



EU-Africa Regionalism Diplomacy: Understanding the Troubles of Post-Westphalian Eurafrica

Ueli STAEGER (CH) – Supervisor: Brian HOCKING

Abstract

This study explores African-European political relations through a diplomacy-based theory of regionalism. It is both a diplomatic study of regionalism and a regionalist study of diplomacy. The paper answers three research questions: 1.) What conceptions of regionalism and pan-Africanism inform European regionalism promotion in Africa?; 2.) How does the European Union (EU) support the regional cooperation and integration in Africa through Regionalism Diplomacy?; 3.) How can EU-African (inter)Regional Diplomacy improve upon its unevenness? This study submits that externally influenced regionalisation is a contentious process whose analysis should be re-politicised through an approach grounded in English School IR and diplomacy studies. The EU's sui generis character is understood through a concurrence of change dynamics in diplomatic practice and aspirations to overcome Westphalian polity. Accordingly, Regionalism Diplomacy is defined as "a diplomatic practice by actors in international societies, which aims at renegotiating existing structures and 'conditions of separateness', both within and across international societies". This paper applies the Regionalism Diplomacy analytical framework to a number of EU practices and policies to understand how and whether the EU promotes African regionalisation: the African Caribbean Pacific group, the Cotonou Agreement, the direct funding of regional organisations, EU-African Union (AU) interregional diplomatic practice, the summitry of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, the Pan-African Programme and the Economic Partnership Agreements. The main finding is that of a powerful and fairly well-funded EU Regionalism Diplomacy in Africa. Sometimes EU Regionalism Diplomacy however also serves EU interests only. Postcolonial dependence on Europe, or Eurafrica, is still kept alive through some regional policies. The paper concludes by suggesting that a more diplomacy-focused relation with African regional institutions could be a felicitous avenue for decolonised Europe-Africa relations. Instead of Eurafrican dependence, the EU and AU could thereby engage in less uneven, issue-based interregional diplomacy.