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## The European Union's development assistance for health (DAH) in Vietnam: any other purposes than health improvement?

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### ABSTRACT

Development Assistance for health (DAH) has increased dramatically these last two decades. While according to the official rhetoric, it aims at 'health improvement' and 'poverty reduction', such apolitical purposes have been questioned by scholars who identified other major objectives. However, few studies have sought to uncover the motivations behind EU's health assistance.

To fill such academic gap, this article explores the main drivers that have guided the EU's DAH in Vietnam where the EU celebrated in 2020 its 25 years of health cooperation. Opting for a 'multiple sources of foreign aid model' that considers that no single factor can explain foreign aid decision, and adopting a 'holistic approach' that focuses on the modalities, the narratives, the allocation, and the terms of health assistance, as well as the international and domestic contexts in which it has taken place, this study identifies five major purposes: (a) the confirmation of EU's identities within the global health community. (b) the defense of the relevance of its approach of health assistance to influence international norms framing international health aid, (c) its support to the leading role of the WHO in global health, and (d) the facilitation of trade and investment opportunities for European companies.

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Introduction