

Towards a European Consensus for Development: the European Commission approves a proposal for an ambitious development policy

Today the European Commission has adopted a proposal defining the new development policy of the European Union. The policy aims at reducing poverty in line with the Millennium Development Goals. The Communication is a proposal for a joint statement by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission. This "European Consensus" would provide, for the first time in 50 years of development co-operation, a common framework of objectives, values and principles that the Union – all 25 Member States and the Commission - supports and promotes as a global player and as a global partner. The EU is the biggest aid donor in the world, accounting for 55% of development assistance, 20% of which is managed by the Commission. .

The EU's Development Policy will cover all developing countries, and for the first time in 50 years, this will be done within a single framework of principles for the 25 Member States and the Commission.

The Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, said: «Last month, the European Council reached an important agreement on the Commission's proposals to increase our Development aid. To do more is essential, but we also need to do better. Since Development is an area where competence is shared by the Union and its 25 Member States, this requires a strategy based on coordination and harmonisation. If we really want to make poverty history, we have to act together.»

The Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner said: "More than ever, development tops the agenda of the EU. The EU development policy is a strategy for equitable globalisation. By addressing the links between development and security, development and migration, development and trade, development and environment, the Commission seeks to give the best possible response to a broad variety of situations and needs in our partner countries."

The new Strategy reflects changed circumstances since the previous Strategy was published in November 2000: the stronger consensus on the Millennium Development Goals, the security context after the terrorist attacks on 11 September and the increased impact of globalisation.

The Commission proposes a new conception of development cooperation, with better coordination and common objectives as supporting pillars.

The Commission's proposal for a new EU Development Policy puts poverty eradication at its core. It highlights the importance of the partnership with developing countries and the promotion of good governance, human rights and democracy. It stresses the role of civil society and tackles conflict situations and failed states.

The policy also sets development as a key element of the EU's external action along with the common foreign and security policy and trade policy and explores links with these and other related policy areas such as migrations, environment and employment. It recognises that the EU's relations with each external partner are unique and require an individual 'policy mix' of aid, trade and other policies tailored to the needs of each partnership. The Communication also summarises the main orientations for implementing the new Development Policy by the Commission.

The proposal will now be discussed with the Council and the European Parliament in view of issuing a Joint Statement by the end of the year.

For further information:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/development/index_en.htm