

# **The EU and poverty eradication – which format to choose?**

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## **Abstract**

In line with the analysis of the legal and policy framework of the European Union (EU) related to poverty eradication present paper gives an overview of the aspirations of the organization in terms of international cooperation with partner countries on the one hand and with other intergovernmental organizations such as the United Nations (UN) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) on the other. In so doing the paper claims for the importance and the efficiency of the EU to intensify targeted cooperation with partner countries and demonstrates major challenges that are associated with the decision making on the level of the UN and the WTO. With this approach the paper clearly shows how multilateralism overcomplicates the already very challenging reality, in line also with the economic shock caused by the COVID 19 and therefore claims for the need for more flexible approaches that will lead to the rapid recovery.

Key Words: European Union, Poverty Eradication, United Nations, World Trade Organization,

## **Introduction**

The political guidelines for the next European Commission 2019-2024 underline the importance of refocusing “the European Semester into an instrument that integrates the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals” (Leyen 2019, p.9). This undertaking is very much in line with the aspirations of the European Union (EU) reflected in the article 3(5) of the Treaty on the EU (TEU) underlining that the Union amongst others shall contribute to the sustainable development, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty as well as to the strict observance and the development

of international law, with due respect of the principles enshrined within the United Nations Charter (TEU art. 3.5).

In continuation of this article 21 (1) of the same treaty underlines that: “The Union shall seek to develop relations and build partnerships with third countries, and international, regional or global organizations which share the principles of the United Nations Charter to promote multilateral solutions to common problems in particular in the framework of the United Nations” (TEU art. 21.1).

EUs strong emphasis on the importance of the poverty eradication is also evidenced from the focus that is put on children and youth and on the need of doing more in the developing and least developed countries as being reflected in the policy documents of the organization (Leyen 2019, p.10).

Article 21 of the Treaty of the EU underlines that: “The Union shall define and pursue common policies and actions, and shall work for a high degree of cooperation in all fields of international relations, in order to: foster the sustainable economic, social and environmental development of developing countries, with the primary aim of eradicating poverty; encourage the integration of all countries into the world economy, including through the progressive abolition of restrictions on international trade; promote an international system based on stronger multilateral cooperation and good global governance” (TEU art. 21.2).

The multilayered approaches of the EU towards poverty eradication reflected in both the declared and implied competences of the organization for global governance inevitably linking the two-fold development cooperation aspirations of the EU with each other, meaning cooperation a) with partner countries and b) enjoying active participation in the UN and WTO, rises questions in the direction as of which format of global governance will be more efficient for the EU to engage with for the purposes of poverty eradication.

On the one hand this is interesting because the EU institutions and countries are the world’s leading donor of development assistance and cooperation and therefore, have very strong cooperation practice with the 150 partner countries from Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific (EC 2021), for the purposes of poverty eradication.

On the other hand, the international community has been observing the difficulties that multilateralism especially within the WTO (in which the EU is member) has been experiencing

over the last decades getting more and more difficult to reach an agreement regarding the crucially important issues in poverty eradication amongst others.

Therefore, the question is, which format of global governance is to be chosen by the EU to intensify its efforts of helping developing and least developed countries to overcome poverty related challenges especially in the times of global economic shock produced by the COVID 19? Is it EUs multilateral and bilateral cooperation agreements with the partner countries or is it intensification of the work within international organizations, such as, the UN and the WTO? While answering these questions one also has to consider the newly accomplished elections of the Director General at the WTO bringing additional issues to the table of multilateral negotiations.

Therefore, the next parts of the paper give the overview of the EUs international cooperation agenda, showing the EU's role within the systems of the UN and the WTO and making relevant conclusions in the concluding part.

### **The overview of the EUs international cooperation agenda**

The EUs vision for international cooperation is reflected in the major legal documents of the organization clearly showing its aspirations to combat poverty in the world and therefore promote more prosperity on the global level. This is evidenced for instance from the wording of the Article 8 of TEU, namely: the Union shall develop a special relationship and cooperation with neighboring countries, aiming to establish an area of prosperity and good neighborliness, founded on the values of the Union. The Union may conclude specific agreements with the countries concerned based on reciprocity and periodic consultation (TEU art. 8, paras 1 and 2). The Union shall respect the principles and pursue the objectives in the development and implementation of the different areas of the Union's external action, ensuring consistency between these and its other policies (TEU art. 21.3).

The treaty of the functioning of the European Union further underlines that: the Union's development cooperation policy and that of the Member States complement and reinforce each other (TFEU, art. 208.1), having as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty with special emphasis on developing countries (TFEU, art. 208.1).

Bearing in mind the importance of the implementation of sustainable development goals with poverty eradication as its core the EU promoting the rules-based global order, in alignment with

multilateralism and the United Nations as its cornerstone has issued the New European Consensus on Development “Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future” [hereinafter as the consensus] (European Consensus on Development 2017, p.1) .

The significance of the Consensus is multifold, mainly because it shows the aspirations of the European Union to combat poverty in two directions, namely, a) promoting the role of EU as a global actor and establishment of it’s development cooperation agenda on a global scale and b) showing the role of the EU in promoting SDGs through it’s participation in international organizations.

To begin with it is interesting to see how the EU sees itself as a global actor in implementation of the 2030 Agenda in partnership with all developing countries, in line with the framework and political instruments provided by the Lisbon Treaty and equipping the union with all tools to respond to global challenges (European Consensus on Development 2017, p.2-3). This also goes hand in hand with the Global Strategy for the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy (Shared Vision A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy, 2016, p. 8) that provides an overall vision and action for a global governance.

The Consensus as a cornerstone of the EU’s development policy, is part of the overall EU response to the 2030 Agenda identifying the reduction and in the long term the eradication of multidimensional poverty leaving no-one behind as a primary objective of the EU development policy (European Consensus on Development 2017, p.4), in line with the article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU art. 208).

Yet another interesting feature of the consensus is that it focuses on trade as a tool for poverty eradication, namely through the implementation of the ‘Trade for All’ strategy, the EU with its Member States shows the readiness to support trading partners, including through economic partnership agreements, trade instruments and economic diplomacy, to integrate sustainable development at all levels of trade policy (European Consensus on Development 2017, p. 25).

The prime focus of EU’s development cooperation remains poverty eradication in all its dimensions, and that there will be no diversion of efforts from that goal is constantly reassured in the text of the consensus, putting emphasis on the importance of multi-stakeholder approaches for comprehensive solutions to poverty on global scale, ensuring partnership in implementation of the

2030 agenda for sustainable development. As it is recognized by the European Union itself “to be more effective in pursuing its objectives, and consistent with the primary aim of eradicating poverty, the EU’s development policy should be adaptable and responsive to changing needs, crises and priorities” (European Consensus on Development 2017, p. 25, 32-36).

The EU’s commitments towards poverty eradication are indeed further reaching engaging in development cooperation, policy dialogue and partnerships with Middle Income Countries (MICs) (European Consensus on Development 2017, p.43), with partner countries, in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, as well as in Latin America and Asia, and the countries of the neighboring regions in coherence with the European Neighborhood Policy under the 2030 Agenda (European Consensus on Development 2017, p.45), as being reflected for instance also in the following documents Joint Way Forward (Joint Way Forward - Afghanistan and the EU 2016), EU’s strategy on India (EU’s Strategy on India 2019) so called tailored agreements with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (Cotonou-Agreement 2020) and many more.

The Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation to which the EU also participates is a multi-stakeholder platform to advance the effectiveness of development efforts by all actors, to deliver results that are long-lasting and contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (Global Partnership 2021). As being indicated in the results of the Busan High Level forum the development co-operation is only part of the solution, it plays a catalytic and indispensable role in supporting poverty eradication, social protection, economic growth and sustainable development (Busan Partnership 2011, para.9).

Yet another forum in which the EU takes part is the Nairobi High Level Meeting. The results of the Meeting in Nairobi in 2016 reaffirmed that the levels of poverty and inequality remain high, especially in Africa, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small- island developing states, countries affected by conflict and Middle Income Countries, therefore the effective development co-operation is in common interest (Global Partnership, Nairobi Outcome 2016, para. 4), in line with the 2030 Agenda calling for all countries and all stakeholders to act in active partnership for its implementation (Global Partnership, Nairobi Outcome 2016, para. 4).

2015 Valletta declaration and Action Plan to which the EU also adheres to recognizes the high degree of interdependence between Africa and Europe facing common challenges in terms of eradicating poverty amongst others (Valletta Summit, Political Declaration 2015), prioritizing

integration of migration in development and poverty eradication strategies and programs, in particular in the areas such as labour market/employment, private sector development and education by the means of ensuring the full policy coherence (Valletta Summit, Action Plan 2015).

To achieve poverty eradication, the EU focuses its development cooperation on helping the poorest and most vulnerable categories of people, in the least developed, conflict-affected, and most fragile countries of the world, aspiring to leave no one behind in line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the European Consensus on Development (International Partnerships, End Poverty 2021). Based on the position of the EU for fighting against poverty development actors need to better cooperate in supporting partner countries (International Partnerships, End Poverty 2021).

The information given above is the clear evidence of the EU's active engagement in poverty eradication on the global level accounting to be the world's biggest development donor. The European development assistance represents almost 57% of the total global development assistance by all OECD-DAC donors (Europe the world's biggest development donor 2020). As being noted by the EU itself the budget support will be applied consistently with the principles of development effectiveness in support of sustainable development, and to promote inclusive growth and job creation, poverty eradication, inequality reduction and peaceful societies in the world (European Consensus on Development 2017, p. 39). Bering all these in mind the question remains if the EU can be more efficient to combat poverty while acting under the umbrella of the International Organizations next to the fact that it on its own is already a greatest contributor to global prosperity making positive changes on international level. Since the whole world has to overcome the economic shocks produced by the COVID 19 and given the heaviness of the multilateral universal organizations such as the UN and the WTO will not it be more efficient for the EU to keep active engagement in the targeted responses and its own multilateral and bilateral agreements with partner countries? Before answering these questions, it is important to see what is the EU's action agenda under the key international organizations.

### **The EU in the UN**

Article 208 (2) of the treaty on the functioning of the European Union stipulates that the union and the Member States shall comply with the commitments and take account of the objectives they

have approved in the context of the United Nations and other competent international organizations (TFEU art. 208.2).

Ban Ki-moon supported by Germany and its European Union partners, immediately after being appointed as eighth Secretary-General of the United Nations on 13 October 2006 declared: "The world's people will not be fully served unless peace, development and human rights - the three pillars of the UN are advanced together with equal vigour" (Matussek A Special Partnership with the UN: A European Perspective, 2021). This position of Ban Ki-moon found its reflection in the official position of Javier Solana (the former EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy) while stating that the European Union is deeply committed to UN goals and principles and that the United Nations is and remains the central institution for effective multilateralism, the "centre of gravity" of the multilateral system (Matussek A Special Partnership with the UN: A European Perspective, 2021). The European Union stands for a policy of dialogue and for the peaceful reconciliation of differing interests. It is in this spirit that the union is committed to actively reaching out to all Member States and groups of Member States within the United Nations (Matussek A Special Partnership with the UN: A European Perspective, 2021).

Cooperation between the UN and the EU has increased very significantly over the last years and as it appears will continue to do so due to an evolving framework of the organizations addressing common challenges of the world and the EU's aspirations to strive for more by strengthening unique brand of responsible global leadership (Leyen 2019, p.17).

This kind of cooperation practice between the EU and UN resulted in granting the enhanced observer status for the EU in the UN General Assembly since 2011 (A/RES/65/276). Bearing in mind that the General Assembly is the principal organ of the United Nations for the fulfillment and implementation of the UN charter this is indeed big step forward for making the EU as regional organization being stronger represented within the system of United Nations as compared to the period from 1974 until 2011 when by that time European Economic Community and lately European Union was enjoying rather weak participatory status being observer within the UN (Resolution 3208 (XXIX) of 11 October 1974).

Based on the position of the UN General Assembly the enhanced observer status of the EU was important for strengthening the multilateral system in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations and the principles of international law and in line with the aspirations of the

UN to cooperate with regional organizations to meet the goals of the charter (A /RES/65/276).

The enhanced membership of the EU in the UN being reflected in the annex to the GA Resolution (A /RES/65/276, annex) allows the European Union, to present the positions of the European Union and its member States as agreed by them, as being inscribed on the list of speakers among representatives of major groups, to make interventions; to participate in the general debate of the General Assembly, including to have its communications relating to the sessions and work of the General Assembly and to participate in all international meetings and conferences under the auspices of the Assembly and of the United Nations, having access to the documents of the assembly, meeting or conference without intermediary, next to also having permission to present proposals and amendments orally in conjunction with States members of the European Union in line with the procedure that such proposals and amendments shall be put to a vote only at the request of a Member State (A /RES/65/276).

The importance of making the UN more active in poverty eradication through increased international cooperation is not a new phenomenon (A/RES/48/166), therefore the former EEC and current EU play significant roles in tackling global poverty reduction challenges both from organizational as well as from member states perspectives. At least the observance of the resolutions issued and declarations adopted under the umbrella of the UN proves the active role that the EU plays in the world. The most remarkable examples of this are: Charter of Economic Rights and Duties of States (GA Res. 3281(xxix), UN GAOR, 29th Sess., Supp. No. 31 (1974) 50), Brussels Declaration (2001), the Monterrey conference (2002), GA Resolution about the process of preparation of the environmental perspective (A/RES/38/161), UN Millennium Declaration (2009), the New Delhi Declaration (2002), Addis Ababa Action Agenda (A/RES/69/313), Beijing Platform for Action covering 12 critical areas of concern including poverty eradication being as relevant today as 20 years ago (2021), the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of its review conferences (European Consensus on Development 2017, p.12), underlining that the widespread poverty remains the major challenge to development efforts closely related to unemployment (Cairo Programme of Action 1994, p.21), the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, the outcomes of the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development



of Africa in the 1990s (GA Res 45/199; A/CONF 147/18; GA Res 46/151, annex, sect II).

But such an impressive number of legal documents encompassing multifold and multilateral obligations bestowed on the shoulders of the UN member states in general and the EU and its member states in particular raise questions in the direction of how capable is the EU to be efficient within the UN system and if not whether it would be more relevant for it to work more on its own behalf rather than within the UN system. This becomes even more important nowadays when the whole world tries to tackle the COVID19 related economic crises and when the need for the targeted approaches to help developing and most vulnerable parts of the world emerges as not only top priority, but most importantly legal obligation for global actors to comply with. It is even difficult for the EU sometimes to reach an agreement on the crucially important aspects of its daily operational agenda within 27 member states as it is evident from the ongoing and lengthy negotiations between the European parliament and the council being supported by the commission on several sectoral acts especially during the approval of budget for 2021-2027 (EU's long-term budget for 2021-2027; Varju 2017, pp.161-162), and how can the better progress be imagined for the poverty eradication if being negotiated with 193 member states of the UN and therefore having much more complicated negotiations based decision making process.

The Enhanced Observer's status of the EU in the UN General Assembly and the discourse of high level political decision makers for the importance of cooperation between the two organizations leaves the impression that the role that is assigned to the EU within the UN system will be getting stronger and stronger in policy papers and therefore will be harder and harder to be implemented in practice leaving the EU's motivation to make the UN system 'deliver as one' as unreachable dream (European Consensus on Development 2017, p.42). Given the fact also that the EU and its Member States are motivated to strengthen their partnerships with the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank Group, regional development banks, the G7, the G20, the OECD and other regional and multilateral institutions (European Consensus on Development 2017, p.42).

Next to exploring the cooperation patterns of the EU and the UN in terms of poverty eradication it is interesting to see also what are the developments in international trade relations and therefore what are the conditions and visions of the EU and the WTO for using trade as an engine for prosperity.

## **The EU and the WTO**

Based on the position reflected in the POLITICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE NEXT EUROPEAN COMMISSION 2019-2024 “Trade is not an end in itself. It is a means to deliver prosperity at home. Every new agreement concluded shall have a dedicated sustainable-development chapter and the highest standards of climate, environmental and labour protection, with a zero-tolerance policy on child labour” (Leyen 2019, p.17).

It is interesting to observe that the EU is not only active within the UN system, but it is even more intensely represented in the WTO. With the aspirations to look for multilateral solutions to global challenges the EU intends to lead the efforts on updating and reforming the World Trade Organization (Leyen 2019, p.17). This is not surprising at all, because unlike the UN the EU is represented as a full member within the WTO system making the overall picture even more interesting, next to the fact that the EU members are also individually enjoying full membership within the WTO (WTO members and observers 2021). “The European Commission — the EU’s executive arm — speaks for all EU member States at almost all WTO meetings” (The European Union and the WTO 2021).

Since trade is an opportunity for economic growth the EU with its trade policy seeks to create growth and jobs by increasing the opportunities for trade and investment with the rest of the world inextricably bounding up its own success with the success of its trading partners, both in the developed and developing world keeping sustainable development in the center to trade policy (EU Position in the World Trade 2019).

The focus of the EU to uphold and update the rules-based global order (Leyen 2019, p.17) in line with strengthening the Europe’s role as a global leader and standard setter through a strong, open and fair trade agenda (Leyen 2019, p.17) derives from the fact that trade accounts for over a third of the EU’s GDP and supports over 36 million jobs. The EU is the largest exporter of manufactured goods and services and the largest export market for 80 countries. Claiming the attractiveness of Europe for business (EU Position in the World Trade 2019; Leyen 2019, p.17). Looking at the map of the EU trade agreements (2021) and being impressed with the results one can ask the same question, what is better for combating poverty in the world? Shall the EU act more intensively with its own agenda of multilateral and bilateral agreements with partner countries or shall it use the WTO platform for this?

It is true that the WTO is the most important player on the global level to deal with trade rules (Azevêdo 2017), but in doing so it also faces significant challenges in terms of moving trade negotiations forward. After The Buenos Aires MC of 2017 that has clearly showed no major achievement in the trade in services negotiations making the former Director General of the WTO Roberto Azevedo to draw a differing line between wants and possibilities of the Multilateral Trade system calling upon to all stakeholders for more understanding of the sensitivity of the situation (WTO doc. WT/MIN(17)/74). Given the fact that no considerable progress is seen within the organization from trade in services negotiations compliments the results of all previous Ministerial Conferences such as the Doha Ministerial Conference (Doha MC) (WTO doc. WT/MIN(01)/DEC/1; Parsadanishvili 2018, pp.340-342), Cancún Ministerial Conference (Cancun MC) (Fifth Ministerial Conference 2003; Parsadanishvili 2018, pp.340-342), the Hong Kong MC (WTO doc. WT/MIN(05)/DEC para. 25., Parsadanishvili 2018, pp.340-342), Geneva MC (WTO doc. WT/L/847., Parsadanishvili 2018, pp.340-342), Bali MC (WTO doc. WT/MIN(13)/DEC., WTO doc. WT/MIN(13)/43 WT/L/918, Parsadanishvili 2018, pp.340-342), Nairobi MC [this last even decided to extend the waiver of preferential treatment to LDCs until 2030] (WTO doc. WT/MIN(15)/DEC para. 24. WTO doc. WT/MIN(15)/48 WT/L/982).

Leading to more trade, employment and economic growth in the world is being bestowed as a major obligation on the shoulders of the WTO back from the times of Marrakesh Declaration of 1994. In this light it is also interesting to observe that since 2017 there has been no Ministerial Conference delivered within the framework of the organization and the one that was scheduled for 2019 to take place in Kazakhstan and then being rescheduled three times, the last time with no fixed dates for its delivery (WTO 2021), proves that the processes within the WTO are getting slower and slower day by day. Observing the previous rounds of the WTO Ministerial Conferences and daily growing number of the interest of various stakeholders in trade negotiations that over complicates the overall process even further not to say anything about the complexities that the WTO has to deal with because of COVID19 does not leave much reason for optimism. There is a hope that the appointment of the new Director General of the WTO for the first time to be female and to be from Nigeria will bring positive developments, but many things will not change much in this overall process because the system is system, the Director General can not act as if being omnipotent and most importantly the whole world has to tackle with the COVID19 economic shock (WTO 2021) for which the expectations towards the WTO will increase, putting much more

pressure on all sides participating in trade negotiations and it is hard to imagine that progress will be made any time soon. Since the previous administration has played its active role in trade relations (The Economist 2018, p. 7 and pp.15-17) much will also depend on the position of the administration of the newly appointed U.S. president and its response towards readiness of the EU ‘to strengthen a balanced and mutually beneficial trading partnership with the United States’ (Leyen 2019, p.79).

Yet another argument to support this vision is linked to the last but not least Buenos Aires MC of the WTO underlining the role that trade plays in poverty alleviation and promoting economic growth for all members (WTO doc. WT/MIN(17)/55/Rev.1) on the one hand and failure of the WTO to consider the interests of the Group of African States in trade in services negotiations on Mode 4 related issues (WTO doc. WT/MIN(17)/8, JOB/GC/166 JOB/TNC/68, JOB/SERV/274.), leaving aside the Agenda 2063 for African Countries (WTO doc. WT/MIN(17)/8, JOB/GC/166 JOB/TNC/68, JOB/SERV/274.), and neglecting the drastic situation of impoverishment of the population on the African continent for which trade is a major tool to eradicate poverty (WTO doc. WT/MIN(17)/11, JOB/GC/167 JOB/TNC/69, JOB/AG/133 JOB/DEV/50, JOB/DS/24 JOB/IP/28, JOB/MA/133 JOB/RL/10, JOB/SERV/275 JOB/TE/48.), proves that multilateral trade negotiations do also experience hardships and it rather slow to respond to daily growing economic needs of the developing and least developed countries.

India’s and its co-sponsors initiative to negotiate a Trade Facilitation for Services Agreement because of the importance of Mode 4 for the developing and LDCs’ within the WTO (WTO doc. WT/MIN(17)/19, JOB/GC/168 JOB/TNC/70, JOB/SERV/276, WT/MIN(17)/7; WT/GC/190) is yet another confirmation that the world trade system does not work the way it should be working and that there is a need for Plurilateral solutions to Multilateral challenges (Natens & Wouters 2013, p.253).

In any case all these developments and the powerful participation of the European Union in the WTO system brings no major progress to the complicated trade negotiations and therefore can not facilitate much to combat poverty using the WTO platform. The WTO is member driven organization with 164 members (WTO 2021) and this explains all the reasons for challenges that the organizations faces from the perspective of the lack of efficiency nowadays. Therefore, the European Union with its 27 member states and incumbent relative flexibility in its daily working

agenda has to become more active outside the multilateral organizations using targeted approaches in continuing bilateral and multilateral trade agreements with partner countries. In so doing the EU will facilitate the use of its external actions capacity to help those in need especially in the process of “rapid” recovery from the economic shock caused by the COVID 19.

This is also the only solution for promoting yet another priority of the EU that is to establish highest standards of labour protection as being cited above. Because the labour issues still remain to be the bone of contention between the UN/ILO and WTO. This is backed up by the fact that if for instance ILO operating under the umbrella of the UN (ILO 2021) underlines the importance of trade in establishing social justice and therefore facilitating the establishment of the peace and security in the world by tackling the challenge of poverty eradication and puts this idea in all its major documents and conferences such as the ILO Constitution (Codified version 2015), the Declaration of Philadelphia (Codified Version 2015), the Declaration for social justice (2008) and it’s annex (2008) the WTO keeps the different vision.

While recognizing the importance of compliance with all international obligations and therefore the need for the consideration of the labour standards (WTO 2018; Charnovitz 2006) keeping in mind that trade is a tool to eradicate poverty (Moore 2002), raising standards of living and ensuring full employment with special focus on developing and least developed countries being backed up by the Marrakesh agreement (1994) and respective multilateral treaty (GATS 1994), the practice of the WTO still goes to the direction of avoiding much discussion regarding social clause within the world trade system as being evidently seen in the results of the respective Ministerial Conferences (Bronstein 2009, p.95; Parsadanishvili 2018, pp.340-342). Even though the WTO has strong basis for making its decisions enforceable (Parsadanishvili 2018, pp.340-342), the efficiency of the European Union in protecting labour standards and therefore facilitating the poverty eradication in the world remains more evident. Because the “EU intervenes not with a view to exporting its standards but with a view to launching interactive processes to identify and evaluate the different approaches that may be adopted to ensure that shared regulatory objectives can be met” (Scott 2014, p.125).

The “EU measures that give rise to territorial extension allow the EU to shape behavior and regulation internationally and in other states. Thus, although it is the existence of an initial point of territorial connection that sparks EU law into life, some of the transactions governed by EU law

will, when taken individually, have no territorial connection with the EU in the end” (Scott 2014, p.124).

## **Conclusion**

The aspirations of the European Union to develop cooperation with the International Organizations and partner countries in line with the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, respecting the principles of the UN charter and relevant norms of international law are indeed impressive. Given the capacities of the EU and its economic and trade potential emerging as a leading power and major donor in handling development aid in 150 partner countries, with particular consideration of the needs and interests of the developing and least developed countries undoubtedly and without alternative demonstrates the leading role of the EU in combating poverty in the world.

On the other hand, daily growing role of the EU within international organizations such as the UN and the WTO and the existing overcomplicated reality accompanying the multilateral decision making delaying the progress and demonstrating the evident differences in visions of global players leaves no other option for the EU rather than to strengthen the cooperation with partner countries.

Much will definitely depend on the newly elected director general of the WTO and the new presidential administration of the United States, but rapid changes in multilateralism is hard to imagine given the realities that exist nowadays. At the same time the current economic shock caused by COVID19 demands for more flexible approaches and more targeted actions demonstrating that there is no time to waste on the way of rapid recovery from the global challenges related to poverty.

Which ever way will be chosen by the EU it will know better what is the best and the words of the president of the European Commission that: “We need to put the clear focus of our development cooperation on improving the perspectives of young women and men in their countries of origin, investing in their education and skills, in infrastructure, sustainable growth and security” (Leyen 2019, p.15-16), gives the impression that hopefully the EU will intensify its work outside the multilateral international organizations reaching closer its partner countries.

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