

Development cooperation in Poland's foreign policy in 1989-2020

Summary

Since the beginning of the 21st century, the concept of development cooperation has been popularized, conducted, inter alia, by transferring development aid, and the opinion that it can benefit all parties involved. While development aid is primarily a tool for pursuing the donors' interests, cooperation (including, in particular, the inclusion of beneficiaries in the process of programming and implementing aid) is both an instrument of reducing disproportions in the socio-economic development of assistance recipients and a soft power measure of the donors' foreign policy, thanks to which they can achieve their – strategic, political or economic – goals.

The international aid system, which took shape in the West after World War II, did not include Poland until 1989. Initially, the state was primarily the recipient of support offered by international financial organizations, governments of developed countries and the European Communities. Since 1998, Poland undertook its first actions as a donor of official development assistance, but until 2004 the status of OA/ODA beneficiary was dominant, as the value of funds received from abroad exceeded the number of funds transferred by Poland to other developing countries. By joining the European Union in 2004, the state formally joined the group of international aid donors and began shaping its development cooperation system. This stage was completed with the adoption on September 16, 2011 of the *Act on Development Cooperation*, which entered into force on January 1, 2012. From that moment, Poland is focused on identifying its role in the international aid system and creating the state's geographical and thematic specialization in activities carried out in this area. It is worth emphasizing a distinct two-track approach in Polish development aid, with the primacy of democracy export in the Eastern direction over activities to support the sustainable development of developing countries, including the reduction and eradication of poverty.

The main research objective of this doctoral dissertation is to present the essence and evolution of development cooperation in Poland's foreign policy in the years 1989-2020 and analyse the importance of development aid and development cooperation in the area of external activity of the state. This goal includes the characteristics of the external and internal conditions of the state-led development cooperation, its legal and institutional system, financial resources dedicated to it, as well as the motivations and interest related to the provision of official development assistance and the manifestations of the use of development cooperation both on a bilateral level (concerning the geographical concentration, thematic specialization and main directions of implemented activities) and multilateral (taking into account the structure of spending multilateral ODA and the financial and political contribution of Poland to the functioning of multilateral distributions channels). This made it possible to identify the main features of development cooperation as a soft power tool of Poland's foreign policy, and the conclusions drawn were used to determine the factors influencing the effectiveness of this instrument, the cost of which from the state budget in 1998-2020 was – according to the OECD data – nearly 7.97 billion USD.

Key words: development cooperation; development aid; Millennium Development Goals; Sustainable Development Goals; Polish foreign policy