



Robert Schuman



European Union Center/ Jean Monnet Chair

**From Colonial Hold to Cooperative Association:
The Evolution of EU-OACPS Relations**

Sara Hansen



**Vol. 21, No. 7
Paper Series
May 2021**

Published with the support of the European Commission

The Jean Monnet/ Robert Schuman Paper Series

The Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series is produced by the Jean Monnet Chair and the European Union Center of the University of Miami.

These monographic papers analyze ongoing developments within the European Union as well as recent trends which influence the EU's relationship with the rest of the world. Broad themes include, but are not limited to:

- The Lisbon Treaty
- The Euro zone crisis
- Immigration and cultural challenges
- Security threats and responses
- The EU's neighborhood policy
- The EU and Latin America
- The EU as a model and reference in the world
- Relations with the United States
- Consequences of Brexit

These topics form part of the pressing agenda of the EU and represent the multifaceted and complex nature of the European integration process. These papers also seek to highlight the internal and external dynamics which influence the workings of the EU and its relationship with the rest the world.

European Union Center

University of Miami
1300 Campo Sano Building, 220C
Coral Gables, FL 33124-2231
Phone: 305-284-3266
Fax: (305) 284 4406
Web: www.miami.edu/eucenter

Jean Monnet Chair Staff

Joaquín Roy Director
Beverly Barrett Associate Editor
Melanie Goergmaier Associate Editor
Maxime Larivé Research Associate
María Lorca Research Associate

Florida International University
Markus Thiel (Director, FIU)

International Jean Monnet Editorial Advisors:

Philippe de Lombaerde, UNU/CRIS, Brugge, Belgium
Carlos Hakansson, Universidad de Piura, Perú
Kurt Hübner, University of British Columbia, Vancouver
Finn Laursen, University of Southern Denmark
John McCormick, Indiana University, Purdue
Félix Peña, Universidad Nacional de Tres de Febrero, Buenos Aires, Argentina
Beatriz Pérez de las Heras, Universidad de Deusto, Bilbao
Manuel Porto, University of Coimbra, Portugal
Lorena Ruano, CIDE, Mexico
Eric Tremolada, Universidad del Externado de Colombia, Bogotá, Colombia
Roberto Domínguez, Suffolk University, Boston
Francesc Granell, University of Barcelona

From Colonial Hold to Cooperative Association: The Evolution of EU-OACPS Relations

Sara Hansen *

“People only accept change when they are faced with necessity, and only recognize necessity when a crisis is upon them. Make men work together, show them that beyond their differences and geographical boundaries there lies a common interest.” - Jean Monnet, 1979

I. Abstract

Since the formation of the European Economic Community (EEC), member states have established foreign relations all over the world. What started as an association with former African colonies has grown into a partnership with a group known as the Organization of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS) consisting of seventy-nine sovereign states¹. The aim of this paper is to study the evolution of relations between what was once eighteen former colonies to the OACPS group that today represents 1.5 billion people (European Commission, 2021). This paper will analyze the motives from the European perspective for the formation and continuation of partnership.

II. Introduction

There exists a long-standing history of relations between Europe and the rest of the world. European empires for centuries conquered territories far beyond what their current borders are and have sought to maintain their trade routes and relations ever since. Where these countries originally held reign, world wars and decolonization forced the practice of alliance and partnerships instead of outright control. The end of the second world war brought colonization to an end and gave the opportunity to vast parts of Africa and the Caribbean to secure independence. Since the creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) in 1957 through the Treaty of Rome, European countries have kept substantive foreign relations, particularly to former colonies. The basis of relations with the OACPS group of partner states is twofold: to create preferential trade practices and provide funding in the form of development aid.

* Sara Hansen is an undergraduate junior at the University of Miami majoring in economics and international studies with minors in finance, chemistry, and business law. An immigrant to the US from Denmark in 2007, her interests are geared towards trade and monetary policies within the EU both domestically and internationally.

¹ In April of 2020, the ACP group (African, Caribbean, and Pacific States) became the Organization of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS). The group represents seventy-nine sovereign nations. The ACP group was created under the Georgetown Agreement in 1975 with eighteen original members.

The development aid is given to partner countries through the European Development Fund (EDF)². Through time, development and enlargement of the countries involved on both sides, the establishment of this fund along with trade agreements over time has since then become the hallmark of the relationship. The evolution of relations can be broken down into five periods: the Treaty of Rome, the Yaoundé conventions, the Lomé conventions, the Cotonou agreement and post-Cotonou agreement. These periods span more than sixty years of interaction, and policies have therefore changed substantially from that of continued colonial practices to that of more equal economic and aid association.

The Europe that many are accustomed to today is not the same as the one that was originally the EEC. The European Union now integrates twenty-seven countries and is not only an economic powerhouse, but a proponent of sustainable development, human rights and human security³. In the time period that the EEC was created, Europe was still recovering from the second world war and decolonization was sweeping across the world, bringing an end to empirical and colonial rule. When looking at today's motives for the OACPS partnership, it is important to remember that times not the same as when the first agreement was established. There are three predominant theories as to the motives for continued relations with these partner countries, stemming from economic growth, the theory of colonialism and post-colonial dependence (Montana, 2003). Following the second world war, Europe experienced a tremendous economic recovery. When the EEC was established in 1957, cooperation was created for the members, along with the potential for economic superiority. This economic growth and the attraction it gave to many third-world countries for possible cooperation and alliance is seen to be the first possible explanation for EU-OACPS relations. The second explanation, carrying a more negative connotation in terms of European motives, looks to the theoretical perspective of colonialism and neocolonialism to explain the ties between Europe and the partner countries. After European countries had to give up their colonies, countries like France and England tried hard to keep its former colonies linked to their interests (Montana, 2003). For example, in the Maastricht treaty, eighteen African nations that were mostly former colonies were given associate status with the community (Ritto, 2002). A feeling of exploitation of these former colonies can be seen in the wording of the first twenty years of association. The third view assumes that OACPS countries attempted to hold onto their relationship and reliance on European members states while attempting to place certain constraints on EEC policy making regarding trade (Montana, 2003).

The creation of the EEC represents the first step in the integration of Europe. Between the six signing member states, a common market was agreed upon that sought to eliminate all tariff and trade barriers inside the community. While the common market set forth by the Treaty of Rome is nowhere near what is seen today, it did however lay the groundwork for the goal of free

² The European Development Fund was created in 1959, two years after the Treaty of Rome was signed. The treaty of Rome provided for the creation of the fund in Articles 131 and 136. The fund was created to be the main instrument for European investment to OACPS countries and the Overseas Countries and Territories (OGT) with the motive for its creation to provide development aid to former colonies of European countries (Bossuyt et. al, 2016). The funding has historically been provided on a voluntary basis by European member states but starting in 2021 it is a part of the EU budget plans.

³ The European Union as it is known today was created under the Maastricht Treaty in 1992 and was signed by the twelve members of the European Communities. This treaty further integrated Europe by providing for common foreign and security policies, shared European citizenship, and the eventual introduction of a single currency.

trade for European countries. While colonies were no longer under European control, they were a tremendous trade benefit and were therefore given selective entrance into some of the European markets operating with zero tariffs (Sakr, 2021). European trade practices in the time period before the first official partnership agreement are often critiqued for a continuation of colonial rule over the former colonies in an economic sense. By granting preferential trade, the EEC was able to maintain economic superiority of less-developed countries, according to one of those theories.

III. The Yaoundé convention

The 1960s brought independence to many African countries and amplified the need for an agreement separate from what the Treaty of Rome laid out. In 1963, the first formal agreement was signed between the six member states of the EEC and the eighteen members of the Association of African and Malagasy States (AAMS)⁴. The agreement was very similar to that outlined in the Treaty of Rome, with the biggest difference being the incorporation of the EDF into the Yaoundé agreements. Although the partnership was critiqued heavily for promoting neo-imperialism, it was renewed in 1969 for another five years (Sakr, 2021). The EEC, however, continued to take advantage of the partner countries; while European member states were given virtually free access to imports from the partner countries. The partner countries received limited duty-free or quota-free access to some of the European markets (McCormick, 2021). The significance of these conventions is not in the equality of the two groups but that it was the first international agreement between European countries and their former colonies and that it began to replace imperial trading systems with more legitimate regional trade regimes (Sakr, 2021). Nevertheless, the agreements signed at the Yaoundé conventions are critiqued for the promotion of economic dependence on Europe and the perpetuation of low-profit imports of raw materials from partner countries to the European community and high-profit manufactured goods from the European community to partner countries (McCormick, 2014).

IV. The Lomé Convention

By the time the second Yaoundé convention agreement expired, continued decolonization throughout the 1960s and the admittance of the UK into the EEC in 1973 had a tremendous effect on the world climate and Europe's foreign relations. The first Lomé convention agreement was signed in 1975 and included forty-eight developing countries, with many commonwealth nations included as well as the newly formed unification of fifteen Caribbean states known as the Caribbean community⁵ (CARICOM) (Ritto, 2002). In many ways, the Lomé conventions following the Yaoundé conventions marked a time where partnership replaced that of association (Ritto, 2002). Signed in 1975, 1979, 1984, and 1989, the Lomé convention agreements were more comprehensive in trade partnership and sought to increase the fairness in funds distributed

⁴ The agreements signed at the Yaoundé conventions were not legally binding but were a network of bilateral agreements between the EEC and the AAMS.

⁵ CARICOM was established in 1973, uniting states throughout the Caribbean with the primary objective being to promote economic integration and cooperation among the members. Once joining Europe's trade framework, these fifteen countries came under the Lomé convention agreements.

through the EDP in the form of a system called STABEX (Ritto, 2002). The implementation of this system provided a guarantee for financial support from the EDF to protect from possible fluctuations in revenues that could result in a number of different markets of products (Hurt, 2003). Additionally, structure in the relations was given through the establishment of the Council of Ministers, the Committee of Ambassadors, and the Joint Assembly (Ritto, 2002). The four revised agreements established in Lomé can be simplified by categorizing them into two separate goals for the European Union. The first two agreements (1975 and 1979) emphasized fair trade while the last two (1984 and 1989) emphasized a focus on development, a stronger political dialogue, and improvement of human life and security. The Center for the Development of Industry (CDE) and the Technical Center for Agricultural Rural Cooperation (CTA) established in 1977 and 1983 respectively, sought to improve overall development in the partner countries as well. The shift in focus can be seen as a positive shift from European benefits of trade to more sincere care for effective development.

V. The Cotonou Agreement

The more comprehensive approach continued to develop following the last revision of the Lomé convention and true to history, a new framework was approved and signed in June of 2000, the Cotonou Agreement (CAP). With seventy-seven signatories and a twenty-year timeframe, it outlined five pillars of focus: enhanced political dialogue, increased participation of non-state actors, a more strategic approach to cooperation, new economic and trade partnerships, and improved financial cooperation (Ritto, 2002). Central to the goal of furthering economic development is the substantial funding in the form of development aid. Funding from the EDF not only promoted sustainable agricultural and infrastructural development, it was also used to support structural adjustment programs (SAPs) set by The World Bank (Hurt, 2003). The SAPs contain political conditionality clauses including certain expectations for human right and were therefore reinforced under the Cotonou agreements. With much greater recognition from the world toward the EU, the goals of this agreement became more encompassing: to eradicate poverty, promote democracy, and to bring OACPS states into the world economy (Economic Commission, 2016). Moving beyond trade regulations; climate change, proper agricultural and industrial development and human security became more pronounced in the revisions made in 2005, 2010, and 2015. With seventy-seven countries as signatories, it was also necessary to make the amount of aid given more specific by dividing countries into less-developed countries (LDCs) and developing countries. The CAP agreements further differentiated from past relations by including non-state actors, local governments and regionalism on top of trade and aid (Hurt, 2003). Concern over how important OACPS relations were to the EU, however, emerged during the second review in 2010. The Lisbon Treaty⁶ signed in 2009 gave no mention to the association agreement and OACPS members grew fonder of continental and regional governance strategies instead of more foreign ties (Bossuyt et. al, 2016).

⁶ The Treaty of Lisbon was signed in 2007 and went into effect in 2009 and amends the Maastricht Treaty and the Treaty of Rome. The most significant changes mainly concerned the function of governing bodies and voting rights within the EU, but no mention to the OACPS relations was written and included.

VI. Post-Cotonou Relations

For over half a century, EU-OACPS relations have evolved to the changing climate of the world. Although trade agreements have become fairer and funding has become more developmentally encouraging, disputes have continued upon the expiration of the Cotonou agreement. Originally set to expire in February 2020, it was extended until November 2021, both because of the Covid-19 pandemic and continuous disagreements over the contents of the new association. On April 15th, 2021, the last meeting was concluded for the new post-Cotonou agreement that will set up the framework of relations for the next twenty years (European Commission, 2021). When signed by both parties, the agreement will be reflective of the challenges that are present in this constantly changing world. Building on the Cotonou framework, the agreement includes a stronger regional focus that is tailored to the different regions in the OACPS group (European Commission, 2021). In an effort to align their foreign relations with their fundamental goals of promoting peace, freedom, security, and justice, and sustainable development, it can be expected that future agreements and relations will be made with these goals in mind.

VII. Conclusion

The evolution of EU-OACPS relations is reflective of general trends seen in trade partnerships throughout the 20th and 21st century. While colonialism and neocolonialism continued for years following decolonization, fairer trade regulations and promotion of development showed its benefits to developed countries. The EU, however, remains unique in the extent to which free trade is promoted and granted. Not only has the common market within the EU been proven popular, but the EU in its framework also continues to promote favorable economic conditions and partnerships throughout the world. Overall, the EU-OACPS relationship is often regarded as a “unique model for North-South cooperation” because of the legally binding nature of the agreements, the comprehensive scope of the agreements that covers trade, development cooperation and political dialogue, and the principle of joint management that seeks to promote equality within the relationship (Bossuyt et. al, 2016).

Works Cited

- “ACP-EU Partnership.” *International Partnerships - European Commission*, ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/acp-eu-partnership_en#:~:text=Our%20current%20relationship%20with%20ACP,the%20EU%20and%20third%20countries.
- Bindi, Federiga M. *The Foreign Policy of the European Union: Assessing Europe's Role in the World*. Brookings Institution Press, 2020.
- Bossuyt , Jean, et al. “The Future of ACP-EU Relations: A Political Economy Analysis.” *Policy and Management Report*, vol. 21, Jan. 2016, ecdpm.org/wp-content/uploads/PMR21-Future-ACP-EU-Relations-PEA-January-2016.pdf.
- Broberg, Morten P. “The European Union-Caribbean Relation: On the Apparent Deterioration of the EU-Caribbean Relationship.” *European Foreign Affairs Review*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2016, pp. 75–94. *Kluwer Law Online*, kluwerlawonline.com/journalarticle/European+Foreign+Affairs+Review/21.1/EERR2016006.
- Hurt, Stephen R. “Co-Operation and Coercion? The Cotonou Agreement between the European Union and Acp States and the End of the Lomé Convention.” *Third World Quarterly*, vol. 24, no. 1, 2003, pp. 161–176., doi:10.1080/713701373.
- Lima Sakr, Rafael. “From Colonialism to Regionalism: The Yaoundé Conventions (1963-1974).” *International and Comparative Law Quarterly*, vol. 70, no. 2, 2021, pp. 449–489. *Cambridge University Press*, doi:10.1017/S0020589321000014.
- Montana, Ismael Musah. “The Lomé Convention from Inception to the Dynamics of the Post-Cold War, 1957-1990s.” *African and Asian Studies*, vol. 2, no. 1, Feb. 2003, pp. 63–97. *Researchgate*, doi:10.1163/156920903763835670.
- “Post-Cotonou Negotiations on New EU/Africa-Caribbean-Pacific Partnership Agreement Concluded.” *European Commission*, 15 Apr. 2021, ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_1552.
- Ritto, Luis. “The European Union and the Caribbean: Analysis and Challenges.” *University of Miami European Union Center/Jean Monnet Chair Paper Series*, vol. 2, ser. 5, May 2002. 5, eucenter.as.miami.edu/_assets/pdf/rittoworkingpaper.pdf.
- Understanding the European Union, a Concise Introduction*, by John McCormick, Red Globe Press, 2021, pp. 214–216.