

PATHS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION – A. BATTILOCCHIO

In January the 16th, Global Governance students had the honour to host the ex-member of the European Parliament Alessandro Battilocchio. His personality and career, as well as the speech he made, arose widespread interest among the present students. He shared his experience in the international political field highlighting his roles as former MEP in Bruxelles from 2004. Moreover he had an experience as Italian politician in the period between 2004 and 2011 when he was mayor of Tolfa, a little town near Civitavecchia. In 2008 he was appointed as “Defendant of childhood and adolescence rights”. In 2011 he was elected as a member of the executive committee of Ipalmo.

The topic Mr. Battilocchio addressed was “Paths of international cooperation”. After a brief introduction, he expounded the concept of International Cooperation for Development, stating that there is not a unique and permanent, correct or incorrect definition of ICD. On the contrary, this concept evolves and changes according to global tendencies, international priorities, social, political and economic environment and, most importantly, according to the notion of what it is considered as development.

He detected four possible criteria in order to identify ICP:

1. It aims explicitly to support national or international development priorities.
2. It is not driven by profit.
3. It discriminates in favour of developing countries.
4. It is based on cooperative relationships that seek to enhance developing country ownership.



It can be defined as aid given by overnments and other actors to support economic, social, environmental and political development of countries (it can be preceded by different adjectives: economic, sustainable, local, rural, endogenous, human). ICD is a global attempt to work together to achieve commonly held ambitions, and to support those parts of the world that need special assistance.

In Italy, the ICD has been directed and coordinated by the MFA trough the specific Department, always within the framework of a wider international situation (UN, EU).

The geographical areas targeted the most by Italian aids have been (for different reasons): Subs-Saharan Africa, Afghanistan, Lebanon, Latin America, Middle East and North Africa.

The main fields have been: environment, rural development, agriculture, energy, gender and women empowerment, education and health.

Mr. Battilocchio strongly underlined the importance of the creation of an Italian system for cooperation. The recent change of ICD in our country had been possible through the law 125, approved on August 11th 2014, which coordinates all the laws and regulations related to ICD and creates a comprehensive and complete framework as art.1 clarifies: “The ICD is a strict and qualifying part of the Italian foreign policy. It is inspired by the UN charter and by the EU human rights charter. Its action, in the framework of art. 11 of the Constitution, aims at promoting the peace and justice and creating solidarity and equal relationships among the nations based on the principles of interdependence and partnership”.

Moreover Art.23 introduces an important innovation, the Italian System of the international cooperation, based on the principle of coherence: “All the many and various actors, public and private entities, are now called to work jointly and to promote more coherent actions with greater impact and effectiveness.”

Furthermore, to promote the implementation of the ICD policies following the effectiveness, transparency and unitality criteria, a new organ has been set up: the Italian Agency for Cooperation (IADC). It has legal personality within the public law, under the address power of the MFA.

Mr. Alessandro also depicted the situation of ICD in Europe, stating that the European Union has a role of coordination of the actions of the different donors, being itself one of the biggest donors of the world. Also thanks to its supra-national dimension, it can fix very ambitious targets and can set up comprehensive strategies.

Even if ICD was already in the 1957 Treaties, thanks to the Lisbon Treaty (2007) its role became stronger: the target of the eradication of poverty is clearly set as primary target.

Furthermore, at the EU level, we have the *Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO)*, which is the EC’s department for overseas humanitarian aid and for civil protection.

It was established in 2010 to coordinate different previous entities. It ensures rapid and effective delivery of EU relief assistance through its two main instruments: humanitarian aid and civil protection. ECHO funded projects affect over 120 million people in more than 90 countries yearly. It does not implement assistance programmes itself but it finances operations through a wide range of partners (around 200 among NGOs, UN agencies, international organizations, ...).



Finally, Mr. Battilocchio explained his role in international projects. In particular, he showed his task in Kosovo and in Birmania.

His invitation to GG students to join his humanitarian travels has been really appreciated by the whole course.

Having Alessandro Battilocchio in our class has been an enlightening experience in order to understand how wide is the number of opportunities in the field of international cooperation for young people like us.

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