THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN REGIONAL POLICY: SETTING AN EXAMPLE FOR NON-MEMBERS

RUFUS AISEDION (Ph.D)
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
AMBROSE ALLI UNIVERSITY, EKPOMA
EDO STATE, NIGERIA.
raisedion@gmail.com

BENEDICT OKOUMENLEN
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
LINNÆUS UNIVERSITY VÄXJÖ SWEDEN
benedict_okoumenlen@yahoo.com
AND
JOEL OSE EROMOMEN
DEPARTMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES,
LINNÆUS UNIVERSITY VÄXJÖ SWEDEN
eromomenj@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT
The EU Regional Policy, or Cohesion Policy, is one of the EU's vital uniting tools. It aims to advance the countries' economic welfare that makes up the European Union and checkmate regional disparities. A more competitive region with stable economic growth and surplus employment opportunities is the EU regional policy's main aim. Despite the comprehensive impact on many member states, some have argued that it is not fit for purpose, hence calling for the policy's renationalization. Therefore, this paper examined the impact of the European Union's regional policy, with the main aim of setting an example for non-member states to arouse their interest in the Union and cause those doubting the policy's efficacy to begin to appreciate it. The paper utilized secondary data sourced from textbooks, journals, periodicals, international organizations' documents, and the internet. The findings revealed that cohesion policy positively impacts economic growth and unemployment reduction partially. Therefore, it recommended that the European Union strongly encourage intending investors to move into those countries experiencing high unemployment rates. It also suggested that the EU should help such countries to attain favorable environments that will encourage investors.

Keywords: European, Policy, Regional.

Introduction

Regional integration entails a procedure in which neighbors come up with a bargain that enables them to promote cooperation among themselves using the instrument of standard bodies and guidelines. Regional integration is a procedure through which two or more countries decide to join forces and work diligently to realize peace, stability, and wealth. Regional integration among countries of various continents worldwide has resulted in international, regional organizations, the various regional organizations, the European Union (EU), and the regional scheme with the most profound and most all-embracing collaboration. As a political and economic union, the European Union (EU) comprises twenty-seven member states that owe allegiance to membership obligations and privileges. The EU member states include Austria, Bulgaria, Belgium, Croatia, Estonia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Cyprus, Slovakia, Romania, Slovenia, Spain (Wikipedia, 2020a). Non-members of the EU include Andorra, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova, Monaco, San Marino, Belarus, Liechtenstein, San Marino, Norway, Georgia, Iceland, Russia, Switzerland, Ukraine, and Vatican City. While countries such as North Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Serbia, and Turkey are currently candidates for EU membership, Kosovo, Bosnia, and Herzegovina are potential candidates. It is necessary to say treaties that led to the creation of the EU were due to the contribution of individual member State, that signed the laws as required by the legislative and judicial institutions of the Union.

At the beginning of 1950s, regional integration commenced in Europe, and the European Union (henceforth EU) remained one of the regions that have made clear and deliberate attempts to reduce regional disparities within its geographical setting (Funck and Pizzati, 2003:xi). The EU regional policy, also called Cohesion Policy (Learn Europe, 2020) (henceforth will be used interchangeably), is regarded as one of the EU's vital uniting tools. EU's regional policy aims to advance the countries' economic welfare that make up the European Union and checkmate regional disparities. The policy is to promote job creation, business competitiveness, economic growth, sustainable development, and improve citizens' quality of life of the EU member States (Friedmann and Alonso, 1975).

EU regional policy seems to be the most effective and long-lasting tool used by the EU to tackle unemployment and ensure proper investment in Europe's economic growth. The European Social Fund (ESF) has remained a powerful instrument in combating youth unemployment among most member states. The cohesion policy has also made an outstanding contribution to industrialization and enhancing the EU economy structure. In the Europe 2020 strategy, the Union came up with beautiful objectives that could help its members work and develop together. For example, the Union planned to increase the 2020 employment rate of citizens who fall within 20 to 64 years by 75%. It also planned to ensure that by 2020, more than 40% of the citizens that fall within 34 years would have completed their post-secondary education. It also plans to lift over 20 million people out of poverty (Troolin, 2020). Despite the positive impact of European RP on many member states, some have argued that it is not fit for purpose, hence calling for the policy. Apart from the fact that a handful of EU countries are yet to join the Union, its current members are exiting; the United Kingdom left the Union on January 31st, 2020

Therefore, this paper examines the impact of European Union regional policy, with the main aim of setting an example for non-members States to arouse their interest in the Union. Thus, the objectives of the paper are to (i) examine the impact of EU's regional policy on the economic growth of member states, (ii) examine the impact of EU regional policy on unemployment reduction among member State and (iii) examine the negative impact of
EU's regional policy on non-members State and how such an impact can be enhanced to make the Union appealing to them.

Previous Research

According to Simmons cited in Ikelegbe (2006:15), policy means an intention, a guide to action, which involves values that establish priority and relations. Friedrich, mentioned in Ikelegbe (2006:14), sees a policy as a course of action of a person, group, or government in a particular environment providing impediments and opportunities that the policy was adopted to overcome such limitation to achieve a goal or actualize an aim. The policy can be equated to or comprehended as political, managerial, financial, and administrative instruments programmed to achieve clear cut goals and targets.

Winiarski (1976:13) sees regional policy as the State's entire actions – i.e., both central and regional authorities performing on its behalf duties that influence the country's social and economic development within the overall structure of the socio-economic policy. To Secomski (1982:24), regional policy is a deliberate action of the State and its organs, aiming at optimal socio-economic and spatial factors for proper local development by national and regional plans. Domaski (1986:22) sees regional policy as an activity that influences the advancement of specific regions and interregional cooperation, in alliance with the objectives of the entire society and regional communities' goals. To Gospodarka (2000:17), regional policy is an aspect of the national policy of development that addresses social and economic processes' spatial structure and dynamics. Farlex (2020) defines it as the type of policy concerned with stimulating and equitable circulation of employment, businesses, or industrial activities and wealth between the varied geographical areas of a country. Regional policy has also been defined as the government's policy to boost economic activity in a country's specific region (MBN, 2020). Having looked at the various definitions of regional policy, what seems evident is that regional policy is the totality of a sequence of guidelines framed according to regional variation aimed at organizing local relations for their development. It involves economic, social, environmental, political, and cultural policy (Wikipedia, 2020b). Regional policy is cherished because it is an instrument of financial solidarity and a powerful economic integration force.

Regional policy emanates due to the unequal and irregular economic development that characterized the market-based financial system, which is mostly unjust or inefficient by individuals, social groups, and nation-states. Explaining this point further, George Brown (British Chancellor of the Exchequer) pointed out that regional policy begins with the persistence of grievances associated with countries or their parts and from conflict of economic interest between at least the major components of local communities (Cameron, 1974:75 - 77). The main aim of regional policy is to enhance disadvantaged regions; it could be within a nation or a diverse grouping such as the European Union. The RP could equally be used to address the problem of high unemployment rates and per capita incomes below average. The main instrument of regional policy is public investment (Wikipedia, 2020b).

European Regional Policy

Europe's regional policy is the EU's approach to handling the social, economic, and disparities among the EU's 28 nation-states and the 273 territories that make up the EU. The European Regional Policy Research Consortium, which was initially thrown open to members in 1978, was financed by government units in Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. It entails observing and investigating nation-state policies in 30 European countries and studying the inter-dependence between the EU Cohesion policy and EU Competition policy control of state aid. The policy aims to promote job creation, sustainable development, and business competitiveness. The policy has three principal aims: (i) to enhance competitiveness and employment at the regional level, (ii) to accelerate growth, and (iii) to foster integration across borders (Samecki, 2009). In other words, the European RP aims to reduce the problem associated with economic, social, and territorial disparities that still exist among Europe's regions. These objectives were between the period between 2014 and 2020. With this adjustment, the goals of EU regional policy are not to:

a. achieve the objectives set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy,

b. reward performance,

c. to promote all-embracing programs,

d. to monitor the results with greater rigor,

e. strengthens territorial Cohesion, and

f. to eliminate bottlenecks for the management of the five different funds available (Learn Europe, 2020) European Regional policy provides funding for projects that were not implemented by the local officials at the regional level, thereby circumventing the nation-states in the whole process. This policy represents one of Europe's critical tools for local governance in the EU and attracts a third of the total EU budget. Between the periods of 2014 to 2020, the regional policy is to be implemented through the following treasuries:

i. The European Regional Development Fund – This reduces the economic and social inequalities between the EU regions. Investments are focused on joint research and innovation, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), digital opportunities, and a low-carbon economy.

ii. The Cohesion Fund – This helps the poorest Member States – i.e., to catch up with the richest. Presently, the nation-states qualified for this fund are Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, and Slovenia.

iii. The European Social Fund – The aim is to directly help people live above the poverty level (Vehkasalo, 2018: 1-19). All EU nation-states are potential beneficiaries of the ERDF and the ESF. Still, only nation-states with GDP per capita below 75% of the EU average are qualified to receive support from the Cohesion Fund (Vehkasalo, 2018:8).

EU regional policy is an investment that promotes job creation, competitiveness, economic growth, improvement in the quality of life, and sustainable development for member states (Vehkasalo, 2018:10). Since its inception, structural funds (SF) have been devoted to enhancing economic growth in less developed EU countries. To achieve this, it utilizes the principles of additionality, concentration, partnership, and programming, which improve their structural impact (Bachtler and Mendez, 2007). The cohesion policy on growth and development has generated significant interest in the literature. Many different surveys exist (Fratesi, 2016: 443–460; Gripaios, Bishop, Ne, and Mcvittie, 2008:499–525; Pieńkowski and Berkowitz, 2015:10). Research by CEC (2017) revealed that the formulation and implementation of more urban-friendly policies (such as cohesion policy) have the potential of possible spatial spread of economic growth from urban areas to their rural surroundings/regions. The idea supports Gagliardi and Perocco (2017: 857–868) who observed that only those rural regions near urban centers experienced positive growth effect from EU Cohesion Policy between 2000 to 2006. However, Becker, Egger, and Maximilian von Ehrlich (2018:143–152) found that the EU Regional Policy spending, which was weakened by the global economic crisis, has made the cohesion policy's convergence aims very difficult to achieve, thereby cutting the positive effect of the EU Regional Policy. Considering the impact of the crisis on the cohesion policy, Rauhut and Humer (2020) opined that the encouraging effects observed by Gagliardi and Perocco (2017:

857–868) for rural areas close to urban centers between 2000 and 2006 might no longer be acceptable.

Also, research by Mykhnenko and Wolff (2019:470) revealed that EU Cohesion Policy stimulates economic growth and that the positive impact of the EU Cohesion Policy can no longer be overlooked as the EU Regional Policy impacts economic growth in all the EU regions. They also submit that such an impact is more robust in the most socio-economically developed areas. When rural development and Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) funds are used to support expenditure, economic growth becomes a reality. The study equally revealed that EU Regional Policy spending and Economic Growth have roots in relatively wealthier and faster-growing areas. Cohesion Policy can stimulate economic growth with robust institutions. Rates of openness of the economies (Ederveen, Gorter, de Mooij and Nahuis, 2002), and the quality of national institutions concerning the rule of law, absence of corruption and bureaucracy (De Freitas, Pereira, and Torres, 2003: 270-275) have also been found to stimulate economic growth. According to Crescenzi and Rodríguez-Pose, (2012: 487–513), investments in infrastructure and transport reinforced by Cohesion Policy have no effect on economic development. Instead, economic growth is impacted most by government quality, governance style, and institutional influences. Some authorities found evidence of a positive impact of structural funds on economic growth (Ramajo, Marquez, Hewings, and Salinas, 2008:551–567). Others found little (Esposti and Bussoletti, 2008:162) to have no impact at all, while some argued that Cohesion policy had little effect on growth (Boldrin and Canova, 2001:207; Puga, 2002:377). The study of Blaug (1994) and McCluskey (1985) showed that spatial economic growth in EU Cohesion Policy seems to be more about politics than economics. Hence Capello and Perucca (2017:1453) and

Borz, Brandenburg, and Mendez (2018) argue that cohesion policy is primarily perceived as a powerful political instrument for crafting and solidifying a European identity.

Theoretical Framework

Neo-functionalism's main focus rests on the concept of 'spillovers.' The process of 'spillover' refers to situations where a particular sector, governed by the central institutions, creates pressures so that neighboring areas of policy, such as currency exchange rates, taxation, and wages, are influenced by integration. Integration in one sector of standard policy amongst sovereign states would lead to a 'spillover' into other policy areas and, in turn, gain more spillover (Dunn, 2012). The creation of the ECSC and the EEC, which led to Euratom's creation, serves as a reference point to spill over both in theory and in practice. Partially, the ECSC was established to achieve short-term goals like the promotion of Franco-German cooperation; it has equally been observed as the first step in a course that would ultimately lead to political integration (McCormick, 2005). Four types of spillovers are associated with the neo-functionalism theory: functional, political, cultivated, and induced (or geographical) spillover.

The functional spillovers refer to economic or political cooperation that leads to greater integration in other economic sectors, mainly due to the connection of different economic sectors and the increase in national states' interdependencies in financial areas. Non-members played essential functions. As economic sectors benefit from interstate commerce, actors in these fields increasingly collaborate across borders and push their respective national governments to cooperate to create institutionalized structures (and hence, greater integration). Functional effusion is considered the most essential for the expansion of integration. The political spillover reflects Haas and Lindberg's definition, arguing that learning processes during integration occur within national and international elites, leading to shifting expectations, political activity, and loyalty to an international center. This political change would pressure decision-makers to cooperate internationally, as this would be in the (national) interest. The cultivated spill, could be seen as a situation where multinational international institutions stimulate the effects of political and functional spillover, thereby causing integration. In this case, the global institution not only serves as a meeting place for national states and their representatives but actively promotes integration, for example, introducing new topics or deliberately setting an agenda. The primary examples of cultivated spillover occurring are the European Court of Justice (ECJ) and its judgments or the European Commission in the telecommunications or energy sectors.

Induced spillover explains how the varying economic conditions and the shaping of integrated countries' commerce cause other nation-states to consider joining the Union. In this wise, neo-functionalism undertakes the geographical development of an international organization. This idea can be supported with relative ease if we look at the number of EU member states and their increase over time. Multinational international organizations promote spillover by providing a forum to contact and exchange elites among member states. In this situation, they socialize with people, including RIO officials and diplomats involved in international decision-making, ideas, and behaviors in favor of integration. This can be termed social spillover (Niemann, 2006:37-42; Checkel, 2007). Social spillover converges on national preferences, eases transnational bargaining, and strengthens legitimate solutions, that is, policies and decisions aligned with institutionalized normative principles of regional integration, in contrast to power-based fallouts. Again, multinational international organizations actively shape the integration process through the institutional aftermath. First, supranational organizations are interested in the success and advancement of regional integration. They, therefore, help governments find problems and reach agreements that maximize their mutual benefits. This is what Haas (1961:368) refers to as "enhancing common interests." Secondly, they use their delegated powers and the gaps in integration agreements to push for further integration and expand their capacities. Thirdly, they "cultivate" functional and political contagion effects by establishing links between political sectors and assisting in creating international organizations and alliances (Nye, 1971:59; Tranholm-Mikkelsen, 1991:6).

This theory is relevant to our subject of discussion because it renders an explanation of European regional policy's emergence and relevance. The idea maintained that the European regional policy emerged due to the integration of economic interests and the management of economic interdependence by centralized systems and created a typical institution (EU) among most European nation States. Also, Keohane and Nye (1972) argued that vital neo-functional thoughts are mainly flourishing in the study of international interdependence. However, the theory pointed out that, when integration is achieved in one sector of standard policy among the EU sovereign states, it leads to spilling over into other policy areas and eventually culminates in expanding integration. It could be recalled that functional spillover has it that cooperation between countries on specific sectors of the economy can activate progressive cooperation (both intended and unintended) in other related areas (McGowan, 2007). According to the theory, the spillover leads to the collaboration of actors across state borders, who, through the knowledge acquired through the integration process, respect the created institutions and, in the long run, inspire other nation-states to consider joining the Union.

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Research Method

The ex-post facto research design was utilized in this paper. This research design explained the impact of European regional policy on setting an example for non-members, referring to events that have already occurred and documented. The paper utilized secondary data collected from sources such as newspapers, journals, magazines, periodicals, international organizations document, and the internet. Data collected was not based on direct observation, but rather through reading what people have already produced.

Analysis

The impact of the EU's regional policy on the economic growth of Member States

Research has shown that economic growth among the EU members is positively and significantly influenced by the EU Regional Policy. Evidence abounds, which shows that EU regional policy's impact is more significant for proposed economic growth and development programs in recent times (Rodríguez-Pose and Novak, 2013). Vast sums of regional policy funds have been spent on structural aspects such as human capital and infrastructure and the enhancement of local institutions' administrative capacity (Mairate, 2006:172; Pegan, 2017: 1212), all of which have enhanced the economic growth of EU member states. For instance, regional policy investments have aided the less developed EU regions or those experiencing financial restructuring, with the enhanced possibilities for growth enabling them to create new opportunities, to address mismatches in the labor market, and to raise the quality of life of their citizens (Barnier, 2003). EU regional policy concentrates on structural interventions and growth in member states. Between 1994 and 1999, the Union's funding was about 15% of total investment in Greece and Portugal, 10% in Ireland, and 6% in Spain (Barnier, 2003). Because of the cohesion policy, Ireland, a member of the EU, has become successful.

The impact of EU regional policy security among the Member States

The EU plays tremendous responsibilities as a regional security, conflict prevention, and crisis management organization within the UN. The EU’s security performance and its effort to global governance are glaring in executing coercive actions. Since November 2011, the EU has heightened its monitoring position at the United Nations (UN), a privileged position that gives it the capacity to speak before other states. The Treaty of the European Union (TEU) binds the EU members taking part in the Security Council (SC) meetings to keep the High Representative and fellow member states abreast and to support the EU’s interests and positions (article 34 TEU) cited by (Natividad 2013). In the international leagues and the General Assembly, the EU speaks with one voice amongst other bodies and agencies. The cohesiveness of EU action and its representatives is favoured by the Union’s unparalleled international legal entity conforming to the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon in 2009. Within the purview of the institutional, legal and political model, the EU carries out actions relating to UN's international peace, including a global crisis manager and the involvement in coercive steps decided by the Security Council (SC). From all indications, EU action does not only tilt towards European interests but also towards global security and governance. The EU is fundamental to conflict-prevention and crisis-management. Its role as mediator in international contestations often frightens international security related to Iranian and North Korean nuclear programs and the Middle East quarter. Thus, it allows the EU to play a protagonist role as a power balancer amidst other big powers, notably the US influence, for instance, in the Iraq war in 2003. It is known in the world record that military action against Iraq was grievous destruction (Natividad 2013).

The impact of EU regional policy on unemployment reduction among the Member States

The EU's cohesion policy is a crucial EU investment tool for creating growth, tackling climate change, energy dependence, social exclusion, poverty reduction, and job creation. The cohesion policy of the EU has resulted in employment creation among member States. In 2013, unemployment measures were part of the EUR 45 billion items to support (Moraliyska, 2017:9). Due to the direct impact of the cohesion policy, 769, 900 new employments were made available between 2007 and 2013, while 2.4 million applicants in the ESF actions; supporting access to job locations, got a job within six months in the period 2007 and 2010 (European Commission, 2014). In addition, 225,560 Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) were supported with direct investment aid, thereby creating 247,000 employments in SMEs. Also, start-up support funds were equally distributed to 97,640 SMEs (Moraliyska, 2017:9). Between 2007 and 2013, cohesion funds supported 72,920 research projects and created 35,125 long-term research employments. In the same period, cohesion funds financed 27 800 cooperation projects, covering over 5 million EU citizens by BroadBand Connectivity. This achievement greatly aided online commerce, creating jobs for many citizens in the various EU Member States.

However, it has been observed that the impact of the EU cohesion policy on unemployment reduction is only positive when looked at from a general perspective. Even the opinions of official institutions and organizations showing the overall dominating positive impact of the EU cohesion funds, it cannot be claimed with certainty that the EU's cohesion policy has achieved its primary goal of unemployment reduction in the EU Member States. Despite European regional policy and EU cohesion funds, many European nation-states have continued to face unemployment crises, most especially youth unemployment. Most EU countries have experienced and are still experiencing higher youth unemployment rates. For instance, Italy began 2008 with a youth unemployment rate of 20 percent, which later skyrocketed to 42 percent towards the end of 2013 (Eubanks and Wiczer, 2020). Spain is in a worse situation as it has a youth unemployment situation increasing from 21 percent to 55 percent at about the same time (Eubanks and Wiczer, 2020). The unemployment situation is more difficult in Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain than in any other EU country.

Although these European countries have very high general unemployment rates, youth unemployment rates are highly unprecedented. In Greece, high unemployment rates have remained the most visible, as it increased rose from 22% in early 2008 to 36% in late 2010 and continued to grow in 2013 to almost 60% (Eubanks and Wiczer, 2020). In 2014, the unemployment situation, especially youth unemployment of about 15 percent, prevailed in Germany, Austria, Malta, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Denmark. Countries such as Estonia, the Czech Republic, and Britain experience unemployment of between 15 and 25 percent, while Poland, Romania, and France unemployment rate of 24 percent (Dietrich and Möller, 2015). In the same year, countries with unemployment of more than 30 percent were Slovakia, Portugal, Cyprus, Italy, Croatia, Greece, and Spain, with Greece and Spain having unemployment rates of more than 50% (Dietrich and Möller, 2015).

In 2012 Spain had the highest unemployment rate (22.9 percent) in the Eurozone observed that even with the absorption of EU funds by the end of 2016, the stopping rate in Bulgaria was 6.5 percent and that the score was less if not the inflow of EU funds. Worse still, the number of persons seeking a job in the country's economy increased by 15.2% by the end of 2016, a situation that could be ordinarily observed in the country without EU funds (Moraliyska, 2017:15).

The negative impact of EU's regional policy on the Non-member States

As earlier pointed out, European regional policy's principal objective is to reduce the gap between advanced and less-advanced EU regions, strengthen economic and social unity in the European Community, and, by extension, achieve job creation economic growth. Going by these objectives, those countries that are non-members of the EU are undoubtedly negatively affected. To start with, non-EU - i.e., countries not benefiting from the cohesion funds experience higher unemployment rates than EU members. Most non-EU countries are characterized by inadequate ability to develop employment opportunities to be employable in the future. The non-EU members will be unemployed from the EU's 28 member states rather than EU citizens (10.0%). In Sweden, the employment rate for non-EU citizens was 50.2% compared with 81.3% for EU citizens (-31.1 percentage points), non-EU countries – i.e., countries not benefiting from the cohesion funds - experience less economic growth than EU countries with access to such funds.

The EU's cohesion policy makes funds available to its members purposely for economic growth. Through cohesion funds, research and innovation, develop Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) and support SMEs, all of which aid economic growth. The non-EU countries do not have access to such funds; hence their economic growth has not been stable compared to the EU countries. Protection for consumers' safety workplace, regional convergence, and constitutional rights protections are other positive impacts that may not be available to non-EU members. A study comparing non-EU and mocked EU members selected from 11 non-EU OECD and 24 middle-income countries, Campos, Fabrizio, and Luigi (2014) found resilient, positive pay-offs from EU membership.

Another negative impact of European regional policy on non-EU members is the area of their unattractiveness to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). One of EU regional policy functions has been the regeneration of economically-disadvantaged countries by inspiring modern cooperations and industries to invest and locate there; this is a condition referred to as an inward investment approach. The EU market is characterized by low wages, low corporate tax rates, and access to EU subsidies, which enable a conducive environment for investment, as well as easy access to all EU members. It has made EU nation-states attractive FDI locations, both from other EU countries and from third countries. Furthermore, investment regulations also aid investors in sourcing capital through significant fiscal and financial provisions made possible through government incentive policies. Research has it that Romania's FDI attraction increased after it joined the EU (Roxana-Mihaela, 2013:445). Unfortunately for the non-EU, they are not benefiting from these facilities; hence they lack the necessary market conditions that attract FDI, and this has dire consequences on their FDI attraction capabilities.

Conclusion and Recommendations

So far, we have seen that the European regional policy, also called the cohesion policy, has made a remarkable impact among members of the EU. The funds made possible through the cohesion policy are being utilized to ensure that all different countries in the EU have the same economic development level. EU cohesion funds have financed many public investments in all the various Member States, thereby leaving them with an enhanced economy. As we saw in the paper, apart from helping to bridge the economic growth gap or differences among the EU countries, the Union has also excelled in enhancing EU countries' economic growth and reducing their rate of unemployment.

The EU's joint foreign and security policy is established to mediate in conflicts and promote international peace, a key role in the EU's international role. EU foreign and security policy seeks to achieve the following objectives : To maintain peace, fortify international security, encourage international cooperation, build up and strengthen democracy, the rule of law and obedience to human rights and key freedoms. The EU sustains partnerships with the world's key players, which include rising powers and regional groups. It attempts to guarantee that these relationships are established on reciprocal interests and benefits. However, the EU has no regular army, so relies on ad hoc forces brought by EU countries. The EU can send delegations to the world's flashpoints; as watchdog and keep law and order, take part in peacekeeping efforts or offer humanitarian aid to struck populations. In foreign policy partnerships and action, the External action service (EEAS) serves as the EU's diplomatic service, to boosts and defends the EU's values and interests. On foreign policy, the EU's highest decision-making body is the European Council, made up of EU heads of most foreign and security policy decisions that require the understanding of all EU countries.

The funding made possible through the European regional policy has facilitated the development of infrastructural networks, such as telecommunications, construction and upgrading of roads and railway lines, and citizens' connection to broadband, all of which have greatly influenced the economic growth of the EU countries. In the area of unemployment reduction, the policy has not recorded outstanding achievement. It was observed that the more remarkable achievement made by the Union in reducing unemployment is a general one. In various specific countries, the causes of unemployment are still very high. For instance, Italy had a 42 percent unemployment rate by the end of 2013, while Spain had 55 percent. It was also observed that Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain's unemployment situation is more difficult than in any other EU country. However, cohesion funding of infrastructural development across the EU country has dramatically influenced job creation jobs for many citizens in the various EU States.

Cohesion policy has negatively impacted the non-EU countries, and this is because they are not benefiting from the cohesion funds. Hence, they find it challenging to measure up with other EU countries in job creation, FDI attraction, and economic growth. However, they can benefit from the various economic advantages associated with the cohesion policy. There is no need to consider member states that still have high unemployment rates; this is because, by the time they join the Union, more funds will be pooled by the Union to cater to the interests of the entire member states effectively. Again, to effectively solve high unemployment rates in countries where they exist, there is a need for the EU to encourage intending investors to move into those countries powerfully. The EU should also help such countries to attain a conducive environment that will encourage investors.

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