

Eritrea's Foreign Relations

Impressum

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This paper was written during an internship at EEPA, from September to December 2009, which was part of the programme of the Master International Relations at the University of Groningen (The Netherlands).

Published by

EEPA

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Proofreading

Bella Koury

First edition

March 2010

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Introduction

On 18 September 2001 a group of eleven prominent members of parliament and of the People's Front for Democracy and Justice, the only political party in Eritrea, was arrested. Five days later, on 23 September 2001, ten independent journalists were also arrested. Since then, other individuals have been arrested and detained incommunicado, with their rights to due process suspended. Eight years later, on 18 September 2009, the European Council issued a declaration on political prisoners in Eritrea.¹ In this document the European Union expresses its deep concern about the Government of the State of Eritrea who severely violates its human rights obligations under domestic and international law. In particular, the European Union urges the Government of the State of Eritrea to unconditionally release all political prisoners. The European Council has been issuing these declarations on political prisoners in Eritrea on the anniversary of 18 September for years now.² But do the declarations have influence on the conduct of the Eritrean Government?

This paper will discuss the foreign relations of Eritrea; with a special focus on the relationship between the European Union (EU), the United States (US) and Eritrea.

In the first chapter, a short introduction on the different countries in the Horn will be given, in order to get a better idea of the history of the countries in the Horn and the relations between the neighbouring countries.

The second chapter will deal with the relationship between the US and Eritrea and the question that will be answered in that chapter, is: Does the US Policy of sanctions on Eritrea and other countries in the Horn contribute to a change of the human rights situation for the better and the promotion of the democratic progress?

The third chapter will explain the relationship between the EU and Eritrea and answer this question: How can the EU explain its policy of cooperation toward Eritrea and the rest of the Horn of Africa and does this policy contribute to the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region?

The fourth and last chapter will focus on the relations between international organisations like the African Union (AU), Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), United Nations (UN), the Middle East, China and Eritrea. The question to answer is here: Do the activities of international organisations, China and the Middle East help bring peace and stability to the region?

This paper will close with a conclusion where a summary of the findings will be given and an opinion will be formed about the foreign relations of Eritrea.

1 Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on political prisoners in Eritrea (18 September 2009), available from <www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/110210.pdf> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

2 Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on political prisoners in Eritrea (18 September 2006), available from <www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/90996.pdf> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on political prisoners in Eritrea (20 September 2007), available from <www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/95978.pdf> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on political prisoners in Eritrea (22 September 2008), available from <www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/102830.pdf> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

1. Status of the Horn

The Horn of Africa is a region situated in the Northeast of Africa, sometimes referred to as the Somali Peninsula. The Horn consists of four countries: Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti. The Greater Horn of Africa also includes Sudan and Kenya. It is a region with a turbulent history that has known a few crises. As of the end of the nineteenth century, large parts of the Horn have been colonised by different European countries. Italy colonised Eritrea, the Italian Somaliland protectorate and briefly occupied Ethiopia. Britain established British Somaliland in North Somalia and France established French Somaliland in what is now the Republic of Djibouti. During the second half of the twentieth century all the countries of the Horn regained their independence and there now exists a fragile peace between the countries of the Horn.

Eritrea had been under the occupation of Italy for fifty years, when the country was colonised by Britain. In 1953 the UN resolved to establish Eritrea as an autonomous entity federated with Ethiopia. This was a compromise between Eritrean aspirations for independence and Ethiopian claims for sovereignty. For ten years this federation worked well, but when the Ethiopian emperor Haile Selassie came into power, he decided to annex Eritrea. This led to a thirty two year armed struggle between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Independence came when an alliance of the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF) and a coalition of Ethiopian resistance movements defeated Mengistu Haile Mariam, the successor of Haile Selassie. In 1993, the Eritrean People voted almost unanimously for independence in a referendum which was supported by Ethiopia. This left Ethiopia landlocked, without access to the Eritrean ports. The relations between the two countries suffered from this issue of Ethiopia's access to the Eritrean ports of Massawa and Assab. In 1998, border disputes around the town of Badme erupted into war. In 2000, the war ended and a security zone, patrolled by UN forces, was created which separated the two countries.³

Ethiopia is the oldest independent country in Africa and one of the oldest in the world. Apart from a five year occupation by Mussolini's Italy, it has never been colonised. Although politics have been reasonably stable compared to other African countries, Ethiopia has suffered from draught and famine which led millions of people to the brink of starvation in the 1970's and 1980's. Due to these food shortages and the worldwide oil crisis of 1973, discontent towards Emperor Haile Selassie grew rapidly. His reign came to an end in 1974, when a Marxist-Leninist military junta, the Derg, led by Mengistu Haile Mariam deposed him. Under the military junta, thousands of opponents were killed and a lot of property was confiscated. In 1991 the Derg was overthrown, which led to a somewhat more stable economic and political situation in Ethiopia. In 1993 Eritrea became independent of Ethiopia and in 1998 a border conflict arose between the countries. At the beginning of the twenty first century this conflict was resolved and ever since a fragile peace exists between Eritrea and Ethiopia. Ethiopia remains one of the poorest countries of Africa and its economy revolves around agriculture. The country relies heavily on its main export product: coffee.⁴

3 *'Eritrea'*, available from <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eritrea> (accessed on 26 November 2009).
'Eritrea Country Profile', available from <news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1070813.stm> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

4 *'Ethiopia Country Profile'*, available from <news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/country_profiles/1072164.stm> (accessed on 26 November 2009).
'Ethiopia', available from <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethiopia> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

Somalia became independent in 1960 when British Somaliland and Italian Somaliland both became independent and the two territories united to form the Somali Republic. However, the borders were drawn by the Italians and the British, which caused inter-clan rivalry to persist. In 1970 Siad Barre came to power and he proclaimed a socialist state, but even during his rule the struggle continued. In 1977 Somalia invaded Ethiopia in the Ogaden War, in order to reunite Somaliland's separated by the colonial powers and to win the right of self-determination for ethnic Somalis living in those areas. As it turned out, the Soviet Union was supporting Ethiopia as well as Somalia, but in the end it favoured Ethiopia, forcing Somalia to withdraw its military. Many Somalis became disillusioned with the totalitarian regime and resistance movements, encouraged by Ethiopia, arose throughout the country. In 1991 the country saw big changes: president Barre was ousted by northern and southern clan-based forces, all backed by Ethiopia, and the Northern part of the country – which used to be British – declared its independence as Somaliland. Although Somaliland is relatively stable compared to the tumultuous south, until now it has not been recognised by any foreign government. The South of the country is still caught up in armed violence between Islamist fractions and the government troops supported by the Ethiopian government. Since 1991 the country has been without an effective central government and years of fighting have led to the displacement of over a million people. Many people have fled to refugee camps in neighbouring Kenya, and many more are in need of humanitarian assistance.⁵

Djibouti gained its independence from France in 1977 and a government was installed that formed a balance between the two main ethnic groups: the Issa of Somali origin and the Afar of Ethiopian origin. However, the country's first president, Hassan Gouled Aptidon, installed an authoritarian one-party state led by his own Issa community. As a result, Afar resentment erupted and the country plunged into civil war in the early 1990s. Under French pressure the president introduced a limited multi-party system in 1992. But still the rebels from the Afar party, the Front for the Restoration of Unity and Democracy (the Frud), were excluded from participating. In 1994 however, a power-sharing deal was closed which allowed the main faction of the Frud to participate in the multi-party state system. In 2000, a peace treaty was signed between a radical splinter faction of the Frud and the government, which ended a decade long civil war.⁶

5 *'Somalia'*, available from <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Somalia> (accessed on 26 November 2009).
'Somalia Country Profile', available from <news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1072592.stm> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

6 *'Djibouti Country Profile'*, available from <news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/country_profiles/1070579.stm> (accessed on 26 November 2009).
'Djibouti', available from <en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Djibouti> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

2. United States – Eritrea Relations

The relations between Eritrea and the United States (US) go back to the 1940s when the US chose Eritrea as a strategic base for military projects. Since then the relationship between the two countries can best be described as a love-hate relationship. Sometimes working closely together but most of the time living in enmity: The US accusing Eritrea of actions that are destabilising the region and of having links with terrorists, Eritrea accusing the US of supporting Ethiopia at a disadvantage for Eritrea. To fully understand the current relationship between the two countries, it is necessary to go back to the beginning.

An important part of the relationship between the US and Eritrea is the issue of sanctions. The last few years, the call for sanctions against Eritrea, especially from the part of the US, grew louder. The Eritrean government is offended by this call for sanctions and responds by blaming the US of trying to impose a CIA policy against Eritrea. With the rise of the importance given to sanctions against Eritrea, the question rises whether we even know if sanctions have the envisaged effect. What is the result of imposing sanctions on a country? Have there been precedents that show a positive effect of sanctions on the human rights situation?

This chapter will focus on the question: *Will a United States policy of sanctions against Eritrea contribute to a change of the human rights situation for the better and the promotion of the democratic progress?* In order to find an answer to this question a few sub questions will be answered. The first sub-question will focus on the history of the relations between the US and Eritrea: *What are and have been the relations between the US and Eritrea?* Then, the relations between the US and Eritrea and their influence on other countries in the Horn will shortly be discussed, with special attention given to the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative. The sub-question that will be answered is: *To what extent has US Policy been directed toward regional cohesion and peace and stability in the region?* The last sub-question will focus on sanctions. First a short explanation of sanctions will be given and the reason why countries want to impose sanctions on other countries. Then an answer will be given to the question: *Do sanctions have the envisaged outcome and have there been any precedents that show a positive effect on the human rights situation?* The chapter will conclude by bringing together the findings in order to answer the lead question.

Early US-Eritrea Relations

The initial encounter between the United States and Eritrea came in 1941, during the Second World War, when an American firm began implementing a series of military projects that were taken over by the US Army as soon as Washington formally declared war on Japan and joined the Allied war effort. The US constructed an aircraft assembly plant, a repair base, naval facilities and started with the development of a communications facility, in cooperation with the British. This communications facility, in the early 1950s enlarged and transformed into the Kagnew Station complex, was for more than two decades one of the most important overseas US intelligence facilities. It was an electronic listening post for Africa and the Middle East and it was a key relay station for communications with US ships and submarines in the Indian Ocean.⁷

⁷ Dan Connell, 'Eritrea and the United States. The "war on terror" and the Horn of Africa', in *Eritrea's Foreign Relations: Understanding its Regional Role*, ed Richard Reid (Chatham House, London 2009), pp. 1-2.

During the Cold War, Eritrea's strategic coastline ensured that the country enjoyed special importance to the US, which wanted to keep open the vital sea lanes that connected North America and Europe with East-Africa, the Persian Gulf and Asia. But in spite of this special importance and to the surprise of the Eritrean people, the US decided to back a plan to link Eritrea and Ethiopia in a federation under the control of the Ethiopian emperor. Eritrea was officially granted nominal autonomy, but Ethiopia got control over defence, currency and foreign affairs. So in reality, Ethiopia was the one pulling the strings and Eritrea was left out of the decisions that were made regarding the future of Eritrea. An example: the agreement that the US and Ethiopia signed, giving Washington a twenty-five year lease on military and intelligence bases in Eritrea.⁸

It was during this decade that Ethiopia was trying to dismantle the federation and get control over Eritrea's political, economic and media structure. The Eritreans protested, but without effect. Strikes were violently put down and the protesters had to go in exile. The US was first silently standing by, but after an attempted coup in Addis Ababa they decided to support Ethiopia by sending military aid. However by the mid-1970s, the US lost interest in Ethiopia and Eritrea, because their importance for the US was declining. Other new African States, like South Africa, held more promising opportunities for American investors.⁹

In the meantime, the Ethiopian emperor was overthrown and replaced by a socialist military committee called the Derg. Ethiopia realigned with the Soviet Union, and although everyone expected the US to take the side of Eritrea, they decided not to support Eritrea in its fight for independence. The US had doubts about the left-leaning nationalist movement, led by the Eritrean People's Liberation Front (EPLF), and they thought that by not interfering they could win Ethiopia back on their side, once the Eritreans were defeated and the war was won by Ethiopia. However, Eritrea's indecency war went on. When the Soviet Union did not renew its defence and cooperation agreement with Ethiopia, the Ethiopian Army lost a lot of support and supply, which resulted in the EPLF being able to defeat the Ethiopian army.¹⁰

US-Eritrea relations after Eritrean independence

On 23-25 April 1993, Eritreans voted overwhelmingly for independence from Ethiopia in an UN-monitored referendum deemed free and fair. The Eritrean authorities declared Eritrea an independent state on 27 April, and Eritrea officially celebrated its independence on 24 May 1993. The United States became one of the first countries to recognise this new state and as the US provided development aid and military training, the bilateral relations between the two countries grew stronger. The Clinton administration saw Eritrea as an attractive partner in post-Cold War Africa. US concerns about the Islamist government of neighbouring Sudan grew and the US gave military aid to Eritrea in order to contain Islamist forces that were threatening the stability of the region.¹¹

Despite the aid the US was providing to Eritrea, there were growing concerns about the behaviour of the Eritrean government. Every time a dispute arose between Eritrea and a neighbouring country, Eritrea decided to bring in their army. This

8 Dan Connell, 'Eritrea and the United States. The "war on terror" and the Horn of Africa', p. 2.

9 Ibidem, p. 3.

10 Ibidem, pp. 3-4.

11 Ibidem, p. 4.

'Eritrea', available from <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/er.html>> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

resulted in armed disputes with Sudan, Yemen, Djibouti and Ethiopia during the 1990s. The outbreak of the dispute with Ethiopia in 1998 ended the good relations between the US and Eritrea of the 1990s. The border war between Ethiopia and Eritrea, that lasted two years, really soured the relations between the US and Eritrea. The US tried to mediate in the conflict, but the Eritreans accused them of being biased toward Ethiopia.¹²

Within Eritrea, voices arose that also criticised the conduct of the Eritrean government during the war. This caused the President of Eritrea, Isaias Afewerki, to slow down the democratisation process. He refused to implement the new ratified constitution, to have national elections and to allow for new political parties alongside his own party, the People's Front for Democracy and Justice (PFDJ). On 18 September 2001, after several months in which a number of prominent PFDJ party members had gone public with a series of grievances against the government, the government instituted a crackdown. A group of eleven prominent dissidents, members of what had come to be known as the Group of 15, were arrested and held without charge in an unknown location. On 23 September 2001, ten independent journalists were also arrested and held incommunicado. During this crackdown, Eritrea also arrested two Eritrean employees of the U.S. Embassy, accusing them of spying. The relations between the US and Eritrea were pushed further in the direction of an impasse.¹³

The Delimitation Decision of the EEBC

On 12 December 2000, Eritrea and Ethiopia signed the Algiers Agreement in Algiers, Algeria. This agreement led to the establishment of the Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC), which was established to arbitrate the boundary dispute between the two countries. The parties agreed on the EEBC delimiting and demarcating the border between them and they stipulated that these delimitation and demarcation determinations of the Commission would be final and binding. They also agreed that the parties would respect the border so determined, as well as the territorial integrity and sovereignty of the other party. On 13 April 2002, the EEBC delivered its Delimitation Decision and both parties promptly announced their acceptance of the decision.¹⁴

However, when it came to the concrete demarcation of the boundary, Ethiopia started to slow down the process by issuing extensive comments on the demarcation and prohibiting the field-work on its territory. Ethiopia said that problems might arise because the proposed demarcations would run straight through villages. Ethiopia also proposed alternations of the demarcations, which the EEBC did not accept. Eritrea had accepted the proposed boundary demarcations and was cooperating with the EEBC, but when the Ethiopians started to slow down the demarcation process, the Eritreans also started to raise obstacles.¹⁵

12 Dan Connell, 'Eritrea and the United States. The "war on terror" and the Horn of Africa', pp. 4-5.

13 Ibidem, p. 5.

'Background note Eritrea', Bureau of African Affairs, US Department of State, available from <www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2854.htm> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

Service for life. State repression and Indefinite Conscriptioin in Eritrea, Report Human Rights Watch on Eritrea (April 2009).

14 Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, Statement by the Commission (27 November 2006), available from <www.pca-cpa.org/upload/files/Statement%20271106.pdf> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

15 Ibidem.

Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, Delimitation Decision (13 April 2002), available from

In July 2000, the Security Council of the United Nations (UN) had set up the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) to liaise between the parties and establish a mechanism to verify the ceasefire. In September 2000, the Council authorised UNMEE to monitor the cessation of hostilities and to help ensure the observance of security commitments. When it became clear to Eritrea that Ethiopia would not cooperate with the EEBC on its Delimitation Decision, Eritrea started to impose far-reaching restrictions on the work of the UNMEE that had the effect of seriously impeding the operations by the EEBC's field staff. On 30 July 2008, the Security Council terminated the mandate of UNMEE. The Council decision came in response to crippling restrictions imposed by Eritrea on UNMEE, as well as the cutting off of fuel supplies, which made it impossible for the operation to continue carrying out its mandated tasks, and put at risk the safety and security of UN personnel.¹⁶

The restrictions on the UNMEE had also affected the work of the EEBC and it is no surprise that the EEBC also had to conclude that it could not carry out its task. So nine years after the Algiers Agreement was signed, the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea still exists and the current situation between the two countries consists of 'no war, no peace'. Affecting the relations between the US and Eritrea, that Eritrea blamed the US for not pressuring Ethiopia enough to accept the EEBC Decision.¹⁷

Relations between the US and Eritrea took a turn for the worse when the US government declared in August 2007 that it was considering putting Eritrea on its list of state sponsors of terrorism for allegedly funnelling weapons to insurgents fighting the Ethiopian-backed government in Somalia. Then Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Jendayi Frazer raised the possibility of adding Eritrea to the list of state sponsors to terrorist activities and that it would carry with it automatic restrictions and sanctions. This fuelled Eritreans anger that started in the 1950s when the US failed to protest the Ethiopian emperor when he slowly dismantled the Federation of Eritrea and Ethiopia and that flared once more when the Eritreans accused the US of not putting enough pressure on Ethiopia to accept the Delimitation Decision of the EEBC.¹⁸

US development aid to Eritrea and the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative

Although the relations between the US and Eritrea went from bad to worse, the US government kept providing substantial assistance to Eritrea, including food and development aid. The United States however withholds non-humanitarian assistance to Eritrea, because of its refusal to release two American embassy local employees arrested in 2001. In 2004, the US provided over \$65 million in humanitarian aid to Eritrea, including \$58.1 million in food assistance and \$3.47 million in refugee support. In 2005, however, the government of Eritrea told the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to cease operations without offering a reason, other than that the government was uncomfortable

<www.un.org/NewLinks/eebcarbitration/EEBC-Decision.pdf> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

16 United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), available from <www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/unmee/index.html> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

17 Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, Statement by the Commission (27 November 2006). Dan Connell, 'Eritrea and the United States. The "war on terror" and the Horn of Africa', p. 6.

18 Arshad Mohammed, 'US considers putting Eritrea on terrorism list' (17 August 2007), available from <www.reuters.com/article/politicsNews/idUSN1744634320070817> (accessed on 26 November 2009)

Dan Connell, 'Eritrea and the United States. The "war on terror" and the Horn of Africa', p. 7.

with HIV/AIDS programs and wanted assistance to be provided directly to the government. In September of the same year, the US imposed a partial denial of arms-export licenses on Eritrea for its religious persecution. This sanction was more symbolic than real because the US exported few arms to Eritrea. The Eritrean ministry of defence, in response, issued a statement calling the sanction part of a US Central Intelligence Agency plot to "instil chaos" in Eritrea and to rescue the Ethiopian government.¹⁹

The US still supports to consolidate peace with Ethiopia, encourage progress toward establishing a democratic political culture, support Eritrean efforts to become constructively involved in solving regional problems, assist Eritrea in dealing with its humanitarian and development needs, and promote economic reform. Annually, the US government publishes human rights reports on Eritrea describing the current human rights situation in that country.²⁰

In 1994, the Greater Horn of Africa Initiative (GHAI) was launched following a visit to the region by USAID officials and the determination of former US President Bill Clinton that a new framework for addressing post-Cold war realities in that region must be developed. The Greater Horn of Africa was defined as consisting of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia, Djibouti, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi: A region that then was seen as the 'arc of crisis', characterised by war and famine. The US government underlined that the region was suffering from poverty and instability with more countries at war than peace. Many of these conflicts were regional in scope and in impact, prompting the US government to come up with an initiative that would better coordinate the development aid given to the region. In their eyes, the response of the international community had in most cases failed to address the root causes of crisis and food insecurity. The crises in the region meant that the assistance provided by the US and other donors was directed toward relief needs as opposed to development goals.²¹

Sanctions

Although the relationship between Eritrea and the US seemed to improve during the nineties, which led to the Horn of Africa Initiative and development aid given by the US government, the relationship worsened at the beginning of the twenty first century. The border dispute and the behaviour of both Ethiopia and Eritrea toward the UN censured the UN Security Council sanctions against Eritrea and Ethiopia. Resolution 1298 (2000) stated that all states should prevent the sale of arms and related materials to Eritrea and Ethiopia and that they should not supply the Eritreans and Ethiopians with technical assistance or training related to arms. The Security Council aimed to end, or at least not prolong, the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea.²² The arms embargo was however given an expiry date one

19 'Essential background: overview of human rights issues in Eritrea', Human Rights Watch, available from <www.hrw.org/legacy/english/docs/2006/01/18/eritre12307.htm> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

'Background note Eritrea', Bureau of African Affairs, US Department of State, accessed via www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2854.htm (accessed on 26 November 2009).

20 Ibidem.

'Human Rights', Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, available from <www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/hrrpt/index.htm> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

21 'Greater Horn of Africa Initiative USG Interagency Framework, Annex A', USAID, available from <www.usaid.gov/regions/afr/ghai/annex_a.html> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

22 Security Council Resolution 1298 (2000), adopted 17 May 2000, available from <daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N00/437/11/PDF/N0043711.pdf?OpenElement> (accessed on 26

year after its imposition, and has therefore been renewed.

After the arms embargo of the UN Security Council, the US in 2004 threatened Eritrea to impose sanctions because 'the Eritrean government was showing an increasingly poor respect for religious freedom for minority religious groups'. The US put Eritrea on the list as one of eight countries worldwide on a government blacklist of 'countries of particular concern' regarding the situation of religious freedom. If a country's name is on the blacklist, this allows for several types of sanctions. However, US authorities claimed that they would first try to engage in the countries on the blacklist, sanctions only as a final result.²³

But the call for sanctions against Eritrea became louder, especially for its presumed role in the Somali conflict. Eritrea was accused of giving support and sending arms to armed groups opposed to the Somali government, the Transitional Federal Government (TFG). Eritrea was said to give help to groups that were controlling swaths of Southern Somalia and most of the capital Mogadishu. Most of these fighters belong to the al-Shabab group, which is said to be trying to bring down the TFG and establish its own version of Islamic law in the country. Both the Somali Government as well as other nations has said that Eritrea has supplied arms to opposition groups. However, the Eritrean government in Asmara has denied any involvement in the Somali conflict.²⁴

This presumed involvement also led the Organisation of African Union (OAU) to call on the United Nations (UN) to impose sanctions on Eritrea for helping Somali opposition fighters. So the US was not the only ones to consider sanctions for Eritrea. The US ambassador to the UN, Susan Rice, declared at the end of July of this year that 'the administration of the US president, Barack Obama, was deeply concerned and very frustrated with Eritrea over its arming, supporting and funding of fighters who have launched attacks on Somali Government targets'. She said: *'it is unacceptable and we will not tolerate it'*.²⁵

In October, Great Britain (GB) called for UN sanctions against Eritrea for supplying weapons to opponents of the TFG in Somalia in violation of a UN arms embargo. The US backed the British by saying that it was time for the international community to address Eritrea's destabilising influence on Somalia and the whole Horn region. The ambassador to the UN of Britain, John Sawers, expressed Britain's concern over the latest UN report of the Somalia Sanctions Committee's Monitoring Group – a group of experts monitoring the arms embargo – which included evidence that Eritrea had provided political, financial and military support to armed opposition groups in Somalia.²⁶

The UN Security Council agreed on Dec. 23, 2009 to impose sanctions against Eritrea for illegally supplying arms to insurgents in Somalia. The decision imposes

November 2009).

23 'Eritrea risks US sanctions over religious rights', Afrol news (16 September 2004), available from <www.afrol.com/articles/14043> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

24 'US threatens Eritrea with sanctions' (29 July 2009), available from <english.aljazeera.net/news/americas/2009/07/2009729173824992324.html> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

25 Ibidem.

26 'Britain calls for Sanctions Against Eritrea', CBS News (8 October 2009), available from <www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/10/08/ap/world/main5372957.shtml> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

Mark Leon Goldberg, 'Sanctions Against Eritrea?', UN Dispatch Global News and Views (8 October 2009), available from <www.undispatch.com/sanctions-eritrea> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

an arms embargo on the state of Eritrea, while targeting for travel bans and assets freezes senior Eritreans who support insurgent groups, obstruct the implementation of UN resolutions concerning the Djibouti/Eritrea border dispute or hinder the work of the Somalia Monitoring Group. The response of the government of Eritrea has been indifferent, with officials and self-described spokespeople accused the UN of believing the lies created by Ethiopia.²⁷

Smart sanctions

Even as the sanctions take effect, the question arises if we even know if sanctions have the envisaged outcome. Do we know what the result of imposing sanctions on a country is? Have there been precedents that show a positive effect of sanctions on the human rights situation? As Arne Tostensen and Beate Bull write in their article on the feasibility of smart sanctions that appeared in *World Politics* in April 2002²⁸, the imposition of sanctions increased during the 1990s. By the second half of that decade people started to show their dissatisfaction with the meagre results achieved by the imposition of sanctions and the effect they had on vulnerable humanitarian groups. They started to look for alternatives and they came up with smart sanctions. These sanctions differ from conventional sanctions in two ways:

1. Smart sanctions more effectively target and penalise the political elites who are committing the actions and making the policies that are deemed reprehensible by the international community
2. Smart sanctions protect vulnerable social groups, like children, women and the elderly, from so-called collateral damage by exempting specified commodities, such as medical supplies and food, from the embargoes²⁹

While smart sanctions aim to penalise political elites and protect vulnerable groups, three forms of smart sanctions have been established: arms embargoes, financial sanctions and travel sanctions. Arms embargoes will only cover military equipment and will not affect goods like food and medicine; however the effectiveness of arms embargoes has not yet been proved. A few problems with the imposition of arms embargoes are that they are often imposed too late (while the targeted area is already overflowing with weapons); permanent Security Council members are exempted from embargoes; the existent asymmetrical power relationships can be reinforced by an embargo (while the embargo will be imposed on all the parties no matter the consequences); the embargoes are easy to circumvent; and the embargoes cannot be adequately enforced by the UN.³⁰

Financial sanctions, especially targeted to hurt the political and financial elite, will only affect those people involved in policymaking and not the innocent bystanders. However, there can be problems with the implementation of these kinds of sanctions, like that they can be easily circumvented and that the time lag between the decision and the implementation gives the targeted individuals the possibility

27 'Eritrea Sanction: A New Horizon in Eritrea's Political Landscape' <www.eepa.be/wcm/content/view/1087/1/>, also see 'Security Council Imposes Sanctions on Eritrea over Its Role in Somalia, Refusal to Withdraw Troops Following Conflict with Djibouti' <www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2009/sc9833.doc.htm> and 'Eritrea Sanctioned Over Somalia Terrorism Concern' <www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=email_en&sid=aF2xdf5tBfjY>.

28 Arne Tostensen and Beate Bull, 'Are Smart Sanctions Feasible?', *World Politics*, vol. 54, No. 3 (The John Hopkins University Press, April 2002), pp. 373-403.

29 Ibidem, p. 373.

30 Ibidem, pp. 382-383.

to take measures.³¹

The last group of sanctions consists of travel restrictions, which have a strong symbolic value, but are not always effective. Travel sanctions can be travel bans for certain groups and individuals, aviation sanctions to restrict or ban air flights in and out of a specific country or transport sanctions which restrict all cross-border traffic. The problem with the implementation of those kinds of sanctions is that it is difficult to identify the groups and individuals that need to be targeted, names can be the same for different individuals, which means that innocent people can be affected and targeted individuals can take countermeasures which will undermine the sanctions taken.³²

While the implementation problems cause reasons for concern about the consequences of smart sanctions, the political difficulties with imposing smart sanctions also need to be taken into account. First of all, the effectiveness of sanctions is now being determined by inadequate research methods. Secondly, the goals of the member states and Security Council often diverge. The economic success of sanctions does not guarantee political success (the pain-gain formula does not necessarily work, which means that civilian pain caused by the sanctions will not always lead to political gain for the people. Some believe that the more pain the sanctions inflict, the sooner they will lead to results for the sanctioning states). Fourthly, sanctions can, and generally do, have unintended consequences. Fifthly, the UN and its member states are not adequately equipped to monitor the implementation of sanctions. Sixth and lastly, often sanctions are used as a prelude to war.³³

What also needs to be taken into account is the intention of the sanctioning states. Do they want to impose sanctions for the gain of the international community and the people facing hard circumstances in the specific target countries for sanctions? Or do they want to impose sanctions for their own gain? For example, to appear to take effective actions (especially in an election year), no matter the consequences of the imposed sanctions?³⁴

And it is just these consequences that are under discussion. In an interview with the Chairman of the Joint Leadership Committee (EDP/EPM/EPP), Woldeyesus Ammar, he underlines that the world has witnessed sanctions having a crushing impact on civilians. He says that sanctions should therefore be a last resort when everything else has failed to resolve the problem. He does make a marginal note, the effect of sanctions can be immense, but a bad relationship with neighbouring countries is also of great importance. If we take the case of Iraq for example, the failure of the sanction regime imposed on Iraq led to the use of armed force, presumably because the sanctions did not reach their goals, he said.³⁵

Arne Tostensen and Beate Bull also give the examples of Haiti and Yugoslavia, where sanctions led to the use of force, because the sanctions did not reach their goals and the regime failed. What Woldeyesus Ammar estimates is that the

31 A. Tostensen and B. Bull, 'Are Smart Sanctions Feasible?', *World Politics*, pp. 386-387.

32 Ibidem, pp. 390-391.

33 Ibidem, pp. 394-399.

34 Ibidem, pp. 396.

35 Michael Abraha, 'Q&A: Eritrea's food shortage amid calls for UN sanctions', *American Chronicle* (28 September 2009), available from <www.americanchronicle.com/articles/printFriendly/121052> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

A. Tostensen and B. Bull, 'Are Smart Sanctions Feasible?', *World Politics*, p. 399.

absence of good relations with neighbouring countries can sometimes be of greater influence than sanctions. The people of Iraq suffered, like the people in Eritrea have suffered and are still suffering, because of the politics of their leader that causes the shutting down of borders, the self-infliction of sanctions on people-to-people contact and trade with adjacent countries. So when it comes to sanctions that one country or international organisation wants to impose on another country, they need to take into account the internal situation in a country, otherwise the sanctions can cause damage to innocent people.³⁶

A country that has been under the imposition of sanctions for years now, is Burma. For years, officials from the US and the EU as well as Ms Ang San Suu Kyi — who has been in detention for fourteen years — were in favour of sanctions, but in August 2009 US Senator Jim Webb called for a new approach toward Burma and Ang San Suu Kyi indicated to the senator that she would not oppose to the lifting of some US sanctions on the junta.³⁷ This was a remarkable step, especially for someone who has for long been a strong supporter of the policy of sanctions against her country's government.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the relations between Eritrea and the US go back a long time and can best be described as a love-hate relationship, sometimes going hand in hand, other times living in enmity. Although this capricious relationship between the two countries exists, the US has most of the time tried to direct its policy toward regional cohesion and peace and stability. It aimed at a development of the region, a solution to the conflict between Eritrea and Ethiopia and it envisaged close operation between the countries of the Horn region. When the US feared that Eritrea was involved in terrorist actions, by means of supporting terrorist groups, especially in Somalia, the US threatened sanctions in the hope that they would help bring peace and stability to the region. Of course, this was not taken well by the Eritrean government; they accused the US of favouring Ethiopia in the border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia and of having a hidden CIA agenda.

The US feels that the imposition of sanctions seems to be the best solution to end the disputes in that specific region on the African continent and the UN Security Council enacted sanctions on Eritrea in the final hours of the decade. But this chapter has reviewed some articles on the subject of sanctions and as it turns out conventional sanctions often do not have the envisaged effect and cause collateral damage. In this way, people who are not targeted will also be affected by the sanctions. There have been precedents that show that the implementation and monitoring of sanctions is very difficult, that the sanctions regime can fail because the sanctions do not work and that it even can lead to armed conflict. On top of that, there also has been no indication that the implementation of sanctions leads to a change in the political and human rights situation in the targeted countries.

So, to answer the lead question, it will not be likely that a US policy of sanctions against Eritrea will lead to a change for the improvement of the human rights situation nor to the promotion of the democratic process.

36 A. Tostensen and B. Bull, 'Are Smart Sanctions Feasible?', *World Politics*, p. 399.

37 'US senator says Suu Kyi may ease sanctions stance', GMA News (17 August 2009), available from <www.gmanews.tv/print/170044> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

3. EU-Eritrea Relations

In September 2009, the news came out that the European Commission (EC) and the government of Eritrea concluded a 122-million Euro agreement for the implementation of development programs in Eritrea for 2009 until 2013. The two sides also concluded an additional 7.26 million Euro accord for emergency situations. Out of this agreement, 70 million Euros would go to achieving food security, 34 million Euros to expanding infrastructure facilities, 10 million Euros to promoting social services and 8.3 million Euros would be directed to the task of preserving national heritage.³⁸

So, in spite of the accusations of human rights abuses in Eritrea, the EU is opting for ongoing cooperation and some people wonder why. That is the reason why this chapter will discuss the EU and Member States policies toward Eritrea and the Horn. A description of the relations between the EU, the Member States and Eritrea will be given, with an emphasis on ongoing cooperation. The chapter will therefore focus on the question: *How can the EU explain its policy of cooperation toward Eritrea and the rest of the Horn of Africa and does this policy contribute to the promotion of democracy and human rights in the region?* In order to find an answer to this question a few sub questions will be answered. The first sub-question will focus on the history and current situation of the relations between the EU and Eritrea: *What are the relations between the EU and Eritrea and between the different Member States and Eritrea? Are they cohesive or diffusive?* Then, the presence of human rights in EU law and treaties and the human rights conditions to cooperation will be discussed: *What is the EU policy concerning human rights? And is it possible to demand more progress on human rights, while being a very important donor?* The chapter will conclude by bringing together the findings in order to answer the lead question.

The policy of the European Parliament (EP), the Council, the European Commission (EC) and different Member States towards Eritrea

The European Parliament and the European Commission

For years now, the European Parliament has shown their concern about the human rights situation in Eritrea, which resulted in resolutions and questions asked by Members of Parliament (MEPs). In 2004, the EP adopted a resolution on the human rights situation in Eritrea (RSP/2004/2613), where the MEPs stipulated their 'deep concern over Eritrea's steadily deteriorating human rights situation' and their 'dismay about the manifest lack of cooperation from the Eritrean authorities'. The EP 'firmly condemned all human rights abuses in Eritrea and called on the country's authorities to uphold human rights, to respect the international conventions and to cooperate in full with international human rights organisations and NGO's'. The Parliament also called on the Council and the Commission to open the consultation procedure in accordance with Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement in order to stop human rights violations.³⁹

The MEPs also 'strongly deplored the continued imprisonment without charge since September 2001 of a group of former ruling-party members of parliament

38 'Eritrean government and European Commission conclude 122-million Euro agreement', Shabait.com (7 September 2009), available from <www.shabait.com/staging/publish/printer_10405.html> (accessed on 27 November 2009).

39 RSP/2004/2613 Resolution on the human rights situation in Eritrea (18 November 2004), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/FindByProcnum.do?lang=en&procnum=RSP/2004/2613> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

campaigning for democratisation, and called upon the Eritrean authorities to release the former members of parliament'. They 'urged the Eritrean Government to lift the ban on the country's independent press and to immediately release the 13 independent journalists who have been arrested in Asmara, one of them being a Swedish citizen, Dawit Isaak, who has not been tried for any crime'.⁴⁰

In 2006, in its *Report on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2005 and the European Union's policy on the matter*, the EP again called on the Council and the Commission to open the consultation procedure under Article 96 of the ACP-EU Agreement with regard to the human rights situation in Eritrea.⁴¹ A year later, the EP expressed concern about the influence of China in Africa. It 'called on the EU and China to suspend arms trade deals with those governments that are responsible for human rights violations, such as the governments of Eritrea, Ethiopia, Sudan, Somalia and Kenya'.⁴² The year after that, the European Parliament issued a resolution on the situation in the Horn of Africa (RSP/2008/2688). It underlined that the unresolved border disputes between Eritrea and Ethiopia and between Eritrea and Djibouti negatively affect peace and security in the region.⁴³

Beyond resolutions or reports were issued, MEPs also asked questions about the human rights situation in Eritrea and the EU's policy towards that country. In April 2009, MEP Franck Vanhecke asked the Commission about the aid given to Eritrea in the context of the European Development Fund (EDF). He wanted to know if the EC would continue the same financial aid as before, how much aid Eritrea received from the EC in the period 2000-2008, how much funding was planned for 2009, to which institutions this aid was transferred and how the use of the money was monitored. He also asked if the EC considered that a link between the provision of aid and fundamental progress on democracy and human rights should be at the forefront of the strategy.⁴⁴

Before writing down the answer of the EC, an explanation of the EDF might help to better understand the working of the EU's aid for development cooperation. The EDF is the main instrument for providing Community aid for development cooperation in the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the Overseas Countries and Territories (OCT). The EDF does not yet come under the Community's general budget and is now funded by the Member States. The EDF is subject to its own financial rules and is managed by a specific committee. Each EDF is concluded for a period of around five years and since the conclusion of the first partnership convention in 1964, the EDF cycles have generally followed the partnership agreement/convention cycles. For the period 2008-2013, the aid

40 RSP/2004/2613 Resolution on the human rights situation in Eritrea (18 November 2004), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/FindByProcnum.do?lang=en&procnum=RSP/2004/2613> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

41 INI/2005/2203 Report on the Annual Report on Human Rights in the World 2005 and the European Union's policy on the matter (18 May 2006), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/FindByProcnum.do?lang=en&procnum=INI/2005/2203> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

42 INI/2007/2255 Chinese policy and its effects on Africa (23 April 2008), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/FindByProcnum.do?lang=en&procnum=INI/2007/2255> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

43 RSP/2008/2688 Resolution on the situation in the Horn of Africa (15 January 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/file.jsp?id=5725682¬iceType=null&language=en> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

44 Written question (E-2254/2009) by Frank Vanhecke to the Commission (1 April 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2009-2254&format=XML&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

granted to ACP States and OCTs will continue to be funded by the EDF (this will be the tenth EDF).⁴⁵

To return to the question that was posed by Mr Vanhecke, the Commission answered as follows: 'Between 2000 and 2008 the Commission has allocated about 170 million euro to Eritrea. The indicative allocation foreseen for the 10th EDF is 122 million euro. The implementation modalities for the programme that is to be financed by the 10th EDF is yet unknown, and will be determined once the projects have been identified and formulated. Therefore, the Commission cannot yet say to which partners or institutions the money will be transferred. The Commission has effective control over where the money is actually spent in Eritrea. Furthermore, the Commission is involved in all steps of the project conception and implementation, including procurement, contracting and payment. All projects will be independently monitored, including through regular visits. The Commission now has access to all its projects sites'.⁴⁶

In the answer, Mr Rehn underlines that 'where in the past the Commission was not satisfied with accountability provided by the Eritrean Government, the latter has reimbursed ineligible expenses'. The answer also states that the 'continuing EU development cooperation allows opportunities for dialogue with the Eritrean authorities, including on concerns over human rights and governance issues, which would otherwise not be available. The EU's desire to influence the human rights and governance situation is one of the reasons why the EU maintains a dialogue with the Eritrean government'.⁴⁷

In the same month of that year MEP Robert Kilroy-Silk also asked four questions to the EC. The first question was about which measures the Commission had taken to ensure that any aid given to Eritrea will be effectively monitored. The second was about the steps that the EC had taken to get the imprisoned Swedish-Eritrean journalist, Dawit Isaak, released. The third question was about why the Commission was preparing to give more aid to Eritrea, given Eritrea's poor human rights record. The fourth question regarded the provision by the Commission of the full details of financial aid given to Eritrea, the projects it has been spent on and an evaluation of its effectiveness.⁴⁸

The Commission's answer to these questions: regarding the monitoring of aid, the Commission states that 'it has effective control and is involved in all steps

45 'European Development Fund (EDF)', available from <europa.eu/legislation_summaries/development/overseas_countries_territories/r12102_en.htm> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

46 Answer to question (E-2254/2009) given by Mr Rehn on behalf of the Commission (26 May 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2009-2254&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

47 Ibidem.

48 Written question (E-2350/2009) by Robert Kilroy-Silk to the Commission (7 April 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2009-2350&format=XML&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

Written question (E-2351/2009) by Robert Kilroy-Silk to the Commission (7 April 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2009-2351&format=XML&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

Written question (E-2352/2009) by Robert Kilroy-Silk to the Commission (7 April 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2009-2352&format=XML&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

Written question (E-2428/2009) by Robert Kilroy-Silk to the Commission (8 April 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2009-2428&format=XML&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

of the project conception and implementation. All projects will be independently monitored, including through regular visits. The EC now has access to all its projects sites'.⁴⁹ About the release of Dawit Isaak, the Commission stipulates that 'it is in regular contact with the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on an appropriate course of action and the issue has been raised during a visit of the European Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid as well as through bilateral contacts'.⁵⁰ Concerning the preparation to give more aid, Mr Michel stipulated that the EC 'by keeping the dialogue open, wants to help creating an environment that is conducive for sustainable development and assistance to the people of Eritrea'.⁵¹

With regard to the full details of financial aid given to Eritrea, the Commission answered that they had spent about 130 million euro under the 9th EDF, in addition the Commission also provided 44 million euro on humanitarian projects. After the independence of Eritrea, the money was mainly allocated toward post conflict rehabilitation programmes, later the 9th EDF evolved into a more development-oriented programme. The impact of the 9th EDF cannot yet be fully assessed, but an overall evaluation of EC development cooperation with Eritrea took place in 2005/2006. In addition an external Result oriented Monitoring (ROM) mission reviewed a number of projects in early 2009. For the 10th EDF, 70 million euro will be allocated toward food security and 34 million euro will go to road maintenance and safety. 10 million euro is meant to go to the justice sector and the public administration and a small intervention of 5 million euro will go to the preservation of valuable Eritrean cultural heritage.⁵²

In May, MEP Sepp Kusstatscher asked a similar question regarding the ongoing aid to Eritrea. He wanted to know according to which criteria a country is allocated development aid and if conditions would also be attached to EU-aid.⁵³ The Commission's answer stated that 'the decision to give aid is based on a careful assessment and that the EU judged that despite the challenges and risks, the primary concern should be with the people of Eritrea. The aid given to Eritrea is governed and conditioned by the provisions of the Cotonou Agreement. In that framework the EC and the Member States have engaged in a political dialogue with a view to exert influence and bring about policy changes'.⁵⁴

On the 10th of August, MEP Catherine Stihler asked the Commission for an update on the humanitarian situation in Eritrea and the reassurance that no EU money

49 Answer to question (E-2350/2009) given by Mr Michel on behalf of the Commission (14 May 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2009-2350&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

50 Joint answer to question (E-2351/2009) and (E-2352/2009) by Mr Michel on behalf of the Commission (4 May 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2009-2351&language=EN> and <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2009-2352&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

51 Ibidem.

52 Answer to question (E-2428/2009) by Mr Michel on behalf of the Commission (15 May 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2009-2428&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

53 Written question (E-3447/2009) by Sepp Kusstatscher to the Commission (12 May 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2009-3447&format=XML&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

54 Answer to question (E-3447/2009) by Mr Michel on behalf of the Commission (10 July 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2009-3447&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

is being used to support the Eritrean government.⁵⁵ The Commission's answer underlined the 'concern of the Commission about the limited capacity in-country to deal with any major humanitarian crisis. It also said that the Commission 'maintains a dialogue on the broader working environment for humanitarian and development operators alike with a view to improving the situation. The attainment of longer-term food security is one of the Eritrean Government's main policy objectives'. The Commission wants to reassure the EP, by stipulating that 'the projects are governed by rules and procedures, and proper checks and balances are in place to make sure the funds are used to achieve well-defined objectives and rules'.⁵⁶

In September, MEP Ian Hudghton posed a question to the Commission about the progress on the appointment of an EU Special Representative/Envoy to the Horn of Africa, which was mentioned in the EP's resolution of 15 January 2009. Mr Hudghton also wanted to know what the Commission is doing on the subject of monitoring and if the EC would review its commitment to provide aid when the Eritrean government would fail to take action to stop the abuses that were also mentioned in the same resolution.⁵⁷ The Commission's answer was that the Commission still feels 'that an effort should be made to enhance coherence of EU activities in the region, but that a Special Representative has not yet been decided on. Concerning the subject of monitoring, the Commission stated that the 'Eritrean counterpart has been made fully aware of the EU's concerns and expectations over respect of human rights in Eritrea and that the Commission is involved in all steps of the conception and implementation of the projects'.⁵⁸

In the same month, MEP Sonia Alfano called to the attention of the EC, the agreement that was signed between Italy and Libya, which allows for migrants and refugees to be sent back to countries such as Somalia and Eritrea. She wanted to know what the EC was intended to do, to ensure that the people intercepted in the Mediterranean would be helped effectively and as a matter of urgency. She asked if the Commission considered that the agreement between Italy and Libya is compatible with the European standards and rules concerning human rights.⁵⁹

The Commission expressed its concern over the humanitarian tragedies taking place in the Mediterranean. At its meeting on 18 and 19 July 2009, the Council had identified a number of concrete measures to address this situation and the EC, the Member States and relevant European agencies are implementing these measures. The Commission is in the process of analysing the agreement between Libya and Italy in the light of Community law. The Commission is also negotiating with Libya, on behalf of the EU, a framework agreement through which it is also intended to promote the respect of international standards in the field of asylum.

55 Written question (E-4076/2009) by Catherine Stihler to the Commission (10 August 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=E-2009-4076&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

56 Answer to question (E-4076/2009) by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission (18 September 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=E-2009-4076&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

57 Written question (P-4335/2009) by Ian Hudghton to the Commission (15 September 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=P-2009-4335&format=XML&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

58 Answer to question (P-4335/2009) by Mr De Gucht on behalf of the Commission (7 October 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2009-4335&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

59 Written question (P-4294/2009) by Sonia Alfano to the Commission (7 September 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=WQ&reference=P-2009-4294&format=XML&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

The Commission will continue its work to contribute to the implementation measures already identified, but the Commission also considers that the efforts in managing migration should be intensified in the coming years. The Commission refers to concrete proposals laid down in the Communication presented on 10 June 2009, named 'An area of freedom, security and justice serving the citizen', that is to be adopted by the European Council in December 2009.⁶⁰

The Council and the Member States

The Council was already briefly mentioned above, but now the actions of the Council and a few Member States regarding Eritrea will be elaborated on. Tension and volatility in the border region between Ethiopia and Eritrea, caused the Council in 2005 to express its concern about the situation. In a resolution on the situation in Ethiopia, the Council not only expressed its concern, but it also demanded Eritrea not to prohibit the work of the UNMEE, in casu that meant that Eritrea had to reverse the decision to ban helicopter flights and all other restrictions on UNMEE. The Council also expressed its concern over Eritrea's request that European and North American members of UNMEE should be withdrawn. Lastly, the Council asked both Ethiopia and Eritrea to refrain from the use of force and to redirect funds for military expenditure towards development.⁶¹

As was mentioned in the introduction, the Council has for years issued annual declarations by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on political prisoners in Eritrea, expressing its concern over 'the severe violation of its human rights obligations under national and international law and demanding of the Eritrean government to immediately release all political prisoners'.⁶² So, the Council seems concerned over the human rights situation and the situation of the political prisoners on Eritrean territory, but does the Council speak with one voice? Do the Member States all 'oblige' by the common decisions and resolutions issued by the Council? According to the question posed by MEP Sonia Alfano to the Commission (see above), on the agreement signed between Italy and Libya regarding migrants and refugees, this is not the case. The answer given by the Commission (see above) showed that the Commission is still analysing the agreement between the two countries, in the light of Community law. The Commission is also working on an agreement between the EU and Libya concerning the promotion of international standards in the field of asylum.

Then, Italy has taken matters into its own hands, but what is the policy of other Member States towards Eritrea? Most Member States do not mention political or

60 Answer to question (P-4294/2009) by Mr Barrot on behalf of the Commission (7 October 2009), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getAllAnswers.do?reference=P-2009-4294&language=EN> (accessed on 30 November 2009).

61 RSP/2005/2620 Resolution on the situation in Ethiopia (13 October 2005), available from <www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/FindByProcnum.do?lang=en&procnum=RSP/2005/2620> (accessed on 1 December 2009).

62 Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on political prisoners in Eritrea (18 September 2009), available from <www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/110210.pdf> (accessed on 1 December 2009).

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on political prisoners in Eritrea (18 September 2006), available from <www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/90996.pdf> (accessed on 1 December 2009).

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on political prisoners in Eritrea (20 September 2007), available from <www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/95978.pdf> (accessed on 1 December 2009).

Declaration by the Presidency on behalf of the European Union on political prisoners in Eritrea (22 September 2008), available from <www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/cfsp/102830.pdf> (accessed on 1 December 2009).

diplomatic relations with Eritrea on the website of their Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), but France and Malta are two countries that do mention these kinds of relations with Eritrea. The French state that 'bilateral Franco-Eritrean relations are good'. The website also learns that 'the French mediation in the conflict between Eritrea and Yemen over the Hanish islands was appreciated, that Mr. Kouchner was the first European Minister to visit Eritrea in August 1992 and that high ranked officials from both countries have regularly met'.⁶³

The website of the MFA of Malta shows an article entitled 'Malta and Eritrea establish Diplomatic Relations'. On 18 December 2008, Malta and Eritrea established diplomatic relations, during a ceremony held at the Permanent Mission of Malta to the United Nations in New York. The two ambassadors of Eritrea and Malta signing the Protocol that would establish these diplomatic relations, took the opportunity of the event to exchange views about the situation in the Horn of Africa and the Mediterranean. Both being maritime states, they highlighted the importance that their respective governments give to the sea in strengthening their economies and development. They also talked about the problematic issues of migration, refugees and human trafficking.⁶⁴

EU law and treaties and the human rights conditions to cooperation

Since the beginning of the 1990's, when the independence struggle came to an end and Eritrea gained its independence from Ethiopia, European reconstruction efforts in Eritrea have been ongoing. The EC strategy for reconstruction is based on a partnership with the Eritrean government and focuses on short-term stabilisation programmes such as post-conflict rehabilitation, including reconstruction of social and infrastructure in war-affected areas and support to the education sector; demobilization and reintegration of soldiers; roads maintenance and food security.⁶⁵

As was mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, in September 2009 the news came out that the EC and Eritrea signed a 122-million euro agreement for the implementation of development programmes in Eritrea for the period 2009-2013. This new Country Strategy Paper (CSP) for the period of five years is based on country analysis and the assessment of past cooperation and lessons learned.⁶⁶

The EC can make these kinds of agreements in the framework of article 177 of the Treaty establishing the European Community. The purpose of Community policy regarding development cooperation is to foster:

- the sustainable economic and social development of developing countries, and more particularly the most disadvantaged among them;

63 'Eritrea, Political Relations', available from <www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files_156/eritrea_205/index.html> (accessed on 1 December 2009).

64 'Malta and Eritrea establish Diplomatic Relations', available from <www.foreign.gov.mt/default.aspx?MDIS=21&NWID=235> (accessed on 1 December 2009).

65 'EU Relations with Eritrea', available from <ec.europa.eu/development/geographical/regionscountries/countries/country_profile.cfm?cid=er&type=short&lng=en> (accessed on 1 December).

66 Eritrea-European Community Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for the period 2009-2013, available from <ec.europa.eu/development/icenter/repository/scanned_er_csp10NEW_en.pdf> (accessed on 2 December 2009).

- the smooth and gradual integration of developing countries into the world economy;
- the campaign against poverty in developing countries.⁶⁷

The objectives of the Treaty are confirmed in article 1 of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, signed in Cotonou on 23 June 2000 and later revised in 2005. The objectives of the Cotonou Agreement are a common strategic approach to poverty reduction, consistent with the objectives of sustainable development and the gradual integration of ACP countries into the world economy.⁶⁸ Cooperation between the European Community and Eritrea will take into account the fundamental principles set out in article 2 and the essential and fundamental elements laid out in article 9 and 11b of the Cotonou Agreement.⁶⁹

Paragraph 2 of article 9 of the Cotonou Agreement states that 'respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law, which underpin the ACP-EU Partnership, shall underpin the domestic and international policies of the Parties and constitute the essential elements of this agreement'.⁷⁰ Article 96 of this Agreement gives the possibility, when 'one party considers that the other party has failed to fulfil the obligation stemming from respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law referred to in paragraph 2 of article 9, to supply the other party and the Council of Ministers with the relevant information required for a thorough examination of the situation with a view to seeking a solution acceptable to the Parties'. The other Party then will be invited to hold consultations on the measures taken or that need to be taken. If these consultations do not lead to a solution that is acceptable to both Parties, appropriate measures may be taken. These measures will be 'in accordance with international law, and proportional to the violation' and 'suspension will be a matter of last resort'.⁷¹

The Cotonou Agreement is one element of the EU policy regarding human rights, another element is the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), which was launched in 2006. It aims to 'provide support for the promotion of democracy and human rights in non-EU countries'.⁷² The key-objectives are, amongst others, to enhance respect for human rights and strengthening the role of civil society. The EIDHR instrument 'can grant aid where no established development cooperation exists and can intervene without the agreement of the governments of third countries. The EIDHR also includes the possibility under certain circumstances to finance not only registered organizations, but also non-legal entities'.⁷³

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the relations between the EU and Eritrea go back to when Eritrea gained independence, in the early 1990s. The EU then started

67 Eritrea-European Community Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for the period 2009-2013, p. 5.

68 Ibidem.

69 Eritrea-European Community Country Strategy Paper and National Indicative Programme for the period 2009-2013, p. 5.

70 Paragraph 2, Article 9 Cotonou Agreement.

71 Article 96 Cotonou Agreement.

72 'European Instrument for Democracy & Human Rights (EIDHR)', available from <ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/finance/eidhr_en.htm> (accessed on 2 December 2009).

73 Ibidem.

its reconstruction and rehabilitation programmes in Eritrea. The focus of the European programmes in Eritrea later changed from rehabilitation into longer-term development. While pursuing the objective of development in Eritrea, the EU also focuses on human rights and democracy. This focus has been laid down in different laws and texts, like the Treaty establishing the European Community, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights and the Cotonou Agreement. The above has shown that the EU policy regarding human rights is one of the main key points in the external policy of the EU, especially in relation to the developing countries.

Articles 9 and 96 of the Cotonou Agreement even arrange for the possibility to hold consultations and take appropriate measures when one party of the Agreement feels that the other party does not live up to the obligations under this Agreement. Suspension of the Agreement might be a last resort, but it remains a possibility and gives the EU a means to stop the cash flow to a partner country when there exists no respect for human rights. This is a way to demand more progress on the issue of the promotion of and the respect for human rights.

4. Other Actors of Importance in the Horn Region

Beside the United States (US) and the European Union (EU), other actors are involved in the Horn of Africa region. Countries, like China and the Middle East Countries, and international organisations, like the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN) and the InterGovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD). The activities of these international organisations and countries could help to bring peace and stability to the region, but to what extent do their actions contribute?

United Nations, African Union and InterGovernmental Authority on Development

As was already discussed in the chapter on US-Eritrea relations, Eritrea and Ethiopia signed the Algiers Agreement in December 2002, which led to the establishment of the EEBC. This commission was to arbitrate between the two countries on the border dispute. When they presented their decision, it seemed like both countries would accept this decision. But as soon became clear, both countries were not willing to cooperate and they started to raise obstacles, which had the result that both the Commission and the mission of the United Nations, UNMEE, could not do their work properly. In 2008, the UN could not decide otherwise than to terminate the mandate of UNMEE and to pull back their personnel.⁷⁴

While UN agencies tried to find a solution to the problem of the border dispute between Ethiopia and Eritrea, they could not carry out its work because of serious impediments caused by the Eritrean and Ethiopian governments. Other regional organisations stepped in to promote unity between the African states and bring peace and stability to the region. One of these organisations is the African Union (AU), which was established by the issuing of the Sirte Declaration by the heads of state and government of the Organisation of African Unity. The AU was to accelerate the process of integration of the African continent and to enable it to play its rightful role in the global economy. The main objectives were to rid the continent of the remaining vestiges of colonisation and apartheid, to promote unity and solidarity and to intensify cooperation for development.⁷⁵

Another organisation that was established is the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in Eastern Africa. This organisation was created in 1996 to supersede the Intergovernmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGADD). The IGAD was to coordinate joint regional actions to cope with recurring severe droughts and other natural disasters, which were of such magnitude and extent that they could not be handled by individual countries alone. In the 1980s the IGADD consisted of six countries (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda), the IGAD now consists of these six countries plus Eritrea, that joined the IGADD in 1993.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), available from <www.un.org/Depts/dpko/missions/unmee/index.html> (accessed on 26 November 2009)
Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, Delimitation Decision (13 April 2002), available from <www.un.org/NewLinks/eebcarbitration/EEBC-Decision.pdf> (accessed on 26 November 2009).
Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission, Statement by the Commission (27 November 2006), available from <www.pca-cpa.org/upload/files/Statement%20271106.pdf> (accessed on 26 November 2009).

⁷⁵ 'African Union in a nutshell', available from <www.africa-union.org/root/au/AboutAu/au_in_a_nutshell_en.htm> (accessed on 27 November 2009).

⁷⁶ 'About IGAD', available from <www.igad.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=43&Itemid=53> (accessed on 27 November 2009).

In 2005, the latter, set up the IGAD Forces for Somalia (IGASOM), but the IGASOM could not work properly, due to restrictions placed on the frontline states to intervene in Somalia as well as other administrative problems inherent in the arrangement. Therefore, a review of the original plan of deploying an IGAD force that would hand over to the AU after 6 months took place and it was decided that an AU Force would be deployed, that incorporated elements from IGAD to be called African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM). This mission was launched by the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, with the agreement of the United Nations, on 19 January 2007. The initial 6-month mandate has been extended several times: United Nations Security Council Resolution 1872 (26 May 2009) authorized the prolongation of AMISOM until 31 January 2010. There are currently over 5000 peacekeepers deployed by AMISOM, mainly coming from Burundi and Uganda.⁷⁷

The main objectives of AMISOM are to provide support to the transitory federal institutions in order to obtain stabilisation and to pursue political dialogue and reconciliation. The mission is also mandated to facilitate the provision of humanitarian aid. For now the mandate stands until January 2010 and we will have to see if the mandate will be prolonged after January.⁷⁸

Middle East Countries and China

Eritrea's independence struggle has been supported by almost all of the Arab countries. The Gulf States gave financial aid to the liberation front's and countries like Syria and Iraq helped with military training and also provided for financial aid to the liberation fronts. Sudan was the main recipient of Eritrean refugees and it was used by the liberation fronts as a transit route for their people and goods. However, post-independent relations between Eritrea and the Arab states have not been as it was expected to be. This period was characterised by difficult relations with its neighbours and the Eritrean government entered into conflict with Sudan, Yemen and Djibouti (all members of the Arab League).⁷⁹

This impeded Eritrea from having strong relations with the Arab countries, the exceptions being Qatar and Libya. There are no concrete facts and figures to substantiate the assumption, but it is assumed that Qatar and Libya are the closest friends of the Eritrean government in the region and the main sources of financial aid to the Eritrean government. About a year ago, the Ethiopian government severed its ties with Qatar, claiming that the latter was collaborating with the Eritreans in supporting Somali insurgents.⁸⁰

Last year, Eritrea turned to Iran and established diplomatic ties with the country. They agreed to increase their bilateral political relations. The leaders of both countries met in Teheran in May 2008, where they agreed to cooperate in industry, agricultural, and regional and international issues. They also signed trade and investment agreements and Iran declared to support projects on energy and infrastructure development. In October of that year they agreed to stimulate

77 *'Background and political developments of AMISOM'*, available from <www.africaunion.org/root/AU/AUC/Departments/PSC/AMISOM/AMISOM_Background.htm> (accessed on 27 November 2009).

'AMISOM', available from <ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/regional-cooperation/peace/peace-support-operations/amisom_en.htm> (accessed on 27 November 2009).

78 *'AMISOM'*.

79 Interview Abdulraman Sayed (4 October 2009).

80 Ibidem.

cultural, scientific and educational cooperation as well. In April 2009, Iran, Algeria and Eritrea agreed to expand their bilateral cooperation and encourage mutual investment. In May of that year, Eritrean President Afewerki declared the Eritrean-Iranian relations 'relatively new', but 'constructive'. He denied that Eritrea would be hosting Iranian military bases or helping them smuggle weapons to the Palestinians.⁸¹

On the relations with the Arab countries, Afewerki said in an interview by the Sudan Tribune in May 2007, that 'Eritrean relations with all Arab countries are good and realistic. They are based on strategic understanding of geography, politics, events and developments. We cannot have other options. We will not join axes or adopt political positions that do not concern us. The Eritrean relations with the Arab countries are moving in the right direction'.⁸²

With the establishment of these diplomatic ties, Eritrea seemed to come out of its isolated position. For long the policy has been directed to isolation. Diplomacy and the willingness to negotiate have been seen as signs of weakness. What also contributed to this isolationist policy was the fact that the Eritrean struggle for independence has not been recognised and supported by the international community which supported the Eritrean sense of standing alone.⁸³

In the same line, Eritrea holds diplomatic ties with China since the early 1990s. On 24 May 1993, China and Eritrea signed a joint communiqué on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries. In 1992, China had already started to supply Eritrea with some aid and assistance regarding goods in general and with some calamity relief. In 1997, China gave monetary aid to Eritrea in order to put up a hospital in Asmara, its capital.⁸⁴

China does not only give aid to Eritrea, since the independence of Eritrea, China also established trade agreements with the new state. In 1993 they signed the 'Agreement for Trade, Economic and Technological Cooperation between the government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Eritrea'. There are currently at least five Chinese companies active in Eritrea, including the China Building Engineering (Group) Cooperation and the China Aviation Technology Import and Export Corporation, which have completed the road-construction and building projects. The exports from China to Eritrea mainly compose of vehicles and spare parts, cement, mechanical equipment and steel materials. In 2002, the trade value came to US \$6.029 million, of which the export from China accounted for US \$6.025 million.⁸⁵

In 1994 Eritrea and China also established exchanges and cooperation in the fields of culture, medical work and military affairs. In that year, they signed the 'Cultural Agreement between the Government of the People's Republic of China and the Government of Eritrea'. They resigned the agreement for 1996-1998, 1999-2000

81 Ariel Farrar-Wellman, 'Eritrea – Iran Foreign Relations', Iran Tracker (25 September 2009), available from <www.irantracker.org/foreign-relations/eritrea-iran-foreign-relations> (accessed on 27 November 2009).

82 'President Afewerki says no political opposition in Eritrea', Sudan Tribune (12 May 2007), available from <www.sudantribune.com/spip.php?article21830> (accessed on 27 November 2009).

83 'Eritrea's Regional Role and Foreign Policy: Past, Present and Future Perspectives', Chatham House, The Horn of Africa Group (2007), p. 3, available from <www.chathamhouse.org.uk/files/10777_171207eritrea.pdf> (accessed on 27 November 2009).

84 'China and Eritrea', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China, available from <www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/wjzb/zjzg/fzs/gjlb/2979/t16502.htm> (accessed on 27 November 2009).

85 Ibidem.

and 2002-2004. In 1996, China sent experts on culture and sports to assist Eritrean teaching work; in 1997, China sent the first batch of medical personnel to work in Eritrea; in 2002, China sent experts for the training of the Eritrean Military Band and for guiding the work of mine-detection and clearance.⁸⁶

Conclusion

After having received support from its neighbours before and just after Eritrea became independent, Eritrea went in isolation. Eritrea has recently come out of its position of isolation by establishing diplomatic ties with countries like Iran and Qatar. Although these countries also give aid to Eritrea, they seem mainly interested in trade agreements with Eritrea. International organisations like the United Nations, the African Union and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development try to bring peace and stability to the region, but their attempts seem to fail because of impediments imposed by countries in the region. The current conflicts in the region are prohibiting the international organisations from doing their work properly. So it seems that the current conflicts need to be resolved first, before the actions of the international organisations can contribute to regional peace and security.

86 'China and Eritrea', Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China.

5. Conclusion

Eritrea is a relatively new country, with a turbulent history. It became independent after a thirty-year struggle for independence from Ethiopia. At the beginning of the 1990s, the diplomatic and political relations with other countries seemed to make good progress. Eritrea gave the impression of wanting to open up to countries like the US and the European countries, and those countries in their turn showed willingness to establish diplomatic and trade relations with Eritrea. For a few years, this seemed to work, but Eritrea started to get into disputes with its neighbours and did not fear to use force in these matters. This led to armed struggle with countries like Yemen, Sudan and Ethiopia. The dispute about the borders with the latter evolved even into a war that lasted two years.

Then, the international community decided to step in and establish an Eritrea-Ethiopia Boundary Commission (EEBC) and a United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE), in order to bring peace to the region. When this Commission and UN Mission are unable to obtain the goals set out in the beginning, other international organisations took the place of these two institutions and tried to achieve what the others could not do. But their efforts were in vain, because Eritrea followed a path of isolationist policy. The Eritreans, during and after their struggle for independence, had had the feeling that they were being left alone in their fight. They felt unsupported and even neglected by the international community, which in their eyes did not acknowledge their right to be independent of Ethiopia.

After the struggle, people thought that Eritrea would enter into good relations with its neighbours, but as it turned out, Eritrea got into armed struggle with most of them. Also, the relations with the United States took a turn for the worse after the border war with Ethiopia as well as the relations with the European Union. When in 2001, a group of former politicians, judicial leaders and journalists was arrested by the Eritrean government and put to jail without a trial, the international community was shocked. The relations with other nations went from bad to worse, especially because the Eritrean government seemed to lack respect for human rights.

Eight years later, most of the people who were arrested in 2001, are still in jail. A situation that is not acceptable for the US and the EU. After the arrest of two Eritreans working at the US embassy in Asmara, the US cut their diplomatic ties with Eritrea. The US is now even following a policy of sanctions against Eritrea. The US sees no other option than to force the Eritrean government to respect human rights by applying a policy of sanctions. The EU sees another option, namely that is to keep the dialogue with Eritrea open, in order to be able to influence the policy of the Eritrean government in a positive way, so they will better the current human rights situation in their country.

At this moment, Eritrea's foreign relations do not exist of good diplomatic ties with other countries, but change seems to be on its way, because Eritrea has entered into diplomatic relations with Iran and China. So the country is opening up to other nations. However, Iran and China are not known for their excellent internal human rights situation, so for that matter it does not look like it will soon be better. Maybe the US and the EU can make a change in this matter, but then it seems that they first have to come up with a joint policy, or at least a more coherent policy, in order to really influence the Eritrean government and make a difference for the Eritrean people.

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