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INTERREGIONALISM AS A FOREIGN POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION:
A CASE FOR SOFT POWER?

by

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ABSTRACT

INTERREGIONALISM AS A FOREIGN POLICY OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: A CASE FOR SOFT POWER?

Maxim Miroshnikov
Old Dominion University, 2012
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This paper looks at the interregionalism as a part of the European Union's foreign policy. It argues that the EU's use of soft power can be traced within this policy. The paper proposes two methods of defining soft power in action: through presence and through purposive action. Three case studies are analyzed to support this. It is shown that indeed the EU exercised soft power toward other actors using these mechanisms. Success of these actions was however not always present.

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INTRODUCTION

Because of its unique nature and particular history of development the European Union is a sui generis actor in the international relations. Its uniqueness is reflected first of all in its character - somewhere between a state and supranational organization. This particular feature has led to the second important factor – the way how the European Union acts in the international affairs. Its main strengths lie in the non-military spheres – economy, culture, values and norms. This behavior of the EU as a foreign policy actor led to its close association with a term ‘soft power’. Indeed, despite the fact that the Union started to develop military capabilities in the mid-nineties and even use them, its main successes still lay in the other spheres.

The problem is however in the definition of soft power, especially in relation to the European Union. The term coined by Nye became quite popular and catchy, and therefore widely misused. Commentators and analytics tend to associate everything which is not connected with military with soft power. With this kind of approach it became hard to use the notion fruitfully.

This paper contributes to the discussion of the soft power by applying this idea to the European Union policy toward the group of African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) states. I argue that the soft power was the important part of these relations, especially in the crucial moments of their institutionalization. Therefore this paper will not only provide a useful insight on the relations between two regions, but also help understanding the idea of soft power and the ways to use it.

The structure of the paper therefore is following. First, the idea of soft power is scrutinized to reveal the definition, criticism and ways to operationalize it.

Second, the nature of the European Union as an actor in international relations is discussed and especially how the notion of soft power can be applied to its foreign policy.

Finally, the paper argues that soft power can be found in the EU policy of interregionalism. Two mechanisms of soft power exertion are proposed: through presence and purposive action.

The case study chosen for this paper is the relations between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of countries. A case can be made that the European Union influenced the development of the integrational process in that region by the use of soft power. Three distinct periods will be viewed – the creation of the ACP group during the negotiations of the Lomé Convention, the EPA negotiations under the Cotonou Agreement, and the creation of the African Union. All three cases represent different use of soft power by the European Union as well as different level of success in using it.

WHAT IS SOFT POWER?

The idea of soft power was introduced by Joseph S. Nye. He defined it as an “ability of a country to structure a situation so that other countries develop preferences or define their interests in ways consistent with its own”¹. Therefore it is opposed to the other types of power that are used as a “stick” or a “carrot”, either to coerce or bribe other actors to change their position and do something they would not do otherwise. In plain English soft power can be understood as an ability to persuade or attract other actors to change their preferences and therefore their behavior. This persuasion and/or attraction is not be based on the threat of hard power invocation. Simultaneously actor shouldn’t be attracted by the promise of some benefits.

The very concept of the fact that power is multidimensional and not necessarily reflects military or economic might of the state preseded Nye. As early as 1962 Edward Halett Carr differentiated between economic power, military power and power over opinion.² Later John Kenneth Galbraith also described three types of power:

- “Condign”³ power – ability to make actor abandon its preferences by linking them to a sufficiently unpleasant alternative.
- Compensatory power – ability to make actor do something by offering him sufficient reward
- Conditioned power – ability to make actor do something by changing his believes⁴.

The idea of soft power is becoming more important given the changing nature and understanding of power in general. It used to be simply represented in military terms, and at some point of history this would be really accurate. The end of the Cold War however signified the end of this era (though the signs of the changing nature of power were present before). It is not enough anymore to have a large army and complicated

¹ Joseph S. Nye, *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1990): 168.

² Edward Halett Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919–1939: An Introduction to the Study of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1962): 108.

³ John Kenneth Galbraith, *The Anatomy of Power* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1983): 4.

⁴ Ibid.: 4-5.

military techniques to exercise influence over other countries. Other methods like economy, cultural attraction gained more and more influence for the policy makers. Significant progress in informational technologies was a crucial factor in this development as well. As Janice Bially Mattern notes, soft power became a feasible part of the state's foreign policy due to the fact that communication became incredibly cheap.⁵

Nye also points out the important difference between “three faces of power”: “commanding change, controlling agendas, and establishing preferences”⁶. Hard and soft power fit all three of them; the trick is to understand which one is actually in play.

According to Nye soft power is a “descriptive, rather than a normative, concept”⁷. It doesn't presume that only ethically correct and “good” values can be attractive. At the end of the day great dictators like Stalin and Mao exercised a great deal of soft power along with coercive military and economic ones, and a big army can be as attractive as a big economy.

Main resources for the soft power are culture (that is attractive to others), political values (when actor lives up to them not only in domestic, but also international arena) and foreign policies that are seen as legitimate and moral.⁸ At the same time it is not at all that easy to distinguish between hard power and soft power resources. Hard power and soft power “are related because they are both aspects of the ability to achieve one's purpose by affecting the behavior of others”⁹. In other words it is sometimes hard to put a clear distinction between two types of power. “Soft-power resources are the assets that produce...attraction”¹⁰, but it is hard to say (and Nye acknowledges it) what at the end of the day will be able to attract public or policy makers. The fact that most of the resources can be basis for both types of power complicates matter further. For example economic resources, as Nye notes “can produce both hard- and soft-power behavior. They can be used to coerce as well as attract”¹¹. On the other hand resources that are clearly marked as

⁵ Janice Bially Mattern, “Why ‘Soft Power’ Isn't So Soft: Representational Force and Attraction in World Politics” in *Power in world politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter and M.J. Williams (New York: Routledge, 2007): 101-102.

⁶ Joseph S. Nye, *Future of Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2011): 11.

⁷ Ibid, 81.

⁸ Joseph S. Nye, *Soft Power* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004): 6.

⁹ Ibid.: 7.

¹⁰ Ibid.: 6.

¹¹ Joseph S. Nye, “Notes for a Soft-Power Research Agenda” in *Power in world politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter and M.J. Williams (New York: Routledge, 2007): 165.

soft-power ones can fail to produce expected soft-power behavior. It seems therefore that the distinction between hard and soft power is contextual and depends on many other variables.

Nye specifies three clusters of qualities that are “crucial for converting resources into [soft] power behavior”, these are benignity, competence and beauty (charisma)¹². In other words actor has more chances to be listened to if it is unbiased, expresses benign intentions, explicit knowledge of the matter and is attractive in one way or another.

Another point is that, it is difficult to demonstrate the short term effect of soft-power instruments.¹³ Hard power (either military or economic) yields results quicker, and they are more easily observable. Results of the soft power application need time to appear and become noticeable. Layne argues in this vein that actually in the realm of high politics soft power is unable to have influence, because decision-makers in this sphere are more than usual insulated from the public opinion.¹⁴ It was also shown by several researches that general public doesn't usually have strong opinion about matters of foreign policy, and it is actually shaped by elites.¹⁵ Nye response however was that the decision-makers can be affected by soft power as well as the public opinion.¹⁶ This relationship is also hard to show directly. It is true that many of the authoritarian leaders are fond of American culture and Hollywood films, but nevertheless seem to be unmoved in their values or policies. However there are some cases, when the influence of soft power on decision makers can be traced. Good example is Mikhail Gorbachev who as evidences show was influenced by his senior adviser Alexandr Yakovlev who grasped the liberal ideas from West and was the main promoter of the ideas of *perestroika* and *glasnost*.¹⁷

¹² Joseph S. Nye, *Future of Power*, op. cit., 92.

¹³ Joseph S. Nye, “The Future of Soft Power in US Foreign Policy” in *Soft Power and US Foreign Policy: Theoretical, Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Iderjet Parmar and Michael Cox (New York: Routledge, 2010): 9.

¹⁴ Christopher Layne, “The Unbearable Lightness of Soft Power” in *Soft Power and US Foreign Policy: Theoretical, Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Iderjet Parmar and Michael Cox (New York: Routledge, 2010): 56-57.

¹⁵ Johan Hellstroem, “Re-examining the Party-Electorate Linkages on European Integration,” *Journal of European Public Policy* 15:8 (2008): 1139.

¹⁶ Joseph S. Nye, “The Future of Soft Power in US Foreign Policy”, op. cit.: 218.

¹⁷ Ibid.

It is also true that in the real world there is probably no such thing as a sheer hard or sheer soft power. Foreign policy of the country usually combines both in different proportions and with different success. To describe this combination Nye coined out the term “smart power” – “strategies that successfully combine hard and soft power resources”¹⁸. The key word here is “successfully”. It serves as a reminder that while probably all countries combine hard and soft power in one way or another, not all of them can do it in the way that will yield positive (for them) results.

Soft power became a very popular concept among the academics and politicians, but at the same time it drew a lot of criticism. Edward Lock stated that the idea of soft power is very ambiguous and has “a number of significant conceptual problems”¹⁹. In particular Lock notes that in different works Nye varies between two distinct accounts of soft power: first that it can be used as an instrument to change other actors’ values; second, that it is aimed at changing in the politics of other countries and not necessarily their values (since values are said to be assets only if shared by others).²⁰

Christopher Layne offers more realist critique of the Nye’s notion. He posits that if the target of the soft power is state it is hard to show its impact. He argues that states can not be compared to individual decision makers and that there is little or no evidence at all that states make decisions based on the fact that they “like” some other state (or decision maker of that state) and not on their national interests.²¹ Layne also agrees with Lock that the very definition of soft power is not clear and has expanded with years.²² Indeed, the attempts of soft power application in the literature show big variety in the understanding of the concept. Andrei Tsygankov in the analysis of Russian foreign policy, defined sources of soft power as “political legitimacy, economic interdependence and cultural values”²³. Such definition is broader than original Nye’s. Tarik Oğuzlu defined soft power through the use of civilian, economic and normative instruments,

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Edward Lock, “Soft Power and Strategy: Developing a ‘Strategic’ Concept of Power” in *Soft Power and US Foreign Policy: Theoretical, Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, ed. Iderjet Parmar and Michael Cox (New York: Routledge, 2010): 34.

²⁰ Ibid.: 34-35.

²¹ Christopher Layne, “The Unbearable Lightness of Soft Power”, op. cit.: 53-54.

²² Ibid.: 58.

²³ Andrei P. Tsygankov, “If Not by Tanks, Then by Banks? The Role of Soft Power in Putin’s Foreign Policy” *Europe-Asia Studies* 7:58 (2006): 1081.

contrasting it only with sheer military power of coercion.²⁴ Peng Er Lam and Shogo Suzuki in their analyses of Japanese and Chinese use of soft power looked at the concept mainly through cultural lenses.²⁵ Sheng Ding noted that within Chinese academia there is a tendency to find the analogues with soft power in the Chinese history and works of great Chinese thinkers and strategists.²⁶

Another line of critique is concerned with mechanisms of soft power employment. Layne notes that they are at least “fuzzy”²⁷. Bohas writes that Nye concentrates on the result, the effect that soft power has on people in other countries, but doesn’t analyse how this effect is achieved, or what mechanisms are in play.²⁸ This problem makes it hard to operationalize the notion of soft power, and make it close to impossible to fulfill the call for devising the “smart strategies” that Nye makes.²⁹

Absence of clear definition just adds more to the confusion about the very idea of soft power. Reflecting this confusion Layne doubts whether the notion of soft power has any value added at all since it uses the ideas that already appeared in the theoretical schools of institutionalism, the democratic peace theory and constructivism.³⁰

As one can see the question of how to operationalize soft power is an important issue. Nye proposes two models of soft power in action – direct and indirect one. Direct model assumes that leaders of the countries change their policies and actions after being affected by attraction and/or persuasion exercised by other leaders. In the indirect model soft power of the actor influences public and third parties that in turn are able to affect the leaders of other countries “by creating an enabling environment for decisions”³¹. To trace

²⁴ Tarik Oğuzlu, “Soft Power in Turkish Foreign Policy” *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 1:61 (2007): 83.

²⁵ Peng Er Lam, “Japan’s Quest for “Soft Power”: Attraction and Limitation” *East Asia* 24 (2007): 349-363; Shogo Suzuki, “Chinese Soft Power, Insecurity Studies, Myopia and Fantasy” *Third World Quarterly* 4:30 (2009): 779-793.

²⁶ Sheng Ding, “Analyzing Rising Power from the Perspective of Soft Power: A New Look to China’s Rise to the Status Quo power” *Journal of Contemporary China* 19:64 (2010): 255-272.

²⁷ Christopher Layne, “The Unbearable Lightness of Soft Power”, op. cit.: 54.

²⁸ Alexandre Bohas, “The Paradox of Anti-Americanism: Reflection on the Shallow Concept of Soft Power” *Global Society* 4:20 (2006): 410.

²⁹ Joseph S. Nye, “Notes for a Soft-Power Research Agenda”, op. cit.: 172.

³⁰ Christopher Layne, “The Unbearable Lightness of Soft Power”, op. cit.:54.

³¹ Joseph S. Nye, *Future of Power*, op. cit.: 94.

the effect of soft power in both of these models Nye writes that “careful process-tracing of the sort that good historians or journalists do”³² is required.

Matthew Kroenig, Melissa McAdam and Steven Weber propose more elaborated model of soft power operationalization. They theorize that for the effective application of the soft power states must “communicate to an intended target in a functioning marketplace of ideas, persuade the target to change its attitude on a relevant political issue, and ensure that the target’s newly held attitude influences international political outcomes”³³. Therefore successful application of the soft power is happening when the states “communicate through credible and attractive sources, deliver a repeated message that speaks to the recipient at an emotional level, and target recipients that are open to communication”³⁴. At the same time the trustworthiness of the source of the message is undermined if it is perceived as having “direct stake in the matter at hand” or “message of the soft power campaign clashes with material interests of the target audience”³⁵. Kroenig et al. use two case studies of soft power application with one of them treated as failure and second as success. They claim that in Iraq in 2003 the US failed to be seen as credible messenger and the ideas it tried to bring to this Middle Eastern country clashed with core material interests of local people (namely the desire to be self-governed, not occupied). On the other hand the democracy promotion in the post communist countries of the Eastern Europe can be seen as success. In this case the US acted in the functioning marketplace of ideas, was perceived as credible messenger and what is important the ideas that it promoted were adopted and implemented.³⁶

The task for this paper is to try to operationalize the notion of soft power in the context of the European Union’s foreign policy. The question is what are the areas where the European Union acts as a messenger that is able to attract others? Before answering this question it seems useful to see how the notion of soft power is related with the EU in the literature.

³² Ibid.

³³ Matthew Kroenig, Melissa McAdam, Steven Weber, “Taking Soft Power Seriously” *Comparative Strategy* 29:5 (2010): 413.

³⁴ Ibid., 415-416.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid., 422.

EUROPEAN UNION – WHAT KIND OF ACTOR IS IT?

European Union is not a state in a classical Westphalian sense, but a number of states that pooled their sovereignties in several areas together. Jacques Delors once called it “objet politique nonidentifié”¹, several decades later Björn Hettne defined it as a “regional institutionalized polity”². Vivien Schmidt proposed to look at the European Union as a “regional state” – “a regional union of nation-states in which the creative tension between the Union and its member states ensures both ever-increasing regional integration and ever-continuing national differentiation”³. The concept of the regional state captures both state-like features of the Union and those that make it different from a traditional notion of the nation-state: the fact that its members are nation-states, the fuzziness of its end borders and the variability of the member states participation in policies and cooperation areas. Looking at the EU from this perspective helps to define its unique position in the international relations as a union of states and therefore departing from classical Westphalian idea of a nation-state.

This approach however creates other questions. If the EU is not a state, then how can its foreign policy actions be accessed? Traditional statist approach would fall short from the reality in this case. It is disputable also whether the European Union can be called an actor in the international relations by its own right or it is merely a combination of the national policies of its member states. And if it is an actor, what kind of an actor is it?

The concept of “actorness” in the international relations is central here. Frederik Söderbaum and Patrick Stålgren define it as “conscious efforts to shape the external world in accordance with the values, interests, and identity of the actor”⁴. Charlotte Bretherton and John Vogler propose their definition of “actorness”: “it implies an entity

¹ Cit. in Philippe Schmitter, *How to Democratize the European Union – and Why Bother?* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, inc., 2000): 20.

² Björn Hettne, “EU Foreign Policy: The Interregional Model” in *The European Union and the Global South*, ed. Fredrik Söderbaum, Patrick Stålgren (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2010): 16.

³ Vivien Schmidt, “The European Union: Democratic Legitimacy in a Regional State?” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 42:5 (2004): 976.

⁴ Fredrik Söderbaum, Patrick Stålgren, “The EU and the Global South” in *The European Union and the Global South*, ed. Fredrik Söderbaum, Patrick Stålgren (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2010): 1.

that exhibits a degree of autonomy from its external environment, and indeed from its internal constituents, and which is capable of volition or purpose”⁵. These definitions embrace both exercises of hard and soft power, since “shaping the world” is possible by employment of different instruments. Central for “actorness” is therefore the ability to influence the international arena by any means that can be used. The concept proposed by Söderbaum and Stålgren concentrates only on the process, it doesn’t take into account whether the actor succeeded in its attempts or not. It is also rather broad and can be possibly applied not only to the states but to the nongovernmental actors as well. For example terrorist groups (at least major once like al Qaeda) are definitely making conscious attempts to shape the external world in accordance with their values, interests, and identities.

Joseph Jupille and James Caporaso viewed actorness as having four main components:

1. Recognition – acceptance by the other actors and their willingness to interact with the entity;
2. Authority – legal competence to act;
3. Autonomy – institutional distinctiveness and independence from other actors;
4. Cohesion – ability to formulate and articulate internally consistent policy preferences.⁶

The answer to the question whether the European Union can be counted as an actor in international relations differs from one theoretical perspective to another. Realist tradition in the international relations underlines the idea of statehood and therefore sees the states as primary actors. The non-state actors, such as international organizations, business corporations and non-governmental organizations are all parts of the international system, but “their functions are seen as essentially subordinate to those of state”⁷. Central to the realist analysis therefore are the individual European states and not

⁵ Charlotte Bretherton, John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor* (New York: Routledge, 2006): 16-17.

⁶ Joseph Jupille, James A. Caporaso, “States, Agency, and Rules: The European Union in Global Environmental Politics,” in *The European Union in the World Community* ed. Carolyn Rhodes (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998): 214.

⁷ Charlotte Bretherton, John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, op. cit.: 16.

their Union per se. Other schools of thought however assume that states are not the only actors in the international arena and non-state or supranational actors can be of equal importance and definitely have a degree of actorness. Within this theoretical frameworks John McCormick claims that the European Union is not only an actor in the international relations but a “post-modern superpower” in its own right.⁸

Institutionalists underline the importance of institutions in the international relations and the fact that they can affect the behavior of states. Summarizing the institutionalist literature Sophie Vanhoonacker noted four ways in which institutions of the European Union can matter in its foreign policy.

First, institutions reflect the level of agreement and common values among the member states as well as their respective power and preferences.

Second, institution as a product of bargaining and agreement on some policies reflect “path dependency”. According to the historical institutionalist approach the agreement once made defines the path for a future development. When one of the several possibilities is chosen, it is usually very costly to change the agreement or institutions that were set up.

Third, institutions and changes that go within them reflect the changes in the political complexity of the European Union itself and ways it interacts with other countries.

Fourth, institutions as an agencies can have profound influence on the way how implementation of certain policies will proceed, and also sometimes on the process of policy making.⁹

Within a constructivist framework Bretherton and Vogler describe the EU as an actor “under construction”¹⁰. According to them, the degree of actorness in general and the actorness of the European Union in particular is based on the notions of presence, opportunity and capability. Opportunity describes the external environment that consists of events and ideas that influence actor and constrain or improve its ability to act. Presence is the ability of an actor to exert influence on other actors by the sheer virtue of

⁸ John McCormick, *The European Superpower* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007): 32.

⁹ Sophie Vanhoonacker, “The Institutional Framework” in *International Relations and the European Union* ed. Christopher Hill and Michael Smith (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005): 69.

¹⁰ Charlotte Bretherton, John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, op. cit.: 24.

its existence. Capability refers to the internal instruments that are available to an actor and its understanding and ability to use them.¹¹

Hettne views the European Union as a regional actor and therefore bases his idea of the EU as an actor on the concepts of regionness, presence and actorness. Presence is viewed by Hettne similar to what Bretherton and Vogler proposed, regionness refers to the degree of internal integration, and actorness is described as an ability to act purposively.¹² His conclusion is that the performance of the European Union as an actor in the international arena is not impressive. Only one of the proposed dimensions is seen as developing and rather strong – its presence. Other two dimensions - regionness and actorness are in decline.¹³ Having said this, Hettne doesn't deny the fact that the European Union is an actor in the international relations. What he emphasizes is the idea that the degree of its actorship is not as high as it could (and should) be.

Bretherton and Vogler also propose four basic requirements for the regional actor to be counted as one:

- Shared commitment to a set of overarching values
- Legitimation on the domestic level of the foreign policy related processes
- The ability to consistently and coherently identify priorities and formulate policies
- The availability of foreign policy instruments and ability to use them.¹⁴

In this paper the European Union is treated as an entity in the international relations that possesses certain degree of actorness and therefore is able to act independently (to some extent) from its member states, set its own aims and select from a number of appropriate instruments at its disposal.

The uniqueness of the European Union as an entity and its consequent peculiar behavior in the international arena gave rise to the discussion on the nature of this particular actor. Several concepts were coined that were aimed not only at description of the European Union as an actor, but also other states that might have similar traits. Thus Richard Rosecrance has proposed the term “trading state” to describe the increasing

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Björn Hettne, “EU Foreign Policy: The Interregional Model”, op. cit.: 15-22.

¹³ Ibid., 38.

¹⁴ Charlotte Bretherton, John Vogler, *The European Union as a Global Actor*, op. cit.: 30.

power of the economy and trade and possibilities that it gives to states that can harvest them.¹⁵

François Duchêne in seventies coined the term “civilian” power to describe the particular way in which the then European Communities exert their influence. He described civilian power as the “domestication of international relations”, arguing that its influence on the international system should be exercised through such fields as trade and other functional rather than territorial spheres.¹⁶

Hans Maull developed the idea of “civilian power” further by applying it not only to the European Union but to the phenomena of German and Japanese politics. According to him, “civilian powers strive to ‘civilize’ relations between states along the lines of their own, democratic, domestic politics”¹⁷. His notion of ‘civilizing’ of interstate relations is similar to Duchêne’s idea of “domestication”, meaning bringing “to international problems the sense of common responsibility and structures of contractual politics which have in the past been associated almost exclusively with ‘home’ and not foreign... affairs”¹⁸. He has set three main features that civilian power should have:

- Acceptance of the fact that cooperation is necessary in order to reach international goals and tackle international problems
- Concentration on the economic (and other non-military) means for achieving national aims
- Willingness to develop and work within multilateral (and possibly supranational) structures for addressing international problems.¹⁹

According to Maull the main sources of the EU influence in the international arena as a civilian power are the perspective of the membership, prospect of association, diplomacy, material and financial incentives, sanctions, organizational and human resources for conflict prevention and state-building missions and the EU’s “post-modern

¹⁵ Richard Rosecrance, *The Rise of the Trading State* (New York: Basic Books, 1986).

¹⁶ François Duchêne, “The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence” in *A Nation Writ Large? Foreign-Policy Problems Before the European Community*, ed. Max Kohnstamm, Wolfgang Hager (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1973); 20.

¹⁷ Hanns W. Maull, “Europe and the New Balance of the Global Order” *International Affairs* 81:4 (2005): 779-780.

¹⁸ François Duchêne, “The European Community and the Uncertainties of Interdependence”, op. cit.: 20.

¹⁹ Hanns W. Maull, “Germany and Japan: The New Civilian Powers” *Foreign Affairs* 69:5 (1990): 92-93.

conceptualization of sovereignty”.²⁰ Maull also underlines that the idea of civilian power doesn’t necessarily mean the total refusal of the military might. It can and will be used by the civilian power, but in a specific way different from a traditional power: “never alone and autonomously, but only collectively, only with international legitimacy, and only in the pursuit of ‘civilizing’ international relations”²¹.

Mario Telò argued for “realistic” understanding of the civilian power²². According to his definition: “A political entity can be termed a civilian power not only if it does not intend, but also if it is not able, for various historical or structural reasons, to become a classic politico-military power and pursues its international peaceful objectives using other methods.”²³ He gives nine reasons why the European Union can be called a “realistic” civilian power.

1. It has stabilized peace in Europe through social and economic integration
2. The process of European integration was instrumental in producing increasing convergence around the common ground of the “European social model”
3. The prospect of accession is a significant instrument for the promotion of peace and democratization across the continent
4. The EU’s influence is being developed through common strategies and partnership agreements with other countries
5. The European Union equals the United States in terms of economic power and is recognized by many as the second global power
6. The European Union identifies itself with multilateralism both on the global and regional levels
7. The EU developed a new dimension in the international relations – interregionalism, which is instrumental for the promotion of the global governance
8. It has a significant diplomatic corpus

²⁰ Hanns W. Maull, “Europe and the New Balance of the Global Order”, op. cit.: 782-784.

²¹ Ibid., 781.

²² Mario Telò, *Europe: A Civilian Power?* (New York: Palgrave, 2006): 51.

²³ Ibid.

9. It is increasing its military dimension by participating in peace-keeping and peace-enforcing missions.²⁴

While Maull proposes to think of the European Union “as a post-modern ‘force’, rather than as a modern power”²⁵, Telò argues that the EU “acts like a power, looks like a power and is an international power, albeit a very particular one”²⁶. Maull (along with Hettne) sees EU’s presence as being the main source of its influence. Telò argues that the European Union is capable to exert influence through its actions as well as a combination of hard economic power with a soft one.

Roy Ginsberg proposes to see the influence of the European Union as being produced by both its action and inaction (presence). According to him it is important to look at the degree to which another actor has changed its policy after being affected by the EU’s action or presence.²⁷ However whenever the actions or presence of the European Union yield positive results it lacks international recognition neither from other actors, nor from its member states.²⁸ It is partly due to the prevailing state-centric view on the foreign policy and the inclination to look at the actions of states rather than supranational entities. Partly it is because of the particular civilian character of the EU foreign policy that is unable to yield immediate results and usually don’t capture headlines. Therefore it is a difficult task to trace the influence of the European Union and not of its member states.

Ian Manners proposed the idea of the normative power as an addition to the dichotomy between traditional (relying on military might) and civilian power (with emphasis on the economic means. He defined it as a “power that is able to shape conceptions of the “normal””²⁹. In other words normative power is one that is able to set standards and norms for others to follow. There is an important difference between the concepts of soft power and normative power. While soft power is an empirical concept and basically describes a foreign policy tool, normative power is an explicitly theoretical concept and is “part of discursive practices that are both constitutive and always

²⁴ Ibid., 51-57.

²⁵ Hanns W. Maull, “Europe and the New Balance of the Global Order”, op. cit.: 778.

²⁶ Mario Telò, *Europe: A Civilian Power?* op. cit.: 57.

²⁷ Roy H. Ginsberg, *The European Union in International Politics: Baptism by Fire*, op. cit.: 49.

²⁸ Ibid., 276.

²⁹ Thomas Diez, Ian Manners, “Reflecting on Normative Power Europe” in *Power in World Politics*, ed. Felix Berenskoetter and M.J. Williams (New York: Routledge, 2007): 175.

present”³⁰. Manners and Diez also commented on the difference between “civilian power” and “normative power” approaches by saying that two of them put emphasis on different things. Whereas “civilian power” looks at the material assets and physical power, “normative power” looks at the “power of non-material exemplification found in the contagion of norms through imitation and attraction”³¹.

The idea of the civilian power was embraced not only by academics but by practicing politicians alike. The then European Commission president Romano Prodi stated that the European Union must become a “global civil power at the service of sustainable global development”³².

Hettne and Söderbaum offer a new term to describe the EU’s relations with developing regions – “soft imperialism”³³. It refers to “an asymmetric form of dialogue or even the imposition or strategic use of norms and conditionalities with a narrowly defined self-interest”³⁴. However they confuse their readers by stating that ‘soft imperialism’ “adds the fact that ‘soft power’ may also be employed in ‘hard’ and coercive manner”³⁵. It goes in direct contradiction with the very notion of soft power proposed by Nye as a power of attraction. As it was noted earlier if some resource is used in a coercive way it automatically becomes a resource of ‘hard’ power and has nothing to do with a ‘soft’ one.

All of these different approaches play around with the same idea of the European Union as a sui generis actor in the international relations. However there is a significant loophole in the definition of soft power as applied to the EU. Soft power can be understood as part of both civilian and normative power, but how to recognize it explicitly? As the co-optive power and the power of attraction, soft power remains quite a vague notion. Maull states that “the gravitational pull” that the European Union exerts

³⁰ Ibid.: 179.

³¹ Thomas Diez, Ian Manners, “Reflecting on Normative Power Europe”, op. cit.: 178.

³² Romano Prodi, *Shaping the New Europe* (Speech before the European Parliament, 15th February, 2000): <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/00/41&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

³³ Björn Hettne, Fredrik Söderbaum, “Civilian Power or Soft Imperialism? The EU as a Global Actor and the Role of Interregionalism” *European Foreign Affairs Review* 10 (2005): 535-552.

³⁴ Fredrik Söderbaum, “African Regionalism and EU-African Interregionalism” in *European Union and New Regionalism. Regional Actors and Global Governance in a Post-Hegemonic Era*, ed. Mario Telò (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007): 199.

³⁵ Ibid.

vis-à-vis other actors in the international arena is based on “the weight of its markets, capital and technological resources, as well as on the attractiveness of the European way of life”.³⁶ How can one trace this attraction and influence exercised by the EU?

³⁶ Hanns W. Maull, “Europe and the New Balance of the Global Order”, *op. cit.*: 779.

INTERREGIONALISM

In this paper I propose to look at the interregionalism as the particular field and approach in the foreign policy of the European Union where the exercise of soft power is possible. First, I proceed with the definition and different approaches to the very notion of interregionalism. Then I will scrutinize the particular case of the EU-ACP relations as a case of interregionalism to find the elements of soft power exercised by the European Union.

The origins of the interregional relations can be traced back to the sixties, when the European Union concluded the association agreements with a number of former colonies in Africa and Madagascar (Yaoundé I, II and Arusha).¹ Söderbaum and Stålgren define interregionalism in the broad sense as “the process whereby two specified regions interact as regions”². In the more narrow sense it refers to the relations “between two clearly identifiable regions within an institutional framework”³. Vinod Aggarwal and Edward Fogarty point out two more types of interregionalism. They refer to “hybrid interregionalism” when one institutionally organized region negotiates with another unorganized region, and “transregionalism” when two regions are weakly organized and include not only state to state relations but also cooperation among non-governmental groups.⁴ Alan Hardacre and Michael Smith propose one more type – a complex interregionalism, defined as “a multi-dimensional model of interregionalism, in which the coexistence of multi-level diplomacy and institutional structures with mixed motivations and strategies on the parts of the actors involved forms the key element”⁵. Their

¹ Elfriede Regelsberger, “The Dialogue of the EC/Twelve with Other Regional Groups: A New European Identity in the International System?” in *Europe’s Global Links. The European Community and Inter-Regional Cooperation*, ed. Geoffrey Edwards, Elfriede Regelsberger (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1990): 5.

² Frederik Söderbaum, Patrik Stålgren, “The EU and the Global South” in *The European Union and the Global South*, ed. Frederik Söderbaum, Patrik Stålgren (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2010): 4-5.

³ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁴ Vinod K. Aggarwal, Edward A. Fogarty, “Between Regionalism and Globalization: European Union Interregional Trade Strategies” in *EU Trade Strategies. Between Regionalism and Globalism*, ed. Vinod K. Aggarwal and Edward A. Fogarty (New York: Palgrave, 2004): 5.

⁵ Alan Hardacre, Michael Smith, “The EU and Diplomacy of Complex Regionalism” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy* 4 (2009): 171.

definition mixes the traits of all other types of interregionalism in one model, assuming that in the reality it is always a combination of regional actors (with different degree of actorness) and non-state actors involved in the process of cooperation and decision-making. Regardless of the particular type, interregionalism is used to describe the relations between two regions. Region is not necessarily (and often not at all) a geographically fixed notion though. Hettne proposes to understand regions as processes, and therefore “actors in the making (or unmaking)”⁶. Mathew Doidge points out that region can represent not only geographical, but also a political, economical and/or cultural group.⁷

In the literature interregionalism is usually described as serving a particular set of functions: balancing, institution building, rationalizing, agenda setting and collective identity formation.⁸ All of these functions represent different theoretical approaches that strive to explain the phenomena of region to region cooperation. Thus realist school focuses on the balancing function, claiming that countries choose to cooperate as regions in order to increase their economic power and influence and therefore have better position comparatively to other actors. Institutional approach focuses on the institution building function, interactions within those institutions and the role they play in shaping future decisions of states. Finally, social constructivism is emphasizing the identity-building role of interregionalism, claiming that interaction of different actors within one region is capable of creating the new identity for them. Hardacre and Smith however point out that the better understanding and explanation for the interregional activity can be achieved only through a combination of different theoretical approaches, and that “the combination is different for every individual interregional relationship”⁹.

As the most advanced regional actor among all others the European Union embraces the interregionalism not only as a tool of foreign policy, but also as its doctrine and a vision. Following this logic the EU aims at the enhancing the regionness and actorness of other regions. Explicit support for the regional integration appears in all of the strategy documents and agreements of the European Union that concern the

⁶ Björn Hettne, “EU Foreign Policy: The Interregional Model”, op. cit.: 17.

⁷ Mathew Doidge, “Joined at the Hip: Regionalism and Interregionalism” *European Integration* 29:2 (2007): 232.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Alan Hardacre, Michael Smith, “The EU and Diplomacy of Complex Regionalism”. op. cit.: 170-171.

interregional cooperation.¹⁰ Official representatives of the EU also spoke out in clear favour of the interregional cooperation. Thus the then President of the European Council and Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt suggested in September 2001 that the G8 forum should be replaced by a modernized version of itself, which would be based on more adequate regional representation, including such forums as ASEAN, MERCOSUR and African Union.¹¹ Romano Prodi while holding the post of the President of the Commission stated that the European Union “should promote across the world its model for managing relations between countries”¹². European Union seems to be also quite consistent and strategic in its employment of interregionalism as a foreign policy tool. Hardacre and Smith note that the aims and objectives of all its agreements and other interregional activities were along the similar pattern across different regions: starting with cooperation on mostly economic issues, but progressing into more comprehensive framework, which includes also political issues.¹³

Being the most integrated regional actor the European Union is capable to exert influence on other less organized regions to make them work towards closer integration. From theoretical point of view it is connected with institution building function of interregionalism, and is being termed as “regionalism through interregionalism”¹⁴. This process can occur in two main forms according to the literature: “extra-regional echoing” and “regional integrator”. Extra-regional echoing refers to the “whole or partial copying of a regional group’s integrative behavior by outside regional group of states, especially behavior that is innovative”¹⁵. The regional integrator presupposes a significant purposive element, meaning that the group of states facing more integrated and organized counterpart may begin the process of deeper integration among them in order to make its voice heard and achieve stronger degree of actorness as a region.¹⁶ Doidge points out that for this to occur it is necessary that the level of actorness and regionness of two

¹⁰ Ibid., 176.

¹¹ Guy Verhofstadt, “The Paradox of Anti-Globalisation” *The Guardian*, 28 September 2001.

¹² President Prodi’s Speech on ‘The first Commission of the new Europe’ at the European Parliament, May 5, 2004: http://www.europa-eu-un.org/articles/en/article_3476_en.htm.

¹³ Alan Hardacre, Michael Smith, “The EU and Diplomacy of Complex Regionalism”. op. cit.: 174.

¹⁴ Mathew Doidge, “Joined at the Hip: Regionalism and Interregionalism”, op. cit.: 233.

¹⁵ William Avery, “The Extra-Regional Transfer of Integrative Behavior” *International Organization* 27:4 (1973): 550.

¹⁶ Mathew Doidge, “Joined at the Hip: Regionalism and Interregionalism”, op. cit.: 239.

interacting regions would be qualitatively different, “for it is in response to this external other that the impetus for integration is to be found”¹⁷.

The idea of the regionalism through interregionalism could be viewed as an exercise of the European Union’s soft power. While interacting with other regions the EU is encouraging them to engage in the integration process among them. European Union is also trying to ensure that this integration will run among the “European” values, which is not always successful. The example of the latter is its interaction with the ASEAN. As a reaction to the pressure from the EU to adopt its values, Asian countries preferred to rely on their own “Asian” values.¹⁸ But the ASEAN was an organized region before it started cooperation with the European Union, and the difference in the values of two regions didn’t prevent them from successful cooperation on a number of issues, ranging from sheer economic to political ones. This paper will however focus on the region that was almost completely constructed by the European Union - the ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) countries. The question is – was the influence that the European Union exerted on this group of state one of a hard power (employment of coercion and/or bribing) or a soft power (persuasion and help in developing preferences)? The focus is not on the particular economical and trade provision of the agreements between the EU and ACP countries, but on the degree to which the integration in this specific region was influenced by Europe. The soft power will be exercised in the case when the ACP countries choose to integrate under the influence of the EU’s example.

On the basis of the previous discussion it is possible to hypothesize that in the case of the EU-ACP relations two kinds of mechanisms can be at work. Both of them in one way or another combine the two ideas - the “extra-regional echoing” and “regional integrator”. Speaking in terms of soft power, it can be hypothesized that the European Union is able to project its power on the ACP countries either through its inaction (or presence) or purposive action aimed at the attempt to promote integration in the given region. The idea of soft power through presence combines the mechanisms of “extra-regional echoing” and “regional integrator”. ACP countries facing the strong influence of the European Union mostly in the economical sphere (and in many others connected with

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Julie Gilson, “New Interregionalism? The EU and East Asia” *European Integration* 27:3 (2005) : 311.

it) may feel it necessary to integrate in order to have a better leverage (if they were able to speak with one voice) and also in order to emulate the success of the European integration. In this scenario, Europeans do not have to explicitly support integrational efforts of the ACP countries or push them toward this process. The sheer presence of such big actor in the region could be stimulus significant enough for countries to integrate.

The soft power through purposive action presupposes that the European Union is acting as a strong supporter of the idea of integration. In order to change preferences of ACP states and make the idea of integration attractive to them the European Union should construct the situation to change the perception of the countries. Given that this is a soft power exercise, the change in perception and preferences can't be achieved by the 'hard power' methods, which means that one should not observe coercion or bribing the ACP states into regional integration.

THE ORIGINS OF THE ACP GROUP – SOFT POWER THROUGH PRESENCE?

The relations between the European and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries are older than the existence of the European Communities. For a long time it was mainly based on the colonial or semi-colonial dependency. The establishment of the European Economic Communities (EEC) in 1957 by the Treaty of Rome made it necessary to somehow structure the relations that European countries have with their dependent territories. Due to the pressure from France provisions for “association” for all dependencies were included in the Part IV of the Treaty of Rome. Initially they concerned 31 “overseas collectivities and territories” (OCTs) and only four member states (France, Belgium, Italy and Netherlands). The numbers increased with the first expansion in 1973. According to the Article 131 of the Treaty of Rome, “the purpose of association shall be to promote the economic and social development of the countries and territories and to establish close economic relations between them and the Community as a whole”¹. Article 132.3 also established a legal obligation on behalf of the member states to “contribute to the investments required for the progressive development of these countries and territories”². Generally OCTs were to be treated as member states in terms of trade access, investment and the reduction of custom duties. Additionally, the European Development Fund (EDF) was created with a budget of approximately \$58 million. Martin Holland notes that these provisions established a discrimination against other developing countries that had no connection with member states of the EEC. It also set a pattern for the European involvement with the third world countries for the next several decades which was based on the historical ties rather than on actual need.³

In the beginning of 1960s most of the dependent territories that were covered by the Treaty of Rome became independent and therefore another arrangement was needed. Thus in 1963 the first Yaoundé Convention was signed. It recognized the sovereignty of the 17 participating African countries and Madagascar and established preferential trade

¹ The Treaty of Rome, 25 March 1957:

http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/emu_history/documents/treaties/rometreaty2.pdf.

² Ibid.

³ Martin Holland, *The European Union and the Third World* (New York: Palgrave, 2002): 26-27.

agreements between them and the EEC. These 18 countries became known as the Associated African States and Madagascar (EAMA). The proclaimed aim of the convention was to help these states to develop economically and become totally autonomous from their ex-metropolises. Holland underlines three distinctive and original features of the Yaoundé Convention: its comprehensive character, multilateral framework and its joint institutions.⁴ It was the first agreement of its kind that linked separate trade and development issues under one approach, and it was the first to create institutions between two groups of countries. Under the Yaoundé Convention the set of four joint institutions was created. First, the Association's Council that was formed by one representative from each one of the EAMA and EEC member states and was able to issue binding decisions concerning the agreement. Second, the Parliamentary Conference with advisory functions. Third, the Committee with functions of permanent secretariat. And fourth, the Court of Arbitration consisted of chairman and four judges (two from Africa and two from Europe). In 1969 the Convention expired, but it was renewed for a new five-year period till 1975.

In 1973 Great Britain joined the Community, thus bringing up the question of the fate of the Commonwealth countries. Protocol 22 of the accession agreement offered 20 Commonwealth states three possible options:

- Simply enlarge Yaoundé to include new countries in its provisions
- Conclude individual bilateral agreements between EEC and them
- Conclude collective preferential trade agreement.⁵

While the preferable option for the European Communities would have been an overarching collective agreement (like it was the case with Yaoundé), it clearly didn't expect the countries of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific to come to a single negotiating position. The view was prevalent in Europe that there is a significant conflict between positions of different groups of countries with whom the then EEC would have to negotiate. Therefore there was an expectation on the part of the Europeans that during the negotiations they would be able to press the agreement favourable to their interests

⁴ Ibid., 28.

⁵ Ibid., 33.

without any significant opposition.⁶ However the countries that were European's counterparts in these negotiations were able to forge a common position and present themselves as a single group and even exert some influence on the EEC during the talks.

Expectations of the Europeans were based on two main factors. First, the countries with which the EEC was to negotiate an agreement represented three distinct geographical regions: Africa, Caribbean and Pacific. The sheer geographical dislocation had to convert in the different points of interest for every particular region. Second issue was different status of the countries in their relations with Europe. There were ones that already have an associate status with the EEC and an experience to work with it under Yaoundé agreement, and there were Commonwealth countries that had links only to Great Britain and never had any experience in concluding agreements with the whole Community. The first attempts to bring all of these states together were not quite fruitful, but as Kenneth Hall and Byron Blake notice, they resulted in a growing understanding that the common position in the negotiation with the EEC is desirable.⁷ It was based on the realization that no single country or even a group of countries among them would be able to withstand the influence from the EEC, and the existence of the different positions within the negotiating group would only strengthen the position of Europeans. The understanding of the desirability of the single position resulted in an initial agreement that there should be no formal recognition of the preference toward any of the options proposed by the EEC before the start of the negotiations.⁸ Furthermore the process of consolidation led to the decision of the African and then Caribbean and Pacific states to negotiate as a group between themselves, reducing the amount of negotiation sides to two. Both groups also became institutionalized to promote coordination and effectiveness. Thus each of them had institutions at the ministerial and ambassadorial level and even a common spokesman.

During a series of conferences between two groups followed the list of eight common principles to enter the negotiations with the EEC was formulated:

1. Non-reciprocity in trade and tariff concessions from the EEC

⁶ Isebill Gruhn, "The Lomé Convention: Inching Towards Interdependence" *International Organization* 30: 2 (1976): 249.

⁷ Kenneth Hall, Byron Blake, "The Emergence of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States: An Aspect of African and Caribbean Cooperation" *African Studies Review* 22:2 (1979): 116.

⁸ Ibid.

2. The extension of the provisions on the right of establishment on the third countries
3. The revision of the rules of origin, so that they would facilitate the industrial integration of the African countries
4. The revision of the provisions on the movements of payments and capital
5. The financial and technical aid coming from the EEC should not be associated with any particular form of relationship with the EEC
6. Free access for all African products to the EEC markets, no matter if they are subject to the Common Agriculture Policy of the Community or not
7. Guarantee of stable prices for African products
8. The agreement made with the EEC shouldn't affect the intra-African relations.⁹

The agreement on these 8 principles and the desire to enter the negotiations with the EEC as a single unit were the basis on which the two groupings got closer to each other and even established formal institutional organization to foster the coordination between them. The Georgetown agreement that formally created the ACP group was signed on 6 June 1975 and united 37 African, 6 Caribbean and 3 Pacific countries. The institutions of the newly established ACP group included:

- The ACP council of ministers
- The ACP bureau
- The Committee of ambassadors
- The Working group of ambassadors
- The Secretariat
- Two groups of experts on financial and technical cooperation

The common position that these states were able to come to led EEC Commissioner for Development M. Sheysson to admit that the EEC doesn't expect the final agreement to resemble the Yaoundé Convention, despite the fact that initial position of Europe was "larger version of Yaoundé".¹⁰ During the negotiations itself the ACP group kept its unity and was in fact able to influence the process. First of all they

⁹ Ibid., 119.

¹⁰ Isebill Gruhn, "The Lomé Convention: Inching Towards Interdependence", op. cit.: 252.

managed to postpone the beginning of negotiations until they were ready to start with a common position. Second, they were able to reposition several of the negotiating sessions. Some of them proved to be very significant to the whole process, like the ministerial-level conference in Kingston, which allowed resolving a political stalemate during the negotiations. Third, the EEC failed to impose a predetermined form of agreement on them.¹¹

The result of the negotiations was the Lomé agreement that regulated trade and aid relations between the EEC and the ACP states. Of course as it turned out not all of the requirements put forward by the negotiators from the ACP group found their way into the final document. But the ones that they have put through can be seen as a quite remarkable achievement. Sissoko et al. summarize the main characteristic features of the Lomé agreement as being the following:

- System of non-reciprocity
- Greater access to the EEC markets to the ACP goods
- Redefinition of the rules of origin
- Special protocol regulating sugar
- Special treatment for beef, rum and bananas¹²

Thus at least three of the basic principles that were stated by the ACP group appeared in the text of the agreement. Except for the trade and aid issues, Lomé established a highly organized system of joint EC-ACP institutions that were to look after the implementation of the agreement. These were the ACP-EC Council of Ministers, the Committee of Ambassadors and the Joint Consultative Assembly. It was decided to reject the idea of having the Court of Arbitration, simply because under the Yaoundé such court was never called upon to solve any kind of disputes. The function of arbitration was given to the ACP-EC Council of Ministers.

All in all by 1975 a new acronym appeared on the map of international relations – ACP, and only because of the negotiation process that the EC was to have with the

¹¹ Kenneth Hall, Byron Blake, "The Emergence of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States: An Aspect of African and Caribbean Cooperation", op. cit.: 121; Isebill Gruhn, "The Lomé Convention: Inching Towards Interdependence", op. cit.: 253.

¹² Macki Sissoko, Louis Osuji, William Cheng "Impacts of the Yaounde and Lomé Conventions on EC-ACP Trade" *The African Economic & Business Review* 1:1 (1998): 9.

former colonies and Commonwealth countries. As Hall and Blake put it, “whatever the merits or demerits of the Lomé Convention... there is a general agreement that the protracted negotiations provided an opportunity for the 46 countries to forge links that have had... far reaching implications for the efforts at mutual cooperation and effective action between Third World countries”¹³.

From this point of view the Lomé negotiations can be viewed as an example of regionalism through interregionalism, with a significant role of the external regional integrator. Faced with the more organized, integrated and resourceful counterpart in the face of the EC, the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries turned to the option of integration among themselves in order to make their own position stronger and make their voice heard. The position of the European Communities was rather passive on the issue of integration between 46 countries in question. Their own preference was to deal with the ACP states not as united group so that they won't be able to arrive at common positions and the convention could just be pressed onto them. On the other hand the EC didn't actively protest nor do anything to prevent the move toward integration.

Applying the logic of soft power to the Lomé negotiations, it is possible to say that the EC exercised the soft power first of all through its presence, second it did so unintentionally. Indeed the sheer fact that the European Communities were viewed as a counterpart in the negotiations was enough for the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to change their preferences toward some level of integration with each other. Before that they existed rather separately as three different geographical regions. While they might have had convergent interests on one question or another there was no need for them to coordinate their efforts or work together on any of the issues (the only exception could have been probably the global non-alignment movement). The EC was viewed not only as a counterpart in the very important negotiations, but also as a successful regional organization that achieved significant accomplishments through the process of integration. Although there is no prove that the ACP states were aiming at the emulation or echoing of the processes that were going within the European Communities, they definitely had an example of success in front of them.

¹³ Kenneth Hall, Byron Blake, “The Emergence of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States: An Aspect of African and Caribbean Cooperation”, *op. cit.*: 111.

This use of soft power was also unintentional in the sense that the integration among the ACP states was at time not the preferred outcome for the EC. If one applies the Kroenig, McAdam and Weber model to the situation, one can see that the EC did not try to really communicate the message to its counterparts. While there existed a more or less open and free marketplace of ideas (concerning trade), the EC didn't actually used it in order to promote the outcome that would have been favorable for it. Neither was the EC viewed as a neutral actor, since it definitely had a stake in the issue and its position had a direct influence on the well-being of the ACP states. Therefore one can not speak of the purposive use of soft power by the European Communities; however their presence as a counterpart in the significant negotiations and as the important part of the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries future and well-being was enough to trigger the process of regional integration among these states. The EC played the role of a catalyst that through its presence changed the preferences of the states involved and indirectly caused them to choose the process of regional integration in order to make their voice heard and obtain at least some leverage during the negotiations.

THE COTONOU AGREEMENT – SOFT POWER THROUGH PURPOSEFUL ACTION?

The Lomé Convention was successfully renegotiated four more times. But by the 1990-s relations between the EU and ACP states found themselves in stagnation. The end of the Cold War was one of the reasons for this development. It concluded tensions between two politico-military blocs in the Third World, and therefore there was no necessity to pay significant attention to the African countries anymore. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc has also turned the European Union's attention toward ex-soviet countries in Eastern Europe. The consequence was that the major stream of aid funding was reversed from ACP countries to Eastern Europe. In 1974 13 out of 15 top recipients of the aid from the EU were members of the ACP group. In 1997 this number decreased to just two, with other 13 place being taken by Eastern European and Mediterranean countries.¹

It also became clear that despite the highly praised character and structure of the EU-ACP relations within a framework of Lomé Conventions, the real economic situation in Third World countries participating in it failed to produce any positive development over the years. In many cases the countries of the ACP groups were still largely dependent on the aid from the European donors and have no independent and substantial economies. Finally the relations between the EU and ACP were recognized as being non-compliant with WTO requirements because of its non-reciprocity elements and discriminatory character and therefore had to be transformed in one fashion or another.

The European Union recognized the fact that the Lomé regime has to be substituted by another agreement. As early as 1995 the European Commission started to embrace the idea of regional integration and free trade agreements in the Third World. The Communication issued that year with a title "Free-trade areas: an appraisal" was devoted to the beneficial impact of the regional free trade areas (FTAs) for the European Union. It stated that "FTAs are economically beneficial, especially where they help the EU to bolster its presence in the faster growing economies of the world, which is our

¹ Karen E. Smith, "The ACP in the European Union's Network of Regional Relationships: Still Unique or Just One in the Crowd?" in *EU Development Cooperation*, ed. Karin Arts, Anna Dickson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004): 62.

overriding interest”². As it was noted earlier, during the negotiations of the Lomé Convention the European Union didn’t express its preference for the integration between African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. In its 1995 Communication European Commission however claimed that the European Union is a “natural” supporter of the regional initiatives, because it represents the only successful model of deep economic and political integration. The Communication recognized however that while the experience of the EU is invaluable in this sphere it doesn’t mean that the European model will fit every other regional organization.³ The document is concluded with specific recommendations on how the European Union can and should support regional integration. According to the European Commission, the EU should do it through its trade policy, development cooperation policy and donor coordination.⁴ The Communication implies that all these policies should be designed in such a way as to serve as promoters and facilitators of the integration among developing countries.

In 1996 the European Commission issued a green paper on the EU-ACP relations in which it acknowledged that relationships that created under the Lomé Convention have to be changed and proposed the ways to do so. The most interesting feature of this document is its support for the regional integration. European Commission has explicitly stated that “the creation of political and economic areas which go beyond national boundaries has been recognized as a necessary step for Europe and is so for the ACP states as well”⁵. The document recognizes the process of the regional integration as “indispensable” for the economical development of the ACP countries and their successful integration into the world economy. Therefore the European Commission stated that the view of the importance and centrality of the regional integration will “influence the shape of a new accord”⁶ between the EU and the ACP that should substitute the Lomé Convention, thus clearly defining the preferred option for the European Union. Moreover Commission proposed that the support for regional integration should be a coherent strategy on behalf of the European Union based on the

² Communication from the Commission “Free-trade areas: an appraisal”, 1995: 6.

³ Communication from the Commission “European Community support for regional economic integration efforts among developing countries”, 1995: 6-9.

⁴ Ibid., 12-16.

⁵ Green Paper on Relations between the European Union and the ACP Countries on the Eve of the 21st Century “Challenges and Options for a New Partnership”, 1996: 43-44.

⁶ Ibid., viii.

three main features: capacity building, assistance to the private sector in order to facilitate restructuring of the markets and support for governments that are committed to the implementation of the regional integration.⁷ Paul Goodison noticed that once the European Union seemed to have adopted the idea that the new agreement will be focusing on the regional integration and more specifically on the free-trade areas, the rhetoric used to describe the FTAs changed from underlining the EU's own economic interests to the interests of the developing countries. FTAs were promoted as bringers of economic and social development and safer integration in the world economy for the ACP countries.⁸ Further Commission has called the European Union to support the regional integration basing on five priorities: strengthening of regional institutions, building of the regionally integrated markets, support of the business development, connection of the regional infrastructure, and development of the regional policies for sustainable development.⁹

As Giulia Pietrangeli noted, at this time the European Union started develop a particular approach in its relations with the Southern countries, which can be termed as "South-South-North (SSN) integration".¹⁰ The central idea of this approach is the support of the integration among Southern countries on the regional or sub-regional level in order to be able later to conclude bi-regional free-trade agreements with already organized regions. It was outlined in the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on Trade and Development in 2002. The document stated that SSN integration approach would be beneficial for the developing countries as it would promote peace and stability among them, positively affect development and trade and make these countries more attractive to the FDI from European Union and its member states.¹¹

⁷ Ibid., 55.

⁸ Paul Goodison, "EU Trade Policy & the Future of Africa's Trade Relationship with the EU" *Review of African Political Economy* 34:112 (2007): 250.

⁹ Frederik Söderbaum, "The European Union and interregionalism" in *The European Union and global governance*, ed. Jens-Uwe Wunderlich and David Bailey (New York: Palgrave, 2011): 227.

¹⁰ Giulia Pietrangeli, "Supporting Regional Integration and Cooperation Worldwide: An Overview of the European Union Approach" in *The EU and World Regionalism: The Makability of Regions in the 21st Century*, ed. Philippe De Lombaerde, Michael Schulz (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 9.

¹¹ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament "Trade and Development. Assisting Developing Countries to Benefit from Trade", 2002.

Another instrument that the European Union employed to support the regional integration since 2000 was a series of regional strategies that were developed by the European Commission for the period of several years (usually five). The purpose of these strategies was to clearly define particular objectives and guidelines that the European Union has in different regions, especially concerning the integrational processes. The strategies are accompanied by Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs) that give more detailed description of the European initiatives in particular region by particular sector, time-frame and also give an estimate of planned expenses.

The EU's support for the regional integration thus found the reflection into the new agreement with ACP countries that replaced Lomé in 2000. The agreement that was signed in the largest city of Benin envisaged that the European Union will negotiate Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with several regional groups within the ACP. Some of these groups already existed, and some were expected to be created. According to the Cotonou Agreement, these EPAs should be free trade agreements between the group of countries and the European Union, based on the principal of reciprocity, aiming at progressive removal of the barriers between them and in compliance with WTO rules. As a result of the agreement the ACP is effectively split into six regions: Central Africa, West Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean, Southern African Development Community, Pacific region and Caribbean region. The ACP group becomes therefore a some kind of an umbrella organization, but it is clear that the negotiating leverage that ACP had as a single unit is lost since every of the six regions is now interested in negotiating for itself.

The EPAs clearly represent not only an attempt of the European Union to "rationalize" its relations with the ACP group¹² and made them compatible with WTO rulings, but also a case of an regionalism philosophy implementation. The idea that regional integration is favorable for the developing countries and is a necessary prerequisite for the progress of their economies is being put into practice with a Cotonou Agreement. The European Union position during the negotiation of Cotonou agreement was to present the EPAs as an absolute necessity due to the demands from the WTO and need for restructuring of the EU-ACP relations. In the end this view found its way into

¹² Adrian Flint *Trade, Poverty and the Environment* (New York: Palgrave, 2008): 20.

the final text of Agreement. And while according to the document it was theoretically possible to arrange EPAs on the bilateral basis, the European Union clearly showed its preference for the negotiations with regional groupings.¹³ As Mary Farell argues, the fact that economies of the ACP countries were still largely dependent on the access to the European market, and the lack of political leadership especially comparing to the level of skills and resources demonstrated by the European Union prompted the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries to accept the Cotonou Agreement.¹⁴ In the EPAs negotiations that followed the European Union had also way stronger position than the ACP states. It had more experience in trade negotiations, more skilful experts and politicians and it managed to break the ACP group into separate groupings effectively disabling probably the only leverage that they had.

The EPA negotiations started on 27 September 2002 and were planned as a two-step process. The first phase from September 2002 till October 2003 included negotiations between the European Commission and the ACP group as a whole and was meant to define format, structure and principles for the proceeding negotiations. The second phase started on October 2003 was direct EPAs negotiations between the European Union and six regional groupings. The way the negotiations were carried out showed clearly that the European Union had a firm control of agenda and had bigger leverage. The first phase of the negotiations produced little progress and resulted mainly in reaffirmation of the basic existing principles. The position of the ACP as a single group was further undermined by the desire of several regional groupings that were already in the integration process to start the direct EPAs negotiation with the European Union (e.g. Central Africa and West Africa). It was even encouraged by the EU. Thus the then Trade Commissioner Pascal Lammy made a public announcement, inviting the groupings within ACP to start the discussions about the EPAs as soon as possible, even if the first round of negotiations was not finished yet.¹⁵

¹³ Stephen Hurt, "Co-operation and Coercion? The Cotonou Agreement between the European Union and ACP States and the End of Lomé Convention" *Third World Quarterly* 24:1 (2003): 169.

¹⁴ Mary Farell, "From Lomé to Economic Partnership Agreements in Africa" in *The European Union and the Global South*, ed. Frederik Söderbaum, Patrik Stålgren (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2010): 85-86.

¹⁵ Sanoussi Bilal, "How Will Economic Partnership Agreements Affect the ACP Regions and Their Relations with the EU?" (Paper Presented for the 3rd ECPR Conference, Budapest, Hungary September 8-10, 2005): 7.

The first phase of negotiations produced three mechanisms in order to assist sides during the second part and ensure the coherence of the process. These mechanisms were: the Joint ACP-EC Ministerial Trade Committee (JMTC), an ACP Follow-up Mechanism for the Regional Phase II of the Negotiations and an all-ACP-EC Technical Monitoring Committee. The coherence of the negotiations in phase two was however hard to reach because regional groupings started with different level of integration within them and therefore proceeded with different speed. Moreover as Stephen Hurt noticed, the regional groupings should be at least at the level of a custom union in order to be able to sign an EPA with the European Union.¹⁶ For the most part the level of integration that existed within those groupings was not enough to sign an EPA right away and some of the regions were yet to be integrated. By the time the Cotonou Agreement was signed only the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU) was integrated sufficiently enough to engage in the EPA negotiations.

Another problem was an overlapping structure of the regional organizations that existed in Africa, what is commonly referred as a 'spaghetti bowl'. Adrian Flint counted that out of the 53 states in Africa 26 were members of two different groups at the same time, 20 had membership in three regional organizations, Democratic Republic of Congo belonged simultaneously to four and only 6 states were members of just one regional organization.¹⁷ The conditions of the Cotonou Agreement foresaw that every country will have to choose only one of the blocks and negotiate an EPA as a part of it. It turned out to be not that easy for countries to make that choice. Proposed regional groupings not always reflected the geographical or historical links of the countries and therefore didn't present an obvious option for them.

The deadline to finish the EPAs negotiations was set to be 31 December 2007, the same day that the waiver given to the ACP and the EU from the WTO should have expired. Consequently the countries that would have failed to sign an agreement with the European Union by that date would be relegated to the EU's Generalized System of Preference (GSP) regime. It was commonly viewed as less advantageous comparing with the treatment that ACP countries had under Lomé and that they would have under

¹⁶ Stephen Hurt, "Co-operation and Coercion?", op. cit.: 169.

¹⁷ Adrian Flint *Trade, Poverty and the Environment*, op. cit.: 22.

Cotonou's EPAs. The only countries that could have been less worried about the deadline were the ones that fall to the Least Developed Countries (LDC) category. Even if they were to fail in signing an agreement with the EU, their access to the European market was secured by the "Everything But Arms" initiative. Therefore their position would have been just a little worse than that under Lomé.¹⁸ Countries not qualified as LDCs would have preferred to conclude some kind of agreement with the European Union instead of referring to the GSP scheme. Given the fact that the level of integration in different regional groupings was below the expectations, the ACP countries tried to ask the EU to postpone the deadline with either one more waiver from the WTO or with a conclusion of some kind of interim agreement. The European Union was however steadfast on the idea that the negotiations on the EPAs should be concluded by the end of 2007. As the then European Commissioner on Trade Peter Mandelson put it, "the deadline is not a bluff or some negotiating tactic"¹⁹, claiming it to be up to objective circumstances. The EU did however present the ACP countries with another option – signing an 'interim' EPA, which would allow both to fit into the initial deadline without referring to the GSP regime and to continue negotiations after the 1 January 2008. The problem with this proposal was that the European Union made this option possible only for those states that managed to conclude an agreement on the market access for goods. Richard Bernal notes, that ironically to conclude this agreement was even harder than to negotiate a complete EPA.²⁰

Ole Elgström pointed out that during the negotiation process the picture of the European Union in the media, and official statements from spokespersons from ACP or European Commissioners was either completely white or completely black.²¹ The European Union tried to present itself as an altruistic actor who cares mainly about the development and well-being of the ACP countries with which it is engaged in negotiation process. Through the speeches of Peter Mandelson the EU was trying to persuade its

¹⁸ Adrian Flint, "The End of a 'Special Relationship'? The New EU-ACP Economic Partnership Agreements" *Review of African Political Economy* 119 (2009): 89.

¹⁹ "Mandelson Urges Final Push in EPA Talks". Remarks to the INTA Committee, Brussels, 11 September, 2007, http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/mandelson/speeches/articles/sppml68_en.htm.

²⁰ Richard Bernal, "CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement Negotiations: Why and How" *Journal of Eastern Caribbean Studies* 33:2 (2008): 7.

²¹ Ole Elgström, "Images of the EU in EPA Negotiations: Angel, Demon – or Just Human?" *European Integration Online Papers* 12:5 (2008): 2.

counterparts that the proposed EPAs is not just the only available option, but that this option is actually beneficial for them as a tool for development and promotion of regional integration.²² In his speech on the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly meeting in April 2005 in Bamako Commissioner underlined the benefits of the regional integration for the ACP countries by saying that “if implemented properly, [it] will build markets of scale, return on investment, and enhanced domestic competition will become really meaningful and stimulate economic growth and employment”²³. Moreover the European Union positioned itself as a benign negotiator that will not force the “ACP governments into signing agreements they do not want”²⁴.

The governments of the ACP states along with some NGOs operating in the region did not trust the rhetoric of the EU and perceived the proposed EPAs as a major setback from the conditions they had under Lomé. They also viewed it as a particular threat for their development, despite the fact that their economic situation didn't actually improved during the years of previous cooperation with the European Union. In the words of the chair of the ACP Ambassadors Trade Committee, “we could very well be faced with a situation in which the EU demands from us something of great value – essentially free access for European goods and services to our markets. But in exchange the give us nothing except the advice that if we are to develop we must open up our markets and liberalise”²⁵. Moreover as it was noticed earlier they did not feel the strict deadline that was put by the EU justified and position of Europeans that were holding for it was instrumental in creating mistrust between two negotiating parties.

The results of the negotiating process however can not be viewed as a success of the European Union strategy. The ACP countries didn't feel that the EU was sincere in its statements, especially about the development character of the EPAs and the fact that there were no credible alternatives to the free-trade agreements.²⁶ Moreover given the strict

²² Peter Mandelson, Statement to the Development Committee of the European Parliament, 17 March, 2005, http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/mandelson/speeches_articles/sppm019_en.htm.

²³ Quoted in Mary Farell “From model to policy? The European Union Policy on Regional Integration Elsewhere” in *The State of European Union* ed. Sophie Meunier and Kathleen McNamara (Oxford University Press, 2007): 3.

²⁴ Quoted in Ole Elgström, “Images of the EU in EPA Negotiations: Angel, Demon – or Just Human?”, op. cit.: 4.

²⁵ Cited in Adrian Flint *Trade, Poverty and the Environment*, op. cit.: 24.

²⁶ Ole Elgström, “Images of the EU in EPA Negotiations: Angel, Demon – or Just Human?”, op. cit.: 8

deadline that the European Union wanted to be achieved no matter what, many of the ACP states felt bullied during the process of negotiations by the European Commission to conclude the agreements by the end of 2007.²⁷ In the end, only one regional grouping – CARIFORUM – was able to sign a full EPA by the deadline. Interestingly enough, the negotiators from this Caribbean group claimed that there was no pressure from the European side to conclude negotiations by the deadline, quite the opposite, it was a voluntary strategy chosen by CARIFORUM in the pursuance of its own interest.²⁸ Moreover, this regional grouping was able to extract some concessions from the European Union, like 25 years timeframe after the signing of the EPA to achieve tariff liberalization. The signing of the EPA with CARIFORUM could have been viewed positively for the European Union was it not for the fact that other groupings failed to do so. Out of total 77 ACP countries, 20 decided to sign ‘interim’ EPAs with the EU, and 43 states didn’t sign any agreement at all. It didn’t work quite well for the integrational process also. In Pacific for example only two members of PACP (Papua New Guinea and Fiji) have signed an interim EPA, other countries from this regional organization decided to have no agreement. The Easter and South African group (ESA) split in two parts during the negotiation. One part of it – EAC reached an agreement with the European Union on a two-year moratorium for any further action of the establishment of the EPA, planning to achieve liberalization of trade in three steps by 2015. Western and Central African grouping failed to sign any agreement at all. The South African Development Community (SADC) – the only regional economic community (REC) that existed before the Cotonou Agreement – reduced its membership from 14 to 5 countries. It also broke into two different negotiation groups: one consisted of Botswana, Namibia, Lesotho and Swaziland and another of Mozambique, Angola and Tanzania. Malawi, Mauritius, Madagascar, Zambia and Zimbabwe decided to change their membership from SADC to COMESA for the negotiations of the EPA. And South Africa decided not to sign interim agreement as well (since it wasn’t part of the Lomé agreement and had separate bilateral agreement with the EU). Cameroon, Ghana and Côte d’Ivoire failed to reach agreement

²⁷ Adrian Flint, “The End of a ‘Special Relationship’? The New EU-ACP Economic Partnership Agreements”, *op. cit.*: 90.

²⁸ Richard Bernal, “CARIFORUM-EU Economic Partnership Agreement Negotiations: Why and How”, *op. cit.*: 9.

within their respective groupings, abandoned them and signed interim EPAs with the European Union on the bilateral basis. At the same time Nigeria, Gabon and the Republic of Congo opted out of the whole process without any kind of agreement.

As one may notice the promotion of the idea of the regional integration through EPAs was not quite successful. The result of the negotiation process was probably less and not more integration among the ACP countries. The only full EPA was signed with Caribbean countries and all other groupings signed either interim agreement or didn't sign any agreement at all. What is more important is the fact that several countries gave up the idea of integration and either signed the EPA with the European Union on a bilateral basis, or dropped out of the process completely for the time being. In the words of van Hoestenbergh et al., "instead of fostering cooperation – the EPAs are putting great strain on the process of regional integration".²⁹

The process of the EPAs negotiations can be seen as a failure of the European Union's soft power. Europeans were trying to convince their counterparts that the proposed solution is not just the only credible and possible option, but is also the most beneficial for them from the economical and developmental perspectives. During the negotiations the European Union tried to construct the situation in order to change preferences and perceptions of the ACP states, so that they will embrace the idea of regional integration as the EU sees it. Yet the efforts of the Europeans backfired on them and the ACP states began to mistrust the EU, especially about developmental benefits of the would-be EPAs. Representative of one of the regional NGOs stated bluntly, that the European Union has "lured countries into EPAs by promising them that there would be development programmes. That is a lie from the beginning – there will be no development programmes ...and there is no new money there"³⁰. The ACP states also anticipated that the EPAs would cause some real losses for them. The lowering of trade barriers and elimination of tariffs would decrease revenue flows and for some states (e.g. Ivory Coast, Uganda and Sierra Leone) it would constitute a very significant blow to the budget. Another anticipated negative consequence is the exposure of the local producers

²⁹ Karel van Hoestenbergh, Hein Roelfsema, Swabiri Khalidi, "The Making of the East African Community: A Case Study" in *The EU and World Regionalism: The Makability of Regions in the 21st Century*, ed. Philippe De Lombaerde, Michael Schulz (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009): 236.

³⁰ A. Kwa, "Africa: Chaos on Eve of EPA Deadline", 9 November.

<http://www.ipsterraviva.net/Europe/article.aspx?id=5413>.

to the competition from other ACP states and Europe. Van Hoestenbergh et al. noted that for the African leaders one of the main problems during the negotiations was the fact that the European Union concentrated mostly on the idea of regional trade liberalization. The prevailing idea among African experts was however that trade liberalization won't be positive neither for the economic development, nor for the political cooperation among African nations.³¹ Feeling that these concerns aren't dully addressed by the European Union, ACP states developed a particular negative attitude toward the proposed EPAs. In the end it turned out that one party in the negotiations doesn't trust the motives and rhetoric of the other and therefore perceives the offers made by it as threatening for its own position. The feeling of mistrust was supported also by the fact that the European Union despite proclaimed support for the regional integration stubbornly refused to notice already existing groupings as negotiating partners. Instead it preferred to create regional groups itself, which didn't increase the effectiveness of the process and only served to complicate matters further. As Elgström puts it, "if one negotiating party does not accept the proclaimed self-image of its opponent, or sees it as inconsistent with the actual behavior of that actor, it will doubt the sincerity and credibility of the actor and hesitate to agree to its proposals"³². Analyzing the situation with the help of the model proposed by Kroenig, McAdam and Weber, one can see that the European Union was perceived by the ACP states as an actor that is not impartial and has a direct stake in the issue at hand. The EU was also attempting to evade the 'open marketplace for ideas' by picturing its position as being the only correct and credible one. Having little trust in the EU's offer, the ACP states further began to perceive it as clashing with their own material well-being, namely as hindering their development instead of helping it. In this case it doesn't really matter whether the European Union was sincere in its proposals or acted only in self-interest, covering it with nice rhetoric. The ACP states didn't feel that their fears and needs are being addressed by the EU, and that itself created a feeling of mistrust that led to the failure of European soft power in the EPAs negotiations.

³¹ Karel van Hoestenbergh, Hein Roelfsema, Swabiri Khalidi, "The Making of the East African Community: A Case Study", op. cit.: 241.

³² Ole Elgström, "Images of the EU in EPA Negotiations: Angel, Demon – or Just Human?", op. cit.: 7.

EUROPEAN UNION AS A MODEL

The European Union did not only try to actually create regional organizations in Africa, it also showed support for the existing institutions and for ideas to create new ones. Along the rhetorical endorsement of any regional initiatives that would promote integration on the continent the European Union as Frank Mattheis argues supported the regionalism in two ways: as being a model of a successful regional organization itself and by making funds available for the countries wishing to engage in the integrational schemes.¹ The later option – financial aid directed for the regionalization can be viewed as a “bribe”. In other words countries change their behavior and embrace regional integration process as a result of the funds becoming available to them, not because their preferences have been actually changed. This is a case of an economic hard power that can be employed both as a stick (sanctions) and a carrot (distribution of funds). An example of such a carrot is a 10th EDF that is established under the Cotonou Agreement for the period of 2008-2013 and totals €22,700 million, €1,780 million from which are directed solely to the goals of regional integration. The total amount of EDF was increased from €13,800 million that was in 9th EDF, covering 2000-2007, and the amount of funds directed to the regional integration almost doubled.²

The idea of the EU as a model of a regional integrational organization is closer to the idea of soft power. It was referred earlier in this paper to the process of “extra-regional echoing”, when countries in one region are trying to copy successful integrational behavior from countries in another region. The European Union to this date presents pretty much the only one deeply integrated region. No other regional organization has achieved that level of integration among them. Therefore, the EU is a natural point of reference when one starts to speak about regional integration. However the European experience (as valuable as it may be) is not necessarily suitable for any other region. There are significant economical, industrial, cultural, historical and political differences that exist between other regions and Europe that should prevent direct

¹ Frank Mattheis, “The Logics of Interregionalism: Comparing EU Relations with SADC and MERCOSUR” (Paper Presented for the ECPR Graduate Conference, Dublin, Ireland, 2010): 1.

² Frederik Söderbaum, “The European Union and Interregionalism”, *op. cit.*: 227.

copying of the European path toward integration. The EU acknowledges this fact and underlines that its experience should of course be adapted to the local circumstances.³

The copying, or echoing of the EU's integrational model does not necessarily implies passivity of the EU as an actor. Indeed, other countries may initiate integration projects just because they see a successful example in Europe, but the European Union itself can promote its own model by the means of soft power. Mattheis sees it to be possible through the support of Europe oriented education programs and promotion of the information about the beneficial aspects of the European Union by the means of EU's representatives in third countries.⁴

The case of soft power through both presence and action of the European Union can be made for the creation of the African Economic Community (AEC) and consequent creation of the African Union (AU). Though both of these structures were established in the last twenty years, the history of the integration attempts on the African continent started shortly after the first countries gained their independence.

It is possible to define four main lines of argument among proponents of the African integration. The first one, the Casablanca group was established in 1961 and led by first president of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah represented the federalist ideas. They argued for the accelerated creation of the pan-African government that will merge all of the states on the continent and thus promote peace between newly-independent countries and be a driving force of the economic development. As some analysts noted Nkrumah was inspired by the example of the USA and saw the creation of the United States of Africa as his ideal goal.⁵ The Casablanca group proposed a three-step process of such integration. First of all, they argued, the common African values and norms should be understood and established among states. On the basis of such values and norms the regional institutions must be established and the process of integration of the economical and political spheres

³ Communication from the Commission "European Community Support for Regional Economic Integration Efforts Among Developing Countries", 1995: 9.

⁴ Frank Mattheis, "The Logics of Interregionalism: Comparing EU Relations with SADC and MERCOSUR", op. cit.: 2.

⁵ Suresh Chandra Saxena, "The African Union: Africa's Giant Step toward Continental Unity" in *Africa at the Crossroads: Between Regionalism and Globalization*, ed. John Mukum Mbaku, Suresh Chandra Saxena (Westport: Praeger, 2004): 167.

can begin. The last step should be a creation of the common government that would have decision-making authority in the spheres of economy, politics, and military.⁶

The second, Monrovia group, was led by the first president of Senegal Léopold Senghor and consisted mostly from ex-French colonies. They were adherents of the functionalist approach, arguing for the need of the gradual European-like spill-over from one sector to another.

The third group which included Libya and Sudan argued that African unity shouldn't go further than creation of the single charter that would state some shared values and principles, but also encompass different positions and viewpoints of the African countries. This group didn't find it necessary to create any kind of supranational institution on the continent.

Finally, the fourth approach to the issue of African unity was presented by the president of Liberia William Tubman and argued for the creation of the loose association of African states that would have intergovernmental organs to promote cooperation between them and enhance their ability to participate in the international affairs.

The functionalist plan proposed by Monrovia group was adopted with the creation of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in 1963, "thus basing African regionalism on political and economic linkages, rather than on common cultural, historical and language experience"⁷. But by the beginning of 1990s little was achieved in terms of all-African integration. The OAU failed to become an actor in the international arena and was helpless in dealing with a number of crisis situations on the continent including a number of failing and/or failed states, war in Angola, conflict around Western Sahara, conflicts in Sudan and Great Lakes Region. It must be noticed that the OAU was not actually empowered by its charter to keep peace in Africa and moreover it simply lacked financial and human resources to do so. However the expectations were that integrational organization would be instrumental in promoting peace and prosperity on the continent, and the Organization of African Unity didn't live up to them.

If there were any somewhat successful integrational attempts, they were made on the smaller level between several neighboring countries. There were more than 160

⁶ Julian Kitipov, "African Local Integration and Multilateralism: The Regional Economic Communities and Their Relationship with the European Union" *Mercury* 16 (2011): 8.

⁷ Ibid., 9.

intergovernmental organizations from which around 40 were in West Africa alone.⁸ According to the United Nations report it is possible to divide these 160 organizations in separate groups by their respective activity and goals. There are economic communities, trying to build common markets and free-trade areas, development organizations, technical/service organizations, monetary and financial institutions.⁹ Speaking of the integration in the sphere of economy, most of the analytics say that all of the attempts in this field failed and didn't lead to creation of any sustainable and successful organization, or working free-trade area, common market or economic union.¹⁰

On the pan-African level till the end of the Cold War, the Organization of the African Unity was the only attempt of the integration and as it was noted before not very successful one. Despite the lack of evident success in this sphere the African governments continued to share the idea that integrational process would be beneficial for the continent, even if they disagreed in the particular approaches toward this process. In the beginning of 1990s the African nations faced the creation of two powerful economical blocs – the European Union and NAFTA. This development called for the governments of the continent to present themselves in the united fashion as well, otherwise they risked to find their voice weak and overheard. It was also a widespread belief among African leaders that regionalization would be a way to overcome growing marginalization of the continent in the world economy and a road that lead the countries out of poverty.¹¹ The solution was found in an attempt to follow the European and North American example and create the common market on the African continent.

The treaty establishing the African Economic Community was signed on June 3 1991 in Abuja, Nigeria by the heads of states and government of the then OAU. It entered into force in May 1994, when it was ratified by two thirds of the member states that have put their signatures under the agreement. The ultimate goal that Abuja treaty placed before the African countries was the creation of the African Common Market by 2025 thus liberalizing and integrating intra-African trade and economies of the respective

⁸ Guy Martin, *Africa in World Politics: A Pan-African Perspective* (Trenton: Africa World Press, Inc., 2002): 128-129.

⁹ Ibid., 129.

¹⁰ See Margaret Lee, "Regionalism in Africa: A Part of Problem or a Part of Solution" *Polis* 9 (2002): 1.

¹¹ Suresh Chandra Saxena, "The African Union: Africa's Giant Step toward Continental Unity", op. cit.: 178, Margaret Lee, "Regionalism in Africa: A Part of Problem or a Part of Solution", op. cit.: 1, Julian Kitipov, "African Local Integration and Multilateralism", op. cit.: 4-9.

states. In order to achieve this goal the countries that signed the treaty pledged to start gradually remove obstacles for the free movement of persons, goods, services and capital. The Abuja treaty also envisaged the cooperation and integration in the monetary field and contained plans to establish following institutions: an African Clearing and Payments House, an African Central Bank, a Community Solidarity, Development and Compensation Fund. The end goal of integration in the monetary sphere is an African Monetary Union. The Abuja treaty also established institutions of the AEC: the Secretariat of the AEC, the Economic and Social Commission, the Pan-African Parliament, the Court of Justice and seven Specialized Technical Committees in particular spheres.

Another step in the regionalization of the African continent was the creation of the African Union. It replaced the obsolete and by that time almost dysfunctional Organization of African Unity. The origins of the African Union can be traced to the fourth extraordinary session of the OAU in Sirte, Libya on September 9, 1999, where the heads of states agreed that they need a new organization to substitute it. The Constitutive act of the AU was adopted one year later in Lomé. Finally in March 2001 once again in Sirte the formation of the African Union was pronounced. Already in May of the same year the agreement entered into force after having been ratified by two-thirds of signatories.

The treaty establishing the African Union was designed to incorporate the AEC which by that time was clearly lagging behind its own schedule and showed little in terms of market integration progress. Therefore many of the articles have found its way from the Abuja treaty into the Constitutive Act of the AU. So did some of the institutions envisioned for the AEC. In total, the Constitutive Act established nine institutions for the African Union: the Assembly of Heads of States and Governments, the Executive Council, Specialized Technical Committees, the Pan-African Parliament, the Court of Justice, three financial institutions (African Central Bank, African Monetary Fund and African Investment Bank), the Commission, the Permanent Representatives Committee, and the Economic and Cultural Council.

One cannot help noticing that the institutional structure of the AEC and especially of the AU heavily resembles that of the European Union. The fact that the African Union

was to some extent modeled by the example of the EU was recognized by its own creators. Thus during the summits that foreshadowed the establishment of this pan-African organization it was often noted that African states should not “invent the wheel” and use a successful existing model of the EU, albeit with some local modifications.¹² It was also openly admitted by several heads of states and governments that took part in the creation of the union.¹³ It is also noticeable that the creators of the African Union hold on to the idea of establishing a monetary union in Africa just like the one that exists in Europe with the financial institutions modeled by the European example as well. The main significant difference is probably in the historical perspective of the both Unions. The EU started as cooperation in one field and then gradually grew up to include more spheres and had never really proclaimed its final goals. The African Union started as an all-encompassing integrational organization that sees as its final aim the establishment of the economical, financial and probably political (although the principles of sovereignty and recognition of the borders are described among the main principles for the AU) union on the African continent. The overall goals are however quite similar to those of the European Union: to promote peace, economic growth, security and justice, sustainable development, scientific research and technological advance, and solidarity and cohesion among member states.¹⁴ This can be also seen as the influence of the EU’s example. Most of the goals are more or less fulfilled in Europe: there’s been no war among the member states of the EU, the economic growth till recently was quite impressive, level of life is one of the highest in the world, and in science and technology Europe is making significant progress. So there are no surprises in the fact that African countries would like to emulate that success and see their own continent being prosperous.

In 2010 the African Union Commission issued a document entitled “Rationalization of the RECs: revision of the Abuja Treaty and Adoption of the Minimum Integration Programme”.¹⁵ In it Commission proposed a gradual process of

¹² Transition from the OAU to the African Union, http://www.au2002.gov.za/docs/background/oau_to_au.htm.

¹³ Olufemi Babarinde, “The EU as a Model for the African Union: the Limits of Imitation” *Jean Monnet/Robert Schuman Paper Series* 7:2 (2007): 8.

¹⁴ Constitutive Act of the AU: http://www.au2002.gov.za/docs/key_oau/au_act.htm; The Founding Principles of the Union: http://europa.eu/scadplus/constitution/objectives_en.htm.

¹⁵ Commission of the African Union, “Rationalization of the RECs: Revision of the Abuja Treaty and Adoption of the Minimum Integration Programme”: <http://www.africa-union.org/root/ua/Annonces/2010/EA/MIP/MIP%20Big%20Doc%20English%20Version%20Web.pdf>.

integration among and within different RECs in the African continent to ensure the cohesion of the process. Ideally this program should help all RECs complete their integrational process at more or less similar schedule that would make it more feasible to organize integration within framework of the whole continent. Julian Kitipov notices that this “Minimum Integration Programme” resembles the integration pace that was followed by the European Union with its step by step integration from sector to sector.¹⁶

The European Union was supportive of the integration on the pan-African level. When the African Union was in the process of being developed, the EU started a dialogue with African countries on the new level that was before that. In April 2000 in Cairo first EU-Africa Summit took place, which was seen as a start of the comprehensive framework in which the European Union and African continent as whole can discuss issues of mutual interest. During the Summit five priority spheres for both sides were agreed:

- Regional integration in Africa
- Integration of African continent into the world economy
- Human rights, principles of democracy, good governance and rule of law
- Management and resolution of conflicts and peace-building
- Development issues.¹⁷

The final creation of the African Union made it easier for the European Union to conduct dialogue on a regional level. And according to some analysts the cooperation between two organizations became an increasingly important part of the EU’s foreign policy and especially its interregional relations.¹⁸ In 2005 the EU Council adopted the first EU Strategy for Africa that supposed to be a comprehensive framework for dialogue and cooperation between African Union and European Union. It stressed that for the first time the European Union addresses Africa as one entity,¹⁹ thus emphasizing its support for the regionalization of the continent and process of integration on both regional and sub-regional levels. To the five priorities that were agreed in Cairo in 2000, this

¹⁶ Julian Kitipov, “African Local Integration and Multilateralism”, op. cit.: 10.

¹⁷ Towards a Joint Africa-Europe Partnership Strategy:

http://europafrika.files.wordpress.com/2007/05/historical_perspective.pdf.

¹⁸ Frederik Söderbaum, “The European Union and Interregionalism”, op. cit.: 226

¹⁹ EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African Pact to Accelerate Africa’s Development”, 2005: 2.

document added terrorism and migration as two other important topics on which the two organizations should work closely together.

The same vision of the united Africa as Europe's partner was put as a cornerstone for the EU's approach in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy adopted at the second EU-Africa Summit in Lisbon in 2007.²⁰ Unlike the EU Strategy for Africa that was viewed as internal European document and therefore quite one-sided, the Joint Strategy as its name implies reflected positions of both sides and was seen by the AU and EU alike as a document that could serve as a basis for comprehensive cooperation and dialogue. It stresses the same priority spheres that figured in the previous two documents and keeps insisting on the image of Africa as a united entity that should be an equal and natural partner to the European Union. The Joint Strategy also falls in line with continuous European argument about the beneficial effects of the regional and sub-regional integration for the African continent. It underlines the idea that further regionalization through African RECs and consequent EPAs will help foster development, increase beneficial effects of trade for the countries in Africa and help fully integrate the continent into the world economy.

The European Union also pledged financial support for the priority areas that were outlined in the Joint Strategy. However it did not established a separate fund for these activities and so far the money goes through existing establishments – European Development Fund, the Development Cooperation Instrument, the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument, and the Instrument for Stability. While it can clearly cause some future troubles it terms of cohesiveness of different funds, the EU is eager to show the support for the African Union in terms of financing as well.

It is worth noting that the European Union also aims at the institutionalization of the EU-Africa dialogue. So far the institutional setting of the relations has five branches:

- Summits at the level of heads of states and government every 3 years
- Africa-EU Ministerial Meetings
- Joint Africa-EU Task Force meetings that cover the key areas of the cooperation

²⁰ Joint Africa-EU Strategy "The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership":
http://www.eu2007.pt/NR/rdonlyres/D449546C-BF42-4CB3-B566-407591845C43/0/071206jsapenlogos_formatado.pdf.

- Informal Africa-EU Expert Groups that is compiled of the experts from both sides
- Dialogue between European and Pan-African Parliaments

The policy of one Africa that the European Union is inclined to follow after the creation of the African Union can be viewed as a conscious attempt at boosting the latter's credibility as an actor in the international arena. As it follows from the strategies described earlier the EU sees its relations with the AU as an overarching framework for any other relations it has with the continent. The support it gives to the sub-regional integration and EPAs it negotiates with RECs are also fitting under the umbrella of region-to-region relations. Smis and Kingah even argue that in attempt to support and promote the AU's actorness, the European Union consciously diluted its support to the regional blocks.²¹ The experience of the EPAs negotiations on one hand may prove to be evidence in favour of this claim, since they caused great problems for the RECs that were functional before the Cotonou Agreement and were not quite instrumental in promoting any further integration on the sub-regional level. On the other hand, it was hardly a conscious policy of the European Union, since it was clearly interested in the success of the negotiations and establishment of the working EPAs with sub-regional entities, it was probably more of bad strategy choice.

All in all a claim can be made that the European Union did influence the creation and becoming of the African Union, and that this influence was in fact an exercise of a soft power. On the one level the influence was exercised by the sheer fact of the EU's existence as the successful integration entity. It was and is viewed as a natural point of reference for any other integrational attempt in other parts of the world (Asia may be the only exception to this rule). The creators of the OAU were applying the same functionalist logic that was used by the founding fathers of the European Union and the institutional setting of both AEC and the African Union heavily resembles that of the EU. Of course it is far from being given that the AU's institutions will work as effectively as their European analogues, but the initial idea and perspective is there.

²¹ Stefaan Smis, Sevidzem Stephen Kingah, "Unassertive Interregionalism in the Great Lakes Region" in *The European Union and the Global South*, ed. Frederik Söderbaum, Patrik Stålgren (Colorado: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 2010): 218.

The other way that the European Union influenced the formation of the African Union was its clear support for such a development in the African continent. This support was visible in the official documents of the EU and also in a quick establishment of the EU-African dialogue between two entities with a highly institutionalized structure. The establishment of the common institutions ensures the possibility of the constant dialogue and promotes the idea of the equal partnership (no matter how closely does this actually correspond with the reality). Addressing Africa as an entity was also a way to boost the credibility of the organization in a soft way. The latter point is also interesting as it adds constructivist logic to the idea of soft power. By choosing to conduct a dialogue with the African Union as a single representative of the region, it constructed the situation to increase the importance of this pan-African organization and promote the vision of its increased actorness both among the African states and other countries.

CONCLUSION

This paper analyzed the relationship between the European Union and ACP states from the perspective of soft power. It was argued that the latter is an important part of the EU's policy of interregionalism and it influenced the relations between two regions significantly.

While the concept of soft power remains vague, several models can help recognize it in action. Note first, however, that the concept is quite often misused in the literature and in official speeches; and it is necessary therefore to understand clearly what soft power is: not just the absence of military power, but the power of attraction, the power to change the preferences of another actor without coercing or bribing it. While such a definition does not make the concept more transparent and easy to use for the analysts, it is sufficiently important to help describe relations between actors in international arena.

Soft power is often recognized as being a certain trend in the foreign policy of the European Union. However most of the work that is done in this field is focused on the United States or China as a country that rises in all dimensions of power. All of the concepts that were coined out to describe the EU as an actor in the international arena tried to capture its uniqueness in the foreign policy conduct, but are not successful in showing how it puts soft power into action. Therefore instead of broad idea of "civilian" or "normative" power this paper focused on the mechanisms of soft power application.

Three specific cases were analyzed – the creation of the ACP group during the negotiations of the Lomé Convention, negotiations of the EPAs following adoption of the Cotonou Agreement, and the creation of the African Union. In all these cases it was possible to find the EU's application of soft power though by different mechanisms and with different results.

In the first case the exercise of soft power was arguably passive and unintentional. The preferences of ACP countries were changed when they faced the then EC as their counterpart and they realized that their voice will be better heard and they gain more leverage if they acted as an integrated group. This outcome was not preferred by the EC

at that time, since it would rather negotiate with single countries than with a united group. However, the sheer presence of the EC was able to change preferences and strategy of the ACP states. Although soft power was at work, its application was unintentional by the actor.

The second case emphasizes an intentional and strategic use of the EU's soft power, though it remained quite unsuccessful. During the EPAs negotiations that followed the adoption of the Cotonou Agreement the European Union's strategy was to present the conclusion of EPAs not only as the single possible solution, but also as one that would benefit the ACP countries. However the ACP group felt that the EU misrepresented the information and tried to bully them. As the result of such mistrust the EU's message was not well received by its recipients. The goal of promoting the sub-regional integration and free trade areas was therefore hampered.

Finally the creation of the African Union is the case where the EU's exertion of soft power was both active and passive. Europe represented an example of regional integration at which African statesmen looked up for inspiration and also used it as a model. On the other hand the EU actively supported the idea of pan-African integration and promoted the idea of a united Africa as a natural partner for Europe, thus purposively exercising soft power in order to boost the AU's credibility as an international actor.

These cases illustrate the two mechanisms of soft power in action: through presence and purposive action. They also show that the successful result of soft power exertion does not depend on the particular mechanism. All in all soft power perspective is applicable for the analysis of the EU's foreign policy and can yield helpful insights in it.

The point was made that soft power can be exercised not only purposively but also unintentionally. The idea that the sheer presence of an actor can create an attraction and stimulate changes on preferences and actions is worth discussing. In this paper it is treated as an instance of the soft power. The question can be raised however, whether it is really can be called a "power" if the actor doesn't intended to use it and may be even not satisfied with the result. At the end of the day the most usual definition of power is an ability to make other actors to do something that they would not otherwise do. Such a definition assumes intention and idea of the end result towards which other actors are

being pushed. When the changes in others' preferences and behavior are caused by the actor's presence and are unintended by it – can it be called an exercise of power?

This question is an interesting one. The concept of soft power is based on the ideas of attraction and persuasion. Still it has purposive character in it. As is the case with hard power, soft one can be used strategically in order to make others see situation in particular way and change their preferences and behavior in the desired way. This is the instance of purposeful exercise of soft power. This paper illustrates it with examples of EPAs negotiations (where this exercise was not successful) and the relations between the EU and the AU (which can't be seen as very successful as well, though are not a total failure).

It gets tricky however when the soft power is exercised unintentionally. Perhaps it would be better to speak about a "soft influence" here. Influence is different from power in that it doesn't have to be intentional. A person can exercise an influence over the other one even without knowing it, just by being oneself. For example a beautiful and charismatic person is more likely to attract attention even just by walking on the street. In the same way a visibly physically strong man is less likely to get robbed. Just by being a particular person one can influence others' preferences and behavior at least concerning oneself. In the same way the actor in the international relations can influence others just by being itself.

Soft influence can be used to describe the instant when the sheer presence of an actor cause others change their preferences without being forced to. It can be understood also in terms of the attraction if the actor whose presence is felt by others has some features that can be successfully copied or has a particular reputation that made other actors to look at it and/or follow it. This paper illustrates this instant with an example of the Lomé negotiations when the ACP group was formed. The countries felt the presence of the EC and decided that it is necessary to enter negotiations with an organized regional actor as an organized regional actor themselves.

The idea of soft influence can be supplemental to the concept of soft power in differentiating between intended and unintended use of attraction, persuasion and other mechanisms that are associated with soft power.

Overall this paper was aiming to make the idea of soft power clearer and more usable. The understanding of different mechanisms, ways and instances of how it works is very important for the analysis of the modern international politics.

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