

**Françoise Moreau:**

## **‘No naming and shaming’**

In Brussels, economist Françoise Moreau heads the DG Development's unit on 'forward looking studies and policy coherence'. She is playing a central role in the initiative for the ERD.

By Frans Bieckmann

### ***Why is it time for the EU to strengthen its bonds with European researchers?***

We want to tighten our linkages with academics because our policy process should be informed much more by the results of research. There are plenty of interesting academic publications, but they are not always timely. Topics that are interesting in theory, but which have no political priority, will not be incorporated into the policymaking process. We need to engage in dialogue with researchers, to make them more aware of the topics on the European political agenda.

### ***What role will the European Report on Development play in that process?***

The report is intended to stimulate discussion across Europe. During the process, people should debate and network as much as possible, also with partners in developing countries. Policymakers and researchers will be more interested in getting involved if they know their views will be reflected in a tangible, authoritative document.

### ***What will be the political dimension of the ERD?***

It will analyze political obstacles to development, but also strengthen the EU's capacity as a player in the global arena. The ERD will develop a specific European flavour. And I don't mean the usual pessimistic, sceptical and existential statements about how timid Europe is. We must present a clear European vision based on Europe's core values: a deeply anchored attachment to human rights and to the importance of the social dimension and the environment.

### ***And that must distinguish us from Washington. Do you mean the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), or the United States?***

Both. Europe plays an important role when it comes to significant reforms in development policy. Take our Report on Policy Coherence for Development. It is one of the few reports that not only contain analyses, but also concrete policy recommendations and even some regulations. In that respect, the EU can make a real difference. In the next two years, the focus of our work will be on Africa, even if not exclusively. It is clear that the hardcore development problems – think of conflicts, bad governance, resource-rich countries that cannot diversify – are found there.

### ***Given the politically sensitive issues on the agenda, will the ERD research team be able to operate independently?***

Yes, but with one proviso. The steering committee, a group of researchers and policymakers from the participating countries and the European Commission, will eventually have to approve the work. It will not comment on it sentence-by-sentence, but it has to make sure that the work is policy-relevant.

### ***Who determines what is policy-relevant?***

The work must reflect the variety and diversity of views in Europe. But we need one storyline if we really want to feed policy. We don't want a report that is so balanced that it does not encourage resolute action. Purely academic publications often have this disadvantage. We want to push things further.

### ***Does the Brussels foreign policy 'family' support your initiative? Obstacles to development often lie with trade or with foreign policy, for example, with Javier Solana and his team. Or with the geopolitical interests of member states.***

We informed them about the ERD initiative and they had no objections. We hope to collaborate with them once we are on the way. They, too, feel that something is missing and that this may give us the opportunity to fill a gap.

### ***Should it turn out that, for example, certain EU member states do not operate very coherently, will that be noted?***

The idea is not so much to analyze and evaluate existing policies. We want to look ahead, to see what the future challenges are and how we should respond to the coming trends. For us, it's not a matter of naming and shaming.

### ***But if you say that something should be done differently, you also say something about the way it is being done now. This may bring pressure to change certain passages.***

Yes, but this report is not going through the institutional process. It will not be a Commission document that everyone has to agree on. In that sense, we will have a considerable degree of freedom. ■