
The EU - a global partner for development
Speeding up progress towards the Millennium Development Goals

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Executive summary

Since 2005 the Member States and the European Commission have shared a common vision of development enshrined in the European Consensus on Development. The principles and objectives adopted by the EU provide a framework for development aid efforts that focus on supporting the developing countries in their poverty-reduction strategies, in particular by promoting access to primary education for girls and boys, building up health systems in the poorest countries, providing access to drinking water for disadvantaged sections of the population, not forgetting support for capacity-building programmes and initiatives for democracy and good governance.

The Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development in 2002, the review of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals and the adoption of the European Consensus in 2005 saw the EU make a series of undertakings concerning the volume of aid, its effectiveness, policy coherence for development and aid for trade. The Commission is responsible for monitoring these undertakings within the Union, and this communication, and the working papers which accompany it, have been drawn up in fulfilment of this obligation.

The aim here is to make a contribution to the formulation of a European common position, with an eye to the Accra and Doha meetings and the high-level UN event in September 2008 in particular, and so confirm the EU’s key role on the international scene and its commitment to the MDGs.

Although the EU remains the leading donor and the developing countries' most important partner, providing aid to the tune of €93 per European per year, the amount of financial aid fell in 2007.

Member States are invited to confirm their political commitments and their financial targets for 2010 and 2015. They need to fulfil their commitments concerning the predictability of aid, notably by drawing up reliable provisional multiannual timetables of their financial flows.

Aid for trade: Member States should sustain their efforts and collectively increase their technical assistance in order to achieve the targets for 2010.

Lastly, Member States are invited to step up efforts to find innovative sources of financing for appropriate measures to deal with the effects of climate change.

Because the EU recognises that development depends on both the volume and the quality of aid, steps were taken to make aid more effective, in particular with the adoption of political and technical frameworks in 2007 (i.e. the Code of Conduct on the division of labour, Commission-Member State cofinancing, and predictability of payments). They were, however, too tentative to make much difference.

The Commission now proposes that active efforts be made to implement these principles on the basis of specific proposals it has put forward. The EU must adopt an ambitious position at Accra in favour of a real division of labour, more budgetary aid, and an inclusive approach that promotes gender equality and involves civil society and local government, both in Europe.

1 Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Accra, 2-4 September 2008; Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development, 29 November-2 December 2008.
and in the developing countries. The efforts already under way to ensure the complementarity and quality of European aid given in support for trade must also be stepped up in future. The Commission invites the Member States to make a major effort to forecast their aid for trade, in particular that to the ACP countries, and to join it in drawing up, by the end of the year, "European aid-for-trade packages" and in setting up regional funds to support the EPAs and regional integration processes where the ACP regions concerned so desire.

The EU is at the forefront of policy coherence and is focusing particular concern on the effects of European policies in 12 key areas (for example, trade, agriculture, fisheries, the environment and security) on the developing countries and the MDGs. Three policy areas with great development potential (climate and energy policies, migration and research) are analysed and specific proposals designed to strengthen synergies with the EU's development objectives are put forward.

The year 2008 should mark a turning point in the EU's development efforts. The EU can and must make a difference. It must give a clear political signal and live up to the expectations of partner countries.

At the June European Council the Member States are invited to adopt an ambitious political position.

Now, more than ever before, Europe must mobilise and harness its forces to make a radical improvement in the living conditions of whole swathes of people in the developing world.

1. **2008 – A CRUCIAL YEAR FOR DEVELOPMENT**

The year 2008 will be a crucial one for development. Several high-level events will make the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) a political priority. The Accra Forum \(^2\) will look at implementation of the 2005 Paris Declaration on aid effectiveness. The Doha Conference \(^3\) will take stock of undertakings made at the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development in 2002. The high-level UN event on 25 September should boost the international community's resolve to achieve the 2015 targets.

This year will also be crucial for Europe's credibility. Historic undertakings were made in 2005 concerning the volume and quality of aid. These undertakings must be met. At stake is the EU’s individual and collective responsibility in the fight against poverty.

Since the adoption in 2005 of the European Consensus on Development \(^4\), which focused on the MDGs and poverty eradication in the context of sustainable development, the EU has taken important initiatives to advance the development agenda. In December 2007 the European Council asked the Commission to draw up a report on the EU's contribution to the MDGs \(^5\). This communication and the working papers accompanying it are the response to that invitation. They take stock of the situation and identify the changes needed to speed up progress towards achieving the MDGs.

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2. Third High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness, Accra, 2-4 September 2008.

3. Follow-up International Conference on Financing for Development to be held from 29 November to 2 December 2008.

4. **OJ C 46, 24.2.2006, p. 1.**

5. European Council of 14 December 2007, point 77 of the conclusions.
The international community has pledged to take a number of measures: the developed countries, to increase their aid and its effectiveness; the developing countries, to implement MDG-focused policies and to coordinate external aid more effectively. While the partner countries have a crucial role to play, hopes of achieving the MDGs depend largely on the volume of aid and, just as importantly, its effectiveness.

Significant progress has been made in some countries and regions, but a halving of world poverty is still a long way off: 11 million children still die every year of curable diseases, most of them under 5; one person in four does not yet have access to clean drinking water; 114 million children do not yet have access to primary education; 584 million women are illiterate. Sub-Saharan Africa is lagging well behind. Elsewhere, in South Asia especially, many groups are excluded from the benefits of growth.

New initiatives have been taken, in particular that of the UN Secretary-General for the MDGs in Africa⁶ and the "Call to Action" on MDGs⁷. The EU-Africa Partnership on the MDGs, adopted at the Lisbon Summit⁸, will also provide a new framework for dialogue and action.

The EU has acted as lead donor, and continues to do so, not only because 90% of the pledged aid increase will come from European countries, but also because the EU undertook to carry out a root and branch reform of its system of Community and bilateral aid. In addition to aid, the EU has decided to ensure that its policies are consistent with development objectives. European policies in fields as diverse as trade, security, migration and the environment are now analysed to see what impact they will have on development and how they can make a positive contribution to the MDGs.

The MDGs call for a sustained, long-term effort. The EU has to arrive at the Accra and Doha conferences with high ambitions. It also has to mobilise the support of the international community for the G8 Summit and the high-level UN event in September. It will be both a test of the international community's and EU's credibility and an opportunity to take stock of what remains to be done by 2015.

New global challenges, in particular climate change, pose a major additional threat to sustainable development. European public opinion is increasingly aware that, as globalisation accelerates, the EU cannot achieve its internal objectives unless it is united and consistent in the way it acts on the international scene.

Europe already has the tools and the policies. It now has to move from words to action.

The year 2008 should mark a turning point in the EU's development efforts. Now, more than ever before, the EU has to harness its forces if it is to radically improve the chances of achieving the MDGs by taking action on the volume of aid and its effectiveness, and ensuring development policies are consistent. Europe must create a dynamic that will galvanise international efforts to take specific measures.

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⁶ MDG Africa Steering Group.
⁸ December 2007.
2. **European Aid of €46 Billion in 2007 – Will We Be Able to Keep Our Promises?**

*A fresh impetus for European aid*

For the second year in a row there has been a net drop in the volume of development aid from the international community. Despite the political rallying call around the MDGs, the international donor community clearly has difficulty in meeting its commitments.

And, for the first time, the EU is part of this negative trend. While some Member States have maintained or improved on their good record in 2006, the overall trend is downwards. Expressed in euro and as a percentage of gross national income, European aid stood at 0.38% in 2007 compared with 0.41% in 2006. Despite this, Europe remains the largest aid donor in the world, in Africa in particular, and the engine of increased aid.

Europe wants and has to play a leading role in rallying the international community’s efforts, especially at the Doha conference in December. To do this, Europe must reconfirm its intention of achieving its collective target of 0.56% in 2010, on the road to the 2015 target of 0.7%. We do not need new promises, but should translate existing commitments into ambitious deliverables. Such an agenda action could re-affirm EU’s aid commitments and agree broad milestones and related actions on achieving the MDGs in the areas of education, health, environment, water, agriculture, growth and infrastructure. This will take renewed political determination on the part of all the Member States and awareness that, today, development is the best long-term answer to the challenges of globalisation, whether they be migration, security, the financial and taxation systems, protection of the planet’s natural resources, food security or international stability.

*We must be serious about the predictability of aid*

In keeping with our political pledges, it is imperative to offer partner countries the predictability they need to plan their strategies, their priorities and the measures they take. Less volatile, more predictable aid is also needed for macroeconomic stability. The predictability of aid is measured in several ways: aid flows, multiannual programmes and payments.

For each the Commission has made proposals:

- Predictability of aid flows: the Commission insists on the pressing need for multiannual and ambitious but realistic timetables so that the gradual rise in aid budgets between now and 2010 and 2015 can be measured for each Member State. The 2007 performance should be seen in this perspective.

- Programming of aid: an increasing number of Member States now adopt strategy papers that give the partner country an indication of the resources available in the medium term. This is welcome. But the willingness to draw up such strategy papers in a framework of joint programming is much less in evidence. While joint analyses have been carried out in a number of countries, a genuine joint response strategy has been mounted only in South Africa, Sierra Leone and Somalia. Work is under way in Ghana and Mali. In total 13 Member States are currently taking part in joint programming efforts. The mid-term review of country strategy papers in 2009 and 2010 will offer fresh opportunities to do this.
The predictability of disbursements is central to the Accra agenda and the Ban Ki-moon initiative. To this end, and in response to the invitations of the Council and the Member States, the Commission has proposed the MDG contract, under which the best-performing countries will receive a minimum annual amount of budgetary aid over a six-year period. The Member States have committed themselves to such action. The MDG contract proposal is the only one which is consonant with these decisions.

The need for fair burden-sharing

The EU and its partners need to have a serious debate about how to share this burden at international level. The EU is by far the most generous aid donor, particularly if we take into account the Gleneagles G8 commitments, and could thus shoulder 90% of the aid increase in the period 2007-2010. The EU must use all its political weight to convince traditional partners, the United States and Japan in particular, and emerging countries (such as China, India, South Korea and Brazil), which will be called on to play a bigger role, to sign up to a fair distribution of the development effort.

Meeting the major challenge of climate change

The world is up against an alarming paradox: the poorest, most vulnerable countries are not responsible for the devastating effects of climate change, but are among the worst affected. Climate is oblivious to borders, continents or North-South divides. The international community has a special responsibility to help these countries move towards economic growth that produces fewer greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to climate change, in line with the agreement reached in Bali to launch negotiations aimed at getting a global agreement on climate change by 2009.

This is one of the objectives the EU set itself when it accepted the Commission's proposal to build a Global Climate Change Alliance and in undertaking bilateral and regional initiatives with Latin America and Asia. We have to organise and act. In this connection the Commission welcomes the work of the International Commission on Climate Change and Development set up by the Swedish government, the findings of which we can share in the EU framework.

The Commission is convinced that climate policies in partner countries cannot be financed only with official development assistance and, in consultation with the World Bank, is studying the idea of a world loan drawing on the resources raised by auctioning emission rights on a future carbon market. A lot is at stake. The only solution is to act collectively.

In this context, the Commission reiterates the importance it attaches to integrating climate change into cooperation strategies and into the coordination of the EU's aid instruments for disaster prevention, in accordance with the commitments made in the European Consensus on Development and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid.

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9 GAERC conclusions of 24 May 2005 and point 27 of the European Consensus.
10 See in particular the 2007-2008 UNDP report “Fighting climate change: Human solidarity in a divided world”.
Member States are invited to confirm their political commitments and their financial targets for 2010 and 2015. Member States are also invited to put into practice their commitments regarding the predictability of aid in the three ways proposed by the Commission by developing inter alia multiannual timetables setting out the increase in official development assistance. They are further invited to step up efforts to find innovative sources of financing to deal with the effects of climate change.

3. **MORE EFFECTIVE AID CALLS FOR MORE RADICAL CHANGES**

Any increase in resources has to be backed up by more effective implementation. If doubling aid for Africa led to a doubling of the number of projects, the situation would become unsustainable. Every year Tanzania has to produce 2400 reports for aid donors. In Mali more than 26 donors are active in the rural development sector alone.

The international aid system is becoming ever more complex with the creation of vertical structures, such as global funds and programmes, and the arrival of new public and private actors, which often work outside existing codes and coordination mechanisms.

This is why we need better organised aid that is aligned on the partner countries. This is not just a question of procedures, we are talking about a qualitative leap forward, a genuine sea change.

The EU, which played a crucial role in the adoption of the Paris Declaration in 2005 and at the UN Summit, has a special responsibility today. It must remain the driving force of this global process. Three years later, however, despite some real achievements, the "critical mass" for success has not been reached; not everyone has got to grips with the new tools yet.

The Accra event will be decisive. Our objectives are twofold. We have to take stock of what has been achieved, the difficulties encountered and their causes, and also the successes and the positive experiences. We will do this taking as benchmarks the indicators of the Paris Declaration and the additional commitments entered into by the EU. But Accra has to be more than a simple stocktaking exercise. The ministerial statement ("Accra Agenda for Action") must be ambitious and visionary.

We must move from concepts and political pledges to tangible achievements. To do this four issues call for bold solutions:

- **The division of labour has to be put into practice.** The Code of Conduct adopted in May 2007, implementation of which is still at the embryonic stage, has to be implemented more proactively; all the actors, including EU operators on the ground, have to shoulder responsibility for doing this. The Commission will make specific proposals for each country.

- **Donors should use country systems,** as the Commission did by increasing the proportion of budgetary aid overall and by sector\(^{12}\).

- **Management by results** makes us reassess how our conditions are conceived and applied.

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\(^{12}\) 44 % for ACP countries under the 10th EDF.
• There has to be predictability in flows, in programming and in disbursements.

In addition:

• One of the tools for making aid more effective and providing clear information about what donors have done and achieved on the ground are the atlases compiled by the Commission since 2005. In 2008 the Commission will unveil a new EU Donor Atlas, an atlas of situations of fragility, and several regional atlases. Thematic or subregional atlases will be produced regularly (half-yearly, for example) as a basis for discussion and decisions at EU level on the division of the labour.

• Cofinancing must be stepped up. Community cofinancing has met with less success than bilateral cofinancing, but should pick up following changes to the legal framework. Here we know what the obstacles are, and the solutions. We just need to implement them without delay.

The EU has now added 12 Member States which were not fully involved in the drafting of the Paris Declaration; they can make a crucial contribution by drawing on their own experience of transition and receipt of official assistance. They can help the EU to make a difference at Accra.

Civil society organisations (CSOs) were the "missing link" of the Paris Declaration. Their strength lies in the diversity of the roles they play. Civil society is a fully-fledged player in development. It has to be included in the process, and supported in its efforts to define its own principles of aid effectiveness.

The same applies to local authorities, which are increasingly vocal in their wish to become stakeholders and actors in development. This is another new dimension of development policy that we must explore. Here the experience gained with the European regional development policy in strengthening the regional and local dimensions of economic development could be a source of inspiration for the developing countries.

The Commission believes that the aid effectiveness agenda must also incorporate the issues of conflict prevention and fragility.

Equality between women and men must also be on the agenda as a fundamental human right and as a strategy for achieving the MDGs.

The Council is invited to adopt an ambitious EU position at Accra in favour of a real division of labour, more budgetary aid, more predictability and an inclusive approach that involves civil society, local government and gender equality. The EU can and must make a difference. It must give a clear political signal and live up to the expectations of partner countries.

4. A EUROPEAN POLE OF POLICY COHERENCE FOR DEVELOPMENT

Aid is essential, but not enough. The principle of policy coherence adopted by the EU is prompted by effectiveness, but it is also a moral principle. The impact of the poverty-eradication policies conducted by Europe in the interest of the very poor must not be

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13 All supported the 2005 European Consensus and four have signed the Paris Declaration.
undermined by other European policies. Underlying each European policy decision should be consideration of its effect on the Millennium Development Goals.

The EU has committed itself to improving coherence in twelve areas liable to impact on the MDGs. This will entail preventive measures in the form of impact assessment, appropriate reforms, such as those of the agricultural policy and fisheries, and efforts to find synergies to enable the poorest countries to profit from the opportunities offered by European policies.\(^{14}\)

This "policy coherence" approach gives the EU's contribution to MDGs added leverage.

The EU will step up its efforts to achieve MDG coherence in all areas identified in 2005. The Commission has also explored the potential room for manoeuvre in three specific areas:

- **Policies on renewable energy, in particular biofuels**, in the framework of climate and energy policies. The EU has to help the developing countries take advantage of the opportunities offered by the biofuel market to combat poverty, while closely monitoring the impact that this policy may have, on food production, use of land, and the environment in particular. This will entail regular monitoring that fully embraces the development dimension, adherence to sustainability criteria, promotion of trade in biofuels, especially with the poorest countries, research and technology transfers;

- **Migration policy and the problem of the brain drain**, an especially important issue in sectors like health, education, and research and innovation. The Commission proposes "export training" programmes, improved rights - in particular social rights - for workers returning to their countries of origin, and employment agreements between Member States and developing countries that make it possible to manage recruitment while protecting vulnerable sectors. It would be opportune to explore various citizenship arrangements to strengthen migrants' links with their host countries and their countries of origin;

- **Research policies**. The Commission will propose to the Council a common research strategy for development in order to coordinate better European efforts in this field. As a first step in this strategy, the Commission has undertaken under the 7th Framework Programme to encourage greater participation by research centres from poor countries and to increase research activities in fields that can make a particularly useful contribution to the MDGs (in particular agronomic research, health, including research into neglected poverty-related diseases, public health systems and reproductive health, migration, renewable energy, water and sustainable development). These initiatives must be backed up by targeted aid measures to increase research capacity where necessary.

The Council is invited to promote the principles of policy coherence for development in the framework of the international agenda for the MDGs and aid effectiveness. The Council is also invited to take a decision on the policy guidelines designed to exploit the development potential of biofuels, migration and research.

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5. **AID FOR TRADE TO FURTHER THE MDGs**

The EU is the first partner among the developed countries to have adopted a strategy of aid for trade\(^{15}\). It is a major step forward which should enable the EU to achieve its planned financing targets and put into practice the principles of aid effectiveness in this area.

The EU has collectively pledged to devote €2 billion a year between now and 2010 (€1 billion from the Community and €1 billion from the Member States) for trade-related technical assistance and to increase its aid in the other areas (production capacity and infrastructure). Priority is given to the ACP States because of their special situation and the challenges posed by the Economic Partnership Agreements currently being negotiated with the EU: 50% of the increase in trade-related technical assistance will go to the ACP countries.

In addition to the financial dimension, the other pillar of the strategy is constituted by the principles of effectiveness, in particular alignment and ownership by the partner countries.

Although this strategy was adopted only very recently, the Commission's follow-up report shows encouraging but patchy results.

Aid for trade is now an integral part of EU development cooperation. In 2006 trade-related technical assistance provided by the Member States totalled €641 million, while the Community's aid amounted to €941 million, i.e. almost 60% of the total. The Community is therefore already not far short of its commitment to reach €1 billion a year. The Member States, for their part, will have to increase their technical assistance by 56% between now and 2010 if they are to bring their collective assistance to one billion as planned. This target can be met, but will require a sustained effort.

The EU's total aid for trade (which includes technical assistance for trade, productive capacity and infrastructure) has risen significantly, standing at €7.279 billion in 2006.

Concerning forecasts, however, it is nevertheless worrying that only six Member States are in a position to present forecasts for the increase in their trade-related technical assistance between now and 2010 and that none of them can confirm that the objective of allocating 50% of the increase in aid to the ACP States will be met. The 10th EDF regional programmes will be an opportunity for the Member States to do this by issuing their forecasts of assistance to complement Community aid.

As regards the quality of European aid for trade, the follow-up report cites good intentions to make progress in coordination and complementarity. Nine Member States have already started a joint analysis of the trade situation and seven of them are embarked on a joint programming process. Six Member States and the Commission, together accounting for 83% of EU aid for trade, have already implemented most of the Council's recommendations\(^{16}\).

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\(^{16}\) The principles governing the effectiveness of the aid-for-trade strategy concern the mechanisms for assessing a country's needs, the integration of trade into development and cooperation strategy, the inclusion of sustainability considerations, analysis, programming and joint financing.
The Council is invited to recommend that the Member States sustain their efforts, and collectively increase their trade-related technical assistance so that by 2010 it is 56% up on 2006, in accordance with financial objectives, and that they redouble existing efforts to ensure the complementarity and quality of European aid.

The Commission invites the Member States to make a major effort to forecast their aid for trade, in particular that to the ACP countries, and to join it in drawing up, by the end of the year, "European aid-for-trade packages" and in setting up regional funds to support the EPAs and regional integration processes where the ACP regions concerned so desire.

6. CONCLUSIONS – A FRESH IMPETUS IS NEEDED

The Council and the Member States meeting within the Council are invited to adhere to the above set of proposals with a view to confirming and fulfilling their financial commitments, radically changing approaches to aid management and increasing synergies between European policies and the MDGs by applying the principles of policy coherence for development.

Aside from the volume and effectiveness of aid, achieving the MDGs requires specific action in education, health, the environment, water, agriculture, growth and infrastructure. That is the task that the MDG Africa Group has set itself. It is also the objective of the "Call to Action". These initiatives, prompted by the pressing need to speed up progress towards the MDGs, require an agenda for action to provide a collective EU response that the European Council is invited to promote in the light of the work undertaken in the European research project on development policies. The Commission intends to make available an initial paper on the MDGs to the June European Council.

Such efforts are vital. But these proposals only translate into operational terms the commitments made in 2005. Taking the MDGs seriously also means looking to the future and keeping in mind two essential facts. First, meeting planned targets is not an end in itself insofar as poverty will only be halved in 2015. Second, major new challenges such as climate change, population trends, instability in the financial markets, tax systems, and the degradation of natural resources and the environment all make it more difficult to achieve the goals laid down eight years ago.

All this should encourage the Union to redouble its efforts to fulfil the financial and political objectives it set itself and encourage other donors to assume their share of the development burden.

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17 GAERC, 11.4.2006, "...welcome the Commission’s proposal to promote a European network of research centres on development issues and looks forward to further elaboration of this initiative".
Figure 1: Global aid flows 2000 – 2010 (in € million constant 2006)

Source: European Commission calculations on OECD/ DAC data.
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<th>2004 ODA (€ million)</th>
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## EU 10/12 TOTAL

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**Sources:** OECD/DAC for 2004 - 2006. Commission data based on Member States’ information to the Commission or the DAC for 2007. Shaded cells contain information supplied by Member States; white cells are Commission data or simulations. ODA is at current prices.