

GENDER EQUALITY – A FEEL GOOD NORM?  
Divergence between Rhetoric and Practice in the  
EU's Development Policy towards the Pacific Islands

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## **ABSTRACT**

As one of the world's largest donors, the European Union provides development assistance to the Pacific Island Countries. At the same time, the EU actively promotes its own values and principles toward the Island Countries as part of the development cooperation with the region. In taking on the role of a norm promoter, the EU promotes its core values in the Pacific region such as democracy, good governance, the rule of law, and also gender equality. The Union is committed the promotion of equal treatment and equal opportunities for women and men. The norm is emphasised and promoted in all development strategies for the Pacific region and in the agreements with the Island countries. But how committed is the EU to gender equality when it comes to the active promotion of the norm in the development projects for the Pacific Islands?

This thesis investigates the divergence between the EU's rhetoric and practice when it comes to the promotion of gender equality in its development policy towards the Pacific region.

An analysis of the Union's rhetoric promotion of gender equality and practical support of the norm in the development projects for the Pacific region provides clear evidence for a gap between the EU's intentions and reality. Whereas the norm is actively promoted throughout the EU's strategies and agreements with the Pacific region, gender equality is neglected in the plans for most of the development projects.

This thesis argues that the successful promotion of gender equality is hindered by internal and external barriers as well as the EU's fragmented composition into different units and actors, that pursue a policies based on norms as well as for interest-related reasons. The identified divergence between the EU's intentions and reality has a crucial impact on its role as a norm promoter: it undermines its power as a normative actor and its legitimacy to shape the concept of normal.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACP	African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific
DG	Directorates-General
EDF	European Development Fund
EDS	European Defence Strategy
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EU	European Union
FSMed	Fiji School of Medicine
GAD	Gender and Development
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HRD	Human Resource Development
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IO	International Organisation
IR	International Relations
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
MP	Member of Parliament
NAO	National Authorising Officer
OCO Sec	Oceania Customs Organisation Secretariat
OMC	Open Method of Coordination
PACP	Pacific Members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
PASO	Pacific Aviation Safety Office
PIDP	Pacific Islands Development Programme
PIF	Pacific Islands Forum
PIFFA	Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
PIFS	Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
PPA	Pacific Power Association
RAO	Regional Authorising Officer
RIP	Regional Indicative Programme
RSP	Regional Strategy Paper
SOPAC	South Pacific Applied Geoscience Commission
SPC	Secretariat for the Pacific Community
SPREP	Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme
SPTO	South Pacific Tourism Organisation
USP	University of the South Pacific
WID	Women in Development

WHO  
WTO

World Health Organisation  
World Trade Organisation

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

“It is in the interests of society as a whole that women’s values and women’s sense of justice be integrated into political life.”

Gro Harlem Brundtland, former Norwegian Prime Minister, when she formed a Government in which nearly half of the members were women in 1986.

“As we pursue social justice and cohesion at home, we should also seek to promote our values, including social and environmental standards and cultural diversity, around the world.”

European Commission’s Communication on Global Europe: Competing in the World. A Contribution to the EU’s Growth and Jobs Strategy (European Commission 2006: 5).

Often viewed as one of the world’s largest donors (Carbone 2010: 13), the European Union has a long history of development cooperation, in particular with the ACP countries. The EU not only provides aid and assistance but at the same time actively promotes its own norms in the regions it cooperates with. Thus, the European Union has taken on the role of a norm promoter in the international system, due to its emphasis on its core principles and the advocacy for its norms in relations to third party countries.

The organisation is actively promoting its core values such as democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance (European Union 2010: Art.2). Moreover, the EU is committed to the promotion of gender equality and equal treatment of women and men (European Union 2010: Art. 2, European Union 2010a: Art. 8). These principles serve as policy objectives for the Union’s foreign and development policy. The EU’s international commitment to gender equality is indicated by its active participation in the Fourth World Conference on Women and its support for the Millennium Development Goals.

But the actions of ‘Normative Power Europe’ can differ from the behaviour that is attributed to a normative actor. The EU’s norm promotion in its development policy is often criticised for suffering from a “gap between intention and reality” (Carbone 2010: 23). Such a gap has a serious impact not only on the effectiveness of the EU’s

development assistance and norm promotion but also on its reputation as an international actor.

This thesis analyses the role of the EU as a promoter of the gender equality norm towards the Pacific ACP states. The importance of this research project lies not only in the insight it provides on how consistent/ consequent the EU is as an actor and how successful and serious its attempts to promote gender equality are, but also because this norm is of particular importance for the region.

Women still face a lot of discrimination and inequalities in the Pacific. The International Human Development Index (IHDI 2005) ranks most of the Pacific Islands low for gender equality and indicated low participation of women within the labour force (IHDI 2009). Moreover, statistics by the International Parliamentary Union (IPU 2012) demonstrate low political participation and representation of women in the Pacific Islands countries. Participants of the Dialogue on Gender Equality at the 43<sup>rd</sup> Pacific Islands Forum stressed that women's economic opportunities on the Pacific Islands remain limited (US Department of State 2012). Feminists argue that women and men are entitled to equal treatment and equal opportunities for the reason of justice. In addition to that, the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women are beneficial to sustainable development. A reduction of the gender gap is vital for developing countries' growth and their economic development (Morrison, Raju and Sinha 2007, OCED 1999: 12, UNDP 2010: 27).

Over the years, the EU has become a strong advocate of gender balance and equal opportunities for women and men and has implemented gender mainstreaming in its internal as well as external policies. The EU's foreign policy towards the Pacific Islands is part of the external relations towards the ACP countries, and the Cotonou Agreement serves as a legal framework for this cooperation. Article 31 of the Agreement explicitly refers to the successful promotion of gender equality (European Community 2000). But, how does the EU actually perform as a norm promoter of gender equality? This thesis will analyse how the EU fulfils its role as a normative power with regard to the promotion of gender equality in its relations towards the

Pacific ACP states. Can Carbone's (2010: 23) suggested gap between intention and reality be identified for the EU's foreign policy towards the Pacific region?

The central research question therefore is:

*To what extent does the EU's development policy towards the Pacific ACP states diverge between rhetoric and practice with regard to the promotion of gender equality?*

Two other relevant questions follow from this main research question:

*If there is a gap, what reasons for its occurrence?*

*What does a divergence between rhetoric and practise imply for the EU's role as a normative actor?*

The Union sets high standards in the development cooperation agreements with the Pacific Islands with regard to norm implementation. The partner countries in the Pacific are required to incorporate the EU's core principles and suggested norms into their national laws in exchange for development assistance and funding. This is also the case for the gender equality norm. How strongly is the EU pushing for gender equality in reality? Is it actually strengthening the role of women or just 'talking the talk'? Is the norm that is stressed in agreements taken seriously in the selection of development assistance projects? Or is the EU treating gender equality as a 'feel good norm'?

A feel good norm is a norm that is used to define and strengthen the EU's role as a norm promoter and "force for goodness" (Debusscher 2011: 46) in the world. It is used to create a positive image and underline the Union's normative superiority from which it acquires its power as a normative actor but it is not promoted as seriously as it is said to be in the relations to third countries. This has a crucial impact not only on the role of the EU as a normative power but also on its legitimacy and credibility as an international actor. The EU might be committed to gender equality in its agreements; it strongly stresses the issue in its strategy papers and rhetorically demands equal treatment of women and men. However, does the EU take into

account gender mainstreaming when it comes to the funding selection of development projects?

The results of the empirical case study of this thesis provide clear evidence for a divergence between the EU's rhetoric and practice with regard to the promotion of gender equality towards the Pacific ACP countries. The EU is composed of different units such as actors, institutions, policy-makers and member-states. These players do not necessarily pursue a policy based only on norms, and interest-related reasons play a role, too. This is the case for the promotion of gender equality in the EU's development cooperation with the Pacific region. The foreign policy towards the Pacific ACP countries with regard to the promotion of gender equality is based on diverging normative and interest-related reasons. This divergence leads to a gap in the EU's rhetoric and practice. Additional internal and external barriers hinder successful norm promotion further. The identified divergence between the EU's intentions and reality has a crucial impact on its role as a norm promoter: it undermines its power as a normative actor and its legitimacy to shape the concept of what is considered normal.

This thesis consists of three main parts. The next chapter examines the concept of 'Normative Power Europe' and the EU's role as a normative actor within the framework of role theory. Afterwards an overview of the concept of gender and development and the links to European foreign aid policy is provided. I will then fill the gap in existing research by undertaking a case study on the EU's development cooperation with the Pacific ACP countries and the promotion of the gender equality norm on a regional level. The EU strongly promotes regionalism in the South Pacific, which "represents a unique case of regional integration" (Carbone 2011: 673) with smaller island states and two larger countries, Australia and New Zealand, as well as different organisations and agencies. Therefore, looking at the EU's norm promotion towards the South Pacific as a region rather than at the bilateral cooperation with each Island state is a particularly suitable approach.

To answer the aforementioned research question I will then evaluate the EU's rhetorical commitment to gender equality by analysing the existing agreements with the PACP states and the EU's strategies for the Pacific region. After this I will

examine how the norm is practically realised in the EU's development cooperation with the Pacific region. Do the projects the EU funds in the region include gender equality as a principal objective, significant objective or do they exclude gender equality? To answer this question I will look at the planning stage of the projects and analyse action fiches, financing and contribution agreements. The focus will be on projects funded under the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund. The final chapter shall then evaluate whether a divergence between rhetoric and practice can be found and why this gap exists, before discussing the impact of the results on the EU's role as a normative power in the South Pacific region.

## **CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The EU's international identity and role is viewed as that of a normative power in the international system. According to Manners (2002: 239), normative actors have the "ability to shape conceptions of 'normal' in international relations". Focussing on socialisation and emphasising the ability of normative actors to redefine interests and influence preference, the concept of normative powers follows a constructivist approach of International Relations Theory (Elgström 2000: 459). This chapter introduces role theory and shows how it can serve as a framework to analyse the EU as a norm promoter, before outlining the concept of the EU as a normative power and the implementation of this approach.

### **2.1. Role Theory**

The European Union is often characterised as an organisation placed somewhere in-between the nation state, an international or regional organisation, or a (con-) federation as it features both supranational and intergovernmental structures. Therefore, the EU is often referred to as an entity 'sui generis'. With the EU's growing importance in international politics and the partial establishment of a common foreign policy, scholars became more and more interested in investigating the EU's external relations and its impact.

Bretherton and Vogler (2006) focused on the conceptualisation of the EU as an international actor to fill the gap of the EU's under-researched foreign policy. Their interest is to find out to what extent the EU has become an actor in international politics (Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 13), which factors have enabled and influenced the EU as an actor and how is it perceived by others (ibid.). Implementing a constructivist approach, they use the related concepts of opportunity, presence, and capability as a framework to analyse the EU's "actorness" (Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 24ff.).

A similar attempt to analyse the EU's foreign relations and international influence is drawn from role theory. The concept of role theory is originally borrowed from

sociology. Holsti (cited in Aggestam 2006: 13) first used role theory in the area of foreign policy analysis on the nation-state level arguing that a state's foreign policy is influenced by its role conception which could explain how the state makes political choices. The role conception results from the state's socialisation process, from experiences in the past but also from the culture and the way its society is constructed (ibid.). In that way, Holsti's perception of roles follows a constructivist approach in IR theory.

Aggestam (2006: 11) in particular argues that role theory analysis can be one way to conceptualise and understand the EU's foreign policy but also how its roles are constructed and framed. An actor's role can be understood and analysed in different ways. Aggestam (2006: 18ff.) distinguishes between four different concepts of roles: role expectation, role conception, role performance and role-set.

*Role expectation* implies how other international actors expect an actor to behave and what role they prescribe for it (Aggestam 2006: 19). *Role conception* refers to how an actor views itself in a given social environment, how it defines its identity and appropriate behaviour and what expectations it has for itself (Sheahan et al. 2010: 351, Aggestam 2006: 19f.). The role conception is rather subjective and influences how an international actor shapes its foreign policy and where its main focus lies (Aggestam 2006: 18-19). An actor's foreign policy is therefore shaped and driven by its own expectations and understandings as well as by third parties' reactions and expectations (Sheahan et al. 2010: 352). *Role performance* then looks at how the actor behaves in certain situations and whether it frames its foreign policy according to its role (Aggestam 2006: 20f.) Finally, a *role-set* can be defined as one general role an actor has. Every actor upholds different roles that are determined by different contexts, experiences, and behaviours. At the same time, the actor has one general role which results from the various roles and shapes what is expected from it and how it generally acts (Aggestam 2006: 21).

Sheahan et al. (2010) develop the role approach further and differentiate between meta-roles and context-specific roles. The *meta-role* of an actor can be described as its general role that is based on its power and resources (Sheahan et al. 2010: 352). A meta-role is relatively stable and consistent and determines the actor's behaviour for

a variety of issue areas or over time (ibid.). *Context-specific roles* refer to a role an actor upholds for a certain situation, and that determines its behaviour in a specific context, geographical area (e.g. a region) or for a certain policy- or issue-area (ibid.).

Sheahan et al. (ibid.) find that if a divergence between the meta-role and the context-specific role can be identified, we speak of role incoherence. They differentiate between three types of role incoherence. *Horizontal role incoherence* appears when there is an inconsistency between different context-role conceptions and how they coincide with an actor's meta-role. We speak of *internal role incoherence* when an actor's own role conception differs from role expectations or role prescriptions that other actors have for it (ibid.). For this study the EU's *vertical role coherence* is of particular interest which can be defined as "the degree of consistency between [an actor's] role conceptualisation and role performance" (Sheahan et al. 2010: 353). Sheahan et al. (2010: 353) conclude that if an actor's role performance differs from its role conception, it has not only a serious impact on the actor's legitimacy but also its role conception can be eroded.

Several scholars have studied "the nature of the beast" (Risse 1996 cited in Bendiek and Kramer 2009: 16) and tried to identify the role of the EU in global politics. Each of these roles is characterised by distinctive goals and values, policy instruments and the institutional construction of the EU (Elgström and Smith 2006: 2ff.). The two main roles that have been identified for the EU and that have shaped the research agenda (cf. Bendiek and Kramer 2009) are the EU's role as a civilian power and its role as a normative power.

Besides, the concept of the EU as a military power became quite prominent especially in the course of the development of the European Defence Strategy and the EU's military missions in the Balkans. However, the impact of this role can be seen as marginal as the EU's military capacities are very limited. It simply does not have sufficient resources as well as competencies to be a military power. Furthermore, an analysis of the EU discourse proves the marginal role of its military power (cf. Bendiek and Kramer 2009: 7f.). The use of the military is subject to restrictions and only used for peace keeping missions or civilian crisis management (for further analysis cf. Larsen 2002).

The debate about the EU as a civilian power has been largely coined by Francois Duchêne since the beginning of the 1970s (Jünemann and Schörning 2002: 4). What shapes the EU's role as a civilian power is the rejection of military measures to achieve its foreign and security policy aims (Ferreira Nunes 2011: 4). Whitman (2006: 103) argues that even though the EU developed the CFSP and the ESDP it can still be referred to as civilian power due to its "distinctive form of diplomacy". Rather than using "measures of classical power politics", the EU focuses on cooperation and trade relations (ibid.). In addition, Maull and Kirste (1996: 300) identify a set of characteristics for the foreign policy of a civilian power among which are the promotion of multilateral agreements and a juridification of interstate relations through supporting international regimes and policy regulations (Jünemann and Schörning 2002: 6).

To conclude, the EU as a civilian power in international relations follows a "distinctive set of principles... emphasizing diplomatic rather than coercive instruments. [Its role is based on] the centrality of mediation in conflict resolution, [and] the importance of long-term economic solutions to political problems" (Hill and Wallace 1996: 9 cited in Freres 2000: 63). More recently, with the concept of the EU as a normative power a new approach has been introduced in academic discourse. This thesis engages with concept of EU as normative actor that will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

## **2.2. The EU as a Normative Power and Norm Promoter**

The role of EU as a normative power has been mainly conceptualised by Ian Manners (2002). Manners (2002: 252) suggests that the EU is not only founded on a normative basis but also acts in a normative way in international politics. A normative power has the "ability to shape the conceptions of 'normal' in international relations" (Manners 2002: 239). According to Manners, the EU is more or less predestined to be a normative power for several reasons.

First, there is its hybrid form of governance (Manners 2002: 240). Its unique structure features both supranational and intergovernmental elements (Bendiek and

Kramer 2009: 18, Manners 2002: 240) and moves beyond the Westphalian notion of state and governance (ibid.). Second, the constitution of the EU as a political entity has been more or less an elite driven process and the development of European integration was based on treaties and legal order (Manner 2002: 241). Therefore, the EU's constitutional norms are highly important and determine the EU's international identity and perception (Manners 2002: 241). The combination of the history of the EU and its hybrid political and legal system lead to the development of the EU as a normative power (ibid.).

The main characteristic of a normative power is that it actively promotes its own norms and values. The EU's external relations are always accompanied by a catalogue of its own norms such as democracy, the rule of law, social justice, human rights and good governance (Bendiek and Kramer 2009: 18, Manners 2002: 241) which serve as policy objectives for its foreign relations and development policy. Furthermore, a normative power supports effective multilateralism as a system for order for the global world as well as peace and non-proliferation. Normative Power Europe also attempts to transfer its own model of integration to other regions in the world (Bendiek and Kramer 2009: 18) and serves as a role model for other regional organisations.

But how does the EU as a norm promoter support its own principles and values towards other countries and regions? Börzel and Risse (2009) identify five mechanisms of norm diffusion. *Coercion* implies that the EU has the power to force other states to adopt its norms e.g. its own member states or states that applied for accession (Börzel and Risse 2009: 9). A second mechanism is *manipulation of utility calculation* where the EU provides either positive (access to the EU market, financial and technical assistance) or negative incentives for others to comply with its norms (ibid.: 10). *Socialisation* is based on the "logic of appropriateness" where actors adopt the EU's norms because they view it as "the right thing to do" (ibid.). A further measure is *persuasion* which follows the "logic of arguing" where the EU persuades other actors of the validity of its own norms (ibid.: 10f.). Finally, Börzel and Risse (2009: 12f.) identify the mechanism of *emulation* that relies on indirect influence rather than active promotion by the EU. Thus actors can adopt certain norms for a

variety of reasons, for example, if they observe that the EU has a competitive advantage.

If the EU is acting coherently in its role conception as norm promoter we could expect it to strongly support its own principles in its foreign policy. Sheahan et. al (2010: 348) identify that the EU's "normative power [...] depends on [...] coherence between EU rhetoric and practice". But if there is a gap between the Union's rhetoric and practice, and its role performance differs from the role conception, the likelihood of successful norm promotion decreases (ibid.).

A gap between intention and reality can occur for different reasons. As Van Schaik and Schunz (2012: 171) identify, the EU is "an actor composed of many units". The EU is not a unitary actor but an amalgam of different actors and institutions and can be viewed as an arena, where different policy-makers and bureaucrats bargain and argue. These actors can pursue a policy for different reasons. They can either be interest-driven actors, which follow a logic of consequences (ibid.: 171). These actors make decisions based on calculations concerning self-interests or according to rational preference ordering. Actors within the EU can also be norm-driven and follow a logic of consequences (ibid.). Norm-driven actors behave according to norms and pursue policies that are considered to be the most appropriate in a given social environment (ibid.). As the Union is not a unitary actor, norms and interests in reality often coexist as determinants of EU policy choices in reality (ibid.). Because different players, actors and institutions within the EU pursue a policy either based on norms or on interests (Van Schaik and Schunz 2012: 172) a gap between rhetoric and practice can develop.

Masselot (2012) examines the EU's attempts to promote gender equality in the context of development projects in the Mekong River region in Asia and distinguishes between internal and external barriers. Internal barriers within the EU can hinder the practical promotion of the gender equality norm in development projects. The first internal barrier can be resistance to change by actors within the EU that are tasked with the implementation of gender equality. Gender mainstreaming of development projects often becomes "mere box-ticking" and no substantial change is made (Masselot 2012: 7f.). The so-called "mainstreaming overload" can serve as a

second internal barrier. Gender equality and gender mainstreaming are defined as cross-cutting issues – along many other issue areas such as sustainability, or environmental policy (ibid.: 8). However, not all cross-cutting issues can be taken into account and therefore, gender equality might have to give way to other, more popular issue areas or issues which are easier to integrate (ibid.: 8).

Furthermore, the EU faces external barriers that can constrain the successful promotion of gender equality. Resistance by the local implementing agencies that are often staffed with male officials can be one factor that makes practical norm promotion difficult (Masselot 2012: 10f.). In addition, gender equality can be traded off for other interests or contrasting development priorities which serve as an external barrier for the promotion of gender equality (ibid.: 9).

### **2.3. The EU's Role as a Norm Promoter in the Pacific Region**

The central topic of this thesis, the role of the European Union as a norm promoter in the Pacific region with a specific focus on gender equality, is an under-researched topic. The relations between the EU and the ACP states have been studied quite intensively, especially with regard to the EU's development aid (cf. Holland 2002, Hoebink and Stobbe 2005, Bormann and Busse 2007, Hout 2007, Slocum-Bradley and Bradley 2010, Bartelt 2012, Holland and Doidge 2012).

Yet, among the studies on the EU and the ACP relations, there are only few that focus on the EU and the Pacific ACP states. Sheahan, Chaban, Elgström and Holland (2010) take a close look at the Pacific region and the EU and focus on the negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreements. They refer to role and belief system theory as their framework of analysis in order to examine reasons for the weak results of the negotiations. They identify internal role incoherence between the EU's own role conception and others' role prescription for the difficulties during the negotiation processes.

Lister and Carbone (2006) explicitly investigate the gender approach in the EU's development policy in a variety of case studies; however, none of them focus on the

Pacific region. Arts (2006) focuses on the EU's commitment to gender equality in the Cotonou Agreement, but her chapter provides an overview of the norm promotion towards the group of ACP countries rather than explicitly towards the Pacific ACPs. Debusscher (2012, Debusscher and van der Vleuten 2012) analyses to what extent the EU successfully promotes gender mainstreaming in its development policy towards Latin America and sub-Saharan countries by combining a qualitative and quantitative approach.

I aim at filling the existing gap in research about the EU and the Pacific Islands with a special focus on gender mainstreaming by analysing the EU's promotion of gender equality towards the Pacific ACP countries. This study not only provides an insight into the EU's promotion of the gender mainstreaming norm but also how role theory helps to understand the EU's role in the international system and its activities in international politics. A gap between the EU's rhetoric and practice in its role as a promoter of gender equality towards the Pacific ACPs indicates a divergence between the EU's role conception and role performance. This vertical role incoherence has not only impacted on the EU's legitimacy as an international normative actor but also on its power as a norm promoter.

#### **2.4. Methodology, Case Selection and Limitation**

To answer my central research question I will conduct an empirical analysis to identify possible links or contradictions between the EU's rhetoric and practice regarding the promotion of gender equality in the South Pacific. I will adopt an approach that allows me to analyse both the EU's rhetorical commitment to and practical implementation of its development policy towards the Pacific Islands and evaluate to what extent they comply or contradict each other. I will focus on the EU's development policy towards the Pacific Island States<sup>1</sup> that are considered as members of the ACP group, namely Cook Islands, Timor-Leste, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu (European Commission 2012a).

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<sup>1</sup> Apart from Timor-Leste, all of the Island countries are members of the Pacific Island Forum (European Commission 2012b).

The EU is funding projects on the Pacific Islands through the European Development Fund. In addition, grants are provided by thematic Instruments such as the European Instrument on Democracy and Human Rights, and Investing in People. This case study only includes data from development projects that have been funded by the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund and that are implemented on a regional level by organisations and agencies in the Pacific region (CROP Agencies). The restricted focus of this research project on development assistance provided from the EDF is not only because of the limited scope of this thesis but also because the EDF is the EU's main tool for regional cooperation and development aid. Only taking development projects into account that are implemented on a regional level allows me to analyse the EU's promotion of gender equality towards the entire region rather than simply individual countries.

I will apply both a qualitative and a quantitative research method to answer my research questions (cf. Debusscher 2011, Debusscher 2012, Debusscher and van der Vleuten 2012). I will use a qualitative approach and screen the official documents, agreements, and strategies that provide the legal framework for the EU and Pacific Islands relations for references about gender mainstreaming and gender equality to evaluate the EU's rhetorical commitment. Does the EU identify gender inequality as a problem for the region? Who is identified as responsible for the inequalities? And what actions and reforms are requested? That allows me to provide a clear picture of the EU's intentions as well as its rhetorical commitment and the demands on the PACP countries.

An analysis of the EU's attempts to promote the norm practically is prevented by the limited scope of this thesis and the difficulty of doing actual field work in the Pacific Island countries. However, as the study is not interested in the efficiency of the EU as a provider of development aid or the output of the EU's policies but rather the coherence/consistency of its role as a norm promoter, an evaluation of the implementation of projects would be a misleading approach. Therefore, I will first look at the projects for development aid towards the Pacific ACPs and classify them according to different sectors which are at the centre of the EU's development cooperation and aid projects (European Commission 2012kl):

- Climate Change

- Civil Society
- Democracy/ Human Rights
- Economics
- Education/ HRD
- Environment
- Fisheries
- Food Security
- Infrastructure
- Poverty Reduction
- Regional Integration
- Sustainable Management of Natural Resources
- Technical Assistance
- Trade.

I will then apply a quantitative methodological framework that relates back to the OECD (2012) to ‘measure’ the Union’s commitment to the promotion of gender equality. The projects will be classified as to whether they include gender mainstreaming as a principal objective, a significant objective or whether they do not target gender mainstreaming at all (‘not targeted’).

Projects with gender mainstreaming as their *principal objective* directly aim at promoting the gender equality norm and empowering women. These issues are the principal object of the project’s activity. If a project includes gender equality as a *significant objective* it means that gender equality was important and taken into account during the programming, but secondary for the activity. *Not targeted* means that the project was screened for promoting gender equality but no reference to gender issues was found and the project was not gender-mainstreamed (OECD 2012). Furthermore, I will take into account the budget for each project, which will provide an overview of the policy areas the EU prefers or neglects.

This methodology allows me to evaluate how seriously the EU takes gender equality in its relations towards the Pacific Islands and the realisation of its projects. It provides an empirical method for evaluating to what extent the EU links its actions to its rhetorical commitments with regard to gender equality. At the same time, the data

will show to which issue areas the EU pays more attention if a gap between its intentions and reality for the promotion of gender mainstreaming can be identified.

Finally, I will evaluate the results and link them to my theoretical framework in an attempt to identify reasons as to why the EU is trading off gender equality and to give an outlook on future development/ provide suggestions for improvement.

## CHAPTER 3: GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT

### 3.1. Reasons for the Promotion of Gender Equality

Before analysing the promotion of the gender equality norm, different reasons shall be outlined as to why the achievement of gender equality is desirable and inevitable. Gender inequalities vary within different societies and cultures. But generally, women are disadvantaged while men are privileged by the societal and cultural structures (cf. Painter and Ulmer 2002: 7). For example, although poverty is without doubt a global issue, women are more affected than men. Furthermore, one third of women have experienced violence in a relationship and only 76% of girls of primary school age have access to primary education (ibid.).<sup>2</sup> In 2012, only 20% out of all Members of Parliament worldwide were women (IPU 2012a).

Among the various arguments why gender balance should be realised, the justice argument is probably the most well-known. It is often brought forward by feminists and supporters of this argument refer to justice between the sexes. Abolishing gender inequality is based on social values such as justice, fairness and equity, and achieving gender balance is “about doing the right thing” (Reeds 2005: 568). Women deserve the same status and rights as men in the cause of justice and should be equally treated and represented (Lovenduski 2005: 22). Furthermore, they shall have equal access to education and equal opportunities.

Moreover, especially with regard to politics, empowering women and achieving equal representation and participation in decision- and policy-making processes is relevant for the value of democracy and participation (Rees 2005: 566). It is argued that particular interests of women would be overlooked if they are not represented in the policy-making process (Phillips 1998: 62). This research project however opposes critiques that argue men could represent women’s interests. Women have not only different experiences than men but are also affected differently by policies. Therefore, it is important that women participate actively and are represented equally in the decision-making process.

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<sup>2</sup> In comparison, 84% of boys attend primary schools (Painter and Ulmer 2002:7).

Gender balance is not only desirable for fairness and justice reasons, but also because gender inequality is actually costly, especially for men. Violence is perceived as an acceptable measure to solve conflicts not only between men but also between men and in women in some societies (Painter and Ulmer 2002: 7). In addition, gender stereotypes about male sexuality lead to a higher risk of HIV/AIDS infections for men (ibid.).

The commitment of the international community to promote gender equality strengthens the importance of the norm. Gender equality is declared as a human rights' issue by the UN following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing:

“The advancement of women and the achievement of equality between women and men are a matter of human rights and a condition for social justice and should not be seen in isolation as a women's issue. They are the only way to build a sustainable, just and developed society. Empowerment of women and equality between women and men are prerequisites for achieving political, social, economic, cultural and environmental security among all peoples.” (UN 1995: 16)

The promotion of gender equality is not only essential for the realisation of human rights but has also become important in the context of development policy. Achieving gender equality has been explicitly referred to in the MDGs<sup>3</sup>. The norm is defined as the third MDG and thus supported by several international organisations such as the UN, the EU, the WHO, the IMF or the World Bank. The MDGs bind the UN member states to the development targets (cf. Holland 2008: 344). They thereby serve as a mandatory framework in which gender balance has to be strengthened and cannot be overlooked. Gender mainstreaming has become a strategy for achieving sustainable development and the successful reduction of poverty (Painter and Ulmer 2002: 7).

Gender inequality has an economic impact. Studies show that countries' developments benefits from gender equality and the empowerment of women. A

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<sup>3</sup> The eight MDGs are 1) eradicate extreme poverty and hunger, 2) achieve universal primary education, 3) promote gender equality and empower women, 4) reduce child mortality, 5) improve maternal health, 6) combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases, 7) ensure environmental sustainability, 8) develop a global partnership for development until 2015 (UNDP 2012).

reduction of gender gaps is vital for countries' economic growth and supports sustainable development (Morrison, Raju and Sinha 2007, OCED 1999: 12, UNDP 2010: 27). The inclusion of women into the labour market furthermore allows them to make an important contribution to development countries' economies.

### **3.2. The Strategy of Gender Mainstreaming in Development Policy**

The preceding chapter stresses the necessity of the inclusion of women and gender concerns into development policy and aid strategies. Inequalities between men and women and women's issues had not been on the international development agenda until the feminist movement in the 1960s (Carbone and Lister 2006: 3). Since donors started paying attention to gender issues, different concepts have been framed to approach these problems.

Women's issues were first addressed in the so-called 'Women in Development' approach. WID resulted from criticism on the reliance on the 'trickle-down effects'<sup>4</sup> of development that not only bypassed women but even contributed to the maintenance of their unequal status. The WID approach identifies women as the missing link to economic growth and suggests increasing their roles in the economy and labour force (ibid.). It addresses the empowerment of women by developing specific projects for them (Debusscher 2011: 39). The WID approach however has been mainly pushed forward by women in developed countries who are strongly focussed on achieving equality between men and women.

In the meantime, women in the developing world were more concerned with improving the living standard for both women and men (Carbone and Lister 2006: 3). This development framed the 'Women and Development' strategy which emphasises the need for development assistance for economic, social and political change for the whole society and not exclusively for women. The shift towards a WAD approach was also supported by criticism of the common assumption during the 1980s that developing countries simply need to implement reforms that

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<sup>4</sup> The trickle-down theory implies that growth and prosperity of the rich will eventually diffuse down to the lower classes in society.

strengthened their economy to improve the livelihood of their citizens. However, the initiated reforms such as cuts in public expenditure to meet the international requirements caused further deterioration in women's status (ibid.: 4). Both the WID and WAD perspectives have been questioned for looking at women's issues from an isolated perspective, and ignoring the underlying societal structures, namely unequal gender relations, that cause inequality (Debusscher 2011: 39). The raising awareness of the concept of gender led to a shift to address inequality between men and women from a 'Gender and Development' approach.

GAD takes into account the concept of gender and gender relations. It concentrates on the roles of men and women in society, rather than 'only' focussing on women. The strategy assumes that these roles were constructed differently in different societies and are based on the biological constitution of sex (Carbone and Lister 2006:4). GAD further conceptualises women as a heterogeneous rather than a homogenous group and accepts that there are significant differences between women based on ethnicity, religious beliefs or class (ibid.). The GAD approach aims not only at reducing gender inequality in the first place but at changing the structural conditions that lead to inequalities for women, transforming gender relations and stimulating a shift in thinking (Carbone and Lister 2006:4, Debusscher 2011: 39). The underlying idea is that to improve the status of women, the relations between men and women have to be analysed (Debusscher 2011: 39).

Meanwhile, women's rights became officially recognised by the international community. The adoption of the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1979 serves as an important human rights tool (Carbone and Lister 2006: 4). The UN in particular put women's issues on the international agenda by initiating world conferences on women. Stimulated by the GAD approach, the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing propounded the strategy of gender mainstreaming internationally in 1995 (ibid.). True (2003: 369) defines gender mainstreaming as

“efforts to scrutinize and reinvent processes of policy formulation and implementation across all issue areas and at all levels from a gender-differentiated perspective, to address and rectify persistent and emerging disparities between men and women. In contrast to anti-discrimination law and

policy that seek to remove institutional barriers to women's *equality* with men, gender mainstreaming starts from the recognition that gender *differences* shape policy processes and outcomes”.

Applied to development policy the strategy implies “the systematic procedures and mechanisms to integrate gender issues in all stages of the development policy-making process” (Carbone and Lister 2006:4f.).

However, the use of gender mainstreaming is also criticised as the focus on gender instead of on the empowerment of women has been counterproductive in achieving greater equality in some cases. It resulted into a shift from focussing exclusively on women to a focus on both women and men. In the end, women were often excluded again and only men received support (Carbone and Lister 2006: 5). An in-depth analysis of the commitment of donor organisations and countries and a review of development projects is therefore worthwhile.

## **CHAPTER 4: THE EUROPEAN UNION'S COMMITMENT TO GENDER EQUALITY**

Gender has initially not been at the core of the EU's interests and has only recently received greater attention. The Treaty of Rome (1957) laid the basis for gender equality by establishing equal pay for equal work for women and men (Lister 2006: 18). However, this standard was not implemented to consider the rights and interest of women but rather to harmonise the member states' labour costs and regulations. The Treaty of Maastricht (1992) expanded the gender regime by adding equal treatment of women and men to the equal pay rule (*ibid.*). With the Treaty of Amsterdam (1999) the EU went a step further towards achieving gender equality by establishing gender mainstreaming as a general competence of the EU in all its activities (Painter and Ulmer 2002: 10).

In 2010, the Commission adopted a strategy for equality between women and men (European Commission 2010c) which builds on the Women's Charter initiated by the Commission earlier that year (European Commission 2010) and the roadmap for equality between women and men 2006-2010 (European Commission 2006a). It serves as a comprehensive framework for the Commission's work on promoting gender equality from 2010 until 2015 and identifies six thematic priorities: 1) equal economic independence for women and men; 2) equal pay for work of equal value; 3) equality in decision-making; 4) dignity, integrity and ending gender-based violence; 5) promoting gender equality beyond the EU; 6) horizontal issues (gender roles, legislation) (European Commission 2012). Gender equality, particularly in the labour market, and economic independence for women is also strongly supported through the Europe 2020 strategy and the Open Method of Coordination.

These main steps towards the promotion and gradual implementation of gender equality into its domestic policies show the EU's commitment to the norm and the growing attention it received over time. Women and men are treated equally by legislation; special measures are taken to empower women and increase their numbers in the labour market and in political decision-making process (European

Commission 2012). The strategy of gender mainstreaming is now used to integrate a gender perspective into all EU policies.

The EU refers to the definition of gender mainstreaming by the Council of Europe in its programming guide that defines the strategy as

“the (re)organisation, improvement, development and evaluation of policy processes, so that a gender equality perspective is incorporated in all policies at all levels and at all stages, by the actors normally involved in policy-making. Gender mainstreaming cannot replace specific policies which aim to redress situations resulting from gender inequality. Specific gender equality policies and gender mainstreaming are dual and complementary strategies and must go hand-in-hand to reach the goal of gender equality” (Council of Europe cited in European Commission 2008a: 1).

Pollack and Hafner-Burton (2010) discuss social movement theory to explain the expansion of the EU’s equality policies. They identify three important changes to the political opportunity structure that explain the EU’s commitment to gender equality. First, the Santer Commission (1995-1999) had new member states with a strong commitment to gender equality (Sweden, Finland, Austria). The new Commissioners from these states showed great interest in the promotion of equal opportunities in their portfolios (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2010: 436). Second, the Maastricht Treaty gave more power to the European Parliament which has always been a strong advocate of women’s rights (ibid.). Third, the Treaty of Amsterdam strengthened the EU’s competence in the area of equality and thus allowed for further measures to be undertaken (ibid.: 437).

In general, the EU’s domestic policies have a large influence on its foreign policy making and development policy (Lister 2006: 19f.). However, a different development can be observed with the implementation of gender equality. Gender mainstreaming as a policy strategy was used in development cooperation before it was generally applied to policy-making within the EU (ibid.). In other words, there was a spill over of the gender mainstreaming strategy from development into domestic EU policies.

Internationally, the Union committed itself to supporting gender equality already in 1995 by actively participating in the Beijing Fourth World Conference on Women and working on the platform for action (Lister 2006: 19). The EU also works towards the achievement of the implementation of the MDGs (Lister 2006: 22f.)

A gender dimension was first included in the development cooperation with the ACP countries in the Third Lomé Conventions in 1984 (Lister 2006: 23). The focus was especially on the welfare approach to women in development however women's issues and their empowerment were not at the core of the Convention. Considerable progress was made with the Fourth Lomé Conventions five years later. It included a subsection concerning "Women in Development" and referred not only to women's rights as human rights but also emphasised the role of women for sustainable and successful development (ibid.). It was however after the Fourth World Conference on Women when the EU became more and more active in the field of mainstreaming gender in development policy (Arts 2006: 32). After the Council of the EU acknowledged in 1995 that the reduction of the gender gap was important for successful development aid a series of policy statements and regulations followed (ibid.). Gender issues were included into the EU's development cooperation and gender equality was defined as a cross-cutting issue (ibid.: 33).

The Cotonou Agreement, which serves as the framework for the current relations between the EU and the ACP countries can be seen as a milestone insofar as it adopted a 'Gender and Development' approach. The Agreement can be seen as partially gender mainstreamed by referring not only to the empowerment of women but also to the importance of considering the roles of both men and women in the development process (Lister 2006: 24). However, there is no specific reference to gender in the area of economics or trade.

Hafner-Burton and Pollack (2000) closely examine the EU's performance with the implementation of the strategy of gender mainstreaming in its development policy in 2000 and find evidence for a positive development. After the Beijing conference, new tools and procedures were created to integrate gender into EU development assistance. The Commission increased the number of staff working on gender issues and trained Commission officials (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 446).

Furthermore, a 'gender help desk' was established as well as new indicators for monitoring the progress towards mainstreaming gender successfully. However, both scholars criticise the lack of gender awareness and expertise found among EU employees working in the area of development aid at that time. The allocation of funding was evaluated as often inefficient and there was still a high number of men among EU officials (Pollack and Hafner-Burton 2000: 446).

Arts (2006) analyses the inclusion of gender into the EU-ACP relations and comes to a more critical verdict. The EU makes a strong commitment to gender equality in the Cotonou Agreement and includes gender mainstreaming into its development cooperation on paper. However, when it comes to the implementation of its development policy towards all ACP countries, Arts (2006: 37f.) identifies a series of weaknesses, especially with regard to monitoring and evaluation but also with the inclusion of gender issues into the Economic Partnership Agreements. It is also criticised that in the political dialogue with the ACP countries, gender concerns are hardly raised (*ibid.*).

The European Council adopted an "EU Action Plan on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development" in 2010 (Vogiazides, Tuominen and Debbari 2010: 207). The aim of the plan is to work further towards achievement of MDGs, in particular gender equality, maternal health and equal access to education over the period of 2012-2015 (*ibid.*). The plan involves political dialogues between the EU and partner regions or countries and involves political meetings, a gender database, and the strengthening of the involvement of the civil society. However, the plan is criticised for its lack of a clear strategy on how specific projects and the implementation is guaranteed and funded (Vogiazides, Tuominen and Debbari 2010: 207).

## **CHAPTER 5: CASE STUDY: THE EU'S NORM PROMOTION TOWARDS THE PACIFIC ACP COUNTRIES**

The following chapter examines the situation of women in the Pacific Island countries and outlines the areas where women face discrimination and disadvantages. I will then give an overview of the EU's relations to the Pacific ACPs and the development cooperation before analysing the EU's rhetoric and practice focussing on the promotion of the gender equality norm.

### **5.1. The Situation of Women in the Pacific Island Countries**

The Pacific Islands are culturally and politically highly diverse. The region can be divided into three sub-regions: The Cook Islands, Niue, Samoa, Tonga, and Tuvalu are all Polynesian countries. Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Timor-Leste, and Fiji are predominantly Melanesian. The Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Palau and the Republic of the Marshall Islands belong to Micronesia (European Commission 2006b: 15). Each of these sub-regions has a different cultural and historical heritage which makes generalisations rather difficult. Therefore, the role of women as well as their status and opportunities vary in Polynesia, Micronesia and Melanesia. However, some general observations about the position of women in the Pacific Islands can be made.

Traditionally, women have been seen as complementary partners to men in the Pacific region and are valued for their specialised knowledge and their contribution to the well-being of the society (Huffer 2006: 3). Most of the Pacific ACP's constitutions prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex and some Island States adopted strategies to increase the representation of women (ibid.). All Pacific Island countries have signed the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women except Nauru, Niue, Palau and Tonga (European Commission 2008: 17). Women's access to education and labour participation has improved as well as the health outcomes for both men and women over time (World Bank 2012: 33).

However, in many cases, women's right to active political participation and representation is formal rather than actual (Huffer 2006: 3). This observation is supported by data from IPU (2012, 2012a). Female representation in the Pacific remains at 12.7%, below the world average of 20.7% for the lower or single house (IPU 2012a). The parliaments of Nauru, Palau, Vanuatu and the Federated States of Micronesia have no female Members of Parliament at all (IPU 2012). Politics is seen as 'a man's world' which results in a reluctance of female candidates to run for elections but there is also limited support for women by political parties (Huffer 2006: 4). Political and governmental institutions that could further enhance the situation and status of women and contribute to their empowerment remain weak (Huffer 2006: 3).

Moreover, women face discrimination through institutional factors, such as out-dated laws and unequal access to land and titles (*ibid.*). In Tonga, women are explicitly not allowed to own land (UN Women 2012: 24). Financial capital as well as new information technology is less available for women (World Bank 2012: 33). There is a gender gap with regard to employment. Women are more likely to work in poorly remunerated occupations and businesses and get paid less than their male colleagues (*ibid.*).

Culturally, women are often discriminated against as the Pacific Islands can be described as rather conservative and patriarchal. The male-dominated societies are quite often reluctant to change the status quo that favours men which in some cases is also due to the colonial and missionary heritage (Huffer 2006: 3). Women do not have equal socio-economic opportunities and their contribution to the economy is seen as secondary. Access to education in particular, is limited for girls in Melanesian countries (Huffer 2006: 4).

In addition, violence against women remains a serious human rights issue. The numbers of cases of gender-based violence remain the highest in the world (World Bank 2012: 34). 60% of women from the Solomon Islands, Kiribati and Vanuatu have experienced physical or sexual violence, often from their partners (*ibid.*).

Agriculture is of great importance for the Pacific Islands' economies. Women produce the majority of agricultural products, but their work is often considered a part of their household duties (UN Women 2012: 10). These gender norms are especially static in the often isolated rural areas (UN Women 2012: 11). Meanwhile, men tend to engage with the more lucrative cash crop production. Women have less access to training and less infrastructural support than men that would enable them to participate in cash cropping (UN Women 2012: 11).

In the tuna industry which is another important sector of the Pacific Islands' economies, the same gender division can be observed. While women are more engaged with the domestic processing and marketing, men work in the more lucrative export-orientated tuna capture (UN Women 2012: 25). In both industries, women are often expected to provide unpaid labour to their husbands or the family (UN Women 2012: 19). However, their active participation in the labour market is not only of importance for the Island countries' development but also for their own financial independence.

Finally, progressing climate change is said to have more negative effects on women than on men in the Pacific Islands. The results of climate change, such as extreme weather conditions and rising sea-levels, will have a severe impact on the countries' core economies such as fisheries, agriculture and tourism and will make it more difficult for women to feed their families (UN Women 2012: 25).

## **5.2. The EU's Development Cooperation with the Pacific ACP Countries**

The EU's interests are externally represented by different EU institutions depending on the purpose of the cooperation with third party countries or regions. The DG "Development and Cooperation – EuropeAid" of the European Commission is in charge of the EU's development assistance. The EU's development cooperation towards Pacific Islands is summarised under the framework for the ACP countries.

The relations with the ACP countries were formally institutionalised for the first time with the Lomé Conventions in 1975 (EEAS 2012a). Since then the Lomé

conventions were revised four times and were replaced by the Cotonou Agreement in 2000 which provides the legal framework for the EU-ACP relations until 2020 (ibid.). Funding for the EU's development aid towards the ACP countries is provided by the EDF which is currently at its 10<sup>th</sup> round (2008-2013). As the main financial instrument for development cooperation, it consists of three main envelopes: One budget for bilateral cooperation with the individual ACP countries which funds the National Strategies and Indicative Programmes, and a regional one for the Regional Strategies and Indicative Programmes. A third budget, the so-called intra-ACP envelope, exists for trans-regional or multi-country programmes that cover common challenges that all ACP countries face (EEAS 2012a).

The 9<sup>th</sup> EDF scheduled € 15.2 billion for the ACP countries from 2002 until 2007 (European Commission 2012c). The current EDF provides € 22.7 billion from 2008 until 2013. € 95 million of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF are allocated for the Pacific Region (European Commission 2012d). Moreover, the EU has thematic instruments to fund projects and programmes with a specific thematic focus such as the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (European Commission 2012e). In addition, the Commission also funds some projects from the EU's general budget (European Commission 2012c).

The projects for the ACP countries are funded in four stages. First, the overall aims and priorities are defined in the indicative programmes. The money is then allocated via global commitment to specific projects. In the next step third parties are implementing the projects and contracts for these projects are agreed through individual commitment. The final step involves the payment for the development projects (European Commission 2012c).

In the South Pacific Region the EU funds development projects for the 14 ACP members of the Pacific Islands Forum, Timor-Leste and its Overseas Territories (European Commission 2012d). In its "Strategy for a Strengthened Partnership with the Pacific Islands" the EU outlines its reasons for engagement in the region (European Commission 2006b). Apart from the shared colonial past (European Commission 2006b: 23), the EU is interested in the Islands' natural resources and environmental challenges that are of 'global significance' (European Commission

2006b: 3). The Pacific Island countries have the only fishery resources that are not heavily overfished and also the world's largest tuna stock. The region is rich in minerals such as gold, copper and nickel as well as oil and gas. Although the fields are still largely unexplored, they are of strategic interest considering growing world-wide demand (European Commission 2006b: 15f.). Furthermore, the Union mentions an interest in the stability of the region as well as security interests (European Commission 2006b: 4), being aware of the activities of other actors in the region such as, for example, China (European Commission 2006b: 16).

As one of the main donors to the Pacific region, the EU is represented with seven delegations which are in Fiji, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia and an office in Samoa (EEAS 2013). The Delegation of the European Union in Fiji is representing the EU in the region, is in charge of the development cooperation and aid programming and provides regular policy analysis and evaluations (EEAS 2013, 2013a, 2013b).

Since 1975 the EU has supported the Pacific ACP countries with more than € 2 billion (Pacific Islands Forum 2012). Additionally, the EU provided a total of € 194 million for regional projects (ibid.). Whereas the development cooperation with Pacific ACPs is significant (European Commission 2006b: 25), trade relations are relatively small. The EU is the Pacific Island's fifth largest trading partner (European Commission 2007: 5). Imports from the EU account for 3% for the region's total imports, whereas the Pacific Islands export about 11% of their total exports<sup>5</sup> to the EU (ibid.). The regions' main exports to EU are palm oil and sugar (Commission 2006b: 24). The EU closely cooperates with the region in the area of fisheries and signed specific agreements with Kiribati, the Solomon Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia so far (ibid.).

### **5.3. Dataset**

The following case study focuses on the EU's promotion of the gender equality norm in its relations towards the Pacific Island countries. The central research question is

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<sup>5</sup> Mainly sugar, palm oil and minerals (European Commission 2007: 5).

to what extent does the EU's development policy towards the Pacific ACPs diverge between rhetoric and practice with regard to the promotion of gender equality?

To answer the question, this study looks at the EU's development assistance that is legally based on the Cotonou Agreement and funded by the EDF. The Island states covered are the 15 Pacific ACP countries namely Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Marshal Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Timor-Leste, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. All of these countries are members of the Pacific Islands Forum, apart from Timor-Leste that has observer-status. This study covers official documents and projects from 9<sup>th</sup> (2002-2007) and 10<sup>th</sup> EDF (2008-2013). To provide a clear picture of the EU's intentions when it comes to the promotion of gender equality I will analyse the legal and strategic documents that serve as a basis or framework for the EU's development cooperation with the Pacific ACPs. The documents will be screened for references to the situation of women and girls, gender mainstreaming and gender equality. I will also examine whether the EU identifies a problem with regard to gender equality and what measures are intended to be taken.

The first document that will be analysed is the European Consensus on Development that was signed by the Presidents of the European Commission, the Parliament and the Council in 2005. It is important as it defines the framework of the common principles that both the EU and the member states will integrate and promote in their development policy towards third countries. EU-ACP relations were established in the Cotonou Agreement of 2000 on which the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF is based on. However, as the revised Agreement of 2005 serves as a basis for 10<sup>th</sup> EDF, both agreements will be taken into account. Whereas the Cotonou Agreement is valid for the whole ACP group of states, the specific actions and measures taken towards the Pacific Island countries are outlined in the National and Regional Strategy Papers. As I am interested in the EU's relations to the Pacific Islands as a region, I will not analyse bilateral agreements with the Pacific Island countries, but the Regional Strategy Paper and Indicative Programmes that set the framework for the funding of projects through the respective EDF. Finally, the EU published a strategy for a strengthened partnership with the Pacific in 2006 which will be also taken into account.

For an analysis of the reality of the EU's promotion of gender equality in its development cooperation I will engage with the projects that have been funded by the EU within the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> EDF. The projects are implemented by the agencies that are members of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific such as Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency or the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme.

It has to be mentioned that the EU is also funding projects in the region with its thematic instruments such as the EIDHR or through its general budget. These projects might explicitly target the promotion of gender equality as well. However, they are excluded from this research as the study is interested in the development cooperation and the actions funded by the EDF.

#### **5.4. Analysis of the EU's Rhetoric**

##### *5.4.1. The European Consensus on Development*

The European Consensus on Development outlines the shared values and principles as well as the goals of the development policy of the EU and its member states (European Commission 2012g). The importance of the gender equality norm itself but also the crucial relation between gender equality and development is manifested in the document. The European Union establishes a clear link between the promotion of gender equality and the reduction of poverty (European Commission 2012h). To promote the norm, the EU follows a so-called twin-track approach by taking measures that are specifically designed to combat gender inequality and by gender mainstreaming all development policies (ibid.).

The promotion of gender equality is one of the principles that the EU commits itself to in the agenda for its development policy in the Consensus. Gender equality is not only declared as a common objective of the EU's development aid (European Union 2006: 2), but the empowerment of women is also seen as the key to sustainable development. Not only the equality between men and women but also the equal

involvement of both genders in social progress are identified as key strategies for poverty reduction (ibid.: 16).

The Consensus outlines the EU's common values that it seeks to promote towards third party countries. Gender equality is here explicitly listed besides democracy, peace and human rights (ibid.: 3). The norm is again named as one of the common principles and it is stressed that gender equality "is not only crucial in itself but a fundamental human right and a question of social justice" (ibid.: 4). The EU commits itself to the inclusion of "a strong gender component in all its policies and practices in its relations with developing countries" (ibid.).

Moreover, the Union identifies several areas for community action in development policy in the Consensus. Here gender equality is related to human development and the promotion of the norm is defined as inevitable for achieving development (European Commission 2006: 14). The EU also plans to promote girls' education and combat discrimination based on gender in the labour market in development countries. It refers to the social dialogue as a useful policy instrument to promote gender quality and social inclusion in this policy area. In the document the EU further explicitly commits itself to the strategy of gender mainstreaming. Gender is identified as a cross-cutting issue and therefore, a strong mainstreaming approach is to be included into all areas of action (ibid.: 15). The Union states that the norm "will be promoted through support to equal rights, access and control over resources and political and economic voice" (European Commission 2006: 16).

A programming guide for strategy papers was developed to ensure that the gender equality norm is actively promoted and integrated into all strategy papers for the development cooperation (European Commission 2008a). The paper not only outlines the EU's commitment to the promotion of the norm (ibid.: 1f.) but also identifies the policy instruments to promote the norm. Besides addressing the issue of gender inequality in the political dialogue with the partner countries, the document further states that specific measures to empower women in the developing countries should be taken (ibid.: 6). The development cooperation shall also be gender mainstreamed and gender equality is to be integrated into each area: general budget

support, sector budget support and project/programme support (country and thematic) (European Commission 2008a: 6).

Finally, gender equality should be addressed in the country and regional strategy papers. The norm should not only be stated among the policy objectives, but should be also included into the political dialogue (ibid.:8). To empower women and achieve gender equality in the respective countries or regions, specific gender-focused projects should be developed and civil society groups, in particular women's groups, should be supported (ibid.). The Commission staff is asked to apply a gender perspective at each stage of the programming. In case gender equality or women's rights are identified as areas of concern in the strategy paper, specific projects to support the norm should be outlined in the indicative programmes (European Commission 2008a: 9).

#### *5.4.2. The Cotonou Agreement*

The Cotonou Agreement was signed on 23 June 2000 and has been revised twice since then<sup>6</sup>. The aim of the agreement is to “establish a comprehensive partnership” (European Commission 2012f) between the EU and the ACP states that is based on three complementary pillars:

1. Development cooperation (funded by the EDF),
2. Economic and trade cooperation (through the establishment of economic partnership agreements, aiming at making the EU-ACP trade regimes compatible with the WTO regulations), and
3. The political dimension (with an emphasis on political dialogues) (EEAS 2012a, European Commission 2012f).

References to the promotion of gender equality and enhancing the status of women are made throughout the Agreement. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women is explicitly recalled in the preamble (European Community 2000: 5). In the outline of the objectives of the partnership, both parties agree that “systematic account shall be taken of the situation of women

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<sup>6</sup> In Luxembourg in 2005 and in Ouagadougou in 2010 (EEAS 2012a).

and gender issues in all areas – political, economic and social” (European Community 2000: 6). Title Two of the Agreement which refers to the political dimension of the partnership especially introduces gender aspects into the political dialogue and calls for both parties to develop strategies and policies that include gender (ibid.: 8).

Furthermore, both the EU member states and the ACP countries emphasise their commitment to human rights. In this context, both parties “reaffirm the equality of men and women” (ibid.) and thereby refer to women’s rights indirectly in the context of human rights. In the outline of the approach to the development strategies the promotion of gender equality is explicitly stated as an aim of the cooperation between the EU and the ACP countries (ibid.: 13). Gender issues are identified as cross-cutting issues and therefore, all areas of cooperation shall be gender mainstreamed. This article indicates that the Cotonou Agreement turned away from a traditional “Women in Development” approach that “only” focuses on women. Instead, the document is clearly following a gender mainstreaming approach in development, taking both the role of women and men into account.

Most striking about the promotion of the gender equality norm in the Cotonou Agreement however is that there is a whole article dedicated to gender issues (European Community 2000: 18). Article 31 calls for policies and programmes that “improve, ensure and broaden the equal participation of men and women” (ibid.) in all spheres of like – political, economic, social and cultural. Here again it is stressed that the cooperation and development assistance under the Cotonou Agreement follows a gender approach and concerns about gender issues are included into every level of the development cooperation.

The concrete measures that are outlined include an increase of female participation and representation in politics, the support of women’s organisations, providing access to education and health care for women as well as to land, credit and the labour market (ibid.). In this way Article 31 directly addresses the issue areas where women in the Pacific Islands region still face disadvantages in every respect. Finally, in the case of humanitarian and emergency assistance, it is agreed on that discrimination on the basis of gender should be prevented (ibid.: 33).

The Cotonou Agreement was revised in 2005 for the first time (European Commission 2012f). The amendments to the development strategies are especially interesting with regard to the promotion of gender equality. A reference was added to Article 25 to increase measures to fight HIV/AIDS as well as to ensure the protection of sexual health and reproductive health and rights of women. More important however is that the revised Cotonou Agreement mentions the Millennium Development Goals in the preamble that “must underpin ACP-EU cooperation within this Agreement” (European Union 2005: 36) and thereby reaffirms the parties’ commitment to the goals that explicitly demand the empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality.

In comparison to the precedent Lomé Conventions, the Cotonou Agreement is certainly more advanced with regard to the promotion of gender equality (Arts 2006: 35). In particular the introduction of a gender-sensitive approach into every area of the development policy toward the ACP countries is ‘path breaking’ (ibid.). Although the references to CEDAW and the MDGs seem to be quite general and superficial, the EU introduces the promotion of gender equality into the policy instruments such as the political dialogue, or the development of cooperation strategies to promote gender equality (European Community 2000: 13, cf. Arts 2006: 35f.).

#### *5.4.3. Regional Strategy Papers and Regional Indicative Programmes 2002-2013*

The inclusion of the gender equality into the Cotonou Agreement stressed the importance of the norm. The document thus serves as a strong point of reference for the EU’s development cooperation with the ACP countries when it comes to gender mainstreaming and the empowerment of women. This chapter looks at how the gender equality norm is included into the regional strategy paper and regional indicative programmes agreed in by the EU and the Pacific Islands.

The strategy paper sets out the explicit framework for the development cooperation between the EU and the Pacific ACPs on a regional level. Furthermore, it evaluates the current political, economic and social situation of the region and gives an

overview of the past projects and areas of cooperation. The regional strategy is followed by a regional indicative programme that defines the focal areas of action for the next period of cooperation. It outlines all regional projects that are funded through the EDF (Pacific Islands Forum 2012). The regional strategy paper and the indicative programme is developed jointly by the EU Delegation in the Pacific region in correspondence with the European Commission in Brussels, the EU member states embassies, the government ministries in of the partner region and representatives of the civil society (Debusscher 2011: 40f.). However, the Commission generally provides the first draft, and thereby largely influences structure and content. The final documents are then signed by the head of the EU Delegation for the Pacific and the Regional Authorising Officer, who is the Secretary General of the PIF Secretariat and acts on behalf of the 15 National Authorising Officers (ibid.).

The Regional Strategy Paper 2002-2007 sets out the guidelines for the cooperation that is funded by the 9th EDF. Gender mainstreaming is declared as one of the principles and objectives for the cooperation with the region (European Commission 2002: 7). In the analysis of the current situation of the Pacific region a significant gender gap is identified. The review stresses that women are disadvantaged in the job market – though it is acknowledged that the number of women in the labour market increased. However, they have less access to vocational and higher forms of education, get paid less than men and are less often promoted than men (European Commission 2002: 22). There are also gender issues related to health care (ibid.: 23). Although women have more access to pre-, intra- and post-natal care, the number of infant mortalities is still high.

The EU's response strategy to the development issues in the Pacific region introduces three focal areas:

1. Regional economic integration and trade,
2. Human resource development, and
3. Fisheries (ibid.: 30).

In addition, a non-focal sector is established that shall reflect that six further Island States<sup>7</sup> have joined the Pacific ACP group by signing the Cotonou Agreement in 2000 as well as provide technical assistance (European Commission 2002: 31).

Gender equality is not a focal area, however, it is identified as a cross-cutting issue (ibid.: 32). The importance of gender mainstreaming is explicitly stressed for the second focal area. The strategy foresees that for the programmes and projects that are to be implemented under the regional indicative programme have to include equal access to education for boys and girls as well as gender equality in human resource development (ibid.: 32, 38).

The regional strategy for 2008-2013 is mainly funded by the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF. It explicitly refers to both the MDGs and the European Consensus on Development, stressing the importance of both agreements and thereby indirectly gender equality, for the development cooperation between the EU and the Pacific (European Commission 2008: 13).

In contrast to the aforementioned strategy paper, the current one includes an explicit chapter on human rights and gender in the analysis of the current political, economic and social situation of the region (ibid.: 17). The document states that although gender equality is achieved in lower levels of education by most of the Island states, a gender gap is still identified for higher education. Women are also under-represented in the political decision-making process and in political institutions as well as in high-level positions (ibid.).

An interesting development is that girls generally tend to be more successful in completing higher education once they have the chance to get enrolled. This is especially reflected in the programmes offered by the University of the South Pacific (European Commission 2008: 24). At the same time women are over-represented in the low-paid informal sector (ibid.: 17). It is acknowledged that most of the Islands have improved the situation with regard to the MDGs. However, child and maternal mortality rates still remain a problem (ibid.: 24). The high fertility rate is identified

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<sup>7</sup> Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue and Palau.

as another issue which makes the improvement of family planning services a regional priority (ibid.: 25).

The EU outlines four focal areas for the indicative programme in its response strategy to the development issues that the Pacific ACP countries face. Projects for the first two focal areas, regional economic integration and sustainable management of natural resources and the environment, will be funded through the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF (European Commission 2008: 11). Two additional focal areas, good governance and security, will be supported through political dialogue or projects funded through special mechanisms such as the Stability Instrument (ibid.). Finally, a non-focal area is designed to especially support the participation of non-state actors, technical cooperation and capacity-building measures (ibid.).

With a reference to the Consensus of Development the EU identifies a number of cross-cutting issue areas that are to be incorporated into the institutional practices and development cooperation between the Union and the Pacific ACPs. Besides human rights and rights of children, gender equality is explicitly mentioned here. The EU furthermore acknowledges that these cross-cutting themes are vital instruments for the achievement of poverty reduction and other development goals (ibid.: 60). Therefore, “a proactive approach” is required to pursue these objects (ibid.). Cross-cutting issues and gender mainstreaming should not only be especially included into the non-focal area and strengthening of civil society (European Commission 2008: 60, 72).

The integration of gender issues is also identified as an important element of the regional indicative programme. For projects that are developed within the framework of the focal area one and two “special attention will be paid to specific activities aimed at mainstreaming gender equality” (ibid.: 72).

#### *5.4.4. A Strategy for a Strengthened Partnership*

The Union’s Strategy for the Pacific defines the relations with the Pacific ACP states and the OCTs as well as with the region as a whole (EEAS 2012). Signed in 2006, it

aims at strengthening the political dialogue between the two regions as well as improving development cooperation and aid effectiveness. The Cotonou Agreement as well as the European Consensus on Development are referred to as the basis for the EU's relations with the Pacific ACPs both of which make strong declarations about gender equality (European Commission 2006b: 2).

The strategy covers three components:

1. to strengthen the relationship between the EU and the Pacific Island Countries and the region and especially foresees the political dialogue as policy instrument to achieve the primary objectives and development goals that both parties defined, ranging from political and security to economic and trade, social, environmental and governance issues (ibid.: 2, 5),
2. more focused development actions, and
3. more efficient aid delivery (ibid.: 5).

The EU addresses the issue of gender inequality under the second component, more focused development actions (ibid.: 6). Gender inequality, human rights abuses, unequal access to land and resources are identified as root causes for conflicts and development issues in the region (ibid.). The promotion of dialogue, participation and reconciliation are identified as the policy measures to improve the status quo. The strategy includes a reference to the MDGs, which include the achievement of gender equality as a main goal. However, gender issues are not specifically mentioned (European Commission 2006b: 10). The problem of inequality between men and women is picked up in the annex and not only identified as one of the main development challenges for the region but also as one of the main human rights violations (ibid.: 17).

#### *5.4.5. Summary of Findings*

The analysis of the EU's main documents that define the common values that the Union represents towards the Pacific Islands and that establish the framework for the development policy show a strong support for the gender equality norm. The EU identifies gender inequality as a problem throughout all the documents, either in the

main body or the annex, and outlines measures or actions to be taken to promote the norm and reduce the gender gap.

In the Consensus on Development the EU declares gender equality as an underlying principle of its development policy. Gender equality is defined as one of the core norms that shall be promoted in its relations to development countries. Inequalities between men and women are identified as a central issue and the reduction of the gender gap seen as vital for successful development. To promote gender equality the Consensus suggests a twin-track approach as the most suitable measure. The EU's overall development policy shall be gender mainstreamed, and this action will be supported by developing special projects aimed at the empowerment of women. Moreover, the instrument of the political dialogue shall be used to promote the norm towards the EU's negotiating partners in third countries.

The Cotonou Agreement, which provides the general framework for development cooperation specifically with ACP countries and thereby also the Pacific, supports the promotion of gender equality even more strongly. It includes not only a whole paragraph designated to gender but by referring to international agreements that support gender equality, it stresses the importance of the norm further and commits both itself and the ACP partner countries to it. Gender inequality is again identified as a crucial issue in most of the developing countries. The EU suggests a closer political dialogue as well as the mainstreaming of its development policy as useful strategies to promote the norm. Among the more explicit measures are an increase of female participation and representation in politics, the support of women's organisations, providing access to education and health care for women as well as to land, credit and the labour market.

The 2002-2007 strategy paper for the Pacific region identifies gender mainstreaming as one of the core principles for the cooperation with the island countries. The strategy clearly recognises gender inequality as an issue and that women are facing discrimination and disadvantages. The promotion of gender equality is not a focal area; however, it is referred to as a cross-cutting issue. The strategy paper outlines that especially the second focal area, human resource development, shall pay attention to the support of gender equality. So projects that directly supported the

norm could be expected in this focal area. The current regional strategy paper follows the Cotonou Agreement by binding both the EU and the Pacific Island countries to promote gender equality by referring to the MDGs and the European Consensus on Development.

The 2008-2013 strategy goes a step further than its predecessor and includes a separate chapter on gender. The paragraph clearly identifies the areas where a gender gap exists and where improvement has to be made by the Pacific region. Again, gender equality is not a focal area; however, projects in area one and two shall aim at mainstreaming gender. Furthermore, a non-focal area is designed to support the participation of non-state actors. Here concrete projects to empower women's organisations could be expected as this focal area should pay special attention to cross-cutting issues such as gender.

The EU's Strategy for the Pacific is quite short in comparison to the other documents analysed. The strategy does not cover the promotion of gender equality explicitly; however the EU does identify gender inequality as one of the Islands' main development challenges. As a reaction to that, more focused development actions are planned to combat inequalities and the promotion of dialogue, participation and reconciliation are suggested as explicit policy instruments.

To conclude, it can be said that the promotion of gender equality is one of the core principles of EU's development policy towards the Pacific as a region – at least rhetorically. It is planned to fund projects that aim at achieving greater equality between men and women on the Pacific Islands. Although it is not one of the focal areas in the strategy papers, the integration of the strategy of gender mainstreaming into the EU's development policy together with the programming guide for Commission staff should ensure that a gender perspective is included into all development aid projects.

## 5.5. Analysis of the EU's Practice

In this chapter the practical promotion of the gender equality norm in the EU's development policy towards the Pacific ACPs will be analysed. The projects will be screened to see to what extent they take gender into account. I will follow a methodological approach adopted from the OECD (OECD 2012) and classify the projects as to whether they include the promotion of gender equality mainstreaming as (1) a principal objective, (2) a significant objective or (3) whether they do not target gender mainstreaming at all ("not targeted").

Projects with gender equality as their *principal objective* were explicitly designed to promote the norm and the empowering of women. Gender equality as a *significant objective* means that the norm was important and gender issues have been taken into account in the project, but were secondary for the activity. *Not targeted* means that the project was screened for promoting gender equality but no reference to gender issues was found or gender mainstreaming was not taken into account at all (OECD 2012). I will also investigate which sector is supported by the project and how much funding is available for each sector in order to identify the EU's preferences for areas that receive funding.

I will use different documents about the projects as some projects, especially those funded by most recent 10<sup>th</sup> EDF, are at an early stage and have not been launched yet. The documents referred to include financing agreements, contribution agreements, or for the most recent projects, action fiches, as a basis for my analysis.

The projects that are funded by the EDF on a regional level in the Pacific are administrated and executed by the regional organisations and agencies. There are currently 10 regional organisations that are members of the Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific:

- Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
- Pacific Islands Forum Fisheries Agency
- Pacific Islands Development Programme
- Secretariat for the Pacific Community
- Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme

- South Pacific Tourism Organisation
- University of the South Pacific
- Pacific Power Association
- Fiji School of Medicine
- Pacific Aviation Safety Office (SPC 2011, Pacific Islands Forum 2012).

The programming of development projects is a joint process both at regional and national level. At regional level, the EU and the RAO are together in charge of the consultation process which involves members of all crop agencies, the UN, civil society and other development partners in the region (Pacific Islands Forum 2012, Interview with PIF Official 2013). In the consultative programming meetings, the priorities for development assistance and focal areas are identified (Interview with PIF Official 2013). The priorities and focal sectors are outlined in the Regional Strategy Papers and Regional Indicative Programmes for the period of cooperation funded under the respective EDF.

Working groups consisting of members of all CROP agencies then identify and formulate the identification and action fiches for the projects (Interview with PIF Official 2013). Regional non-state actors and other organisations are consulted during this process to avoid the duplication of activities and increase the effectiveness of aid delivery (Pacific Islands Forum 2012). Proposals for the projects need to be in line with the Cotonou Agreement and have to meet the objectives of the focal sectors. If the EU grants approval, a financing agreement is developed. Projects on a regional level are implemented by the regional CROP agencies through direct agreement between the EU and these organisations. The implementation is supervised jointly by the EU and the PIFS (Interview with PIF Official 2013).

The 2002-2007 Regional Strategy Paper and Regional Indicative Programme established three focal sectors and one non-focal sector. € 29 million of the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF were allocated to the indicative programme and were distributed as presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Allocation for the 2002-2007 Regional Indicative Programme

Focal Sector 1	Regional Economic Integration and Trade	€ 9 million	31% of total
Focal Sector 2	Human Resource Development	€ 8 million	28% of total
Focal Sector 3	Fisheries	€ 5 million	17% of total
Non-focal Sector		€ 7 million	24% of total

Source: European Commission 2002: 3.

Four focal areas and one non-focal area have been identified as main priorities for cooperation under the 2008-2013 Regional Indicative Programme, however, only focal area 1 and focal area 2 will be funded by the EDF. A total amount of € 95 million are allocated for the latest RIP. The distribution of funding is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: Distribution of Allocation for the 2008-2013 Regional Indicative Programme

Focal Sector 1	Regional Economic Integration	€ 45 million	47% of total
Focal Sector 2	Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment	€ 40 million	40% of total
Non-focal Sector	Organisational Strengthening and Civil Society Participation	€ 10 million	11% of total

Source: European Commission 2008: 67.

### 5.5.1. Project Analysis for the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF

The EU funds 12 projects that are directly programmed for the Pacific ACP region. 10 of these projects have been analysed for the purpose of this study. Table 3 offers an overview of the projects.

**Table 3: Projects funded by the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF**

Project Name	Acronym	Sector	Budget (€) <sup>8</sup>	Implementing Agencies	Analysed Document
Reducing Vulnerability in PACP States		Infrastructure	2,550,000	SOPAC	Financing Agreement
Pacific Environment Information Network II	PEIN	Environment, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	525,000	SPREP	Financing Agreement
Pacific Regional Coastal Fisheries	Cofish	Fisheries	1,997,476	SPC/FFA	Contribution Agreement
Development of Tuna Fisheries in Pacific	Devfish	Fisheries	2,940,000	FFA/SPC	Contribution Agreement
Scientific Support in Fisheries Studies	SCIFISH	Fisheries	4,000,000	SPC	Contribution Agreement
Technical Cooperation Facility	TCF	Technical Assistance	1,200,000	PIFS	Financing Agreement
Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific II	DSAP	Food Security, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	1,981,000	SPC	Financing Agreement
Pacific Regional Economic Integration Programme	PACREIP	Regional Integration, Economics, Poverty Reduction	9,200,000	PIFS	Financing Agreement
Facilitating Agriculture Commodity for Trade	FACT	Trade, Poverty Reduction	4,000,000	SPC	Contribution Agreement
Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education	PRIDE	Education/ HRD	8,000,000	USP	Financing Agreement

The project ‘Reducing Vulnerability in PACP States’ is directed at the six new Pacific Island states that joined the Pacific ACP group after signing the Cotonou

<sup>8</sup> Funds for the budget are rounded.

Agreement (European Commission 2003b). Its principle objective is the reduction of the Islands' vulnerability and to strengthen their capacity to identify alternative sources of aggregates for construction purposes, to plan safe and adequate water supplies and sanitation systems, and to develop hazard and risk management tools for safe communities. Apart from acknowledging that SOPAC's current staff is gender-mainstreamed, the project does not take into account gender or identify it as a cross-cutting issue.

The establishment of the 'Pacific Environment Information Network II' aims at improving the national capacity for environmental management and sustainable development of the Pacific Island Countries (European Commission 2003a). The idea is to strengthen the national environment agencies and improve access to environmental information. Gender issues are taken into account and equal participation in the network's activities will be encouraged.

The 'Pacific Regional Coastal Fisheries' project shall develop a long-term sustainable management of the fishery resources in the Pacific region by providing information and scientific advice as well as developing regional fisheries administrations and management arrangements (European Commission 2003). There is no specific reference to gender issues and the project itself is not gender-mainstreamed.

The 'Development of Tuna Fisheries in Pacific' contributes to the reduction of poverty and enhancement of food security by establishing a concerted policy to develop Pacific ACP states' owned fishing and processing operations (European Commission 2005). One of the activities will be the promotion of gender equality in the private tuna sector by developing strategies to address limitations to women's participation in the tuna production.

The project 'Scientific Support in Fisheries Studies' overall objective is the conservation and sustainable use of fish resources in the Pacific Ocean surrounding the Pacific Island countries (European Commission 2007b). To achieve this goal the project will provide a scientific basis for national and regional management to

improve the monitoring and protection of the eco system. Gender issues are not taken into account.

The 'Technical Cooperation Facility' assists the implementation of the Regional Indicative Programme for the Pacific and the National Indicative Programmes for the PACP countries by providing assistance for the ROA and NAO offices (European Commission 2003c). No reference to gender issues is made in the project.

The programme 'Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific II' aims at improving the situation of food security (European Commission 2003d). It targets farm families in particular and shall increase the productivity of households. The role of women in households is explicitly taken into account. Thus, the project follows a gender sensitive approach and will target women's groups.

The 'Pacific Regional Economic Integration Programme' is based on the assumption that economic integration will stimulate economic growth in the Pacific and reduce poverty (European Commission 2003e). Therefore, the project supports regional integration to achieve sustainable development in the Pacific region. No special measures are taken to promote gender equality: however, a social impact assumption including gender will be carried out as an activity in the framework of the project.

The project 'Facilitating Agriculture Commodity for Trade' focusses on the promotion and increase of trade in the Pacific Island States (European Commission 2007a). In particular it targets rural communities and provides them with better opportunities to combat rural poverty. The project is neither gender-mainstreamed nor does it take gender inequalities into account.

The programme establishing the 'Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education' shall provide opportunities for better education for children and youth in the Pacific ACP countries (European Commission 2009c). Education is identified as vital for sustainable development and poverty reduction. The project is gender-mainstreamed and gender issues will be approached in every key area of and activity, including the project management, planning and coordination.

### 5.5.2. Project Analysis for the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF

For the analysis of the EU's development projects towards the Pacific ACP countries 13 programmes have been screened for the promotion of gender equality for the purpose of this study. Table 4 provides an overview of the projects of the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF.

**Table 4: Projects funded by the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF**

Project Name	Acronym	Sector	Budget (€) <sup>9</sup>	Implementing Agencies	Analysed Document
Strengthening Pacific Economic Integration through Trade	SPEITT	Regional Integration, Trade		SPC, OCO, SPTO	Financing Agreement
Trade Facilitation in Customs Cooperation	TFCC	Trade	8,000,000	OCO Sec	Grant Contract
Increasing Agriculture Commodity Trade	IACT	Trade	8,500,000	SPC	Contribution Agreement
Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Programme	PITAP	Regional Integration, Trade	8,000,000	PIFS	Contribution Agreement
Pacific Regional Tourism Capacity Building Project	PRTCBP	Economics	5,000,000	SPTO	Grant Contract
Deep Sea Mining	DSM	Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, Economics	4,704,000	SPC (SOPAC)	Financing Agreement
Scientific Support for the Management of Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries in the Pacific Islands Region	SCICOFISH	Fisheries	9,000,000	SPC	Contribution Agreement
Development of Fisheries in the Pacific II	DEVFISH II	Fisheries	8,200,000	PIFFA/SPC	Financing Agreement
Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre <sup>10</sup>	PFTAC	Economics, Technical Assistance	3,600,000	PFTAC/IMF	Action Fiche

<sup>9</sup> Funds for the Budget are rounded.

<sup>10</sup> The project has been agreed in Brussels but not yet signed with counterpart in the Pacific region.

Project Name	Acronym	Sector	Budget (€) <sup>11</sup>	Implementing Agencies	Analysed Document
Pacific Waste Management Project <sup>12</sup>	Pac Waste	Environment	8,000,000	SPREP	Action Fiche
Proposal for a Project on Non-State Actors <sup>13</sup>		Democratic Participation, Civil Society	4,000,000		
Technical and Vocational Education	TVET	Education /HRD	6,500,000	SPC	Action Fiche
Technical Cooperation Facility	TCF	Technical Assistance	2,000,000	PIFS/EU	Action Fiche
Proposal for a Project in the area of Energy and Climate Change <sup>14</sup>		Climate Change, Energy	35,000,000		

The EU launched the ‘Strengthening Pacific Economic Integration Through Trade’ (SPEITT) initiative under the 2008-2013 RIP for the Pacific (European Commission 2009). SPEITT follows the so-called ‘aid for trade’ strategy and addresses key issues in the Pacific states’ trade development: policy and legislation, trade facilitation and increased export capacity. To improve the situation in the Pacific ACPs in each of those three areas, four projects have been initiated under SPEITT. The financing agreement states that gender equality shall be taken into account by in particular promoting businesses that provide employment opportunities for women (European Commission 2009: 14). Moreover, the tourism sector is identified as strategically important for the promotion of gender equality. All activities in the sector therefore shall be gender-mainstreamed and negative social impacts on women shall be prevented (ibid.).

The first project, ‘Trade Facilitation in Customs Cooperation’, aims at improving the trade-related infrastructure and promoting trade-related adjustment (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2011). The Pacific ACP countries’ customs service shall be advanced to comply with international standards. At the same time, international

<sup>11</sup> Funds for the Budget are rounded.

<sup>12</sup> The project has been agreed in Brussels but not yet signed with counterpart in the Pacific region.

<sup>13</sup> This project is still at concept note level.

<sup>14</sup> This project is still at concept note level.

market access shall be increased as well as private sector competitiveness. Possible gender issues are not taken into account.

The ‘Increasing Agriculture Commodity Trade’ project shall strengthen the productive export capacity of the Pacific Island states in the regions’ primary industries such as agriculture forestry and aquaculture/ mariculture (European Union 2011a). The programme is neither mainstreamed nor does it address gender issues.

The ‘Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Programme’ contributes to the successful implementation of the SPEITT programme, too, and aims at improving trade policy outcomes (European Union 2011). The project will build technical capabilities, increase private sector engagement in trade policy processes and increase exports and investment in the Pacific region. The programme does not focus on the promotion of gender equality and is not gender- mainstreamed.

The ‘Pacific Regional Tourism Capacity Building Project’ is part of the SPEITT initiative as well and aims at strengthening the Pacific ACPs productive export capacity in the sustainable tourism (Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat 2011a). The issue of gender inequality is not included in the programme and there are no initiatives aiming at the empowerment of women.

The same can be said about the ‘Deep Sea Mining’ project (European Commission 2009b). The purpose of this project is support expansion of the Pacific region’s economic resource base. In the frame of the programme, a sustainable marine minerals industry shall be developed by strengthening the system of governance and capacity of the Island states to manage their deep sea minerals sustainably. In the financing agreement, neither cross-cutting nor gender issues area considered.

The ‘Scientific Support for the Management of Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries in the Pacific Islands Region’ project’s overall objective is the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and oceanic fisheries resources in the Pacific Region and it is thereby in line with the 7<sup>th</sup> MDG<sup>15</sup> (European Commission 2010d). A reliable and improved

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<sup>15</sup> Environmental Sustainability.

scientific basis for management and decision making processes in coastal and oceanic fisheries shall be developed in the frame of the project. Gender is identified as a cross-cutting issue. It is planned that during the inception phase of the project a gender analysis will be conducted to identify specific activities to empower women, among which are: an enhanced role for women in the data analysis and stock assessment work, and greater involvement in the decision-making processes in fisheries management.

The purpose of the 'Development of Fisheries in the Pacific II' programme is to increase the sustainable use of marine resources, especially tuna, to reduce poverty and is thereby following up the original DevFish project (European Commission 2009a). The beneficiaries of the projects remain the same, and it is stressed that the expansion of the tuna industry mainly provides employment opportunities for women. Gender equality is listed as a cross-cutting issue. The programme will establish specific actions to improve the situation of women and combat negative social impacts of the tuna industry development.

The aim of the development of the 'Pacific Financial Technical Assistance Centre'<sup>16</sup> project is to improve the economic management and the economic growth of the Pacific region (European Commission 2010a). Gender has been identified as cross-cutting issue, and it is expected that improved public financial management will contribute to gender equality through an increase in transparency. Nevertheless, no explicit activities to promote gender equality are planned.

The 'Pacific Waste Management Project'<sup>17</sup> falls under the second focal area of the 2008-2013 Regional Indicative Programme and aims at supporting the Islands' efforts to develop cost-effective and self-sustaining priority waste management systems (European Commission 2012j). The cross-cutting issues refer to gender, and it is planned that the project's risk assessment will include gender difference when appropriate as men or women could potentially be more exposed to risks resulting from waste disposal.

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<sup>16</sup> The project has been agreed in Brussels but not yet signed with counterpart in the Pacific region.

<sup>17</sup> The project has been agreed in Brussels but not yet signed with counterpart in the Pacific region.

Furthermore, a project on ‘Non-State Actors’<sup>18</sup> is proposed to improve dialogues and the participatory processes between non-state actors and regional institutions in the Pacific. If the project is approved, it will include a gender component and gender equality will be identified as cross-cutting issue (Interview with Subject A 2013).

The ‘Technical Cooperation Facility’ aims at enhancing the effectiveness of EU’s development aid to the Pacific region and provides assistance for an efficient implementation of the 2008-2013 RIP (European Commission 2010e). Gender equality is identified as having limited relevance for the project itself. However, it will be ensured that gender equality is promoted during the recruitment processes as well as that it empowers women to participate actively in workshops and dialogue on aid effectiveness.

The project concerning ‘Technical and Vocational Education’ aims at developing and improving opportunities for young people to acquire education and skills to actively participate in the labour market (Pacific Association of Technical & Vocational Education and Training 2011). Gender is listed under cross-cutting issues. The project will focus on high risk groups such as young women and men and the training programmes will be designed to promote gender mainstreaming.

Finally, there is a proposal to allocate funds still available to a project in the area of ‘energy and climate change’ (European Union 2012, Pacific Islands Forum 2012a). If the project is adopted, it will be likely to have a gender component (Interview with EU Official 2013).

### *5.5.3. Summary of Findings*

An analysis of the EU’s promotion of gender equality in its development project under the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> EDF shows that in the timeframe between 2002 and 2013 no project had the promotion of the norm as its principle objective in the Pacific region. That means that no activity that was funded by the EU through the EDF has been

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<sup>18</sup> This project is still at concept note level.

explicitly designed to combat inequalities between men and women and to support gender mainstreaming.

Table 5: Gender Equality Focus of EU's projects for the Pacific ACP Countries funded by the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF

Project	Principle Objective	Significant Objective	Not Targeted	Sector	Budget (€)
Reducing Vulnerability in PACP States			x	Infrastructure	2,550,000
Pacific Environment Information Network II		x		Environment, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	525,000
Pacific Regional Coastal Fisheries			x	Fisheries	1,997,476
Development of Tuna Fisheries in Pacific		x		Fisheries	2,940,000
Scientific Support in Fisheries Studies			x	Fisheries	4,000,000
Technical Cooperation Facility			x	Technical Assistance	1,200,000
Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Pacific II		x		Food Security, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	1,981,000
Pacific Regional Economic Integration Programme		(x)	x	Regional Integration, Economics, Poverty Reduction	9,200,000
Facilitating Agriculture Commodity for Trade			x	Trade, Poverty Reduction	4,000,000
Pacific Regional Initiatives for the Delivery of Basic Education		x		Education/ HRD	8,000,000
Result	0 (0%)	4 (40%)	6 (60%)		

Among the projects that the EU launched under the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF (2002-2007), only four can be identified to include the promotion of gender equality as a significant objective of the activity. The other six either do not pay attention to gender equality at all, are not gender mainstreamed, or do not pay attention to gender under the cross-cutting issues. A slightly better result can be found for activities under 10<sup>th</sup> EDF (2008-2013).

Table 6: Gender Equality Focus of EU's projects for the Pacific ACP Countries funded by the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF

Project	Principle Objective	Significant Objective	Not Targeted	Sector	Budget (€)
Strengthening Pacific Economic Integration through Trade		x		Regional Integration, Trade	
Trade Facilitation in Customs Cooperation			x	Trade	8,000,000
Increasing Agriculture Commodity Trade			x	Trade	8,500,000
Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Programme			x	Regional Integration, Trade	8,000,000
Pacific Regional Tourism Capacity Building Project			x	Economics	5,000,000
Deep Sea Mining			x	Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, Economics	4,704,000
Scientific Support for the Management of Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries in the Pacific Islands Region		x		Fisheries	9,000,000
Development of Fisheries in the Pacific II		x		Fisheries	8,200,000
Public Finance Technical Assistance Committee		(x)	x	Economics, Technical Assistance	3,600,000
Pacific Waste Management Project		(x)	x	Environment	8,000,000
Proposal for a Project on Non-State Actors		x		Democracy/ Human Rights, Civil Society	4,000,000

Project	Principle Objective	Significant Objective	Not Targeted	Sector	Budget (€)
Technical Cooperation Facility		x		Technical Assistance	2,000,000
Technical and Vocational Education		x		Education/ HRD	6,500,000
Proposal for a Project in the area of Energy and Climate Change		x		Climate Change	35,000,000
Result	0 (0%)	7 (50 %)	7 (50 %)		

Again none of the programmes developed to achieve the development goals set out in the 2008-2013 Regional Strategy Paper and Regional Indicative Programme refer to the promotion of gender equality as their principle objectives. Seven of the 14 analysed projects pay attention to the gender equality norm to some extent and refer to it as a significant objective. That means they consider the promotion of the norm to be important, are gender-mainstreamed or include activities that aim at the promotion of gender equality under the principle objective of the programme. The remaining seven projects have been screened for references to gender but do not target the promotion of gender equality and are not gender-mainstreamed. Especially interesting are the findings of for the SPEITT project and the programmes launched to achieve its objectives. Whereas the SPEITT initiative includes gender equality at least as a significant objective, the projects TFCC, IACT, PITAP, and PRTCBP do not target the norm at all.

Finally, the allocation of funding for the development aid programmes for the Pacific region divided by sector shows a clear picture of what policy areas receive the biggest budget.

Table 7: Projects and Distribution of Funding by Sector 2002-2013

Sector	Number of Projects	Allocated Funding (€)
Climate Change	1	35,000,000
Civil Society	1	4,000,000
Democracy/ Human Rights	1	4,000,000

Sector	Number of Projects	Allocated Funding (€)
Economics	4	22,504,000
Education/ HRD	2	14,500,000
Environment	2	8,525,000
Fisheries	5	26,137,476
Food Security	1	1,981,000
Infrastructure	1	2,550,000
Poverty Reduction	2	13,200,000
Regional Integration	2	17,200,000
Sustainable Management of Natural Resources	3	7,210,000
Technical Assistance	3	6,800,000
Trade	4	28,500,000

Most projects are launched in the sectors of Economics, Fisheries, Trade, or to achieve Sustainable Management of Natural Resources. At the same time, these are the areas where the majority of the money is invested. Civil Society, Democracy/ Human Rights, Food Security, Infrastructure and Technical Assistance receive comparatively less attention and less funding. An exception is the area of Climate Change, where only a proposal for a project exists at this stage, but it will receive a large grant if it is approved.

## **CHAPTER 6: RESULTS**

The next chapter will outline the findings of the case study and identify explanations for these results. I will then discuss the implications of the outcomes for the EU's role as a norm promoter and normative actor in the Pacific region.

### **6.1. Findings**

This thesis has investigated the EU's promotion of the gender equality norm in its development policy towards the Pacific ACP states on a regional level. I have outlined reasons for the promotion of the gender equality norm in development cooperation. Apart from the 'justice argument', gender equality has been identified as important for sustainable development and economic growth. The thesis furthermore has identified how gender and women's issues have been included into international development assistance. The approach has changed over time and moved away from simply focussing on women. Whereas at the beginning, the issues were addressed with 'Women in Development' and later 'Women and Development', the strategies have since moved towards a broadening of the approach to Gender and Development. Today, the strategy of gender mainstreaming is widely recognised by donors and International Organisations as an effective tool to promote gender equality.

An analysis of how the EU embraces the gender equality norm shows that the Union has developed a strong commitment to the promotion of the norm over time. What started out in the EU's domestic policies as an attempt to harmonise the member states' regulations is now integrated into the EU's set of core norms and values. In contrast to the usual development of EU policies, a spill over of the norm from the Union's external policies into its domestic policies was observed. The EU was a strong advocate of gender equality on the international agenda long before gender mainstreaming became the standard tool to combat gender inequalities in its domestic policies. The observation is supported by the EU's active involvement at the Fourth UN Conference on Women and the resulting platform for action, as well as by its efforts to achieve the MDGs.

An examination of the situation of women in the Pacific Islands region demonstrates that although there have been positive developments in some areas there is still room for improvement. That is especially true for the areas of equal access to resources as well as participation on the labour market. The political representation and participation of women remains among the lowest in the world whereas violence against women is still relatively high.

The case study of EU's rhetorical commitment underlines the initial finding of the organisation's strong commitment to the promotion of gender equality. The norm is integrated into the EU's catalogue of core principles that it promotes in its relations with the ACP countries. The EU stresses the importance of equal rights and equal opportunities not only for justice reasons but also identifies them as vital for effective development aid. The Union has different budgets available to launch activities to support the norm. In its development strategies, the EU identifies a variety of measures to strengthen gender equality such as the political dialogue with the partner countries' representatives, special activities and projects that aim at empowering women and measures to support civil society organisations. The development of a programming guide for the strategy papers further indicates that the EU is determined to include the norm and promote it effectively towards developing countries.

In the Regional Strategy Papers and Indicative Programmes for the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> EDFs the EU identifies several issues with regard to gender and equality for the Pacific Islands region that comply with the findings of this thesis (cf. chapter 5.1). Although the promotion of gender equality is not a focal area in either of the two Strategy Papers, gender equality is in both cases identified as a cross-cutting issue. Several references to the promotion of the norm and the integration of gender mainstreaming into projects can be found throughout the documents.

The analysis of EU's rhetoric identifies a strong commitment to the promotion of the norm. Both the general documents on development assistance towards the ACP states but also the Strategy Papers and Indicative Programmes for the Pacific Region include references to the promotion of gender equality. Therefore, one should expect

active norm promotion throughout the projects launched in the region. However, the results of the empirical analysis of the EU's practice lead to a contrary conclusion.

None of the analysed projects which receive funding from the EU include the promotion of gender equality as its *principle objective*, although the Union has stressed rhetorically the importance of achieving equal treatment and equal opportunities for both sexes. This finding is relatively unsurprising as the promotion of gender equality was not listed as a focal area in either the 9<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> EDF (cf. Table 1 and 2). Considering that gender is identified as a cross-cutting issue and the EU states that the achievement of gender equality is of great importance for the region's sustainable development, one could expect gender issues to be included at least as a *significant objective* in the majority of the projects. But the empirical analysis shows only 40% of the projects from the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF refer to gender as a significant objective (cf. Table 5). With 50% of the projects funded by the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF integrating a gender component or being gender-mainstreamed, a slight improvement can be observed (cf. Table 6).

A significant gap between the EU's rhetoric and practice with regard to the promotion of gender equality towards the Pacific region can be identified on the basis of the conducted case study. Despite the fact that promotion of gender equality is named as one of the EU's main principles and the existence of a programming guide to ensure the successful promotion of the norm, the analysis of the projects attests to the EU's bad performance as an active promoter of the gender equality norm.

In addition, the thematic distribution of the funding indicates that the EU has clear preferences among the sectors that receive funding. The majority of the money is spent on economics, fisheries, poverty reduction, regional integration, trade, climate change<sup>19</sup> and sustainable management of resources. Sectors such as civil society and democracy/ human rights where gender equality would receive direct promotion, receive considerably less funding. However, it has to be mentioned that projects in some areas are more costly for technical reasons than other sectors.

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<sup>19</sup> If the proposed project is approved.

The EU referred to the political dialogue as an instrument to raise awareness of gender issues and to promote gender equality. Gender equality and mainstreaming is usually raised in the briefings that the EU prepares before the political dialogue takes place (Interview with Subject A 2013). However, it is not ensured that the issue area is always discussed during the meetings. The problem of gender inequality is easier to discuss with some of the Pacific ACPs whereas dialogues with other Pacific Island countries, especially those located in the north of the region, prove to be more difficult.

It has to be acknowledged though that there are attempts to close or at least minimise the gap. A closer look at the fisheries project reveals that not only has the budget for fisheries increased significantly from the 9<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF but also both of the projects funded by the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF include gender as a significant objective. In comparison, only one of the three projects funded by the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF that were concerned with fisheries included a gender component. An SPC representative stressed in an interview that the larger budget allowed a bigger focus on cross-cutting issues such as gender (Interview with SPC Official 2013). Further, the review of the fisheries projects under the 9<sup>th</sup> EDF resulted in policy recommendations for an increase of the focus on gender which obviously have been taken into account for the programming of 10<sup>th</sup> EDF projects.

## **6.2. Explanations**

My case study provides a clear answer for the initial research question. There is an undeniable divergence between the EU's rhetoric and practice when it comes to the promotion of the gender equality norm towards the Pacific ACP countries. Carbone's gap (2010: 23) between intention and reality is clearly identified for the EU's development aid in the region with respect to that particular norm. The EU uses the gender equality norm as a 'feel good norm': Gender equality is strongly supported in documents, agreements and strategy papers, which allow the EU to strengthen its role as a normative actor and 'force for goodness' (Debusscher 2011: 46) in the Pacific region. But when it comes to the practical support of the norm, it is either not

addressed or only mentioned as a secondary objective. So why is there a divergence between the EU's rhetoric and practice?

To answer this question, it must be understood that the EU is by no means a unitary actor but should be rather viewed as an amalgam of different actors and institutions or an arena, where different policy-makers and bureaucrats bargain and argue. The EU is "an actor composed of many units" (Van Schaik and Schunz 2012: 171). And as the Union is not a unitary actor, norms and interests often coexist as determinants of EU policy choices in reality (ibid.). Because of its fragmented structure, the EU can be seen as an arena where different players, actors and institutions pursue a policy either based on norms or on interests (Van Schaik and Schunz 2012: 172).

The reason why the EU is active in the region in the first place is a normative one. The Pacific ACPs are politically and economically not important enough for the EU to have a primarily rational interest in the region (Interview with SPC Official 2013). Therefore, the EU is a norm-driven actor rather than an interest driven actor when it comes to the intentions of why it is providing development aid to the region. The analysis of the EU's strategic documents and agreements with the Pacific region demonstrate its ability to act as a unitary actor with regard to rhetorical commitments.

However, concerning the selection and programming of development projects, this research projects has found evidence that the EU is not purely norm-driven in its foreign policy towards the Pacific ACPs. The findings of the case study indicate that the EU does not follow its norms but is at least to some extent an interest-driven actor. When it comes to the practical realisation of policies, the Unions' policy choices are determined by norms *and* interests. The programming of the development projects is executed by different actors within the EU who are not acting coherently but pursue a policy either based on norms or on interests. Thus, the EU acts as a unitary actor rhetorically in the Pacific region, but not practically.

The Union's initial motivation to become active in the region is undermined by at least two rational interests. First of all, the findings of this thesis demonstrate that the EU is not a purely altruistic actor in the Pacific region but is trading off gender

equality for its own interests. This hypothesis is strongly supported by the choice of sectors in which the EU spends most of its development budget. As outlined in the analysis of the EU's development programme, projects on Economics, Fisheries, Trade, Climate Change or the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources receive the biggest grants. The EU's focus on specific sectors indicates other motivations than norm promotion and sustainable development for its activities in the region.

Interestingly, the sectors that receive the majority of funding are those that are identified as the Union's interests in the Pacific region in the EU's Strategy for the Pacific (European Commission 2006b). The EU has an interest in the Islands' resources such as mineral, oil, and fish, and therefore, it is supporting development in these sectors (European Commission 2006b: 3f.). In addition, the Pacific Islands can be of strategic importance as alliance partners in the fight against climate change, which is one of the EU's priorities. The 2008-2013 RSP which was agreed on after the publication of the Strategy for the Pacific reflects the EU's interests by focussing on the EU's priorities in its focal areas.

Secondly, the EU follows a rational preference order when it comes to the selection of focal areas and projects that will receive funding. A reason for the EU's hesitation when it comes to the practical implementation of its strategies on promoting gender equality is that there are simply more important issues to combat in the Pacific region. Therefore, the EU focuses on other, more 'urgent' areas that receive funding for development. Among the 15 countries that belong to the Pacific ACP group, six island states are still listed as least developed countries by the UN (UN 2012a).

Moreover, the region is one of the first in the world to be severely affected by the outcomes of climate change. Poverty reduction, developing economic growth as well as ensuring food security and establishing trade relations seem to be more urgent development goals than pushing for the achievement of gender equality. This explanation is strongly supported by the focal areas the EU identifies in the Regional Strategy Papers and Regional Indicative Programmes. The EU identified the development of regional economic integration and trade in both of the analysed RSPs. In addition, the focus of the aid is on Human Resource Development and the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment, which again

reflects the need for economic development as well as supports the countries' abilities to adapt to the climate change.

The hypothesis is also supported by the distribution of funding (cf. Table 7). The areas that receive the largest grants are typically development issues (economic development, trade, fisheries and sustainable management of natural resources to ensure food security) and climate change<sup>20</sup>. Issue areas like human rights and the promotion of civil society seem to be only secondary. That the EU might identify other priorities for its development assistance towards the Pacific region delivers a valid explanation as to why the EU does not launch any project that includes gender as a principle objective. Economic growth and development is at least to some extent traded off for gender equality and social development.

Nevertheless, when the EU chooses which issue areas receive priority, the actions of other donors are taken into account. Considering the fact that the countries in the Pacific region have very few capacities (few staff in Government, few civil society organisations, geographically dispersed islands) donor coordination becomes even more important. Traditionally, Australia has been the most active donor in the area of gender equality and mainstreaming. To add value to a certain situation and improving it rather than interfering in already existing projects, the EU therefore positions itself in other issue areas (Interview with Subject A 2013). This observation supports the argument that the EU follows a rational preference ordering.

However, the EU identifies gender equality as vital for sustainable development. A marginalisation or exclusion of gender issues from development projects would therefore be counterproductive. The aforementioned reasons explain why there are no projects that aim at the promotion of gender equality as a principal objective. But it does not explain why there are so few projects that integrate a gender component at least as a significant objective. Even though the main focus might be on other issue areas, why are the remaining projects not gender-mainstreamed? Why do they not include minor activities to promote gender equality?

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<sup>20</sup> If the proposed project is approved.

Half of the projects do not take gender issues into account, although gender is identified as a cross-cutting issue in the strategies and as vital for sustainable development. Examples are the projects aiming at promoting regional integration and trade. The EU is a strong supporter of regional cooperation and advertises its own model of integration in the Pacific region. However, programmes do not ask where women are in the regional organisations and agencies in the Pacific. Neither do they include an analysis of how men and women are affected by regional economic integration and trade and how these strategies could be used as measures to promote gender equality. The exclusion of a gender component enhances the risk that regional integration in the Pacific will be a 'man's world'.

The EU might behave as an interest-driven actor when it comes to the programming of the projects; however, it faces internal as well as external barriers towards the promotion of gender equality in these projects. These barriers explain why there are few projects that are gender-mainstreamed. The internal barriers in particular underline that the EU is not a unitary actor.

All actors and institutions involved in the policy-making and programming process need to be aware of the importance of gender equality. However, EU officials are often not trained well enough to successfully and effectively include gender components into the development projects at a programming. Training on gender is often not at priority for officers in the region. With limited possibilities for training, EU staff members focus on the sector they are working in e.g. trade, or climate change (Interview with Subject A 2013). Furthermore, clearer gender-related indicators need to be designed for the planning phase to ensure each project is including gender issues properly (Interview with Subject A 2013). This problem will be addressed within the frame of the Gender Action Plan (European Commission 2010b).

In addition, there is lack of human and financial resources for the promotion of gender equality. The Pacific region includes many island countries and to promote gender equality successfully, a respective number of EU officers in charge of gender mainstreaming needs to be employed. In addition, there are only limited financial

resources available for the promotion of gender equality on a regional level (Interview with Subject A 2013).

An additional internal barrier that serves as a valuable explanation for the gap between the EU's rhetoric and practice is that the development policy suffers from a mainstreaming overload (cf. Geyer and Lightfoot 2010: 342f.). The EU identifies a lot of cross-cutting issues that are supposed to be mainstreamed in its development aid projects such as environmental issues, sustainability and gender. As Allwood (as cited in Masselot 2012: 8) correctly identifies, "there is a limit to the number of issues which can be mainstreamed through all other policy areas". The EU has to decide which topics take priority and often topical issue areas or those that are easy to implement or mainstreamed are preferred (ibid.). More difficult issues or those that have been around for a while such as gender are neglected in favour of others (cf. Woodward 2008: 295).

Resistance from the recipients of development aid, the Pacific Islands, serves as an external barrier for the promotion of gender equality. A change in the dominant 'masculine' culture is difficult and a long-term process (Interview with SPC Official 2013). In an interview, the example of fisheries was mentioned, where the EU tries hard to support women and is well aware of the significance of gender equality for economic development. But change is happening very slowly and men still do not acknowledge the presence of women (Interview with SPC Official 2013). Another barrier to the promotion of gender equality is the capacity of the implementing regional agencies. While the main regional organisations have gender officers and advisors, the capacity to mainstream gender in the programmes is rather limited (Interview with PIF Official 2013, Interview with Subject A 2013).

To summarise, the normative motivation for the EU to be an active donor and norm promoter in the Pacific region is undermined by its behaviour as an interest-driven actor. The EU in part trades off gender equality for other, rational interests which leads to a divergence between rhetoric and practice. It is talking the talk but follows a rational preference ordering when it comes to the decision-making of what kind of projects to launch in the regions and if they aim at promoting gender equality or

include gender issues at all. In addition, internal as well as external barriers hinder an effective promotion of gender equality.

### **6.3. Implications for the EU as a Norm Promoter**

This research project reveals that gender equality is treated as a ‘feel good norm’ by the EU. The Union is ‘talking the talk’ when it comes to the promotion of gender equality in its strategy papers and international agreements. But when it comes to ‘walking the walk’ and the funding of projects, sectors, where the Union has a rational interest in, have priority. The above outlined reasons deliver valid explanations for the EU’s gap between rhetoric and practice with regard to promotion of gender equality towards the Pacific region. In the next step I will analyse how my findings matter conceptually. What do the results of my case study imply for the EU as a norm promoter and a normative power in the Pacific region? I will refer to role theory and apply the concept to analyse the outcome of the study.

The result of the study – the gap between the EU’s rhetoric and practice – provides evidence for vertical role incoherence. Vertical role coherence implies there is a consistency between the actors’ role conceptualisation and role performance (Sheahan et al. 2010: 353). Role conception refers to how an actor defines its own identity and appropriate behaviour and how it views itself in a social environment (Aggestam 2006: 18f., Sheahan et al. 2010: 351f.), while role performance looks at whether the actor frames its foreign policy according to its role and how it behaves in a certain situation or environment (Aggestam 2006: 20f.).

The role the EU has defined for itself in its relations towards the Pacific region is that of a normative actor. Its motivation to become active in the region is norm-driven. The EU is promoting its own set of core norms and values in its development policy as it states both in the European Consensus on Development and the Cotonou Agreement. The EU promotes its core principles towards the Pacific region in particular as well. In both the Regional Strategy Papers and the Indicative Programmes and the Strategy for the Pacific the EU emphasises the norms and

values both regions share and that shall be respected and implemented by both partners.

In addition, the EU not only sees itself as a norm promoter in the region, but at the same time, attempts to transfer its own model of integration towards the Pacific. The EU is cooperating with the region through regional organisations and agencies that are implementing the projects. Furthermore, it is actively supporting regional integration among the Pacific ACP countries with its development programmes.

As Börzel and Risse (2009) show, the EU uses a variety of measures to promote its norms towards other countries and regions. Taking a closer look at the EU's strategies towards the Pacific ACP states, one can identify at least three instruments. The EU uses the mechanism of manipulation of utility calculation in its development policy towards the Pacific region by combining its aid with the implementation of certain norms or by mainstreaming its projects. Furthermore, it uses socialisation and persuasion which should be included in the political dialogue in particular.

An analysis of the practice however has shown that the EU does not behave accordingly to its role. Its role performance significantly differs from that of a normative power in the Pacific region. The case study has proven that unlike its initial plans to actively promote gender equality towards the region, the EU does not pursue this outcome. The norm is regularly raised and discussed in the political dialogue. The empirical analysis of the projects towards Pacific ACPs however demonstrated that the EU only marginally focuses on the promotion of gender equality in the development projects.

The EU defines its role as that of normative power and norm promoter in its foreign relations towards the Pacific regions. But there is a clear inconsistency between the EU's role conceptualisation and its role performance in the region. Therefore, a vertical role incoherence for the EU's relations towards the Pacific ACPs can be identified. What does that mean for the EU as an international actor, as a normative power, as a norm promoter and for its development policy?

A vertical role incoherence has a significant effect on the EU as an international actor and its role as a normative power. It not only impacts on its legitimacy as an actor (Sheahan et al. 2010: 353) but will eventually lead to an erosion of its role conception. The EU sees itself as a normative power, but is not perceived as one by the countries it is cooperating with. If the EU trades off gender equality for pursuing its own interests and securing access to resources, it is less likely to be perceived as a normative power and more likely to be perceived as a hegemon or imperial power.

The observation that this erosion is already taking place is underlined by findings of Sheahan et al. (2010). An analysis of the Economic Partnership Agreement negotiations between the EU and the Pacific Islands indicates both a vertical and internal role incoherence (ibid.: 362). Whereas the EU saw itself as a benign partner, it was perceived as a benign master by the Island states (ibid.: 361). The development of vertical role incoherence and an erosion of the role as a normative power eventually leads to an undermining of EU's power as a normative actor.

Referring to Manners definition of a normative power, it has the ability to shape the conceptions of normal in international relations (Manners 2002: 239). But the EU is unlikely to maintain an ability to shape the conception of normal towards the Pacific region with an existing gap between the EU's role conception and performance. The vertical role incoherence has also had an impact on the success of the EU's norm promotion. If the EU only outlines the importance of gender issues in strategy papers but in the end does not include the norm into projects, it will not be taken seriously by partner countries in the region. By promoting gender equality only rhetorically but not practically, the EU jeopardises the importance of the norm. The erosion of competence and reputation might even spill over to other policy areas and norms as well.

An exclusion of a gender component for most of the projects also indicates inefficiency of the EU's development assistance. Throughout all documents on development policy, the EU stresses its determination to achieve the MDGs with the Pacific ACP countries. This seems to be unlikely especially for the Goal 3 and 5 regarding the way in which a gender component is absent in most of the projects launched in the Pacific region. The vertical role incoherence eventually hinders the

EU from successfully performing its role as a normative power towards the Pacific region.

Furthermore, to be considered as an effective normative power, the EU would have to act on a normative base, use its core principles in its foreign policy towards other countries and regions and shape the definition of what is perceived to be normal (Van Schaik and Schunz 2012: 172). The EU's power as a normative actor very much depends on a coherence between rhetoric and practice. The EU uses gender equality as a feel good norm in its relations to the Pacific ACP states – a norm, that is only promoted rhetorically and used by the EU to construct its image as a force for goodness in the world (Debusscher 2011: 46). By allowing this gap between intention and reality and not doing justice to its own, self-proclaimed role, the EU undermines its power as a normative actor. The role and policy incoherence further undermines the EU's legitimacy as a 'normative' international actor.

However, interviews suggest that the EU is aware of the problem of an inadequate promotion of gender equality. With the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in development the European Commission launched a new staff document in 2010 (European Commission 2010b). The Plan includes nine general and specific objectives that reach from the improvement of capacities to address gender issues within the EU over ensuring that all EU funded projects are mainstreamed, to better monitoring and evaluation (ibid.: 6f.). The Action Plan is based on a so-called three-pronged approach that includes political and policy dialogue on gender equality with the partner countries, gender mainstreaming and specific actions (ibid.: 7ff.).

The responsible EU Delegation in Fiji prepared a List of Actions for Field Level to implement the Action Plan effectively in the Pacific region. The list of field action sets out the commitment of the EU and its member states to work jointly towards the achievement of gender equality in the region. According to the document, gender issues have been regularly addressed in all regional dialogues with the PIFS since 2011. The list criticises the absence of an envelope on gender in the Regional Strategy Paper and Indicative Programme for the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF. A specific budget for the promotion of gender equality might be therefore considered during the programming

of the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF, most likely in the form of a non-focal sector (Interview with Subject A 2013).

## CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

This research project has analysed the EU's promotion of gender equality within its development policy towards the Pacific region. The case study has demonstrated that there is a gap between the EU's rhetoric and practice in its policies towards the Pacific ACPs.

I have outlined valid explanations as to why there is a divergence between intentions and reality when it comes to the promotion of gender equality towards the Pacific region and successfully related the findings to role theoretical concepts. Role theory proves to be not only a useful tool to analyse the EU's foreign policy towards the Pacific ACP countries but also for its performance as a norm promoter. The application of the approach of vertical role coherence serves as a framework to explain the impact of the incoherence between the EU's role conception and role performance as a normative power.

Based on this evaluation a number of policy recommendations can be made. It is vital for the EU's recognition as a normative power to be more coherent with its strategies and rhetorical commitments when it comes to the planning of development projects. As an organisation that is strongly built on a set of core norms and values, its ability to promote these principles in its relations towards partner countries is an essential component of the EU's significance in the international system. Gender equality has been identified as an important factor for sustainable development in this thesis. The importance of the norm has also been recognised repeatedly by the EU. If the EU does not only want to be 'the world's biggest donor' but also a successful donor, the active promotion of gender equality is inevitable. This thesis has shown that the rhetorical framework for the promotion of this particular norm has been set. In addition, Commission staff has been provided with instruments and tools such as a gender checklists and a programming guide to successfully integrate gender issues into development policies and to gender-mainstream projects. Now it is necessary that actions follow.

## *Outlook*

This thesis provides interesting material for further research. As it only focused on the promotion of gender equality on a regional level, it will be interesting to look at the bilateral cooperation and norm promotion towards Pacific Island countries. Is there a different result than for the regional cooperation when it comes to gender mainstreaming? In addition, the scope of the thesis did not allow for an inclusion of projects funded by the EU's general budget or thematic instruments such as the EIDHR. If an analysis of these projects results in more positive findings, valuable lessons can be learned for programming of 11<sup>th</sup> EDF. The relevance of the subject and the multitude of new developments in terms of action plans and strategy papers provide promising prospects for further studies. Currently, the 11<sup>th</sup> EDF is negotiated. The RSP and RIP for the Pacific will be based on the second revised Cotonou Agreement (European Commission 2012i) which has not been taken into account for this research project. The second revision did not bring any changes with regard to the promotion of gender equality (ibid.). Therefore, it will be interesting to see, if a specific envelope for the promotion of gender equality will be included as it was planned by the EU Delegation and what impact the Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women has.

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## **INTERVIEWS**

Interview with Pacific Islands Forum Official, 12 February 2013.

Interview with Secretariat of the Pacific Community Official, 8 and 11 February 2013.

Interview with Subject A, 12 February 2013.

Interview with EU Official, 21 February 2013.