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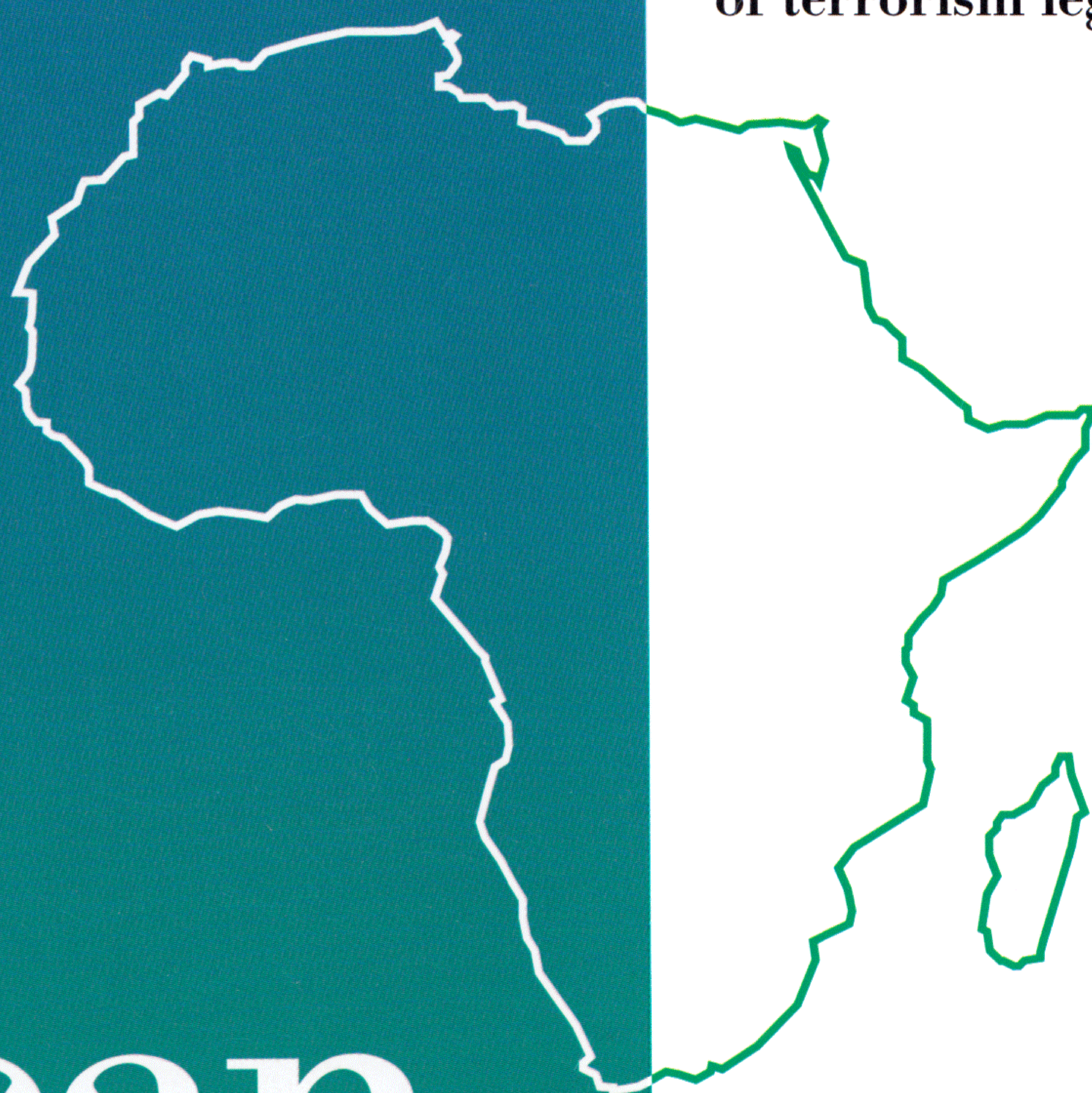

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African Security Review

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The challenge of change: Comparative lessons from the experiences of the EU and SADC

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INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of its co-operation in the late 1950s, with what is today known as the ACP group (African, Caribbean and Pacific countries), the European Union (EU) stressed the importance of regional co-operation or even integration, particularly among its African partners. Every convention signed during the last four decades between the two groups contained a chapter focused on co-operation.

All over sub-Saharan Africa, the history of the EU is looked upon as an exemplary model. Indeed, the EU is a unique success story. Founded in 1958 by six western European states, it has a current membership of 15 states. Since the end of the Cold War, it has adopted a policy of opening up to eastern and south-eastern Europe and, in the not too distant future, might have some 30 members.

After attaining independence from their colonial masters, African states have tried – in no less than 200 cases – to establish regional and institutionalised co-operation, or even integration, and mostly failed. What are the main reasons for these failures? The answer that is usually given, is threefold. Firstly, with the exception of South Africa, African states rarely have exchangeable goods. Secondly, there are no transnational communication links in many cases, and national currencies are often not convertible. Thirdly, and probably the most important hurdle, African leaders have not been prepared to take the step that has been of the utmost importance in the EU's success, namely a partial transfer of the national sovereignty of member countries to supranational institutions like the European Commission and the European Parliament.

A renaissance of regionalism has only recently developed in Africa, particularly in the Southern African region. It could be argued that, in Southern Africa, as in other parts of the continent, regionalism is the only answer to pressing socio-economic and political challenges. It was precisely on this assumption that the EU, through the initiative of the former German minister of foreign affairs, Klaus Kinkel, met in Berlin in September 1994 to sign a treaty of extensive co-operation between the EU and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).[1] By this time, many in the EU had concluded that, despite the heterogeneity of Southern African states, regionalism in sub-Saharan Africa had a future. How far is this true?

It could be argued that, in Southern Africa, as in other parts of the continent, regionalism is the only answer to pressing socio-economic and political challenges

SADC – AN ATTEMPT AT CREATING AN AFRICAN RENAISSANCE

FROM SADCC TO SADC

By signing the Windhoek treaty in 1992, the member states of the Southern African Development Co-ordination Conference (SADCC) transformed this forum into the much more ambitious Southern African Development Community (SADC).[2] It is often overlooked that the founding of the SADCC in 1980 was due largely to the initiative of Claude Cheysson, at the time the EU's commissioner in charge of co-operation with ACP countries. Cheysson, a well-known *tiers mondiste*, held the view that, as a result of South Africa's apartheid policy – South Africa would probably be destroyed by a civil war – its land-locked neighbours needed to develop new trade routes to the sea. Consequently, members of the SADCC concentrated on developing their own infrastructure so that their dependence on the South African powerhouse could be lessened. In the years that followed, the SADCC collected the necessary capital, mostly from western donors, and particularly from EU members, to establish this greater independence.

At its inception, SADC found itself developing along the lines of the EU. One of the major differences between the EU and SADC was the latter's uniquely decentralised administration. The different sectors of co-operation – 19 sectors at present divided among 12 member countries[3] – do not form part of the remarkably small, Gaborone-based SADC Secretariat, but are integrated into the national ministries of responsible member states. While the creation of a costly bureaucracy was avoided, the price that was clearly paid, was greater inefficiency.

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN CUSTOMS UNION

A thorough understanding of Southern Africa's regional structures is complicated by the fact that the Southern African Customs Union (SACU) functions within SADC. Founded around 1910, its members are, besides South Africa, the economically weak states of Botswana, Lesotho, Namibia and Swaziland (BLNS countries). SACU is characterised by common external tariffs, free trade and a system of harmonised excise duties. However, even more than SADC, SACU is a union of grossly unequal members.

South Africa's dominant role is revealed by its 93% share in SACU's regional gross domestic product (GDP). Its four partners, consisting of 13% of the total regional population, only produce the remaining 7% GDP. The respective national share of the regional customs tax and revenue that the BLNS countries are entitled to, is therefore quite low. Yet, it provides a significant part of government income – in the case of Swaziland, some 50% of its income. South Africa's dominance is further underlined by the fact that, with the exception of Botswana, all SACU members use the South African rand as legal tender. The common tariff and excise duty pool is not run by a supranational financial institution, but by the South African Reserve Bank. Given the economic legacy of the apartheid regime, it is hardly surprising that South Africa's SACU partners never questioned their membership of the union.

However, in the mid-1990s, SACU members started to renegotiate parts of the treaty governing their co-operation. They particularly argued over the amount of compensation payments transferred by South Africa to their accounts to repay them for being the country's captive markets. Such a cosy arrangement looks set to change. A new round of negotiations involving the EU and the BLNS countries will influence, among others, accommodations to compensate the BLNS countries for their financial losses as a result of the fact that – as is discussed later – the free trade agreement between the EU and South Africa, in reality, establishes a free trade zone (FTZ) between the EU and SACU as a whole.

STRUCTURES AND DEVELOPMENT PERSPECTIVES OF SADC

While the 1992 Windhoek treaty confirmed the objectives of SADC – with the signatories obliging themselves to co-operate with maximum effort in the fields of national development strategies, economic issues, democracy, human rights and a system of the rule of law – co-operation over trade was to take much longer.

Supplementing the SADC treaty in the succeeding years, nine protocols on co-operation in terms of energy, mining, drugs, transport and trade – a most problematic area – were signed. The trade protocol aimed at a step-by-step reduction of the existing tariff and non-tariff trade obstacles. It became legally binding after 1999 when ten out of the 14 SADC members ratified it. However much the existing tariff order still favoured South Africa's role of domination, the trade protocol aimed to ensure, at least on paper, that 90% of the region's goods would be freely traded within the then existing SADC FTZ.

More than any other item, the trade issue clearly showed that SADC suffered from a fundamental structural problem as a result of South Africa's continued economic and political dominant position. Most of the SADC members, according to criteria set by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), are 'least developed countries' (LLDCs)[4]: Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Seychelles and Zambia. Zimbabwe is classified as a low income country, while Botswana, Namibia and Swaziland have the status of lower middle income countries. Even within SADC, the economies of these countries are hardly competitive. All have huge deficits in their trade with South Africa and have often, in vain, requested South Africa to open its markets for their agricultural goods, textiles and other products which they cannot sell on world markets.

South Africa has been criticised for recklessly following aggressive export strategies, but also for hesitating to open its own markets to African producers

Since the end of the apartheid regime, South Africa has openly traded with the rest of Africa. The country has been criticised for recklessly following aggressive export strategies, but also for hesitating to open its own markets to African producers. But Pretoria has arguably little other choice, as the South African government is confronted at home with a very high, often structural and continuously increasing rate of unemployment.

A number of factors aggravate the unemployment situation in South Africa: the dramatic decline in the gold price resulting in the closure of mines; the trend towards mechanising commercial farming caused by high crime rates in the rural areas; and decreases in South Africa's mineral exports to countries hit by the Asian crisis. This most dangerous development will only be stopped if local and foreign capital shows renewed preparedness to invest in labour-intensive sectors of the economy.

But, such a turn to a brighter future is hardly conceivable: the very high crime rate, the costs of production which, when compared internationally, are often far too high, the militancy of many trade unions and the poor quality of the professional qualifications of victims of the apartheid regime's Bantu education, make a new start difficult.

Anglo American's decision, taken late in 1998, to transfer its main seat from Johannesburg to London, could be seen as a flight from crime.[5] The consequences of Anglo's step were disastrous and nobody was surprised when other companies followed.

Events such as these could be interpreted by foreign business as evidence that the local business community has lost its confidence in the chances that South Africa's historic transformation process would successfully continue. This is confirmed when potential foreign investors hear that, with the possible exception of 1997, South Africa's capital exports were clearly higher than its imports. If there are foreign direct investments at all today, they are investments not in labour, but in technology – intensive means of production. The sizeable investments of three German car manufacturers – Daimler Chrysler, BMW and Volkswagen – are good examples. But, these were investments into robots that hardly created any new jobs. As David Roche, chief strategist of the London-based Independent Strategy/Global Investment Consultants, correctly pointed out: "of all emergent markets South Africa has the greatest need of foreign capital and the least potential to attract it."[6]

It seems there is no real solution for South Africa's SADC dilemma. For SADC to be successful, the country must open its markets to producers in the other SADC countries, but this must be balanced against the realities of South Africa's disastrous rising unemployment rate.

It is difficult not to conclude that SADC's chances to develop balanced trade relations and to increase the regional trade volume of only 8% are poor. Prevailing circumstances in the SADC region are even worse when compared to the experience of the Common Market of the South (MERCOSUR), founded by Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay and Paraguay in the early 1990s. Notwithstanding economic and political inequalities, MERCOSUR succeeded in strengthening and expanding mutual trade between its members, largely due to liberalisation. Even if MERCOSUR is not a fair comparison, the experience of the former East African Community (EAC) may perhaps apply. For a long time, the EAC – consisting of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania – was seen as a model of successful co-operation. The widespread view was that it had reached the point of no return, as it functioned on an exceptional level of integration, even more so than that of the EU today. Yet, the EAC collapsed in the late 1970s. The main reason for its end was attributed to the fact that both Uganda and Tanzania felt that partially industrialised Kenya's exports into their two less developed economies, were detrimental to their economic growth.

Drastic inequalities clearly exist within SADC. Present structures seem ill-equipped to address these inequalities. The main body of the community is the annual summit of the heads of state. A council of ministers is subordinate to the summit, with each member state represented by its minister of finance or of development. The chairpersons of both bodies rotate annually. As stated above, SADC's remarkably small bureaucracy consists of the SADC Secretariat in Gaborone and sectors located in national ministries in SADC member countries. The importance of restructuring this Leviathan needs to be addressed.

EFFORTS TO DEEPEN SADC

Aware of its weaknesses, SADC made an attempt in 1996 to base its co-operation on a political pillar, in addition to its existing co-operation and development pillars. The former Frontline States (FLS) alliance, of which members had closely co-ordinated their efforts in the struggle against apartheid, formed the core of this development which saw the creation of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security.[7] The Organ was charged with a wide variety of demanding functions, including:

- the safeguarding of the region against internal and external instabilities;
- the promotion of democracy and human rights;

- the development of a common foreign policy;
- co-operation in the fields of security and defence;
- a regional defence treaty; and
- regional peacekeeping.

However, the founding of the Organ on Politics, Defence and Security did not strengthen SADC. On the contrary, the Organ added many serious problems to existing ones, with far too many questions absolutely vital for the proper functioning of SADC being left unanswered. Only the top of the Organ actually exists. Yet, interestingly enough, this top does not consist of a council of ministers of foreign affairs or of defence as had been envisaged, but of a summit of heads of state. No decision has yet been taken whether its chairperson will rotate. Indeed, SADC governments have not agreed until now whether this Organ council – like the SADC council of ministers – will be subordinate to the SADC summit. More damning is the fact that the Organ is without any administrative support. Since its inception, president Robert Mugabe has been the chairperson of the Organ. He initially seemed intent on ensuring that this position will be permanently held by the president of Zimbabwe as a move to prevent South Africa from dominating SADC politically. Such political moves served to divide rather than unite the Community's members. The Organ played no role at all when, at the request of the government of Lesotho, South Africa and Botswana sent troops into the mountain kingdom in September 1998 to suppress a *coup* by members of the country's security forces. Similarly, but for different reasons, the Organ did not figure when Angola, Zimbabwe and Namibia sent troops into the DRC a month earlier, and thus saved the dictatorial Kabila regime from being toppled by rebels.

Being aware of the dangers resulting from the non-functioning of the Organ, ministers of foreign affairs, defence and security of member states proposed a set of important reforms late in 1999. If accepted by any upcoming SADC summit, the Organ will have a better chance to be effective for the first time. According to these proposals, the Organ will be subordinate to the SADC summit. The council of heads of state will be replaced by a troika, consisting of the acting, preceding and succeeding chairpersons. Under the troika will be a council of ministers of foreign affairs, defence and security, with a rotating chairperson. The activities of the council of ministers will be supported by a permanent secretariat.

In the current uncertain circumstances, however, the fact has to be commended that troops from all SADC member countries – with the exception of the DRC and Seychelles, and with the support of some foreign, mostly EU countries – took part in Exercise Blue Crane, a subregional peacekeeping training exercise in South Africa's Northern Cape in April 1999.[8] The troubling role of South Africa's armed forces has aggravated the uncertainty in the region. Observers at Blue Crane noticed with concern that the quality of participating SANDF units had apparently declined sharply. It leads the EU – and other outside observers – to question the potential role of the South African forces in future peacekeeping and peacemaking missions. Weaknesses in the SANDF

The Organ on Politics, Defence and Security added many problems to existing ones, with many questions vital for the functioning of SADC being left unanswered

had already been noticed before, particularly during the campaign in Lesotho. The SANDF currently seems to experience a crisis similar to the one which the police, customs, immigration, public schools and hospitals, and other institutions have gone through since the historic transition to democracy. Among other factors, it seems as if affirmative action, however understandable, has been implemented with too much haste, often leading to even more corruption and inefficiency.

The consolidation and deepening of SADC is one of president Mbeki's highest priorities. It is particularly here that his vision of an African Renaissance will succeed or fail. The tasks lying ahead of him in the region are as demanding as the problems he is confronted with at home, where Africans took over a ruined country from the Afrikaners. It is important that the outside world, particularly the EU, provides him and his democratic government with as much support as it can afford.

THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

The late 1980s and early 1990s were the decisive years of the breakthrough towards democracy. In pursuit of its own national interests, the diplomacy practiced by the United Kingdom steered most of the decisive transformation process in South Africa, as well as developments in Namibia, Mozambique and, to a lesser extent, in Angola. At the time, the British government disregarded efforts by the EU to shape a common foreign policy towards Southern Africa, in general, and individual countries, in particular. Only when president Nelson Mandela took over from F W de Klerk did the EU and its other members have the opportunity to play a role. Arguably, British diplomacy then did and still does play the most active part in shaping Europe's policy towards modern-day South Africa.

However, it was the diplomacy of Klaus Kinkel, the German foreign minister at the time, that led to the opening of a dialogue between the EU and SADC. This paved the way for SADC and most of the EU countries to convene in Berlin in September 1994, when they signed a general and very ambitious co-operation agreement. It was agreed that ministers of member states of the two communities would meet every two years. Current affairs would be dealt with by a common EU/SADC steering committee of high ranking public officials, meeting every six months. The two bodies have given special emphasis to the following issues of mutual interest:

- the development of SADC;
- the future of the *Lomé convention*;
- human rights and democracy;
- the conflicts in Kosovo, Angola and the DRC;
- the EU's Agenda 2000;
- the EU's opening towards new member countries in the East; as well as
- the fight against drugs and HIV/Aids.

An important step towards the restructuring of relations between the EU and the whole of Southern Africa was taken when, after nearly four years of intensive negotiations, a free trade agreement was signed between the EU and South Africa.[9] The time these negotiations took, should make it clear how difficult they were. Even on 1 January 2000, the date of the agreement's provisional implementation, not all details had been cleared. The Greek and Italian governments, supported by other Mediterranean EU members, made it clear that the parliaments in Athens and Rome would not ratify the agreement if South Africa continued to export its respective schnapps under the trademarks *Ouzo* and *Grappa*. Other than trade issues, those dealing with development co-operation were not problematic. The *European programme for reconstruction and development in South Africa*, the accord signed in 1994, was simply included into the free trade agreement.

According to the key chapter of the free trade agreement, 95% of South Africa's exports into the EU will be allowed free of any custom duties after a ten-year transitional period. After 12 years, 86% of EU exports will have free access to South African markets. As far as South Africa's exports are concerned, a considerable number of 'sensitive' agricultural products are exempted from this agreement to protect the interests of European farmers. It remains to be seen whether these limitations will survive future World Trade Organisation (WTO) negotiations on the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products. Despite this, it can be expected that mutual trade will grow further. Currently, South Africa buys 43% of its imports in the EU and sells 30% of its total exports to the EU.

The EU-South Africa deal undoubtedly influenced the post-Lomé negotiations, conducted by the EU and its 71 ACP partners from September 1998 to February 2000. The *Suva convention*, signed in May 2000 in the capital of the Fiji islands, represents the most fundamental change in more than 40 years of EU-ACP co-operation. With the exception of South Africa, which was admitted into the group in 1997 as a member with very restricted rights, all ACP countries benefited from the generously endowed European Development Fund and from non-reciprocal trade preferences.

European negotiators insisted that such preferential treatment towards ACP countries, according to current WTO rules, could only be granted to LLDCs. In other words, after a transitional period, the EU and the non-LLDCs among its ACP partners will be linked by mutual FTZs. In the SADC region, this means that Zimbabwe, Botswana, Namibia, Swaziland and Mauritius will also have to concede trade preferences to the EU in the longer run. In addition, the EU and its partners agreed that, from 2008 onwards and again after a transitional period, the EU will no longer co-operate with individual ACP countries, but with whichever regional organisations that represent their interests as member countries. Decades of EU efforts to make its African partners co-operate on a regional level were more or less a total failure. This new criterion might force neighbouring ACP countries to be more serious in closely co-operating with one another on an institutionalised basis. It remains to be seen how the EU will combine the different patterns of co-operation with LLDCs and non-LLDCs belonging to one regional organisation.

the EU agreed that, from 2008 onwards, it will no longer co-operate with individual ACP countries, but with regional organisations that represent their interests as member countries

The free trade agreement between the EU and South Africa might serve as a model here. Clearly, this agreement will involve more than just an EU/South Africa deal in practice, as it will include, in terms of Southern Africa, the whole of SACU. As this agreement changes South Africa's external tariffs, the country's four SACU partners must approve these changes, according to article 19 of the SACU constitution. They will clearly only approve this, if the EU is prepared to compensate them for their serious economic losses as a result of the EU's dealings with Pretoria. These losses will be manifold. Two important factors will determine the extent of these losses. The first is the reduction of income through tariffs for BLNS countries. Until now, tariffs must be paid for EU products upon entering a BLNS country, as these countries, according to their ACP status, still enjoy the privilege of having a non-reciprocal FTZ with the EU. As costs do not allow for the establishment of tariff borders for EU products entering the BLNS countries via South Africa, they will also enter free of any duties into South Africa's four SACU partners. Furthermore, products from BLNS countries will have to compete with EU products – some of these exports are even subsidised – on the South African (and even local) markets in future. These issues are currently being negotiated between the EU and BLNS countries. Secondly, it is likely that these issues will be combined with the agenda of deliberations since the mid-1990s, in which the five SACU members have tried to agree on a new formula for distributing SACU's income from tariffs and excise duties. This will depend upon South Africa's willingness to make the relevant concessions to the BLNS countries as they will hardly approve Pretoria's deal with the EU otherwise. Perhaps today, for the first time in the history of SACU, the BLNS countries could act from a position of strength in their negotiations with Pretoria.

INTERNAL STABILITY IN SOUTH AFRICA: PRECONDITION FOR SADC'S SUCCESS

Since Mandela took over from De Klerk in May 1994, South Africa has been governed by the African National Congress (ANC) and its alliance partners, the South African Communist Party (SACP) and the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU). The alliance's coalition partner, the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) only seems to play a minor role. During the decades of the struggle, the SACP and large parts of the ANC and COSATU worked very closely with the ruling party and the government of the German Democratic Republic and of other socialist states. Not surprisingly, their successful fight against apartheid also had a strong influence on the alliance's direction with its economic policies in post-apartheid South Africa. However, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of socialism forced the alliance to throw its plans of a socialist development agenda overboard. Circumstances further forced the non-Marxists, the strongest wing in the ANC, to get rid of the 'Swedish model'.[10] Advised by the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and leading western governments, the ANC came out in favour of an unequivocally market-oriented policy – as elaborated upon in the Growth, Employment and Redistribution strategy (GEAR). This put them on a collision course with the SACP and COSATU. The view was that economic growth would be created so that the national income could be redistributed. It was never disputed that redistribution was a social, economic and political necessity, given that South Africa remains one of the countries with the most unequal national income distribution in the world. However, GEAR could only have succeeded if South Africa's first democratically elected government had been able to create a favourable investment climate and thus to attract mostly foreign capital. But, in this Pretoria has been failing. Since the triumph of democracy, South Africa has lost capital more or less continually. One of the consequences was that its 1.5% annual growth remained far behind the envisaged 6%. In addition, it was impossible to create 100 000 jobs annually, as promised in the 1994 electoral campaign. Instead, the opposite happened, with the country losing at least half a million jobs between 1994 and 1999.

On its return to the international community, South Africa was again submitted to the regimes of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and later that of the WTO. GATT forced Pretoria to dismantle the high protection tariffs that had been built up around the apartheid state. One consequence was that local producers suddenly had to compete with strong rivals from abroad. Local production sites had to be modernised if they were to become competitive. These plans could only have been realised if huge sums were invested. But this did not happen. The poor quality of training among many people, the militancy of SACP- influenced trade unions and crime often negatively influenced foreign and local business decisions to invest capital.[11] Black South Africa, for very good

Democracy is not given, democracy is a continuous challenge

reasons, are too proud of their victory over 350 years of racism to question the ANC's policies seriously. Every potential investor today knows that, due to the mixed results of affirmative action and due to the view held by many Afrikaners to be in a Versailles-like situation,[12] police corruption, the breakdown in the criminal justice system and the problems in prisons could disintegrate beyond the control of the government. The country's élite will therefore continue to emigrate and South Africa might well decline to the development levels of some of its neighbours in the long run.

Sadly, South Africa's young and fragile democracy could pitiably fail. Unfortunately, no-one in the EU or elsewhere seems to have the political courage to tell South Africa's new leaders to heed the words of Klaus von Beyme, an eminent German political scientist: "Demokratie ist nicht gegeben, Demokratie ist aufgegeben" (democracy is not given, democracy is a continuous challenge). Of course, democracy has to be developed and this requires stability. To quote Patti Waldmeir, an excellent American journalist, democratic niceties will have to wait upon the overwhelming need to restore stability, so that a lasting democratic order can evolve in the longer run.

The EU and its partners should urgently and strongly advise Mbeki and his government to include strong Afrikaner individuals into key positions in cabinet, such as Constand Viljoen and a representative of Afrikaner business concerns. Far too many gifted Afrikaners have withdrawn into apathy and, to quote one of Afrikanerdom's great sons, Breyten Breytenbach, it would be most surprising if this apathy does not turn into counterviolence and even counterrevolutionary activities in future.[13] It would be naive to believe that conservative and even not so conservative Afrikaners in such a situation will lack the necessary will and organisation to resist. The great catastrophe can still strike the country. South African and foreign leaders must be reminded of what Van Zyl Slabbert[14] said in July 1987 in Dakar when his group of progressive Afrikaners met with a delegation of top ANC officials, headed by Mbeki: "If you want to overcome Apartheid you must convince Whites, and particularly Afrikaners, that there is life beyond Apartheid."[15] Not so long ago, this was repeated by Beyers Naudé, one of the Afrikaners who identified with the ANC's struggle. The Afrikaners' great potential is still there and could still be easily abused to destroy the country when it should be used to achieve the opposite: to stabilise and develop democratic South Africa.

All this was clearly seen by Princeton Nathan Lyman, a former United States' ambassador in South Africa, and his colleague from the UK, Sir Anthony Reeve. Both were present on 23 April 1994 when, hours before the country's very first democratic elections, Thabo Mbeki and Constand Viljoen signed the *Accord on Afrikaner self-determination* after nearly nine months of deliberations. For the author of this article – one of two EU observers, present at the signing ceremony in the West Wing of the Union Buildings – it was painful to see that the German government was not represented. Like so many others, the Germans apparently did not have a clue then, and neither do they have now of what was at stake.

London and Washington, of course, knew the latent dangers. What is less understandable, is their apparent indifference after the accord had been included into the South African *Constitution* (article 235). As such they did their own diplomacy a fatal disservice. But, it was disunity in Viljoen's political camp and ideological reservations in parts of the ANC that predominantly prevented progress. With Viljoen's marginalisation in the 1999 elections, the whole of South Africa and its EU partners suffered a serious setback. The many Afrikaners who were not prepared to follow F W de Klerk into capitulation, but who were prepared to give the new South Africa a chance on the condition that, as prepared by Mbeki and Viljoen, their right to self-determination was respected, became leaderless. In June 1999, many of them did not go to the polls at all, or voted for the Democratic Party (DP) whose seemingly racist slogan – *"slaan terug"* (hit back) – reflected their desperation and frustration. Many Afrikaners now ask when the ANC/SACP/COSATU alliance (and also the Western world) will understand the open letter, published late in 1999 by Breyten Breytenbach, Johan Degenaar, Deon Geldenhuys, Hendrik Willem van der Merwe and other progressive Afrikaners, asking the government to respect international standards on minority rights.[16]

THE THREAT OF SADC'S COLLAPSE: A CHALLENGE TO THE EU

The chances to turn SADC into a genuine success are arguably slim. However, the disintegration of South Africa and of the other SADC countries is by no means inevitable. The EU must be made aware of the fact that chaos and anarchy in South Africa, from a security point of view, would confront the Union with challenges with which it could not cope.[17] As is well known, more than a million citizens from EU countries, among them mostly Britons, Portuguese and Germans, still live in South Africa. Scenarios might arise that make it necessary to evacuate them through the mysterious US airbase at Molepolole in Botswana, or through South African airports and harbours. None of the EU countries and not even the US has the necessary transportation capacities at its disposal. The alternative will be for the EU and its members to do everything possible to help South Africa to consolidate its fledgling democracy.

In considering Germany's experiences with ethnic minorities in a number of eastern European countries, the question arises whether solutions cannot somehow be comparatively transferred to South Africa. The government in Berlin should remember that, only a few years ago, it tried to compel the Russian government to hand back what belonged to the so-called *Sowjetdeutsche* (Soviet Germans) from 1924 to 1941, in order to be able to preserve their identity in a culturally foreign environment – the *Autonomous Republic of the Volga Germans* (a kind of *volkstaat*) and closed settlements (*Sprachinseln*, or linguistic islands) in the other parts of the USSR. The leaders of the young Soviet Union, by the way, had conceded these privileges to their ethnic German community and so successfully overcame its counterrevolutionary tendencies. It should not be a problem at all for Germany, being one of the EU's key members, to introduce this expertise into European discussions on developments in South Africa and into any EU/South African and/or EU/SADC dialogue.

If the EU and South Africa succeed in stabilising democracy in South Africa, they will have a much better chance to help with the settling of conflicts in other SADC countries. Hopefully, SADC and its members will then be better prepared to use the many available possibilities. The existing web of treaties with Western Europe offers them the opportunity to develop SADC further. The EU/SADC co-operation treaty of September 1994 is particularly filled with opportunities that have not yet been fully utilised. SADC and its members should use the opportunity of frank dialogue to learn from the EU's successes and failures over the last 40 years. They should be prepared to admit, for example, that the hasty agreement on a common market within a few years only, the founding of the far too ambitions Organ on Politics, Defence and Security and the inclusion of the war-torn DRC into SADC, endanger SADC's very existence. Furthermore, when considering reunited Germany's not too powerful role within the EU, the EU and SADC may together find ways to deal with South Africa's place within the Community. The French politician and EU commissioner, Claude Cheysson played a most fruitful role in the founding of the SADCC some 20 years ago. This example should urge the EU to sponsor SADC, albeit under totally different circumstances. Together, both regional organisations stand a chance. If their co-operation fails, it will be a disaster for the EU as much as for SADC.

Together, both the EU and SADC stand a chance. If their co-operation fails, it will be a disaster as much for the one as for the other

NOTES

The author, a trained lawyer, was the representative of the Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP) to the German federal parliament and the federal government until fairly recently. The SWP is Germany's most important think-tank on foreign and security policy issues. Over the past three decades, shuttling between Germany and South Africa, he also worked as a freelance consultant on Southern African issues and the *Lomé convention*.

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1 The text of the agreement was published by the Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (Bonn), 12 September 1994, pp 769-772.

2 With reference to the SADCC, see T Hawkins, A mere magnet for funds, in Southern Africa: The political and economic prospects for the region, *Die Suid-Afrikaan*, October/November 1992, pp 13-14. With reference to SADC, see the detailed papers by C Peters-Berries & M Marx, Regionale Kooperation und Integration im Südlichen Afrika (SADC), Chancen und Herausforderungen, *KAS-Auslandinformationen* 11, St Augustin, 1997, pp 64-98; and C Peters-Berries & M Marx, Regionale Integration in Südlichen Afrika: Die Southern African Development Community (SADC) im Jahr 1998, *KAS-Auslandinformationen*, 1999, pp 50-69.

3 See details about the different sectors in J Cilliers, *Building security in Southern Africa: An update of the evolving architecture*, ISS Monograph 43, Institute for Security Studies, Pretoria, November 1999, pp 13-14.

4 The OECD distinguishes between less developed countries (LDCs) and least developed countries (LLDCs).

5 "Fly the beloved country", as Anne Paton entitled an article in a London Sunday paper late in 1998.

6 South Africa's capital crisis, *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 9 September 1998, p 10. On the foreign investments in South Africa, see World Bank, *Global development finance*, World Bank, Washington DC, 1999, p 492. From a German point of view, see Southern African-German Chamber of Commerce and Industry, *Fifth survey of German enterprises in South Africa: Views, opinions, judgements, intentions and considerations with regard to policy and economy*, Johannesburg, 1998.

7 See J Cilliers, The SADC Organ on defence, politics and security, *IDP Paper* 10, Institute for Defence Policy, Halfway House, October 1996; M Malan & J Cilliers, SADC Organ on Politics, Defence and Security: Future developments, *IDP Paper* 19, Institute for Defence Policy, Halfway House, March; and Cilliers, 1999, op cit, pp 32-36.

8 See SANDF, *Exercise Blue Crane, South Africa, 7 to 30-4-1999,* booklet for military attachés. Compare in this context, E G Berman & K E Sams, *Constructive disengagement: Western efforts to develop African peacekeeping*, ISS Monograph 33, Institute for Security Studies, Halfway House, December 1998.

9 See European Commission, *The European Union and South Africa: An overview of the relationship in light of the trade, development and co-operation agreement*, EC, Brussels, 1999. Important information on the negotiations are to be found in Koordinationsstelle Südliches Afrika (ed), *Europäische Union – Südliches Afrika. Freihandel oder handel mit Entwicklung*, Bielefeld, 1997.

10 Sweden was the pioneer of democratic socialism. Later, while it could still be financed, it was widely copied by other members of the EU.

11 See, for example, Euro Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Southern Africa, *European business confidence in South Africa: Survey of prevailing views and options*, Johannesburg, October 1997.

12 After World War I and Germany's defeat, Germany had to sign a 'peace dictate' in Versailles in Paris, instead of a 'peace treaty'. As many Germans saw it, this humiliated the German nations and was therefore one of the main reasons for the next catastrophe, World War II. In German, the term 'Versailles' became synonomous wiht deep rooted hopelessness.

13 B Breytenbach, He Mann, lass mich nicht allein. Unerledigte Geschäfte in Südafrika...., *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 28 March 1998, p 18.

14 The author was a member of his groundbreaking delegation to Dakar, Senegal in July 1987.

15 Quoted by K Baron von der Ropp, Two years after Dakar, the dialogue continues, *Democracy in Action*, July 1989, pp 14-15. K Baron von der Ropp, Nuwe benaderings nodig vir Westerse inisiatiewe, *Die Suid-Afrikaan*, April/May 1988, pp 34-36. K B von der Ropp, Afrikaner-Israel kan 'n tweede Lebanon verhoed, *Vrye Weekblad*, 27 October 1989, p 18.

16 Pres Mbeki, luister asb na ons..., *Insig*, November 1999, pp 24-25.

17 K Baron von der Ropp, Nicht undenkbar: Bundeswehr-Soldaten in Süd Afrika, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 30 August 1999, p 10.