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### **Integration of EU water and development policies: vision or plausible expectation?**

The paper examines the current state and future prospects of integration between EU water and development policies (agricultural and regional) in the light of past experience and recent policy developments (Water Framework Directive and reforms of the CAP and the Structural Funds). The focus is on the southern EU Member States and the problems of water scarcity faced in rural areas which accounts, among others, for their sensitivity to desertification.

Research is based on secondary analysis of EU policy documents and of the pertinent literature.

Concepts of integration in water resources management are first reviewed, and the need for and the characteristics of integration between water and development policies are examined. A set of criteria for analyzing policy integration is then presented. These include: substantive integration; integration of goals; integration between actors and policy networks; and, procedural integration. Next, the main features of the EU water, regional and agricultural policies are presented and compared. The analysis of the current state of integration between EU water, regional and agricultural policies follows on the basis of the selected criteria. Positive signs and problems with respect to progress towards policy integration are identified. Finally, the question whether, in a dynamically changing socio-political and policy context, it is plausible to expect that the integration of the three policies will materialize and bring the desired results – namely, contribute to sustainable development in general and to combating desertification in Southern EU regions in particular is addressed. Substantive and procedural requirements to promote policy integration are suggested. Theoretical reflections over the nature of policy integration and the relation between its substantive and procedural aspects conclude the paper.