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EU Policies towards the Colombian Conflict:
Policy Coordination and Interregionalism[1]

Philippe De Lombaerde[2]

Geert Haghebaert[3],

Socorro Ramírez[4],

An Vranckx[5]

Introduction

Mainly since the mid-1990s, the international community set its eyes on the Colombian conflict. The growing interest relates to a series of factors, including changes in the international political agenda, a renewed interest of the US in Latin America, the growing interlocking of Colombia´s socio-political conflict with issues like human rights, drugs trade, indigenous populations and ecology, regional spill-over of the conflict, increase of emigration of Colombian citizens, and mediatised cases of victims among the foreign community.

An initiative that brought Europe closer to the situation in Colombia was the proposal formulated by President Virgilio Barco in 1990 for a special plan for economic cooperation in order to tackle the drugs problem and linked criminal activities. During César Gaviria's administration (1990-94), and following a visit of European Commission (EC) representatives to Colombia in 1993, the parties started to define the terms of economic and technical cooperation, support of NGO projects and humanitarian aid. European protests were raised after the murder of leaders of the Unión Patriótica and for the violation of human rights, while from the Colombian side accusations were launched against military training delivered by British and Israeli nationals to paramilitary groups. However, European cooperation in relation to the conflict remained marginal in that period.

The presence of Europe started to take shape during Ernesto Samper's administration (1994-98) when the political situation became more complicated. Sudden requests for international presence were launched which attracted the attention of the international community. It was during the following administration of President Andrés Pastrana (1998-2002) that international intervention really took-off. Measured on the basis of the numbers of high-level visits and official declarations since the mid-1990s, a steadily growing official presence of the EU in Bogotá was observed (Ramírez, 2004a: tables 1, 2, and 4).[6] In this chapter we will focus on the period since 1998.

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[6] "Diplomacia por la paz", El Tiempo, 21/07/1997:12A.

This paper attempts to answer two questions. The first is related to how European policy towards the Colombian conflict is shaped and, more in particular, how well it is internally coordinated. The second question deals with the degree of inter-regionalism in EU policies towards the conflict. Before addressing these two questions, we start with a brief sketch of the nature of the conflict.

The Nature of the Colombian Conflict

The Colombian conflict is difficult to define or categorise (McLean, 2002). Apparently contrary to the general internationalising or globalising trends in many areas of human and social activity, conflicts have become predominantly domestic over the last decades (Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 2001). The Colombian conflict is in this category in the sense that both its causes (actors) and consequences (victims, costs) are predominantly domestic.

The principal illegal armed groups are: the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), the National Liberation Army (ELN), and the United Self-Defense Groups of Colombia (AUC). The current constellation of the conflict emerged in the 1960s when FARC and ELN were founded. FARC was created in 1966 after government forces attacked a leftist rural militia, aligned with the Liberal Party during the *La Violencia* period.[7] ELN was created in 1964 and has been supported by the Cuban government. It is significantly smaller than FARC.[8] Both FARC and ELN adhered to a Marxist ideology. A third important guerrilla movement, the M-19, and a few smaller groups, laid down arms in 1990 and many of its members are currently active politicians.[9] The para-military (self-defense) groups originated at the end of the 1970s, but only in 1997

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[7] In this way, the current conflict is linked to *La Violencia*, starting in the second half of the 1940s and characterized by political violence driven by the opposition between followers of the Liberal and Conservative parties. These parties had been in power since independence in the early XIX century. During a period of "consensual" dictatorship from 1953 till 1957, most of the militias were dismantled. In 1957, both traditional parties agreed on a mechanism to alternate power during four presidential terms (ending in 1974), called the *Frente Nacional*. Estimates of FARC's strength in terms of numbers of combatants fluctuate between 15000 and 20000. FARC formed a political organisation, called *Unión Patriótica*, but this movement was practically exterminated at the end of the 1980s.

[8] ELN once counted 5000 combatants, but is believed to dispose of a much smaller number than that today.

[9] The M-19 was created after the 1970 presidential elections.

a representative organisation, involving most of these groups, was established as the AUC. These groups built their strength on their connexions with drugs trade in the second half of the 1980s (idem FARC, since 1982). Only after that they started to develop a political agenda.

Initially, the Colombian conflict thus belonged to what Rogers (2002) has called the category of "anti-elite insurgencies and rebellions often stemming from the development of radical social movements" as a result of socio-economic divisions. Ethnic, religious or (sub-) nationalist drivers are completely absent in the Colombian case.

The fact that drugs trade plays a crucial role in financing the conflict, that terrorist techniques are used, that the conflict has crossed the borders with neighbouring countries, or that there are linkages between rebel groups and political movements abroad, does not change the qualification as an internal conflict, although the international (regional) dimensions of the conflict are clearing out. It is not impossible, in one of the more pessimistic scenarios, that the internal conflict gradually moves in the direction of a so-called "complex regional conflict" (Buzan, 1991).

In order to qualify as a civil war, the conflict, apart from being internal, should show two additional characteristics: a minimum scale and a sufficient level of socialisation. As far as the scale of the conflict is concerned, it was initially and until the 1980s very limited. According to often used criteria for characterising civil wars as causing a minimum of 1000 conflict-related casualties per year, the Colombian conflict was not a civil war for many years.[10] After the intensification of the conflict at the end of the 1980s the number of casualties started to rise above 1000. Restrepo et al. (2003) estimate an annual average of about 3150 conflict-related casualties in the 1988-2002 period. However, according to the State Failure Task Force (Gurr, 1998), the conflict should still not be characterised as a civil war, but rather as a war of guerrillas of low intensity (causing between 1000 and 10000 political casualties per year).

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[10] See e.g. Singer and Small (1982).

As far as the socialisation of the conflict is concerned, the majority view seems to be that it shows low levels of socialisation. Although it objectively affects the majority of the population in some way or another, the illegal armed groups have not succeeded in mobilising important sectors of the population and polarising society.[11] It would therefore not be correct to call the Colombian conflict a civil war (Pizarro, 2002).[12] The low levels of socialisation of the conflict are linked to its apparent coexistence with relatively solid (democratic) institutions and a relatively high level of legitimacy of the state. This makes it an a-typical conflict, when put in a global/comparative perspective. If one looks at indicators of State legitimacy like participation rates in national elections, legal opacity, corruption perceptions, or corruption, for example, Colombia scores better than the lowest score available for the EU.[13] The legal environment of freedom of press is comparable to Italy's (Deutsch, 2004). It is also true, however, that Colombia scores significantly below the EU benchmark on the gini coefficient, showing the limited redistributive capacity of the Colombian State.[14]

The long duration of the conflict contributes to its complexity, because elements of auto-sustainability, like action-reaction patterns and the institutionalisation of violence as a way to settle differences, have been generated. The conflict has acquired new characteristics over the last decades. On the one hand, there was a move from a "war of guerrillas" to a "war of positions". On the other hand, the modes of financing of this 'war' has changed and increased in volume, due to increasing involvement with the illegal drugs trade and the rise of the so-called 'kidnap industry'. This corroborates Collin's analysis of civil wars over the 1965-1999 period and his conclusion that financial viability of organisations in conflict, often related to the existence of natural resources, is a major variable for explaining the existence of today's conflicts (Collier, 2000).

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[11] See e.g. Posada (2001).

[12] For a critical perspective, see e.g. Ramírez Tobón (2002).

[13] See: www.electionworld.org; www.opacity-index.com; www.transparency.org. Any selection of indicators is arbitrary. Nevertheless, since the lack of legitimacy is being tested here as an explanatory variable for the existence of the conflict, variables should be selected that are not mere expressions of the conflict itself (like e.g. the number of victims of the conflict). They are (and should be) chosen from independent sources.

[14] See, Human Development Report 2005 [www.hdr.undp.org]

Finally, a survey of foreign intervention aimed at ending internal conflicts (Walter, 1997; Tokatlian, 1999), shows that few conflicts that ended in the second half of the XX century did so at the negotiation table. Those conflicts that did end through negotiations, tended to do so through intervention of a third credible country. This leads us to two considerations. First, it is likely that given the type of conflict, a role could and should be played by external actors in order to bring the conflict closer to its end, even taking its sui generis characteristics into account. Second, given the relatively high degree of legitimacy of the (weak) state in Colombia, it should be carefully analysed what "neutral" intervention by third countries really means. Interventions by third countries that systematically by-pass the state might well be counterproductive because they contribute to further weakening the state and reducing citizen confidence in public institutions.

Policy Coordination

<u>Coordination among whom?</u>

When looking at the policy coordination issue in this particular case, a complex map of actors comes to the fore and, therefore, the difficulty of coordinating EU policy with the current institutional architecture. Even when only focussing on the European side, the picture is quite complex. A fluid panorama of actors appears, where next to the official actors at the regional and national levels, a series of actors appear on the (blurred) borderline between state and non-state actors and where certain proximities between European and Colombian actors (clustered around 'Brussels', on the one hand, and around 'Bogotá', on the other) are not without relevance. EU support is also part of an ongoing and more encompassing international community endeavour to help resolve the conflict in Colombia. This endeavour is steered at donor conferences, such as those organised in Madrid, Bogotá and Brussels in 2000 and 2001, and London in 2003, or is channelled through international organizations such as the UN and the OAS. This implies that Europe is in reality a heterogeneous actor, operating through

different modalities and on different levels. The coordination issue cannot be reduced to a simple coordination game between 'Europe' and its member states.

The European actors clustered around Brussels include, first, the institutional actors at the supranational level: Council, EC, European Parliament (EP) and its political fractions. Their policies cover not only political but also economic and developmental aspects like humanitarian assistance and longer term programmes for vulnerable populations, and are therefore spread over the three pillars of European policies.[15] A whole range of programmes and projects are in place and the institutional gravitation point (in Brussels) shifts with the type of policies concerned: sometimes the Commission takes the lead, sometimes the European Council, the European Parliament, national governments, etc. political activities of EU actors are difficult to catch in budgetary terms, but as far as aid is concerned, from the mid-1990s onwards, the EC and separate EU member states had already been increasing their budget allocations to multilateral agencies, humanitarian programmes, university cooperation and civil society organisations in Colombia. Colombia stood out as the main zone of operations in South America for the European humanitarian aid agency (ECHO). The EU and its member states combined are the largest humanitarian aid and development cooperation donors to the CAN countries[16], and the Andean region is the only one in the world with which the EU has a special high-level dialogue on drugs (since 1995). In that cooperative framework, precursors agreements were signed between the EU and each Andean country separately, and a process was installed to monitor implementation of these agreements.[17]

National state actors develop their activities from their respective capitals and from Bogotá alongside EU actors. European efforts to cooperate over security and hence the task of 'combating terrorism' remains a matter that largely resides in the hands of national governments. In this respect, different European governments foster different sorts of policies, in accordance with political affinities, traditions, and other

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[15] The different policy regimes are explained in detail by, e.g. Bretherton and Vogler (1999). For a critical and alternative view, based on four modi operandi, see Torrent (2005).
[16] See, http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/andean/intro/index.htm
[17] See, http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/drugs/coc.htm.

singularities. The same holds for development aid at the national level, although efforts to coordinate aid packages have been made and were sometimes successful. Spain, Sweden, Italy, France and The Netherlands appear the more active EU member states in Colombia. Spain assumes a *de facto* leadership role in EU-Latin America policy, for historical, cultural and economic reasons. This is not only the case for Spanish governmental policies towards Latin America, but also within the European institutions where Spanish nationals are particularly active. Colombia and Spain have, moreover, extensive security cooperation agreements. And particular Spanish expertise on ETA has been made available to Colombian enforcement agencies, as well as British expertise that stems from coping with the IRA. However, on the basis of detailed information on project cooperation, there does not seem to be a clear pattern indicating a division of labour according to policy areas, sectors or geographical subregions among EU donors. Some countries (Spain) are slightly more willing to collaborate with government agencies than other countries. Other examples of bilateral initiatives include the signature by France of a separate security cooperation agreement with Colombia in July 2003. Practical enforcement cooperation in combating the flow of drugs, generally seen to be the main source feeding the conflicts in Colombia, is provided for in port control agreements concluded with the Netherlands. Many member states channel their cooperation funds through UN agencies which dilute their influence on policy making but increase their potential impact by pooling resources. Apparently, there is a tendency since the 2000 Madrid meeting to pass on the activities and funding in relation to humanitarian aid to the EU level in a "philosophy of unifying efforts and of complementarity" with important impact in coordination on the field.[18]

European policy-making towards the Colombian conflict is strongly influenced by non-governmental actors, not only as lobbyists in the policy-preparation phase but also as subcontractors in the implementation phase. European civil society actors with an

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[18] Cf. Cooperación Española en Colombia, memoria 2001-2003, pg. 83-84. www.aeci.es This document explains that the EU Presidency of Spain in Colombia was used as a mechanism to propose and start up coordination meetings between EC and member states cooperation responsible (monthly) and between NGOs (bimonthly) including contacts with UN and national authorities as well as a shared web-based project database available on www.acci.gov.co

interest in Colombia range from large international non-governmental organisations (INGOs), over medium-size non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other non-profit outfits that are based in one of the European member states and there gather private and governmental budgets for funding their own activities in Colombia or for funding the activities of Colombian partner organisations, to low-budget organisational constructs which support special interest advocacy work. When looked upon from a party-political perspective, European politicians termed 'progressive' are targeted most consistently, both in national politics and in the EP. In that last institution, advocacy work with a special interest in a certain interpretation of the human rights problematic tends to focus on the socialist group and the smaller group of *Gauche Unitaire Européenne* and Nordic ecologists. Business groups with an interest in Colombia, meanwhile, lobby with right-wing members of the same Parliament. As to the contents of non-commercial civil society activity, European NGOs support socio-economic development activities and humanitarian aid in Colombia. They tend to do so by sending over their own people and transferring money and technology to Colombia. These European 'development' NGOs are also seen to financially support their Colombian partners' endeavours at local civil society capacity-building.

Concern for human rights violations in Colombia is manifest in many European civil society activities. That concern is articulated in advocacy activity performed in Europe by networks and special interest groups, such as the *Oficina de Derechos Humanos – Acción Colombia* (OIDHACO).[19] In the politically inspired approach to Colombia's human rights problem, OIDHACO activity does not differ from that undertaken by Colombia-desks at large international non-governmental human rights organisations; nor is all European advocacy work on Colombia orchestrated by OIDHACO. It is one among more actors on that scene. Some networks are even seen to obstruct the activities organised by other NGOs in Europe, such as the spring 2002 launch of the

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[19] European NGOs contributing funds include: Novib, kolko e.V. – Menschenrechte für Kolumbien, Diakonie Alemania – Departamento de Derechos Humanos, 11.11.11, Fastenopfer, Civis, Federación de Asociaciones de Defensa y Promoción de los derechos Humanos-España, Diözesanrat der Katholiken im Bistum Aachen, Taula catalana per la Pau I els Drets Humans a Colòmbia, Federación Internacional de Derechos Humanos (FIDH), Secours Catholique-Caritas Francia, Terre des hommes – Deutschland e.V., Action pro Colombia Aachen, Oxfam Solidarité, Misereor, Paz y Tercer Mundo, Broederlijk Delen, Comité pour les droits humains en Colombie "Daniel Gillard", Christian Aid.

Pax Christi Holland campaign to advocate a coherent European policy vis-à-vis kidnapping (of Europeans) in Colombia. What appears is thus a conglomerate of radical political activity on the one hand, and on the other hand, several politically neutral arrangements that promote 'constructive' socio-economic cooperation activity and politically disinterested academic work.[20]

However, Colombia-related activity around Brussels is not the province of European organisations and networks only. Representatives of several Colombian organisations - some of which are funded by European NGOs – have become regular visitors on the European human rights scene from the late 1980s onwards. An important move in that direction was made in 1988, when a *Comisión colombiana de Juristas* was set up as a branch of the Geneva-based *Commission Internationale de Juristes*. The *Colectivo de abogados José Alvear Restrepo* is another example of a Colombian lawyers' organisation that gained high visibility at the European human rights scene. As has been the case with the aforementioned organisations, this was achieved largely with the aid of certain European NGOs.[21]

In this diverse landscape, coordinating endeavours exist, although they do not encompass the entire civil society spectrum. A *Coordination des ONGs françaises* groups no more than 10 French NGOs, under the leadership of *Secours Catholique*. A Dutch coordination of Colombia-related activity is organised by the *Bureau Beleidsvorming Ontwikkelingssamenwerking*, an institutionalised advocacy outfit that has an intermediary position between the Dutch NGO community and the governmental (funding) agencies. This last coordination structure encompasses a larger section of the Dutch civil society than does the French Colombia coordination, and in its turn, it is less radical in political orientation than the *Coordination belge pour la Colombie*.[22] This Belgian coordination, in its turn, brings together representatives of several Belgian NGOs, international NGOs' Brussels lobby offices and still other civil society groups. These Brussels-based 'selective coordination

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[20] E.g. the *Red de Académicos europeos por Colombia*.
[21] A Belgian chapter of Oxfam has been funding this *Colectivo de abogados* for more than a decade, as did the Catholic Belgian NGO *Broederljjk Delen*.
[22] See, http://cbc.collectifs.net

meetings' are organised by the very small but active *Comité pour le respect des Droits Humains 'Daniel Gillard'*.

Turning now to the Bogotá cluster, at the beginning of 2005 there were 13 Member States with diplomatic representation in Colombia: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, The Netherlands and the UK, alongside the official EC delegation and the important Norwegian and Swiss representations. This means, among other things, that common and/or coordinated positions on the conflict in Colombia transmitted by the diplomatic delegations, do not necessarily involve all EU member states. As funds for humanitarian assistance are mainly channelled through the ECHO office, many member states' embassy's staff involved in the humanitarian sector often focus instead on cultural and environmental issues and small scale social projects. There is a *de facto* division of labour between the national and communitary delegations in the field. For human rights and terrorism related issues, information sharing and coordination mechanisms have been put in place, although this does not necessarily mean that Europe has become less reactive to events and more proactive. Especially for smaller member states, the possibility to stand behind common declarations has proved to be important. The presence of NGOs in Colombia, meanwhile, increased through projects, declarations and other initiatives, when the conflict escalated as of the mid-90s.[23] Not only in Brussels or Strasbourg, but also in Colombia well-coordinated NGO forums intervene directly with the EU,[24] by following closely European Institutions' events concerning Colombia and publishing widely e.g. conclusions of the UN Commission on Human Rights,[25] or by coordinating interventions with central EC policy makers through lobbying offices in Brussels. However, only few European NGOs operate directly in Colombia. The majority operates with the intermediation of a local partner who receives part of the resources obtained from public and private sources in the respective European NGO's countries of origin. European NGOs

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[23] "Organizaciones europeas respaldan iniciativas de paz", en El Espectador, 20 de septiembre de 1997, p. 13A.
[24] See e.g. OIDHACO, "Recomendaciones sobre Colombia a la Presidencia Holandesa de la Unión Europea – julio a diciembre 2004".
[25] Press release, Colombian Commission of Jurists, 22 April 2004.

operating directly in Colombia come mainly from Spain[26] and Sweden,[27] followed by Italy[28] and France[29]. In the German case, foundations are predominant, some of which engage in academic and dissemination activities on the conflict and the peace process.[30]

Policy coordination in practise

In order to assess the degree and quality of European policy coordination since the Pastrana government, we analysed the development of the conflict and European policies and actions towards it over the 1998-2004 period.[31] This period has been marked by: (i) Pastrana's initiative for a dialogue with FARC and the ('so-called') Caguan peace process; (ii) the launching of Plan Colombia[32]; (iii) the débacle of the Caguan process; (iv) the 2002 presidential elections, won by Alvaro Uribe; (v) the agreement of Santafé de Ralito on a conditional ceasefire between the government and the AUC, signed in 2003; and (vi) the inclusion of Colombian organizations in the list of terrorist organizations by the Council.

As already suggested when mapping actors in the previous section, European policy towards the Colombian conflict appears the result of the functioning of a complex machinery, not operating according to a set of simple coordination rules, but rather as a multi-level governance system with moving decision-making centres and overlapping jurisdictions, although not without the capacity to learn and coordinate.

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[26] E.g. Acción contra el hambre; Caritas Española; Spanish Red Cross; Movimiento por la Paz, el Desarme y la Libertad; International Solidarity; Intermon Spain; Médicos del mundo; Educación sin fronteras; ISCOD Spain; Paz y Tercer Mundo.

[27] SICDA; Diakonia; Caritas Sweden; Civis; Forum Syd; International Industrial Council; Sind.

[28] International Committee for the Development of Peoples; Cooperazione Internazionale; Movimondo MOLISV; MLAL.

[29] France Solidarité; French Red Cross; Médecins du Monde.

[30] Konrad Adenauer Stiftung; Friedrich Ebert Stiftung; Development Cooperation; Hanns Seidel Stiftung; Alexander von Humboldt Institute; Casa Colombo-Alemana. See e.g. Kurtenbach (2005).

[31] For further details we refer also to: Vranckx (2004) and Ramírez (2004a, 2004d).

[32] The so-called Plan Colombia refers to President Pastrana's endeavour to obtain financial support from the international community related to his presidential programme (multi-annual development plan), which was approved by the Colombian Congress in 1998. That programme was budgeted at U.S. $ 7.5 billion, and aspired at getting a peace process going with Colombian guerrilla, while at the same time strengthen the State institutions and curb the drug economy. For a critical perspective, see e.g. Estrada (2001).

A few factors seem to drive policy coordination. The first one is related to the fact that in matters of foreign policy, certain member states tend to take up leadership roles and are driving European opinion and forge a common stance on political issues. As mentioned before, they do this for historical, political or economic reasons. In particular, Spain was already mentioned. However, the coalitions of leading member states seem to vary with time or according to the specific issue of concern. France, Spain and Sweden, for example, pushed for active participation of European diplomatic delegations in the dialogues between government and FARC (1998-1999), emitting a strong political signal to the parties in the conflict.[33] But when the 2002 Donor Conference failed to conclude on formal EU commitments, Swedish and Belgian government officials were heard to be explicit in their opposition to Plan Colombia. Later, Sweden, The Netherlands and Germany took the lead in committing support to the Organisation of American States' mission to accompany the Colombian government's negotiation with paramilitary blocks and to verify the paramilitary cease-fire, a few months after the EU's initial cool reaction to the Uribe administration's progress in its endeavour to get a formal negotiation process going with a section of the paramilitary self-defence groups in 2004[34] and its refusal to cooperate.[35]

A second factor concerns the role of the EP. Although it is often taken for granted that the power and influence of the EP is limited, European foreign policy coordination appears enhanced when the EP emits clear signals. Some of the concerns and considerations that were recorded in Europe when the Plan Colombia was announced, for example, were articulated in a debate at the EP at the end of which the EP voted its 1/2/2001 Resolution on 'Plan Colombia and support to the Colombian peace process',

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[33] "Suecia le apuesta a la paz", El Espectador, 2/07/1999.
[34] One year after the *Acuerdo de Santafé de Ralito* between the Colombian government and the paramilitary blocks on 15 July 2003
[35] Declaration of the Presidency on behalf of the European union on the occasion of the formal start of talks between the Government of Colombia and the AUC paramilitary groups, Brussels, 20 June 2004, 10167/04 (Presse 194); "Llegó la hora cero para el inicio del proceso de desmovilización de los paramilitares", El Tiempo, 1/7/2004; "La Unión Europea saluda proceso con paramilitares, pero no asiste a él", El Tiempo, 30/6/2004.

with an overwhelming 474 votes to 2 and a few abstentions. From then on, policy coordination went visibly smoother.[36]

A third exogenous factor is the role played by the US policies and specific measures as a catalyst for European policy coherence. This happened clearly when US Congress decided to allocate budgets for Plan Colombia in June 2000, and after which Washington announced to pledge USD 1.3 billion, only 238 million of which was not earmarked for military aid. This announcement from the side of the US was not met with universal satisfaction. In fact, some saw it to conduce to 'further militarization' of the Colombian situation. As such, the US pledge met with harsh criticism in certain circles within the US, Colombia, and Europe. In this respect, Plan Colombia's appeal in Washington would even prove to undermine the possibility to obtain European funding for Colombian endeavours.

In spite of these driving factors, at times some member states prefer to act alone or, at least, to differentiate their behaviour while formally adhering to a common European position.

Preceding Europe's refusal to back Plan Colombia, both Prime Minister Tony Blair and then Spanish President José María Aznar, for example, made commitments to president Pastrana (to support the Plan) and were heavily criticised for it afterwards.[37] Later, Spain organised an international Donor Conference to seek funding for a non-military part of Plan Colombia on 10 July 2000. The EU as such, and its member states other than Spain, abstained from making formal pledges, notwithstanding the fact that the EU CFSP High Representative had already demonstrated his willingness earlier on to accommodate Pastrana's requests. In fact, the whistle was blown on Javier Solana for these commitments, which had not been duly consulted with EU institutions. After Plan Colombia was officially rejected by the EU, division continued or was even reinforced. Several European diplomats in Colombia questioned the radical rejection and openly asked whether it did not wrongly neglect the necessity to strengthen

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[36] See e.g. Memorias 2001-2003 of the Spanish Cooperation (p. 83).
[37] "The Last Thing Colombia Needs is More Weapons", The Independent, 23/5/2000.

Colombia's institutional capacity and, more in particular, the modernization of the armed forces and security apparatus as one of the necessary conditions for reaching a solution to the conflict (Massé, 2003).

When some EU countries that accompanied the dialogues between the government and FARC started to move towards a mediating role, they were heavily criticised by others and even collided with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, whose office was mainly financed by Europe, by the way.

Another example is related to arms exports. Little European support has materialised for answering President Uribe's repeated calls for military aid from Europe.[38] Assistance in that field of activity resorts to the level of national governments, and as such the decision about that assistance is likely to be marked by political considerations and affinities. Several European states would even be prevented from allowing commercial military exports to Colombia, by their national arms exports laws and by the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports that prevents them from exporting military equipment to a country engaged in armed conflict and/or that has already been turned down by another European exporter.[39] Spain, nevertheless, did donate military aid to Colombia, although the content of that aid has become clearly restricted to 'non-offensive' material (ambulance planes) and training (such as in landmine eradication).[40]

A particular case of acting as *cavalier seul* is the use of the veto right in the Council. In the run up to the May 2002 meeting of the EU and Latin America + Caribbean, organised under the Spanish presidency (*Madrid Summit*), commotion arose over intentions to add the FARC guerrilla to a European terrorist list. At that time, that list already included the Colombian paramilitary AUC.[41] Inclusion on that list would undo prerogatives which FARC spokespersons enjoyed in European countries (visa, refugee

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[38] This aid was requested after the European-Colombia meeting in Bogotá, May 2003.
[39] More on that matter in *European Arms Exports to Latin America*, www.ipisresearch.be
[40] The Spanish and Colombian Defence ministries signed an agreement to that end on 23/9/2004.
[41] The EU "terrorist list" was introduced in December 2001 in the aftermath of the 11/9/2001 events, and included AUC from the onset. Spain and Belgium are reported to have eventually pushed the idea to include FARC ("Cumbre de Madrid condenará terrorismo", El Tiempo, 16/05/2002).

status). Sweden, later joined by France, initially vetoed the inclusion of FARC on the European terrorist list.[42] Such inclusion was argued to obstruct the next Colombian presidency to begin new negotiations. The failure of European governments to reach an agreement for including FARC on its terrorist list caused Europe to be criticized bitterly in Colombia,[43] as the controversy concurred with the May 2002 mass killing in Bojayá, department of Chocó, where more than a hundred people died in a church that was bombed by FARC. Swedish UN High Commissioner Anders Kompass restricted his criticism to the Colombian State, for having failed to prevent the tragedy, and to the paramilitary troops assumed to have provoked FARC to detonate the bomb. In Colombia, this statement proved difficult to appreciate, and European 'anti-militarism' – which some Colombians also took to have blocked substantial European funding for Plan Colombia - was played out against human rights concerns and still other considerations presumed to be on European agendas. The Swedish government effectively changed its view in the aftermath of the Bojayá tragedy and after President Pastrana met with the late Anna Lindh, then Swedish Minister of Foreign Affairs. After this 'Swedish Turn' the inclusion of FARC on the common EU terrorist list was decided rapidly at a meeting of the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) and formalised at the next Council meeting, in Luxembourg on 13 June 2002. Surprisingly, early 2003, France announced that it would be willing to receive and harbour FARC guerrilleros 'were these to be liberated in a humanitarian agreement'.[44] That commitment corresponds at least in part to overt and covert French governmental endeavours to negotiate the liberation of the kidnapped French-Colombian former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt.[45]

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[42] Decision-making on the list is a CFSP issue, which the *Treaty of the European Union* defines to resort to an intergovernmental 'Pillar II' scheme: policy formulation takes place within the context of the Council of Ministers and its Working Groups, almost exclusively on the basis of unanimity.

[43] See e.g. "El despiste europeo", El Tiempo, 5/5/2002.

[44] El Tiempo, 9/1/2003. The offer was repeated later on, e.g. in September 2004, see "Francia mantiene oferta de facilitar refugio a guerrillenen de acuerdo humanitario", El Tiempo, 10/9/2004.

[45] In July 2003, the then French foreign affairs minister Dominique de Villepin's envoy was - somewhat embarrassingly - found aboard a French Hercules airplane that had landed in Manaus without previous notice to the Brazilian authorities. These authorities were not allowed to inspect the plane, for it claimed diplomatic status. The Hercules was alleged to be equipped so as to provide a medical check-up to Ingrid Betancourt, whom the French expected to be liberated in Brazil at that time.

The fact that individual member states sometimes try hard to push their (minority) position through does not necessarily mean that country policies are consistent over time. The Belgian government, for example, was seen to have pushed for the inclusion of FARC on the European terrorist list - an action that was certainly not 'on demand' of the dense civil society networking in the Heart of Europe. But weeks after the inclusion of FARC, Belgium was reported to have successfully stopped the inclusion of the ELN on that same list. By mid-2002, the ELN was no longer talking with Colombian representatives in Havana, a fact taken to be significant. The inclusion on the European terrorist list of this second Colombian guerrilla organisation was therefore believed to become a fact at the next occasion where that list would be revisable, even though – quite remarkably - Belgium had expressed reservations on the matter.[46] These or other reservations appeared to have been more problematic than anticipated, as it would take the EU Council almost two more years before it could include the ELN on the list.[47] This achievement could not be taken for the result of a transparent political or public debate, but must still be seen as government-endorsed.

In contrast, a German change of approach was the outcome of a parliamentary debate that had lasted seven months, after which the *Bundestag* approved an 18 paragraph motion that sets out the lines of a new German policy vis-à-vis Colombia. In a crucial first paragraph to the motion, the German parliament urges the government to support President Álvaro Uribe in his task to have the public forces recuperate the monopoly of military force in his country. In this, the motion could not possibly contrast more with a certain German policy of the past, whereby both private German entities and citizens, and their government, were seen to cut deals with armed non-state actors that undermined the Colombian state's monopoly of military force in order to facilitate the release of kidnapped citizens or to avoid kidnapping. Moreover, Germany sent Claudia Roth (of *Bundnis 90*), its parliamentary commissioner for human rights, to Bogotá on

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[46] Several sources ascribed Belgian reluctance to put ELN on the European terrorist list to the liberation of European kidnap victims in the first half of 2002. The Belgian member of parliament who negotiated that liberation, candidly and publicly claimed ELN had remained off that list thanks to his insistence (Meeting at the *Maison de la Communauté française* on 11/10/2002), suggesting a deal was cut so that the ELN would abstain from kidnapping Europeans in the future as long as Europe did not consider that organisation terrorist. ELN has not complied with its part of that deal, if ever there was one.
[47] Official Journal of the European Union, L 99/28, 3/4/2004.

2 October 2003. In Bogotá, Roth announced that Germany would urge the EU to appoint a High Commissioner, in line with the parliamentary motion. In the meanwhile, the German government gave its full support to its Colombian homologue's request that Europe finally come to consider the ELN guerrilla as a terrorist organisation.

One could label as 'policy differentiation' instances when member states do not collide with the majority or common European position but, in any case, pursue a distinctive policy within the broader agreed framework. This was the case when in the months following the February 2001 EP Resolution, EU member states were to put forward their pledges to complement the Commission's aid commitment. A 'Third Meeting of the Support Group of the Peace Process' was organised jointly by the EC and the IDB in April. Swedish State Secretary Gun-Brit Andersson formally announced the concerted EU support to Colombia's peace endeavours at that occasion. She stated that for the EU, the first objective of the meeting was "to grant full political support for the peace-efforts of President Pastrana". Some European countries had by that time become facilitators of the presidential talks with guerrilla groups and had been asked to become even more involved in the near future. The EU presented a multi-annual and overall support package worth more than EUR 330 million. Commissioner Patten confirmed the contribution which the EC had announced a few months previously and had topped up in the meanwhile to EUR 140 million. The remaining EUR 190 million was pledged by different European member states. The more important contributions came from Spain, Sweden, France and Germany. Small countries such as Belgium and Holland made relatively substantial pledges too. The UK declared in its country profile on Colombia it "is contributing to an EU package…" and "will continue to support the work of the EU…"[48] in a direct reference to the decisions made in the third meeting of the support group for the Peace process held in Brussels. In practice, many of these European pledges and programmes could be recognised as a refocusing - and in some case a mere re-labelling - of the support that Colombia had been receiving until then, through 'non-concerted' European aid strategies. Apart from peace laboratories, the

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[48] Foreign and Commonwealth Office Country Profile Colombia, accessed 13 Aug 2004.

concerted European aid package provided for resources to "combat violence and human rights violations", and to "relieve the social impact of conflict (displaced people, children involved in conflict and alternative development in areas where manual eradication of drug crops takes place)". The so-called "Actions to increase the respect for human rights and stimulate a peace culture" would come to be funded by Sweden, Finland, the UK and Belgium.

A final remark relates to Europe's capacity to learn. It should be recognised that recent years have seen progress, especially related to coordination of European actors in Colombia. Regular meetings are now organized between the Delegation, the Presidency and the diplomatic missions, together with responsables for cooperation, human rights and security, and policy papers have been prepared. This, together with the consensus reached at the donor meetings, the EU has been able to act in a more coordinated way and assume common positions on crucial issues and in crucial moments. Concrete and far reaching experiences as the (failed) Caguan peace process with the FARC under President Pastrana in 1998-2002 obliging member states representatives to coordinate and sit together have certainly contributed to this evolution.

Interregionalism

We now turn to the second question guiding this chapter, namely whether EU policies with respect to the Colombian conflict are increasingly built on an interregional model.

Looking first at the institutional framework, since the emergence of the Andean Pact in 1969, inter-regional relations have developed through different types of agreements, showing growing complexity and diversification. Whereas the initial agreements focused on trade, more recent agreements and common declarations are much wider in scope. The political dialogue in the context of the Rio Group was institutionalised in 1990. Five agreements on chemical precursors for narcotics production were signed in

1995. The Declaration of Cochabamba (1996) includes shared responsibility of drugs producers and consumers and is followed by the Declaration of Rome on Political Dialogue in the same year. A new EU-CAN Framework Agreement was signed in 1998.

Late in 2001, the EU launched the Andean programme on human rights and democracy 2002-2005. The Second Summit of Madrid, held in May 2002, opened space for a new EU-CAN strategy for 2002-2006. Resources were allocated in different areas amongst which notably an initiative for Andean Regional Stability, supporting CAN in the field of conflict prevention. This concurs with the EC Regional Strategy paper where the challenge of peace building in Colombia is clearly stated as a main issue, along with measures to stop drug trafficking. Resources are also foreseen for controlling the trade in chemical precursors amenable to the production of illegal drugs. Most of the programmes are implemented through NGOs. Concrete experiences of intervention in Andean conflicts are almost inexistent. The vast majority of European resources are destined to bilateral cooperation and only a minority to biregional projects with limited effects.[49] The fast reaction mechanism of the EU –- designed at the Helsinki Council of December 1999 to strengthen its civil intervention capacity in crisis situations and forming part of the CFSP agenda approved in February 2001—has only been mobilized in Bolivia thus far.

On 15 October 2003, the EC, on behalf of the EU member states, and the Andean Community finalised negotiations on a new Political and Cooperation Agreement which was signed in Rome on 15 December 2003. This Agreement on Political Dialogue and Cooperation included not only counternarcotics endeavours, integration, governance, poverty eradication and migration issues, but also topics on security and terrorism.[50] The arrangement has been endorsed by the Declaration of

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[49] Regio-to-region cooperation includes projects aimed at the creation of the Andean common market (quality standards, tariffs, competition policy), strengthening of the integration process, democracy, human rights and prevention of natural disasters. A coordination office is functioning in Bogotá.
[50] Negotiations for the Agreement were concluded on 15/10/2003 in Quito, Ecuador. The Andean partner felt EU interest in negotiating such a regional agreement was only rekindled after the Doha Trade Round failed to conclude a global arrangement. See, Fernández de Soto (2004:363-444).

Guadalajara of May 2004 and may be upgraded in the future to an association agreement, which is to incorporate a free-trade area.[51]

The main EU policy objective according to the EC "Colombia Country Strategy Paper"[52] reads: *"to support the Peace Process in order to be able to contribute to the stability of the region…"*. This key strategic document approved in May 2002 links clearly from the start the EC co-operation objectives in Colombia with the broader objectives based upon the EC Treaty, article 177, namely the Community development co-operation where an economic focus prevails. However in the Country Strategy Paper these objectives include also elements which can be all linked in one way or another with the conflict in Colombia. This includes not only a general:*"…developing and consolidating democracy and the rule of law and encouraging the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms…"*, but also more detailed areas as brought up in the Statement on development co-operations and in Regulations[53] and in several Communications on Latin America[54]. Elements relevant for the study of the making of EU policies in conflict management for Colombia include: *"…the promotion of equitable access to social services, food security and sustainable rural development, … conflict prevention, …"…"the reply to … drug trafficking, terrorism…"* or *"Human Rights Protection and promotion and attacking the poverty and inequalities problems"*. Logically the EU involvement in the peace process is "stepped up" and several meetings are organised on international level of "the Support Group for the Peace Process in Colombia".[55]

Coherence seems to emerge when linking and comparing all these EU documents, and it is also observable in different Member States strategic papers. What could be an excellent summary of the relevant explanatory models in the different EU documents and declarations is written down in the country strategy paper of Sweden for

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[51] *Joint communiqué* from the meeting of the EU Troika and the Heads of State of the Andean Community, issued at the Guadelajara summit on 29 May 2004.
[52] Accessed 30 July 2004.
[53] November 2000 Statement of the Council and Commission and the Council regulation (EEC) N. 443/92 of 25 February 1992
[54] COM (95) 495, COM (99) 105 and COM (2000) 670
[55] http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/colombia/intro/index.htm pg.2, accessed 13/08/2004.

Colombia: *"...the escalating internal armed conflict in Colombia poses a serious general obstacle to development in Colombia. The unequal distribution of political and economic power, increasing poverty, weak democratic institutions, widespread impunity, crimes against human rights and international humanitarian law, the unequal distribution of land, and drug trafficking are obstacles to development that are linked to and mutually reinforce one another. They must be addressed to make it possible to achieve sustainable peaceful development in Colombia and regional stability"* [56], or the statement from the Spanish Cooperation agency that "development is the best contribution to peace".

The changing modalities of interregional cooperation reflect changing trends in the international environment, rather than a substantial increase or a deepening of the relations between the two regions. Neither of the regions is a priority for the other. A combination of factors plays a role in explaining the limited development of interregionalism in this case. A first element is the difficult political situation in the Andean countries and the weakness of CAN institutions. A second element is US bilateralism and its growing political, economic and military presence in the region, especially since the launch of Plan Colombia in 2000 and the Andean Regional Initiative in 2001. In Europe, diverging views exist on what would or should be an appropriate European (counter-) strategy.[57] A third element is the low level of objective economic interdependence between the two regions and Europe's prioritary attention for the enlarged EU.

For the EU, with its potential as a world power, it should be possible to partially endogenise these factors and be more influential, even with the current levels of budgetary resources destined to the region (by the EU and the member states combined).[58] For this to happen, a few pre-conditions have to be met. First, interregionalism requires higher levels of policy coordination than have been

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[56] Regeringskansliet, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Country Strategy for development cooperation, Colombia, January 1 2003 - December 31 2007
[57] On the Colombian side most political forces support diversification of Colombia's external relations and favor closer relations with Europe. See e.g. De Lombaerde (2002).
[58] See also, Ramírez (2004b; 2004c).

established to date. As shown in the previous sections and confirmed by observers like the International Crisis Group[59], due to divergent interests and relatively weak policy coordination EU policy with respect to the Andean region has been characterised by isolated initiatives and counterproductive rivalries. Mechanisms should be put in place to guarantee more consistency and coordination in relation to anti-drugs policies in third countries, security, migration policies and judicial cooperation.

Second, interregionalism would benefit from a working interparliamentary dialogue as shown by its contribution to democracy and peace in Central America. The important scale, urgency and critical nature of the situation in the Andean region, make a new European interparliamentary initiative desirable. This could be a fruitful scenario for exchange of information, intra- and inter-regional confidence building, and the gestation of new proposals and initiatives.

Related to the coordination issue, there is an apparent need to develop a stronger analytical capacity on the European side, which should permit a better understanding of the complexity of the conflict and its context. A pooling of resources of national foreign services, together with the European institutions (DG-RELEX) would seem the logical solution here.

This should allow focussing more on border zone problems, revise anti-narcotics policies, and recognise the changing nature of the conflict and of linkages between the socio-economic and political situation in the region and the problematic insertion of their economies in the world economy.

Policies could gain effectiveness if the regional linkages of the conflict would be recognized. As mentioned before, the Colombian conflict is increasingly linked with the socio-political situation in neighbouring countries and spilling-over through illegal trade circuits (drugs, arms), certain proximities between the guerrilla and sectors in

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[59] IGC, Increasing Europe´s Stake in the Andes, Quito – Brussels, 15 /6/2004; Ramírez (2004a).

these countries, border-crossing by rebel groups and displaced populations, etc.[60] The development of conflict-related activities, like securing strategic corridors, in the geographically complicated but resource-rich border zones fuels the conflicts and makes it more difficult to control, especially since income inequality is rampant in these areas. The weakness of the regional institutions in the Andes and –consequently- the low levels of trust and cooperation, tense Colombo-Venezuelan relations, and traditional US bilateralism are all factors that leads one to believe that there is an important margin for action by the EU. The multilateral and bi-regional events have not been seized by the EU as a privileged opportunity to help the countries of the region move beyond the fundamentally individual and reactive postures and stimulate mutual *rapprochement* and concertation. The EU may not have insisted sufficiently on a regional cooperative perspective. In dialogues and interviews with different European diplomats accredited in Bogotá, one does not perceive that interregionalism refers to conflict resolution; it is rather circumscribed to trade issues. In the dialogues on Andean integration, internal border issues are not adequately covered. It is striking also, for example, that the joint evaluation of Andean integration which has been initiated after the Guadalajara Summit focuses almost entirely on trade integration. This passive stance contrasts with the role Europe has played in central America in bringing neighbouring countries closer when these entered in conflict because of the mutual negative fall-out of their respective internal conflicts. These interventions helped peace negotiations in each of these countries and relaunched a regional integration process.

Pooling resources to monitor the conflict should also allow for Europe to better capture the conflict's changing nature, actors and the dynamics of it. This, in turn, would allow a more balanced evaluation of the role of the actors involved and formulate realistic demands (e.g. with regard to justice and reparation in a negotiated peace scenario). It would also allow better monitoring the impact of European policies and the role of EU-subsidized NGOs in Colombia, and reducing Europe's conceptual dependence on the UN office and the NGOs.

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[60] On the development of the conflict in the border areas, see for example, Cubides (1998).

A more coherent policy to combat drugs trafficking is also high on the list of elements that Europe might contribute to the peace process in the Andean region. Thus far, the interregional political dialogue lacked effect. Although the EU has pronounced itself in favor of a joint fight against drugs with multilateral commitments and global strategies involving both producing and consuming countries, the practical consequences of this discourse (alternative solutions to fumigation, tackling consumption in Europe, tackling trafficking and money laundering) are not clear.

Finally, the design of European institutions and the distribution of competences across governance levels do not prove to be well suited to acknowledge the links between different policy areas. The Colombian conflict, and the socio-economic and political crises in the Andean countries for that matter, cannot be probed independently from their problematic insertion in the world economy. Market access (GSP), although important, is not the only issue which should be settled. The EU could contribute to a more harmonious insertion of the Andean economies in the global economy, for example in the context of the WTO negotiations.

Conclusions

The Colombian conflict is relatively complex. It is an essentially internal conflict, although the regional and international dimensions are (increasingly) important. Because of the nature and development of the conflict, a negotiated end to it would be expected to require firm involvement of third countries. The EU, as a world player, could play such a role but has not done so in Colombia thus far. Its role has been modest, as compared to the EU's political and economic weight, its historical and cultural ties with the region, and the objective co-responsibility for certain (but essential) aspects of the conflict, such as generating and laundering drugs money, exports of chemical precursors, arms trade, political status of leaders of illegal groups, etc. Colombia and its conflict are relatively marginal to its external policy, to an

important extent because it is taking place in the zone of influence of the US and because economic interests in the country are limited.

<u>Coordination, coherence and EU actorness</u>

The Colombian case confirms the perception of the EU as a heterogeneous actor with insufficient levels of coordination, often emitting contradictory signals, which reduces the effectiveness of its actions. Instead of a solid strategy towards the region, relatively isolated initiatives seem to exist that emanate from certain EU member states, not without disputes among them, and motivated by tensions between national and communitary interests. The effort put on seeking protagonism and visibility tends to go against the effectiveness of European policy and presence in the Andean region, as in the cases of the Plan Colombia and the Caguan peace process.

Although it is perhaps not a solid demonstration of the lack of effectiveness of EU policies, the results of the Latinobarometer related to Colombian perceptions of EU policies are interesting. The US is perceived by the Colombian citizens as helping more in promoting democracy, defending peace and promoting development than the EU (Focus Eurolatino, 2004). Europe's discourse on peaceful conflict settlement, democracy, justice and development is not perceived as necessarily reflecting the reality and effectiveness of its policies.

Although the EU is believed to learn from coherence failures (Everts and Keohane, 2003), in this case, as in many other cases, European national policies give little evidence of building up to a more coherent EU policy, although some learning is observed in the field, as in the area of humanitarian aid. When policy coordination takes place, it is not necessarily based on positive motivations (effectiveness, efficiency, …): controversial US positions on the way to wage the war against drugs traffickers and on illegal armed groups operating in Colombia have also been a driving force towards common positions.

The need for more coordination still becomes clear when one observes the fact that decisions related to defining a European positions vis-à-vis the conflict in Colombia have sometimes been taken, both at the European and national levels, on the basis of lacking, partial or even biased information. This is a very strong perception among Colombian and external observers. More pooling of resources would strengthen the analytical capacity of the EU (through economies of scale), especially for this kind of complex cases that is ascribed relatively low (political/economic) importance for the EU.

The case also shows the important role of non-governmental (para-governmental) organisations in the policy cycle, and their capacity to monopolise certain policy niches. Diversity and dissent marking civil society activities has been mirrored in EU policies on Colombia for considerable time. Although it is recognised that, generally speaking, their work is valuable, Colombian governmental observers criticize activities of certain sectors of European NGOs and their Colombian counterparts. Often, NGOs do not limit themselves to their declared work programme related to socio-economic or political development. Conflicts have been registered among NGOs over resources and prestige, undermining the effectiveness of their operations because they do not always succeed in establishing a functional relationship with local authorities and actors and because their lack of confidence in the local institutions tends to be exaggerated. The choice of location of a project is not always coordinated with local actors, projects do not always contribute to community building, and relevant information is rarely passed on to the authorities. European aid channeled through NGOs consequently does not always contribute to strengthening the (relatively weak) institutions in Colombia. A critical evaluation of the role played by the NGOs in EU's external policies is needed.

The case shows that the analysis in terms of the three pillars is not sufficient to capture the reality of EU foreign policy. The empirical evidence suggests that the choice of modality of European intervention is rarely based on effectiveness criteria but rather

on (least) institutional resistance: at the European level, aid and trade, more easily managed by the EC, tend to substitute foreign policy.

Another aspect of EU external policy-making is the fact that Europeanisation and coordination of external policies is not a uni-directional process. Sometimes, when a common position is (finally) reached, like in the case of declaring the armed groups terrorist organisations, policy-makers return to their respective national levels to voice discontent and question the consensus reached at the European level. One should be aware of the internal functionalism of the existing EU external policy machinery: the multiplicity of official actors on different levels is convenient to respond to different (internal) political pressures. In cases where the cost of non-coherence or non-coordination is not really felt in the member states, the machinery is unlikely to be replaced soon.

Interregionalist strategy and agenda

The institutional framework of interregional relations has contributed to reach some level of policy coordination, resulting in coherence at the level of policy documents and official statements.

As far as concrete politics and actions are concerned, the EU could go further and be more proactive in an area where third country intervention appears necessary. The EU could play a more important role in developing initiatives that contribute to tackling the regional dimension of the conflict, as in border zone issues, combating illegal flows of arms and drugs, demonstrating links between illegal armed groups and certain sectors in neighbouring countries, etc. Additionally, recognizing interdependence between a series of situations and problems in the Andean region would, allow for positive feed-back to the policy formulation process on Colombia. Recognizing interconnectedness of different policy areas and issues is relevant as well, such as linkages between the processes of regional and multilateral trade liberalisation and domestic socio-economic problems. The complicated institutional architecture behind

EU external policies, however, renders such endeavour difficult to translate into concrete politics.

Finally, and with respect to linkages between policy coordination and interregionalism, the case of EU conflict management in Colombia illustrates that two-way relationships exist between both aspects of the problematique of EU external policies. Better policy coordination would allow to set an interregional dialogue and negotiation machinery in motion and define policies with a regional scope. On the other hand, interregionalism imposed by the regionalisation of the issues at stake, have a positive effect on the demand for more policy coordination and the pooling of European resources.

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