Japan and Republic of Korea among top 10 trading partners for EU, as the sixth and eighth trading partners (EU Commission, 2018). Both the EU and the Republic of Korea (hereinafter Korea, however South Korea in the case of discussing both North and South states of the Korean Peninsula) have concluded not only an economic agreement (2011), but also focused their collaboration on political and security dimensions, through the 2010 Framework Agreement and Korea's participation in the Common Defence and Security Policy (CDSP) missions.

The aim of our paper is to explore the potentials for encouraging cooperation between the EU and Korea on inter-connected policy matters. Considering both partners, namely Korea and the EU, a theoretical analysis of the cooperation process is likely to draw feasible directions towards the future of the strategic partnership between the two international actors. Our contribution will mainly focus on the EU's role as a global actor, in relation to Korea, in three main areas: economy and trade, development cooperation, and security, in order to see how well the EU-Korea relation fits within the image the EU as a global actor.

Our main research question inquires on EU's status on the international area: What can the EU do in order to consolidate its position as global player? Consequently, the main assumption highlights the cooperation between EU and Korea: in order for EU to consolidate its position as a global player

on the international arena, as a normative power, it needs to deepen cooperation with Korea on a wide range of issues regulated under the Framework Agreement. Following our main inquiry, other secondary questions arise: What are the main areas of cooperation between Korea and the EU? What can the two partners learn from each other in the field of development assistance? What role can the EU play in the recent developments in the Korean Peninsula? Can the EU use its normative power as a tool for deepening cooperation with Korea and influence regional stability and security?

As our research, that is the relationship between EU and Korea, focuses on both traditional and non-traditional dimensions and on the diffusion of norms and ideas within the international system, the paper will mainly use constructivist explanations. Moreover, the concept of normative power will be the starting point of our analysis. In this regard, we will use Manners' tripartite analysis framework (Manners, 2008) in order to make an assessment of EU's principles, actions and the impact of these principles and actions upon Korean Peninsula.

In order to answer to the questions and to attest (or contest) the rationale of our main assumption, the paper analyses various speeches, policy papers and official documents. Altogether, for data collection, open and written sources will be employed for relevant analysis.

1. Literature Review

Researchers have been analysing the foreign agenda of the European Union and explain the actions undertaken by the European leaders through various theoretical lenses and by applying different concepts. Accordingly, taking into account the overall power projection, the European Union/European Community is labelled as "civilian power" due to the pre-eminence of the economic, political, diplomatic and cultural means over the military instruments (Duchêne, 1973, p.19), as a "strategic power" due to the focus on the external environment and dismissal of ethical concerns over issues of security (Hyde-Price, 2006, p. 220) and as a "transformative power" due to the positive impact of the EU policies on the internal policies of the candidate countries (Grabbe, 2006, p. 200). Nonetheless, another important contribution to the theorization of EU's international role and identity is Ian Manners' article, who characterizes the EU as "normative power" due to its ability to prescribe norms, to spread its values and ideas, to define appropriate behaviour and ultimately to set world politics agenda (Manners, 2002, p. 235). In other words, Manners' analysis moves beyond the traditionalist approach to security, which prioritizes military dimension of security, and questions European Union's role in a specific issue.

Taking into account that our research analyses European Union as a global power, with specific reference to its relations with Korea and its involvement in the peace process in the Korean Peninsula,

this section will elaborate on the concept of normative power. Furthermore, as EU's normative power (NPE) is based on the diffusion of norms and not solely on material explanations, a social constructivist analysis is mostly indicated.

As Wendt (1999, p. 170) himself puts it, constructivist approach focuses on the influence of ideas on crafting political agenda, as identities assist in the shaping of objective and subjective interests of actors. As such, unlike in the case of realist and liberal theories, where the focus is on states as dominant units within the international arena or on the state-society relationship (Legro and Moravcsik 1999, p. 10), constructivist theoreticians emphasize both normative and the material structures (Reus-Smit, 2005, p. 188). Therefore, in a social constructivist analysis, the identity of a state is constructed not only through its material capabilities and national interests, but it is mainly influenced by the norms of the international society (Reus-Smit, 2005, p. 196). In this manner, the foreign policy of a state does not reflect only the national interest, but it is a matter of adequate behaviour in the international society.

Moreover, in a constructivist understanding, security is not envisaged as being an objective or subjective reality and it is not simply defined as “pursuit of freedom from threat” (Buzan, 1989, p. 25). Given that no objective form of measuring security has been provided by any security theory and that reality rarely presents us with the opportunity of witnessing unambiguous threatening developments, the constructivist approach thusly calls attention to the inter-subjective nature of security. The constructivist scholars showcase the lack of utility of a universalist definition of the term (Buzan *et al.*, 1998, p. 31) and they argue, in a post-modern vein, that danger is not an objective condition but the effect of an interpretation (Campbell, 2002, p. 500) of a specific context. States make different assessments on potential threats and this entails different responses (Buzan *et al.*, 1998, p. 29). These dispositions influence and shape their interactions in the international system which, in turn, contributes to the construction of different security constellations. In addition, security is not solely understood in a traditional manner, with a focus on the military dimension, but also through other non-traditional sectors: political, economic, societal and environmental (Buzan, 1983). In Buzan's interpretation, military threats retain primacy, yet the other dimensions, with their strong interconnectivity, can contribute to the vulnerability of a state (Buzan, 2007, p. 107).

Moving forward to the concept of normative power and how a state or, in our case an international organization can exert it, Manners equates it with ideological power or “power over opinion”. Adopting a constructivist line of thought, the concept does not refer to the EU's economic prowess or to its developing military capacities, but it rather takes into account its ability to diffuse European values and discourses and the overall impact of these legal and political standards on the international environment. According to Skolimowska, these ideas are correlated by Manners with

standard liberal ideas of peace, democracy, rule of law, uphold of human rights, sustainable development and good governance (Skolimowska, 2015, p. 117). In other words, rather relying on material explanations (military power, economic policies and legal measures) Manners advances a theoretical model according to which European Union influences the international environment with this set of ideational instruments.

Furthermore, in what regards the process of diffusion from the European Union towards a third party, whether the entity is a state or an international organization, Manners comes with six explanatory models (Manners, 2002, p. 244-245):

- Contagion, based on the unintentional diffusion of ideas from the EU to other political actors (the example given in this case is MERCOSUR);
- Informational, which involves the official policies, strategic communications by the EU leaders and initiatives coming from EU's main decision making bodies;
- Procedural - a process which involves an institutionalized relationship (here the author gives the example of inter-regional agreements and the enlargement of EU);
- Transference: when diffusion of norms is related to financial exchanges, aid or technical assistance;
- Overt diffusion- refers to the physical presence of the EU in third states and international organizations (delegations, diplomatic representatives);
- Cultural filter which affects the impact of international values in third states and organizations (processes of learning, adaptation or rejection of norms).

In addition, Manners transforms the concept of NPE to an empirical framework of analysis by providing a method for assessing the European Union's principles, actions and impact (Manners, 2008, pp. 55-58). As such, the focus is not solely on the process of diffusion. The tripartite framework starts with an examination of EU's constitutive values, continues with EU undertakings regarding the promotion of these principles and ends with an impact analysis of EU actions (Manners, 2008, pp. 55-58). In other words, an evaluation of power projection in the case of EU consists of three pillars. First of all, it relies on a clear delimitation of its governing principles and norms, which are peace, democracy, the rule of law, human rights, sustainable development and good governance. The second pillar makes an assessment of EU's policies in relation to the diffusion of these values. Lastly, the analysis takes into account the outcome of these policies, in relation to the third party.

The framework not only makes way for research into EU internal policies and their normative influence on third parties, but also opens up investigations on the concept of NPE in other areas which are still understudied, such as development and denuclearization policies. For the paper's rationale, we will use the framework of analysis provided by Manners in analysing first the EU's power of

norms in not only shaping its development cooperation policy in order to be consistent with the values and norms it has, but also in order to see the effectiveness of the policy and how can working together with Korea in this field can be helpful and beneficial to the goals of development and reduction of global poverty. Secondly, the framework also allows seeing the implications of the EU's role in promoting peace and security in the Korean Peninsula, following the recent evolution of the relations between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

2. Main areas of cooperation between the EU and Korea

The diplomatic relations between the EU and Korea date back to 1963. In July 1963, diplomatic relations between the EU (at the time, the EEC: European Economic Community) and Korea were first established. As the new framework agreement was signed, while the 'Strategic Partnership' was declared in the fifth bilateral summit in Brussels in 2010, a wide spectrum of policy fields including trade, environment, climate change, combating terrorism, human rights, non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, transports, science and technology, education, agriculture, development assistance, culture, etc. was expected to be covered (European Union, 2010). In the next year, the EU-Korea FTA was provisionally applied, which elevates the cooperative ties between the two sides.

For the European Union, Korea is its fourth trading partner, outside the European continent. Moreover, with a trade surplus for EU for various goods and services (from auto parts to pharmaceuticals products) and with Korea being an important market for EU agricultural goods, the Asian state represents a credible trade partner for the Union. In terms of politics, the relationship between the two partners is also dynamic, Korea being a key ally for several important issues: security (tackling the security conundrum in the Korean Peninsula), economic issues (trade, economic cooperation) and cooperation in international policies (development cooperation) (Marx et.al., 2014, p. 232).

Therefore, in terms of economic power, development cooperation experience and mostly strategic position, Korea is one of EU's best political and trade partners in Asia. For these reasons, each of the areas of cooperation mentioned in the introduction, namely economy and trade, development cooperation, peace and security will be subsequently developed in the following sections of our paper.

Table 1. The history of cooperation between EU and Korea

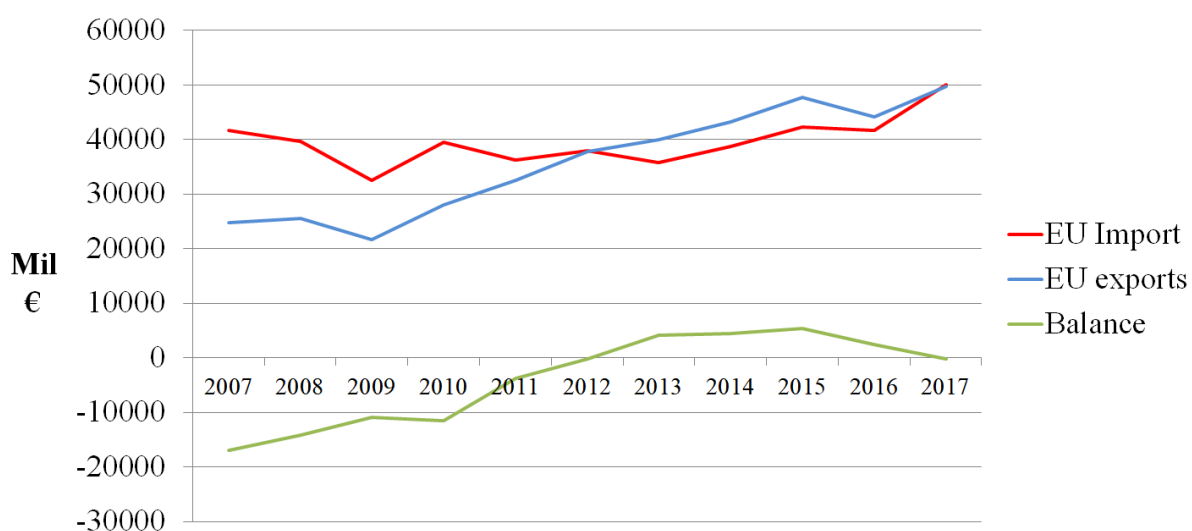
| Date | Event |
|----------|---|
| 07. 1963 | Diplomatic relations between the EU (then the EEC: European Economic Community) and Korea were established. |
| 10. 1996 | 1996 Framework has been settled which is to provide a legal and sound framework to further the cooperation from both sides in global issues including politics, economy, education, culture, society and administration |
| 2007 | EU and Korea started negotiations a bilateral FTA |
| 05. 2010 | The new framework agreement was signed. |
| 10. 2010 | The fifth bilateral summit held in Brussels. ‘Strategic partnership’ was declared. |
| 07. 2011 | The EU-Korea FTA was provisionally applied. |
| 06. 2014 | The new framework agreement entered into force |
| 12. 2015 | The EU-Korea FTA formally entered into force. |

Source: Marx *et al.*, 2014

2.1. Expectations and perceptions of the impact of the EU-Korea Free Trade Agreement

After the application of the EU-Korea FTA in July 2011, both sides had a high expectation in achieving a goal which brings significant benefits to the economies. The EU-Korea FTA, the EU's first trade deal with a country from Asia, was the most ambitious trade agreement implemented by the EU so far, which shows the high expectation from the EU side. (European Commission, 2017) Korea could also expect positive outcome from the FTA. Korea was the only country that has signed FTA with European Union, which means it has preoccupied the EU market than other Asian countries such as Japan, China or ASEAN.

As EU's first trade deal with a country from Asia, the EU-Korea FTA was implemented on 1 July 2011, after increasing awareness of the significance of East Asia in its economic point of view. The fact that Korea, the only member of OECD from Asia with Japan, was one of the most advanced economies in Asia based on the dynamic economic growth met the standards when being chosen as a proper FTA partner of EU. Moreover, a high degree of commitment combined with a higher level of development can be considered one of its strengths. As the most ambitious FTA ever implemented by the EU so far, a substantial outcome was expected by this FTA and according to the annual reports from European Commission, it is considered that both parties has gained satisfying economic results for the first 6 years of application, from the perspective of EU.

Figure 1. EU Trade Flows and Balance - Annual Data 2007-2017

Source: Eurostat–Statistical regime 4, 2018

EU exports to Korea has increased by 59.2 %, from 28 billion EUR in 2010 to 44.5 billion EUR in 2016, while EU imports from Korea have increased from 39.5 billion EUR in 2010 to 41.1 billion EUR in 2016, which indicates that the EU's 11.6 billion EUR trade deficit with Korea in 2010 has turned into a trade surplus of 3.1 billion EUR in 2016 (European Commission, 2017).

When comparing the EU export and the EU import in Graph 1, the EU export has almost doubled for the last ten years since 2007 while the EU import has remained the same until 2016. The two lines (export and import) intersect in the year 2012, the following year when the FTA was implemented as demonstrated in graph 1, which proves that the results have met EU's high expectations. Under the influence of a prolonged financial crisis in Europe, the economic recession in EU has continued over a long period of years. The recession has weakened the consumer confidence and it led to the decrease in import, which influenced upon the export and trade deficit of Korea towards EU.

Remarkable figure is found in bilateral trade of motor vehicles and car parts. From 2010 to 2016, the EU exports of motor vehicles have increased by 244%, as derived from the high preference by Korea on German motor vehicles. The EU has sold 64,200 units with 1.68 billion EUR in 2010 and, in 2016, has sold 176,900 units with 5.79 billion EUR, which accounts for 13% of total exports to Korea (European Commission, 2017, p. 5).

After a period of 7 years, consequentially, the EU gained more satisfying results than Korea. As satisfied with the previous case with Korea, the EU has finalized negotiations for trade agreement with Japan on 8 December 2017. After the finalization of EPA (Economic Partnership Agreement),

it is expected that Korean companies including auto companies would confront the severe competition with Japanese companies towards Europe. Not only EU exports, but also EU imports from Korea have increased from 2.48 billion EUR to 4.79 billion EUR from 2010 to 2016, which is by 53%. It accounts for 12% of total imports from Korea (European Commission, 2017, p. 5). Korean companies began to prepare a countermeasure but it seems hard for Korea to avoid the severe damage derived from EPA between EU and Japan.

The FTA is a bilateral agreement. As the trade barrier in Korea is lowered, the one in EU is also lowered to that extent. When negotiating the agreement with the new nations, making provisions for the upcoming situations from existing is recommended. In order to be a leading global leader, EU needs to seek solutions to reach a mutually acceptable outcome for both sides.

3. The EU and Korea – a future partnership for development cooperation

Development cooperation incorporates many forms and meanings. From controlling diseases and providing humanitarian relief and eradicate hunger to ensure good governance, education and sound political reforms, the field tackles these issues through allocation of grants, loans, or technical assistance (OECD, 2017). Development cooperation, as a field, is in an on-going change, as we are witnessing today an increased diversification of development models, due to the appearance of new players on the donor arena and because of increased attention given to establishing partnerships for development, particularly for triangular cooperation (Busan Declaration, 2011). In this context, we have the European Union as the world's largest aid donor, with over half of the world's development aid coming from the EU and the member states. According to EU statistics, in 2013, the EU spent more than 50 billion EUR on development aid, money which targeted the entire globe¹. In 2016, according to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the Official Development Assistance (ODA) provided by both the EU member states and the EU went over 70 billion EUR (OECD, 2017). This means that both the European Union and the member states consolidated their leading aid donor position in the world.

As highlighted in the New European Consensus on Development (2017), the objectives of the EU's development policy are poverty reduction and alignment with the 2030 Agenda. Moreover, emphasis is put on the promotion of partnerships for development (EU Commission, 2017, p. 37). The 2012 Agenda for Change outlines policy guidelines that are complementary to the main

¹ Data provided by the European Union website (retrieved from https://europa.eu/european-union/topics/development-cooperation_en).

objectives of the Consensus, calling for stricter aid conditionality, focus on the poorest countries and engaging the private sector; it also emphasises as norms the respect for human rights, democracy, rule of law, and good governance, together with the principles it encompasses.

On the other side of the coin, we have Korea, a relatively new donor, which entered into the OECD - Development Assistance Committee (DAC) in 2010, a country which remarked itself as a successful example of unrelenting economic development, reaching in a few decades the status of donor country. For Korea, it is not only the status of donor and the DAC membership which grabs the attention of researchers and academia – Korea becomes attractive to states and international institutions in order to develop partnerships in the field of development cooperation. With an ambition to reshape its ODA system in order to comply with DAC standards and an experience in transition from recipient to donor state, as well as openness in entering South-South or triangular cooperation (ECOSOC, 2008, p. 13), Korea can be seen as aligning with the EU development cooperation agenda as well.

However, there are criticisms raised in the specialised literature on Korea's development assistance policy – mostly focusing on the prevalence of national strategic economic interests in giving aid (Chun *et al.*, 2010), on the lack of transparency, as it has yet to fulfil its commitments to the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI), on the weakening of the Korean policy coherence in response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and on the lack of interest in capitalising civil society's technical expertise, thus losing the normative framework of the ODA policy (OECD Peer Review, 2018). Moreover, Korea's focus is mainly on aid allocated to Asia, which has been criticised because it is seen as an alignment with Korea's interests (allocating aid because of economic gains, not because of targeting the poorest countries in the region) (Marx and Soares, 2013, p. 253).

Yet, following the lines of the same OECD Peer Review, Korea is seen as one of the “engines behind the global development agenda”, having an essential role among all middle powers. Its trump card lies in development effectiveness and, as OECD mentions, Korea is capable of gaining the main role on the international arena as a channel between rich and poor countries and getting involved in international consultations in the ODA field (OECD Peer Review, 2018, p. 16).

In this section, starting from the supposition offered by Birchfield – that the EU's approach to development cooperation is an endorsement of the conceptualization of the NEP – an analysis of the way both the EU and Korea cooperate will be made – having as main idea the fact that the EU can further realize its normative potential through direct cooperation with Korea, by building on the experience which Korea gained in the field of development cooperation while working with the EU member states.

3.1. Conceptualization of NEP – Development Cooperation

For the European Union, Asia also represents an interest, as the region still has almost two thirds of the world's poor. Yet Asia is a region of discrepancies, as it is also home to many emerging economies. In this sense, the EU is not only an aid donor in the region, but also a strategic partner, working together with emerging economies and also embarking on regional cooperation in order to achieve progress.

If we are to compare the EU aid with other donors, such as the United States, we can see the EU's commitment for respecting international recommendations on improving aid flow and achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and, currently, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Over the last decade, the EU has been instrumental as an international donor in advancing a great number of critical global issues in the field of development. OECD-DAC last peer review on the EU considered it as "a formidable player in global development", underlining the fact that the EU institutions are critical in order to create a harmonious and coherent development policy (OECD-DAC Peer Review, 2012, p. 28).

There is a plethora of writings on the EU's development policy, yet there are not that many specifically on the connection between NEP and this particular external policy of the EU. Based on the same tripartite method of Manners, explained in the theoretical part of our paper, Birchfield demonstrated that the EU's development policy is an empirical proof of the normative power of Europe (Birchfield, 2011, pp. 141-161). The author stresses out that the EU's approach to development cooperation is a testimonial to the conceptualization of the NEP – and in this sense, it is not about the bilateral aid given by EU member states, aid which is criticised oftentimes as reflecting the national interests of the donor, but it reflects the EU's collective efforts in the field of international development.

The conclusion of Birchfield, as seen summarised by us in the table below, is that the European model for ODA is, overall, in accordance with the notion of the European Union as a normative power – with some exceptions, such as aid efficiency and trade assistance measures that the EU follows in regards to recipient states.

Table 2. Empirical validation of NPE through development policy (DP)

| Tripartite method ² | Meaning | Analysis | Evidence in development policy |
|--------------------------------|---|--|---|
| Principles | EU constitutive principles ³ becoming objectives in world politics | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Key principles of EU, equality and solidarity, are enshrined in the EU's founding treaties. - EU external development aid and trade are core external policies of the EU. - Objective of EU DP (Lisbon Treaty, 2007): <i>"Foster sustainable economic, social and environmental development of developing countries, with the aim of eradicating poverty."</i> |
| Actions | EU promotion of constitutive principles as actions and policies in world politics | Discourse and Development policies in the EU | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EU projects norms and values externally by emphasizing the benevolent nature of its foreign policy and by linking DP to promotion of fundamental freedoms, consolidation of democracy, strengthening respect for human rights and rule of law. |
| Impact | The impact and outcome of the actions taken by the EU | Empirical evidence | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Doha Development Round (<i>EU's normative principle of sustainable peace</i>) - Commitment to UN MDGs and Development Index |

Source: Birchfield, 2011

3.2. Engagement on development cooperation between the EU and Korea

Engagement on development between Korea and the European Union has not evolved as much since the establishment of the commitments under the Strategic Partnership Framework Agreement – to be specific, concrete collaboration has been done at the level of EU policy via dialogue and meetings, as well as at the level of joint bilateral cooperation with the EU member states. As of now, there has been no concrete collaboration between EU institutions and Korea in the field of development cooperation.

As Sung-Hoon Park assumes, the interest in getting involved into such cooperation is not that high, not only because of the EU's priorities, but also because of Korea's focus on the internal reform inside the ODA policy and due to the EU being seen not as important as it is in reality by the Korean policy makers (Park, 2014, p. 4).

It is however true that Korea started to collaborate with other donors –EU member states – and Park mentions here Germany, France or Spain, collaboration which developed on many areas. In his

² As presented by Ian MANNERS, (2008) 'The Normative Ethics of the European Union', *International Affairs*, 84 (1), 45–60;

³ Values and principles of the EU, as seen through the Lisbon Treaty (Reform Treaty), 2007: democracy, the rule of law, universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, equality, solidarity, respect UN principles and international law;

paper, Park mentions Germany as being the oldest partner for Korea in development cooperation, the two countries managing to collaborate even in triangular cooperation (Park, 2014, pp. 4-5). In this sense, triangular cooperation is also preferred by other donors, when talking about cooperation with Korea. Having in mind that Korea is a DAC member and started to reshape its ODA policy in order to fit the DAC perspective, Korea became a stable partner for cooperation in the field of development – the country represents a window for European countries to increase their impact in the Asian region through the deepening of pre-existing partnership with an Asian regional actor.

Following the natural way of how Korea started working with bilateral European partners, it can be seen how it managed to reach a developed partnership level through developing capacity-building projects and joint cooperation activities with other EU member states. Following this rationale, Park also emphasises that Korea is a reliable partner due to the fact that Korea has expertise, experience and can work very well with others – yet, it can also learn at the same time from the European counterparts many valuable lessons in areas where Korea is not strong as donor.

4. EU's role as a normative power in the Korean Peninsula

As showed by the official documents, the EU's essential interests are not exclusively shaped by objectives established by member states, foreign policies of actors from its immediate proximity or security actions undertook by a traditional ally (U.S.); they are also influenced by East Asian security developments (Council of the European Union, 2012). By all means, as it was underlined in the previous sections, when it comes to the EU's relations with East Asian states, the economic ties are prioritized. Yet, the EU's global agenda involves more than just economic exchanges. In the case of Asian states, the most recent common foreign policy directive emphasizes direct connection between European prosperity and Asian security (Council of the European Union, 2016, p. 37). In light of this argument, peace and stability in East Asia are prerequisites for European prosperity, as policymakers encourage economic exchanges and an upgraded security role for the EU. Therefore, security developments in the Korean Peninsula, especially recent evolution of the North Korean dossier, become even more important for the EU's agenda in the area. Using the tripartite framework (guiding principles, policies and impact of these actions) this section delves into European Union's agenda in what concerns the North Korean security quest.

In general, when discussing the EU's policy directives towards North Korea, member states promote a policy of critical engagement. In other words, this course of action adopts “carrot and stick” formula, by combining on the one hand political dialogue and humanitarian assistance programmes and, on the other hand, diplomatic pressure and targeted sanctions (Ferenczy, 2017). On this subject,

in accordance with its democratic norms and values, EU continues to show its support for a non-proliferation regime, an upholding of international law and an attenuation of tensions on the Peninsula. Nonetheless, when it comes to Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), a particular attention is given to human rights issues.

Acting in accordance with the UN resolutions, especially those presented by the UN Human Rights Council, EU institutions have been constantly condemning human rights violations by the North Korean regime. The latest annual report, presented by the Foreign Affairs Council, mentions severe and systematic violation of human rights and decries the lack of an accountability mechanism for these abuses (FAC, 2017, p. 205).

Even so, moving to the second pillar of our analysis, when it comes to European policies per se, EU institutions have been closely collaborated with other actors in order to preserve the issue on the international agenda (Ferenczy, 2017, p. 4). One such example is the UN Human Right Council resolution A/HRC/31/L.25 from 2016, which was initiated by EU and Japan and underlined the deficiencies within the North Korean state. European Parliament also raises awareness in regards to North Korea's situation: hearings and debates are organized inside the international affairs committee (AFET) and human rights subcommittee (DROI), while a delegation established in 2004 organizes inter-parliamentary meetings, mostly with South Korean representatives, and discusses on a regular basis the situation from the Peninsula.

Strictly referring to the diplomatic tools, the EU does not have a permanent delegation in North Korea, as member states assure local representation on a rotating basis. Therefore, since the EU does not have direct representatives in DPRK and it utilizes the diplomatic channels of its member states, we cannot talk about overt diffusion.

Taking all these into account and assessing the diffusion of European norms towards North Korean state, the only model applicable from Manners' framework is the transference mechanism. This is validated by the fact that the critical engagement policy combines political dialogue and economic incentives-mainly humanitarian assistance- with sanctions. The latter came as a response to the nuclear tests and DPRK's nuclear developments and reinforced UN sanctions regime. One such action was taken last year in October, when the Foreign Affairs Council adopted a series of EU autonomous measures: total ban on EU investments and total ban on export of refined petroleum products towards North Korea (Council of the European Union, 2017). Recently, the Council updated its list of sanctions with more individuals on a black list involving illegal financial support for DPRK nuclear programme (Council of the European Union, 2018).

Lastly, in what concerns the third variable from Manners' framework, the outcome of EU policies, we cannot correlate it with strong impact upon North Korean political landscape. In spite of

international commitments pushing for denuclearization and European efforts to engage with North Korean regime, especially in relation to human rights issues, the development of nuclear programme was resumed two years ago, while the political dialogue with the European leaders reached a relative stalemate in 2015.

It is well known that the EU was not included on the Six-party Talks Framework. Yet, occasional political dialogue used to exist between the two entities. Institutionalized in 1998, meetings were held almost every year. However, the last one was in 2015, just 6 months prior to the resuming of North Korean nuclear tests in January 2016. Back then, in accordance with its critical engagement policy, an EU delegation visited Pyongyang and had discussions with North Korean authorities on issues pertaining to regional security (EEAS, 2015). As such, EU representatives tried to persuade North Korean leadership on subjects that were mainly promoting non-proliferation and uphold of human rights.

After a period of nuclear tests and international sanctions, only fairly recent, North Korean leadership has announced its plans of denuclearization and has reopened the diplomatic channels. However, negotiations are still conducted on a regional basis rather than international framework as Kim Jong-un reopened the discussions mainly with South Korea, China and U.S. In spite of the positive message coming from EU High Representative, immediately after the Inter-Korean Summit from April 27, the role of the EU is rather limited when we discuss about direct political dialogue between the EU and DPRK, especially since sanctions against North Korea are still in force. Practically, through Mogherini's statement of support for full denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula (EEAS, 2018), the EU is only reinforcing its previous position of critical engagement towards Asian security.

Conclusions

As discussed throughout our paper, there is enough untapped potential in the EU-Korea cooperation, and the existing research on this issue – scarce yet all-encompassing – indicate that there are some areas of interest where both strategic partners can invest. The ambitions of the European Union and of Korea seem to align in trade and economy, development cooperation and security and peace promotion and cooperation between the two in these main fields analysed in our paper can only lead to achievements on both sides of their main objectives: in the case of the European Union, to strengthen the “global actor” main trait, and for Korea, to consolidate its position in world politics as a DAC member, as a booming economy and a reliable, peace-promoting state on the international arena.

Therefore, there are some feasible directions towards the future of the strategic partnership between the two international actors. Firstly, in order for the EU to consolidate its position as a global player on the international arena, as a normative power, it needs to deepen cooperation with Korea on a wide range of issues regulated under the Framework Agreement. The FTA with Korea was the first of its kind, a deal under the ‘Global Europe’ initiative. By looking beyond the effects measured in trade and investments, the FTA contributed to the maturing of the Korean economy and the purchasing power of the Korean society. The areas of cooperation mentioned in the contents of both the Trade Agreement and Framework Agreement open up on-going cooperation lines between the two and also become benchmarks for future successful deals with other countries or institutions.

Secondly, as both partners have strong shared commitments to pursue a global development assistance agenda, cooperation in this area needs to evolve from partnerships with the EU member states to concrete collaboration with the EU institutions. As seen above in our paper, by analysing both the ODA policies of Korea and the EU, we can see that both have to large degree similarities in what regards their development assistance objectives. In this regard, there is significant untapped potential for collaboration between the EU (institutions) and Korea. Both the 2010 Framework Agreement and the 2012 Summit Declaration represent the start for such collaboration, but the entire cooperation should be done in a framework which also takes into account the bilateral economic relations regulated through the 2011 Korea-EU FTA, discussed in the earlier section of our paper.

Under the umbrella of these strategic documents, both partners held policy consultations on development cooperation – with the 5th ROK-EU policy consultation on development cooperation taking place in 2017. Korea has a unique status for the EU and this particularity provides a thorough foundation for deepening the already-existing relations, including international development cooperation. However, cooperation in this field is not only reflected through consultations and official documents – commitment is seen in the activities done together, and in this sense, the EU can open triangular cooperation having as partner Korea. This can be build based on existing experience of such cooperation between Korea and the EU member states. Moreover, both can cooperate by learning from each other – providing regional expertise and sharing knowledge. Another alternative is offered by the global agenda for development which encompasses many issues that can be tackled by the two strategic partners through join projects.

Following the assumption presented by Birchfield – that the EU’s approach to development cooperation is a testimonial to the conceptualization of the NEP – , the EU can further realize its normative potential through direct cooperation with Korea, by building on the experience which Korea gained in the field of development cooperation while working with the EU member states. In this sense, by translating policies into actions, the EU can gain a critical weight to respond to global

challenges by setting up joint objectives and giving encompassing solution to global challenges to development cooperation. The role of coordinating actions of different donors strengthens EU's position as a global player.

Lastly, given the importance and the recent evolution of the North Korean dossier, the EU should encourage multilateral dialogue and participate in high-level discussions regarding the peace process in the Korean Peninsula, while pushing for DPRK to sign and comply with all major non-proliferation treaties. The focus is still on the diffusion of norms (non-proliferation regime and human rights), yet in the absence of signed commitment by the North Korean regime, EU continues to maintain economic sanctions against DPRK. In this case, EU should continue this policy of pushing for DPRK to sign and comply with all major non-proliferation and human rights treaties. Yet, in order to further define a truly global agenda, on the one hand, it should work on reopening of direct political dialogue with North Korean leadership and, on the other hand, it should encourage multilateral dialogue and participate in high-level discussions regarding the peace process in the Korean Peninsula.

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