

Global health, foreign policy, and agenda setting processes : the European Union as a global health actor

Citation for published version (APA):

Aluttis, C. A. (2016). *Global health, foreign policy, and agenda setting processes : the European Union as a global health actor*. Datawyse / Universitaire Pers Maastricht. <https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20160217ca>

Document status and date:

Published: 01/01/2016

DOI:

[10.26481/dis.20160217ca](https://doi.org/10.26481/dis.20160217ca)

Document Version:

Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Please check the document version of this publication:

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VALORIZATION ADDENDUM

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The ‘valorization’ of research findings has been considered an increasingly important element for all research activities at Maastricht University. Essentially, valorization refers to increasing the impact of research findings and enhancing their benefit to society. Accordingly, thinking about the benefits of scientific activity in economic, social or environmental terms can create more legitimacy and added value to academic research. According to the understanding of this doctoral research, valorization can thus be defined as: “a process that can support the utilization of scientific knowledge in practice”. This valorization addendum is therefore first and foremost a thinking exercise on the question of how the research results generated by this dissertation can yield benefits to society beyond its value to the scientific community.

Suggested approach for the valorization of this dissertation’s research findings:

This thesis provides some valuable insights into global health issues from a European perspective. Due to the fact that the definition and understanding of Europe as a global health actor is currently only emerging, this has been one of the first PhD dissertations on this subject. The research activities and outcomes that have contributed to this PhD dissertation are thus unique and provide a few possibilities for valorization. In the following paragraphs we outline two pathways through which it is possible to use this dissertation for more societal impact.

1 Providing courses and lectures to global health curricula in Europe and beyond.

Academic global health programs around the world are growing rapidly in scale and number. Also in Europe, various academic institutions in Europe have started offering curricula with global health concepts at the core of their teachings. Within those curricula, the role of EU institutions as global health stakeholders is often not taught at all. However, students in Europe nowadays should have a basic understanding of the role of the EU, its institutions, mandate and activities in relation to global health matters. Based on our research, and coupled with our educational competencies, we could set up a flexible 4-8 week module for universities that are teaching global health. This could even be free of service, as part of an online course on global health essentials in Europe. The content for this kind of valorization would not only derive from this dissertation’s research results, but also from the background research that was required to compile it. As our research can be considered an early step in an evolving field it is important to educate further about this field, so that students and future researchers will build on it and take it forward.

2 Strengthening the think tank on Global Health Europe.

During the writing of this dissertation the author has already taken up a role in the valorization of research by getting involved in a think tank for European engagement in global health, entitled „Global Health Europe“. This think tank is a collaborative effort between selected academic institutions in Europe with the aim to ‘promote synergies between the policy spheres of public health, foreign policy, development and research for Europe in a global context’ (Global Health Europe, 2009). Accordingly, this think tank aims at bringing together the leading experts in European engagement on global health and to create and communicate knowledge to policy- and decision makers.

So far, the think tank has mainly been concerned with organizing Global Health Europe related events, and publishing relevant think pieces on the issue. Another central element to this endeavour is the administration of a dedicated website entitled www.globalhealthurope.org, through which the research team communicates developments and important aspects to the public as well as to academics and other stakeholders. Notably, typing the search words “global health” and “Europe” into google yields the abovementioned website as one of the top hits, directing every individual directly to this think tank. This is an easy and cost-effective way to communicate research results to a wider audience and provides an entry point for interested stakeholders.