**Position Paper (Greece)**

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**Issue I: A Post-Cotonou Framework for EU-ACP Relations**

Cotonou Agreement, signed in 2000 and was then revised twice, was set to expired in 2020. This framework agreement built a comprehensive partnership between the EU member states and the ACP group– African, Caribbean and Pacific countries, 79 countries in total. The agreement is based on three main pillars, political dialogue, economic and trade relations and development cooperation. There are greater challenges faced these years, such as terrorism, climate change and migration. The revision in 2010 was to be adapted with the changes, and the agreement was then set to be re-examined in every 5 years.

Most of the ACP development programs are financed through the European Development Fund (EDF). The 9th EDF, between 2003 to 2007, was € 13.5 billion, comparing to € 9.9 billion with the 8th EDF. The 10th EDF, between 2008 to 2013, was € 22.7 billion. And the 11th EDF, period of 2014-2020, is scheduled to give out €30.5 billion. In 2017, trade with ACP countries has represent more than 5% of EU imports and exports. To the ACP countries, EU is a major trading partner, mainly for agricultural and transformed goods. Besides ACP countries’ development programs, the money pot of EDF is also spent on supporting the EU’s Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs). The total of OCTs are twenty-five islands that are associated with EU. The OCTs have constitutional relationships with Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. With the BREXIT coming soon, the relationship between EU and EU-Commonwealth countries and part of the OCTs countries may change. Greece is positive about the BREXIT with the more possibility to take more account to Europe integration issue. Throughout the expansion of EU, Regional differences are becoming more and more significant. Greece has always put higher emphasis in Europe than the ACP countries due to viewing European integration more urgent. Greece had 28% of the 2011 ODA to Europe and 26% to sub-Saharan Africa. Though Greece has had a hard time through financial crisis, the economy has started to pick up slowly since 2013. In 2015, Greece had provided 282 million USD in net ODA, according to the OECD data.

The Cotonou Agreement has led through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to now, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) from 2000 to 2016, and to 2030. Throughout the MDGs, Greece has had pay special attention to education and infrastructure in the Least Developed Countries (LDGs) with the allocation of ODA, and would continue with these goals in the SDGs. In 2011, half of Greece’s ODA goes to education (49.1%) and 13.5% goes to infrastructure. The EDF funds the ACP aid through four stages progress now, most of the annual programs are considered together. Greece urges all member to consider placing the discussion to the seven EPA subgroups. While through the subgroups, having ACP funds a clearer annual financial budget. In addition, the current "Everything But Arms" initiative seems to have not helped the LDGs countries much under the remaining trade restrictions. Greece calls on all EU countries to reduce the trade restrictions on these ACP countries.

 In conclusion, Greece affirms the maintenance of partnership between EU and ACP with the Cotonou Agreement. But at the same time, Greece believes that with actual practice, the Cotonou Agreement has failed to reach desired results. Due to the dramatic changes in the environment, mutual restrictions, and ineffective financial planning. While maintaining European integration, the maintenance of external relations is also a major issue. Therefore, Greece appeals to all countries to take consideration to adjust trade restrictions and look for a better way for the EDF aid to the ACP countries in the Post-Cotonou Framework for EU-ACP Relations.

**Issue II: Delivering EU Development Goals**

Official Development Assistance (ODA), presumably to have played a pivotal role in modernization and economic development in ACP countries, is under considerable criticisms for its tendency to foster corruption, inefficiency, and dependency of the recipient states. According to a research conducted by Michael Clemens in 2011 and the UN Economic Analysis & Policy Division, there are 28 Least Developed Countries (LDCs) in which more than 10% of their GNI are from ODA. Though statistics show appreciable variation among LDCs' aid dependency, countries with low government transparency, rampant corruption, and inefficiency in policy implementation, are tended to rely more heavily on foreign aids. ODA lowers the necessity of the state leaders to collect taxes from its citizen, thus reduce the accountability of the politicians, and it does not contribute to promoting democracy and improving humanitarianism in the recipient countries. Notwithstanding that the Cotonou agreement place great emphasis on the importance of structural adjustments, reforms in haste without discrete planning may result in economic catastrophe. Greece thereby holds reservation on the effectiveness of ODA and wishes the EU countries to place more emphasis on other development factors such as trade and Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).

Promoting good ACP-EU relationship is essential in maintaining the EU’s influence throughout the world. Even though utilizing ODA could, arguably, characterize EU’s altruism and soft power, with mounting criticisms on the effectiveness of foreign assistance on LDCs’ economic development, it is thus imperative for the European Union to readjust its strategies toward the Cotonou Agreement. Furthermore, increasing awareness on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) challenges the previous modernist understandings that economic development should be the ultimate goals without considering sustainability. Therefore, EU development policy should align with SDGs, and implementation among European countries should be consistent and coherent with established EU policy norms and frameworks.

As a result of the EU debt crisis, Greece experience severe economic downturn, and its ODA/GNI ratio dropped from 0.17% in 2010 to 0.11% in 2011 but then raised significantly to 0.15% in 2015 according to Statistics from OECD. With shortage of excess money, Greece’s country programmable aid (CPA) focuses primarily on priority countries and LDCs. In spite of the economic crisis, Greece increased its portion of untied aid from 26% in 2005 to 62% in 2010, acknowledging that commercial advancement of donor countries has no direct correlation with economic development of the recipient countries. Lastly, Greece’s ODA places its emphasis on gender equality and women’s empowerment as well as environment and climate change mitigation including harnessing green economy, protecting biodiversity and enhancing energy efficiency. In conclusion, Greece’s economic recession has profound effects on its development policy. Nevertheless, Greece has made substantial improvement on readjusting its form of foreign assistance to maximize aid efficiency and effectiveness.

Throughout the expansion of the European Union, large sum of money from the European Structural and Investment Funds are devoted to narrow the gap of economic development between western and eastern European states. The Cotonou agreement was signed before the largest EU expansion of membership in 2004, during which significant amount of funds are allocated to Eastern Europe. Greece also places emphasis especially on assistance to newly acceded EU countries rather than to the ACP regions with approximately USD 6.1 million to Eastern Europe and only USD 2.1 million to second largest recipient region, the Middle East. The changing dynamics of EU expansion thereby underlines the Cotonou agreement’s shortcomings in terms of applicability and practicality. While globalization failed to meet the expected global integration, countries are stressing increasing importance on regionalization. Regional multilateralism is more feasible and approachable considering discrepancies in political, economic and social background and framework among different geographical regions. Furthermore, the Euro debt crisis, the migration problem, climate change and terrorism necessitate prioritization of resolving the EU internal problems through utilization of EU development funds.

Hence, Greece advocates budgetization of the European Development Fund into the general EU budget. Such inclusion would attain policy coherence and consistency, increase transparency on budgetary rules, and allow the European Parliament to possess oversights on strategies and programming of EU-ACP relationship. In addition, budgetization would enable better allocation of funds in accordance of long-term EU strategies, and it would simplify negotiation procedure as well as improving effectiveness and efficiency of assistance delivery. Greece also recommend the EU to shift its development policy from donor-recipient relationship to trade and commercial interconnection. Emphasis on trade will reduce one-sided dependency resulted from unilateral ODA and incentivize ACP to increase industrial competitiveness and reform its economic structure. Emphasis on trade would alleviate the problem of corruption, unaccountability, leader-to-leader relationship, and thus increase general welfare of ACP countries.

In conclusion, Greece upholds budgetization of the European Development Fund to ensure policy consistency with the EU principle and global goals. More emphasis should be place on trade rather than on donor-recipient relation to reduce dependency and to increase competitiveness. Greece believe that the Cotonou framework failed to meet the requirements rising from European internal issues, and reexamination and readjustment of the existing institution are urgently needed. Greece thereby looks forward to cooperating with Member States to orchestrate a comprehensive, applicable, and feasible post-Cotonou framework.