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“Management of land use systems for enhanced food security:
conflicts, controversies and resolutions”

Land Conflicts Are Security Risks — Can the EU Stabilize the Sahel by Trade, Investment and Development?

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Abstract

The EU established recently a so-called comprehensive security approach as part of foreign security policy. This aims at extending classical military and humanitarian strategies by others like trade, development and investment approaches. Sahel-specifically in 2011 the »Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel« was adopted, with Mali being evaluated regularly evaluated as pilot.

This paper focusses on the question of political coherence as major EU policy aim, i.e. how existing approaches towards Sahel countries work together, fit within existing UN frames like »Global Alliance for Resilience« (AGIR) and whether they finally contribute to overall political stabilisation.

Sahel countries face increasing pressure on acceding land and water resources due to climate change. As consequence especially pastoralists are at risks losing their income base due to hardly enforceable tenure rights and due to often political marginalisation.

This can be counterproductive as first, especially this land use system is seen as most resilient to the extreme nature conditions of the Sahel. And second, pastoralists losing their income base may become vulnerable to several terrorist and radical activities involved in political conflicts. This finally can be a threat to European security.

Existing EU policies towards Sahel like the European Partnership Agreement EPA — ECWOAS and the bilateral foreign direct investment agreements will be analysed regarding their potential for pushing or avoiding land use conflicts. Additionally, existing development funding is evaluated regarding its impact on land use. Some best cases will be presented and finally conclusions on how to improve EU's existing policies' impacts on stable land use are drawn.

Keywords: EU trade and investment policies, pastoralism, political stability, Sahel region