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THE POTENTIAL IMPACT OF BREXIT ON THE UK-AFRICA ECONOMIC RELATIONS

Summary: The article discusses the implications of Brexit for the UK-Africa relations, focusing on trade and development aid. Cooperation between the European Union (EU) and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of states has provided a vehicle for the UK's ongoing relationship with the majority of the Commonwealth. Following the vote for Brexit, the UK is facing a new challenge: designing a new trade policy. It seems to be crucial to redefine the role of the UK in international politics, with trade at the centre. Trade is regarded as the basis on which to pursue national interests as well as retain global leadership. Moreover, considering the relation between the UK and African countries, the important issue is development aid. The articles analyses former relations and possible scenarios of further cooperation between the UK and Africa in terms of trade and development aid. Authors underline the challenges and opportunities from the Africa's point of view.

Keywords: Brexit, the UK-Africa relations, aid development, trade.

JEL Classification: F13, P 33, P 45.

Introduction

On 23 June 2016, a referendum was held in the United Kingdom to see whether or not its citizens wanted to stay in the European Union. British people decided to leave the European Union. In March 2017 the European Union triggered the Article 50 of the Treaty of the European Union (TUE). Therese May – the Prime Minister of the UK said that “no deal for Britain is better than a bad deal” [Department for International Trade, 2017]. It was an important milestone in a relationship of the EU member states. Difficulties had appeared in a wide range of policies, from agriculture to the financial issues. Much of the debate on

the Brexit process and its consequences regard cooperation between the UK and the EU. However, implication of Brexit could affect other part of the world, in particular Africa. Considering the potential Brexit's impact on Africa, first of all the issue of trade and development aid should be taken into consideration [Misiuna, 2018].

The main aim of the article is to identify and evaluate potential impact of Brexit on the UK-Africa trade relation and the development aid for Africa. The paper consist of three parts, relating to the issue of trade, development aid and challenges for Africa. The articles analyses former relations and possible scenarios of further cooperation between the UK and Africa in terms of trade and development aid. In order to prepare the material, the authors used information published in newspapers, books, studies and statistics.

1. Brexit's impact on the UK-Africa trade relations

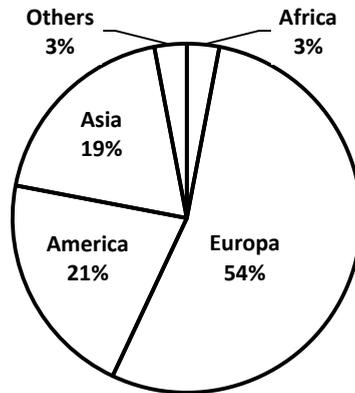
The history of the UK-Africa trade relations began many years ago. As the country that created the largest empire in the world, Great Britain had an influence on its colonies for decades. The situation changed on January 1, 1973, when the UK joined the European Economic Community. Since then, decisions about the shape of trade relations have been taken jointly with other EEC/EU members.

After 43 years, in a referendum held on 23 June 2016, British citizens voted in favour of leaving the European Union. This raises the question of the UK's future relations with the EU and the rest of the world, including Africa. Much will depend on how relations between London and Brussels are regulated. In 2017, the British government set four main negotiation objectives for new relations with the EU, one of which is to leave the common market and customs union. This means that the UK will face the challenge of negotiating new trade agreements with the rest of the world [Sparrow, 2018].

1.1. Characteristics of the UK-Africa trade relations

If we look at the African continent as a whole, it accounts for less than 3% of the UK exports of goods and services (Figure 1). At the same time, it should be remembered that the largest share of exports goes to the European market – over 50%. One of the reasons for this shape of trade relations may be the fact that goods exported from Africa are still uncompetitive. Another important factor can be phenomena taking place in Asian economies.

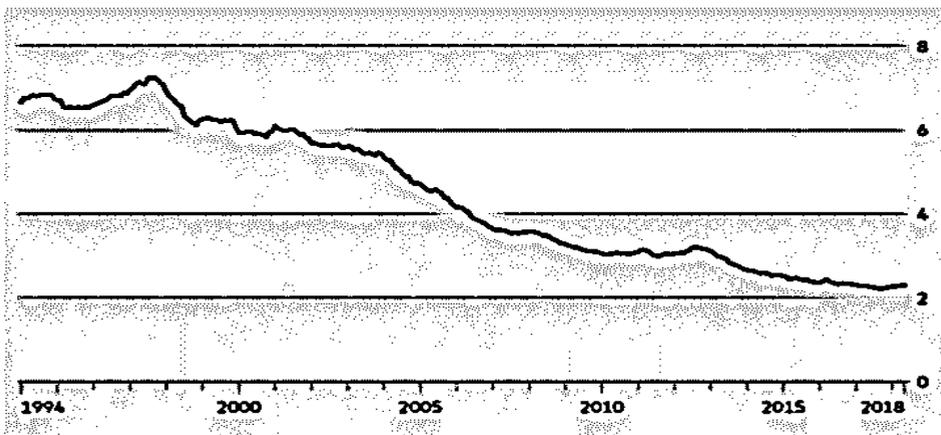
Figure 1. Regions' share in the UK export goods and services in 2017 (%)



Source: Romei and Cocco [2018].

Another phenomenon worth highlighting is the systematic decline in the share of British goods in Africa's imports. The data (Figure 2) show that this share has fallen by about four percentage points since the end of the 1990s. These figures confirm that the United Kingdom will have many competitors in Africa.

Figure 2. The UK share in Africa's imports 1994-2018 (%)

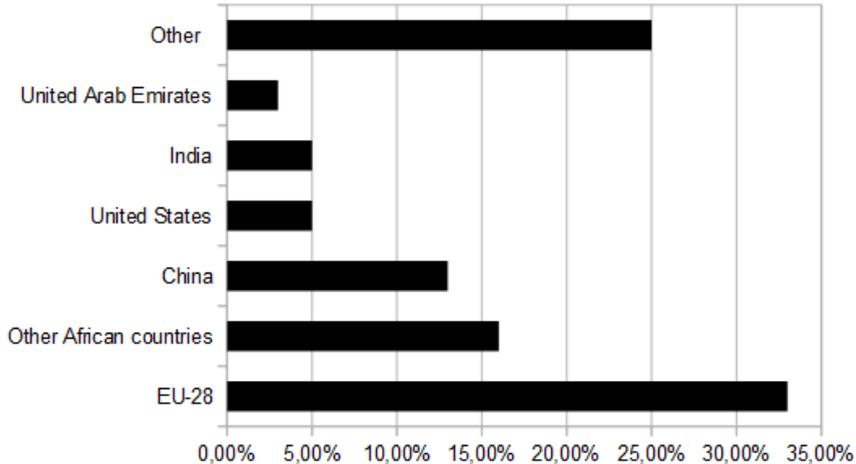


Source: Romei and Cocco [2018].

If the British Government wants to increase trade with Africa, it will have a lot of work. Previously expressed suspicion of strong competition in Africa is confirmed by the figures below (Figure 3). The European Union is the largest trading partner for Africa on the import side. In this group, however, the United Kingdom is only 7th, giving way to Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Nether-

lands and Belgium. Moreover, if we do not count the EU as a whole, the UK ranks 13th [Romei & Cocco, 2018].

Figure 3. Africa's main import sources in 2018 (%)



Source: Based on: Eurostat [2018].

The British Government is optimistic about the possibilities of developing trade with Africa. Recently, Theresa May visited South Africa, Kenya and Nigeria and pointed to the need to boost mutual trade in goods. This is an important change in the behaviour of the British Government, as for many years no British Prime Minister has visited Africa, while German and French leaders, for example, have done so. Moreover, the British aspire to become Africa's investment leader among the G7 members by 2022 [Sabbagh, 2018].

Looking at the situation on the African continent, it is not surprising that Theresa May has chosen these countries as the targets of her visit. The Prime Minister's main focus is on the countries that have the strongest trade ties with the UK and are characterised by rapid economic growth. Nigeria and South Africa are also important players on the African continent. Nor can we ignore the issue of some kind of rivalry between countries over African countries. China's strong presence in Africa forces Western countries to review their approach to date. Exports of Chinese goods to the African market are several times greater than the export from UK. Even the export volumes of Germany, France and the United States to Africa put together are not that significant. China is also at the forefront as a country investing in Africa in foreign direct investment. It is all the more surprising that the country leaving the European Union, Africa's largest trading partner, is signalling the need to start talks on future trade relations [Dibie, 2017].

1.2. Challenges and opportunities for particular countries

Due to the degree of dependence on exports to the UK, there are three countries that Brexit is likely to be significantly affected. These are: Nigeria, South Africa, and Kenya [Overseas Trade Statistics (OTS), 2018].

South Africa

South Africa is one of those African countries that may suffer from Brexit because of strong trade links. The United Kingdom is South Africa's eighth trading partner. Experts predict that South Africa's gross domestic product could fall by 0.1% (or more) and cause an economic downturn in the short term [OTS, 2018]. The decline in economic growth is expected to be the result of a relaxation in trade and investment, followed by an increase in unemployment, especially among young people.

There is no consensus among experts on the exact extent of the damage to GDP, but everyone agrees that the country will face problems in trade, investment and employment. These forecasts are bad not only for South Africa, but also for Nigeria and Kenya [Royal African Society, 2018].

Nigeria

Nigeria is the UK's second largest trading partner in Africa. In the case of this country, the situation is particularly interesting. Before the Brexit affair became formally possible, it was predicted that by 2020, mutual trade would increase from close to 6 billion pounds to 20 billion pounds. Unfortunately, these estimates are now considered to be too optimistic [Romei & Cocco, 2018].

The most important source of income for Nigeria is the sale of crude oil. Chemicals and related materials account for nearly 25% of export to the UK. Falling oil prices, combined with Brexit and a possible decline in demand for oil, could pose a serious threat to the desired recovery of the Nigerian economy. T. Andrews, an economist from Lagos, argues that Nigeria should base its action on the belief that sales to the European Union will be able to make up for any income shortfall [Royal African Society, 2018].

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) [2018], Brexit is likely to contribute to the recession in the Nigerian economy. According to the IMF, the planned economic growth of 2.3% will actually be around 1.8%.

Kenya

The most sensitive commodity that may suffer the most from Brexit is Kenyan flowers. The UK is the second largest export market for this good, after

the Netherlands. Even before Brexit became a real threat, Kenya was negotiating a trade agreement on the export of flowers with the European Union. Now fears have arisen that Brexit will hamper the progress on this agreement. If this happens, Kenya could lose billions of shillings. The Kenya Flowers Association predicts that it will be difficult to negotiate separate agreements with the EU and the UK, and without these agreements, up to 4 billion Kenyan shillings a month will be lost [Norton Rose Fulbright, 2018].

2. Brexit's impact on development aid for Africa

The European Union (EU) has a cooperative relations with a lot of developing countries. The main purpose of the cooperation is to promote economic development, with the primary aim of reducing poverty in the long-term. The European Union provides the developing countries with development aid and technical assistance. The EU is one of the world's largest donor, providing of all international aid. The widest standing of the EU's development relations with developing countries is with the African, Caribbean and Pacific states that form the 'ACP' Group¹. The EU-ACP relationship has its own funding mechanism, the European Development Fund (EDF). The UK is one of the largest donor to the EDF, and provides approximately 15 percent of the total EDF funding. Brexit could have an impact on EU development aid.

2.1. European Union development policy

EU development policy is set down in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union [2012] (articles 208 to 211). EU member states have also their own policies as 'a shared parallel competence' (acting as an additional donor). Obligation of each member state is to contribute to the EU budget, of which a heading 4 entitles 'Global Europe' is dedicated [Frankowski, 2015]. This part of the EU budget includes funds, which are most relevant for the Official Development Assistance (ODA). European Union and its member states are the largest providers of Official Development Assistance (ODA). For the period 2014-2020, the EU has nine instruments covering external aid – External Financing Instruments (EFIs). The European Development Fund (EDF) is the largest single instrument of the EU (Table 1).

¹ The ACP counts 79 Members from Sub-Saharan Africa (48), the Caribbean (16) and the Pacific (15). It is the largest organisation of developing countries in the world.

Table 1. External financing instruments and funding 2014-2020 (in million euros)

Instruments	Funding
European Development Fund (EDF)	30,506
Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI)	19,662
European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)	15,433
Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA)	11,699
Instrument for Greenland	217
European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR)	1,333
Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP)	2,339
Partnership Instrument (PI)	955
Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC)	225

Source: Based on: [European Commission, 2017].

The legal basis for the first EDF was provided in the Treaty of Rome (signed in 1957). The EDF is the oldest development cooperation instrument of the EU. The EDF funds activities in the fields of economic and social development as well as regional integration and cooperation. The ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, that modernises the EDF, covers aid, trade and political relations and puts the emphasis on dialogue between the partners (European Development Fund, 2018).

The fund has a geographic focus on third countries – some of them have special historical ties to member states (e.g. former colonies). The majority of EDF funding is allocated to countries in sub-Saharan Africa. It is financed by direct contributions from EU Member States according to a contribution key.

The current fund – the 11th EDF – started in 2014. The total financial resources of the 11th EDF amount to 30.5 billion euro for the period 2014 to 2020. It is also worth mentioning that in recent years, approximately 30 percent of EU spending on external assistance, including spending on development has been provided through the EDF [European Commission, 2017].

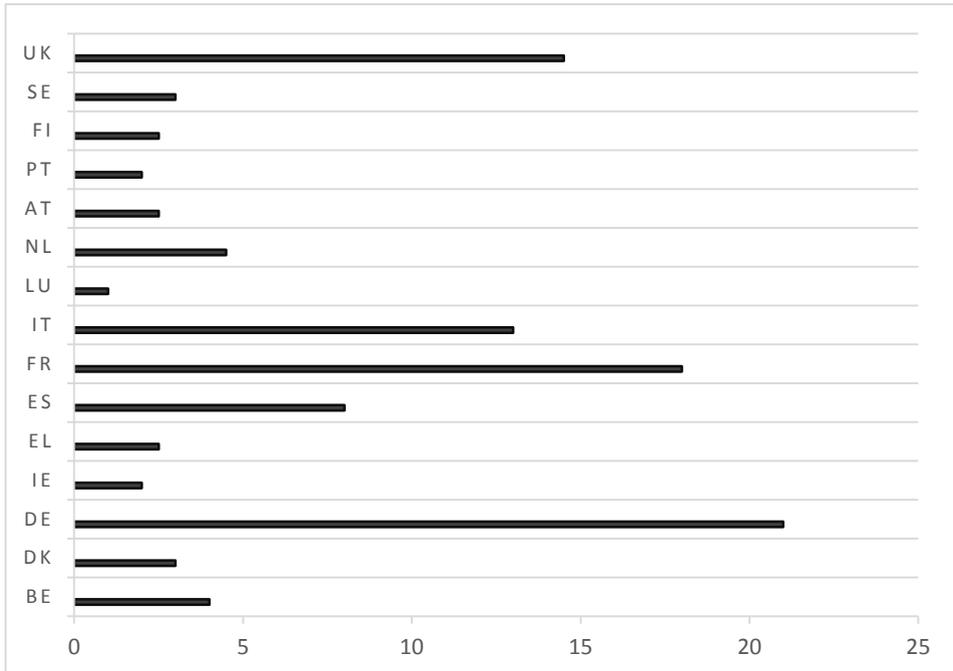
2.2. The UK's contribution on the EU's development aid

The United Kingdom contributions to the EU aid are significant, at 4.5 billion euro (2014-2020). UK provides approximately 15% of the total EDF funding.

The EDF is outside the EU budget and has its own specific contribution key. Member states had different levels of historical ties with the geographic beneficiaries of the EDF and thus of involvement in development cooperation. This instrument is financed through voluntary contributions, which the EU countries negotiate. EDF contribution key is negotiated by the EU member states on the basis of a proposal of the European Commission. Cost-sharing between the EU

countries is different from this of the EU budget [European Commission, 2018a]. Figure 4 presents member states' contribution to the EDF (as a percentage of total). Six EU countries (Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy, Spain and the Netherlands) provide more than three quarters of the total in absolute terms. The UK is the third largest contributor to the EDF (after Germany and France).

Figure 4. Member states' contributions to 11th EDF (as % of total), EU-15



Source: Based on: Devco Annual Report [2016].

2.3. Africa as the beneficiary of the EDF

The EDF is a main EU's instrument for providing development aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and to overseas countries and territories (OCTs)². However, the ACP countries receive majority of funding from the EDF. ACP countries are signatories to the Cotonou Agreement, "a comprehensive agreement setting out the wider framework for their relations with the EU and its member states until 2020" [European Development Fund 2014]. Maximum amount of resources for financial development assistance under the ACP-EU

² OCTs are 25 non-European countries and territories that have special links with Denmark, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom and are associated with the EU.

agreement are set in the annexes to the Cotonou Agreement. These financial protocols are now called Multiannual Financial Frameworks (Table 2).

Table 2. EDF under the Cotonou Agreement (in million euros)

Specification	2000-2007 (9 th EDF)	2008-2013 (10 th EDF)	2014-2020 (11 th EDF)
ACP	13,500	21,966	29,089
OCTs	175	286	364.5
Administrative budget	125	430	1,052.5
Total	13,800	22,682	30,506

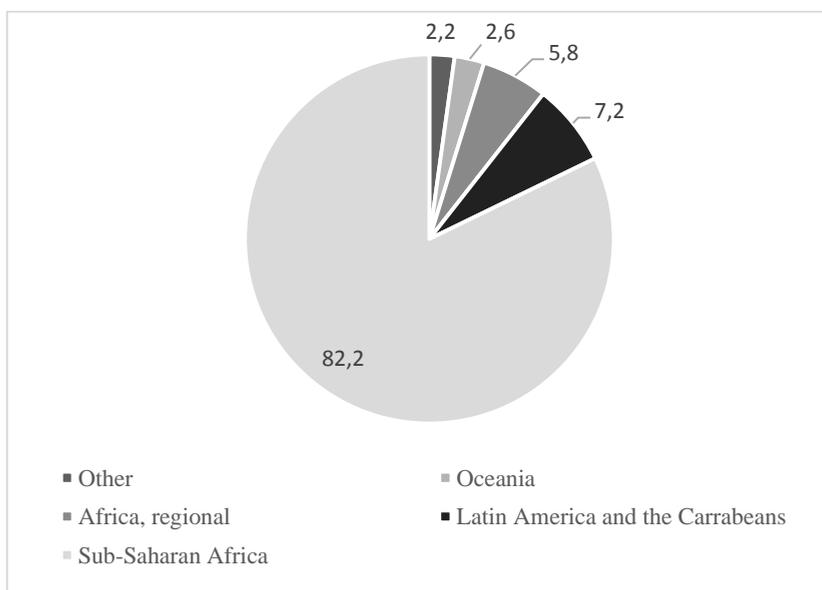
Source: Based on: Devco Annual Report [2016].

Budget available under the 11th EDF for ACP countries is divided into three subcategories of spending:

- National and Regional Indicative programmes (84% of EDF resources for ACP);
- Intra-ACP and Inter-Regional Cooperation (12%),
- Investment Facility (4%).

When examining the geographical distribution of EDF it is immediately apparent that the EDF is a crucial tool for delivering EU development assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa (European Parliament, 2014). Spending on Africa accounts for more than 80% of total EDF disbursements (Figure 5). Majority of top ten beneficiaries of EDF is African countries (in the order of the amount of the EDF: Ghana, Niger, Burkina Faso, Somalia, Ethiopia, Chad, Mali, DRC, Haiti, Tanzania).

Figure 5. The EDF by region (2015) in %



Source: Based on: Devco Annual Report [2016].

3. Challenges and opportunities for Africa

The need to negotiate new agreements does not mean that the African region will become a priority for the Department of International Trade. The government in London has set up 10 working groups to draft future agreements with 15 partners – not a single African country among them. There is therefore a risk that Africa's status will be reduced – especially given the low level of integration with the global economy in terms of trade. There is also the possibility that the UK may want to adapt the trade order that has evolved between the EU and Africa over the years in order to avoid excessive losses [Department for International Trade, 2017].

Bearing in mind cultural, linguistic or legal ties with former colonial areas, it should be noted that an attempt to shape relations 'in the old style' will not be satisfactory for these countries. Some of them are more interested in putting their trade relations with the EU in order. In the case of Africa, the United Kingdom would have to use many diplomatic efforts. These countries see colonialism as an infamous period in history. They will certainly expect the United Kingdom to act as an equal partner to them and not consider them as 'a poor brother'. African countries often accuse Western countries of protectionism, so in this area a different UK strategy could bring benefits. In addition, the United Kingdom has been in favour of free and fair trade for years, so it is likely to offer greater opportunities for African markets to export goods. This could be an encouraging prospect for countries such as Ghana, Kenya and Ethiopia [Cropley, 2018].

From the viewpoint of African countries, it is worth noting that the United Kingdom, after leaving the EU, will negotiate from a weaker position. Europe remains Africa's most important trading partner and the market access offer still seems attractive to African countries. In this situation, the UK's offer must be prepared at the appropriate level. The fact that there are more than 50 countries in the African continent, grouped together in various agreements, does not make the situation any easier. Each country in a given group and each group can have different priorities.

Despite these difficulties, both the United Kingdom and Africa can reach good agreements. Especially if politicians join the process with reason and make appropriate use of diplomacy. In addition to protectionism, African countries often accuse Western countries of being slow. The need for the United Kingdom to acquire new agreements quickly may, in this case, work in Africa's favour. But African leaders must also play their part in the effective operation of these solutions. African leaders should use their negotiating power to their advantage.

Given other global powers fighting for influence in Africa, such as China and the USA, competition is serious. However, there is still a lack of a strong and committed western partner. This gap could be filled by the UK.

As mentioned above, since the UK's accession to the EEC, London's trade relations with Africa have been shaped through Brussels. The basic framework for relations is the Cotonou Agreement (signed in 2000), which replaced the previous agreements. Economic partnership agreements are an important part of this process. These are free trade agreements that the EU has negotiated or is negotiating with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries. The EPAs are intended to encourage African countries to open up their markets to European goods in return for duty-free access to European markets for African goods [European Commission, 2018b].

The problem with concluding these agreements is that they presuppose a level playing field. Meanwhile, African countries are simply able to compete with players such as the United Kingdom, Germany and France. As a result, broad access to the African market is not balanced with the benefits that African countries gain in Europe, especially in agriculture. The European system has repeatedly been criticized by African countries, including the GSP system, for its unilateral preference. African representatives have repeatedly pointed out that Europe behaves as if it knew the needs of African countries better than the Africans. The reality is that African economies simply cannot compete with those of the UK, France or Germany, so that unrestricted imports from the EU into their markets are unsustainable (especially in agriculture). Weak industries and services suffer if they have to compete with subsidised, cheaper imports from Europe [Royal African Society, 2018].

In this context, agricultural biotechnology is an area for future cooperation between the UK and Africa. EU Member States' policies in this area have discouraged Africa from cooperating with them, with the result that it has finally turned to China and Brazil. This is one of the reasons why, in recent years, Africa's trade relations with Asian countries, particularly with China, have developed. This is also the source of growing Chinese investment. Observation of Beijing's activities in Africa has led the Obama administration to try to make up for a certain delay and to develop the Power Africa initiative. The discouragement of Africa to cooperate with the EU in this area and the involvement of other powers has weakened the UK's trade relations with Africa [Blasquez-Lopez, 2016].

Now that Britain is due to leave the European Union, there is a new opportunity to gain better access to African markets. If London is up to the task and guarantees fair and beneficial trade for Africa, then cooperation can be estab-

lished. One of the ways of remaining deep relations with African countries could be a development aid. The UK could continue to play a role in delivering aid through the EU even after Brexit. However, there are still uncertainties about the UK's new foreign policy approach on aid. It is very possible that UK will continue to be involved with the EU development policy. In April 2017, Theresa May, the Prime Minister of the UK, confirmed that the target of 0.7 percent on ODA would remain. The UK's Government will have to decide how to spend approximately £1.5 billion of ODA which is currently channelled through the EU.

The possibility of the UK's involvement in the EU development policy was noticed by S. Lightfoot, Mawdsley and Szent-Iványi (2017), who noted that the UK will need to weigh the costs and benefits of creating new structures to administer aid.

The European Parliament paper, *Possible Impacts of Brexit on EU Development and Humanitarian Policies* (DEVE, 2017) examined the different scenarios for a future relationship between the UK and EU. The UK may act under three different scenarios (nationalist, realist, cosmopolitan) with different consequences for EU aid. The UK's leaving would change the role of the EU the world's leading donor (it could lose between about 12% of its world aid share). Its presence, through ODA, in North Africa could be particularly affected, with a cut of some percent, depending on different scenarios. The EU could react to Brexit by adopting two distinct approaches to foreign policy and development cooperation: either limiting its role to that of a regional power or growing to become a global leader. In the second scenario, the EU could need to compensate for the loss of Britain's contribution to EU aid. Paradoxically, in this situation African countries could even profit from Brexit.

Conclusions

The full impact of Brexit on African countries is difficult to estimate. This uncertainty will continue to exist. Certainly, the UK's offer will be of greatest interest to those countries that may be most affected by Brexit, i.e. South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya. For all other African countries, Brexit provides an opportunity to negotiate new agreements and gain better access to the British market.

Uncertainty and the threat of short-term economic downturns do not preclude Brexit from being a turning point in UK-Africa trade relations. The Cotonou Agreement (2000) between the ACP countries and the EU now forms the

basis through which the EU cooperates with a number of African countries. However, Brexit may enable a new, more favourable agreement to be drawn up.

All of this could be an unprecedented opportunity for future relations between the UK and Africa. Brexit will be an opportunity for the UK to strengthen and support African economies. After all, Britain has a deep historical knowledge of the continent, common linguistic and cultural ties. Acting on its own, the UK will be free to create an offer for Africa and get involved in a way that it has not been able to do for many years.

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**POTENCJALNY WPLYW BREXITU NA RELACJE GOSPODARCZE
WIELKIEJ BRYTANII Z AFRYKĄ**

Streszczenie: W artykule omówiono wpływ Brexitu na stosunki między Wielką Brytanią a Afryką, koncentrując się na handlu i pomocy rozwojowej. Współpraca między Unią Europejską (UE) a grupą państw Afryki, Karaibów i Pacyfiku (AKP) zapewniła możliwość do utrzymywania stałych stosunków Wielkiej Brytanii ze Wspólnotą Narodów. Wraz z wynikiem referendum i decyzją o opuszczeniu UE, Wielka Brytania stanęła przed nowym wyzwaniem – stworzeniem nowej polityki handlowej. W obliczu Brexitu konieczne jest ponowne zdefiniowanie roli Wielkiej Brytanii w polityce międzynarodowej, koncentrując się na handlu, który jest uważany za podstawę do budowy interesów gospodarczych. Rozważając konsekwencje Brexitu z punktu widzenia Afryki, ważną kwestią jest pomoc rozwojowa. W artykule przeanalizowano dotychczasowe relacje, jak również możliwe scenariusze dalszej współpracy między Wielką Brytanią i Afryką w zakresie handlu oraz pomocy rozwojowej. Autorki szczególną uwagę poświęciły skutkom Brexitu z punktu widzenia Afryki.

Słowa kluczowe: Brexit, relacje Wielka Brytania – Afryka, pomoc rozwojowa, handel.