40. Calls on the Commission, the Council and the Member States to monitor carefully the procedures and decisions taken by the UN Committee on NGOs in order to prevent and avoid any violation of the fundamental freedom of expression of NGOs inside the UNCHR;

41. Calls on the Council Presidency to sponsor or co-sponsor a resolution to create an effective system for monitoring and evaluating the implementation by governments of recommendations from the UNCHR and the Special Procedures in order to achieve greater accountability by States;

42. Encourages the EU to respond to the call by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, in her 2005 Annual Appeal, to ensure appropriate resources for her Office's work in servicing the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission, and for supporting the treaty bodies and the special procedures;

Preparation and follow-up of the 61st session of the UNCHR

43. Reaffirms the need for a coordinated, concerted and well prepared approach on the part of the European Union prior to, during and after the 61st UNCHR session so as to ensure an efficient and effective contribution to its proceedings;

44. Asks its Conference of Presidents to establish an ad hoc delegation of Members of the European Parliament to attend the 61st session of the UNCHR;

45. Calls on the Council and the Commission to report back in full to Parliament in plenary session on the outcome of the UNCHR no later than May 2005; and points out that their report should outline in detail not only the issues on which the EU and its Member States sponsored or co-sponsored resolutions and the range of actions taken by the EU during the UNCHR session, but also when and why such sponsoring was not undertaken;

*  *

46. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the governments of the countries mentioned in this resolution.

P6_TA(2005)0052

Action against hunger and poverty

European Parliament resolution on action against hunger and poverty

The European Parliament,

— having regard to the New York Declaration on Action against Hunger and Poverty of 20 September 2004, signed by 111 national governments, including all the EU Member States,

— having regard to the UN Millennium Declaration of 8 September 2000, which sets out the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as criteria established jointly by the international community for the elimination of poverty, and the UN Millennium Project report 'Investing in Development: a practical plan to achieve the Millennium Development Goals' made public on 18 January 2005 in Brussels,

— having regard to the UN Conference on Trade and Development's report of 2002 on Least Developed Countries, entitled 'Escaping the Poverty Trap',

— having regard to Rule 108(5) of its Rules of Procedure,
A. whereas extreme poverty affects over one billion people, who survive on less than one US dollar a day, and the difference in per capita income between the world's poorest and richest countries has more than doubled over the last 25 years,

B. whereas aid, debt relief and trade are recognised to be interrelated and whereas actions on all three elements need to complement each other in order to achieve genuine development,

C. whereas, in order to achieve the MDGs, it is estimated that it will be necessary to at least double the annual international aid contribution (currently USD 50 billion), and whereas two thirds of developing countries spend more on servicing debt than on basic social services,

D. whereas the EU and its Member States are lagging behind on their MDG commitments, and all except four Member States have yet to reach the 0.7 % GDP mark for development aid,

E. whereas 2005 will see major challenges taken up, with the G8 presidency focused on Africa and climate change, the UN review of the world’s feeble progress towards the MDGs and the WTO's Hong Kong Ministerial Meeting in December, which is the crucial staging post in the Doha Development Round,

F. whereas the OECD divides developing countries into five categories according to their per capita GDP, the poorest of these being the Least Developed Countries (LDCs); whereas the EU and the majority of its Member States do not assign priority to the poorest countries in their development spending.

Levels and effectiveness of aid

1. Expresses its grave concern at the fact that, five years after the MDGs were adopted by the UN, sub-Saharan Africa has not achieved and is not on track to achieve a single one of the eight MDGs by the target date of 2015; stresses that, unless the international community dramatically increases both the quality and the quantity of its development assistance, the MDGs will be unattainable for a large number of LDCs, in particular in sub-Saharan Africa;

2. Congratulates the four Member States (1) that have surpassed the 0.7 % GDP mark for development aid, commends the five Member States (2) that have set timetables for achieving this level of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and particularly those new Member States that have dramatically increased their development budgets; urges the remaining Member States that have failed to reach these levels and have not set timetables to do so without delay;

3. Calls on the Commission to use its forthcoming communication on reviewing development financing commitments to suggest establishing an EU timetable for as many Member States as possible to meet the 0.7 % target by 2010, and to set longer-term targets for the new Member States; calls for the establishment of intermediate annual targets for increasing ODA, monitored by GAERC or Ecofin;

4. Notes the ongoing discussion and various initiatives on ‘innovative mechanisms of financing for development’; calls on the Commission and Member States to give further attention to the full range of such initiatives, be they public or private, compulsory or voluntary, universal or limited; stresses that all such funds must be additional to the standing commitment by governments to give 0.7 % of their GDP in ODA;

5. Regrets that in 2003 only 2.4 % of EU development spending was earmarked for basic education and 3.8 % for health despite consistent calls by Parliament for such spending to reach at least 20 %; calls, in this regard, on the Commission to improve its own contribution to the MDGs by ensuring that development aid spending on health and education on the ground increases significantly:

(1) Denmark (0.84 %), Netherlands (0.81 %), Luxembourg (0.8 %) and Sweden (0.7 %).
(2) Belgium (by 2010), Finland (by 2010), France (by 2012), Spain (by 2012) and UK (by 2013).
6. Calls for better use of existing aid, in particular by reordering priorities, ending aid tied to donors and pooling funds internationally to release additional funds for the poorest countries; urges bilateral and multilateral donors to harmonise their operational procedures, gear aid to countries’ own priorities and provide for measurable results;

7. Reiterates the need identified in Article 178 of the EC Treaty for the Community to assess on a systematic basis, through the use of ex-ante impact studies, whether its development policy objectives are being undermined by other policy actions;

8. Recognises that there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution to poverty, but calls, in particular, for sustained political commitment, transparency and accountability to cut corruption, capacity-building to attain the goal of good governance, and partnership between all stakeholders;

9. Calls on the EU and its Member States to ensure that development aid remains geared to the alleviation of poverty and achieving the MDGs; calls, in this regard, on the EU to take the lead in swiftly implementing the UN Millennium Project’s report ‘Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals’;

10. Calls, in this context, on the Commission to make EU development spending more effective and visible by budgeting for large amounts of new money to enable EU aid to spearhead global initiatives and to give particular consideration to the Millennium Project’s suggestions for ‘quick win’ initiatives (such as providing malaria bed-nets and anti-malaria medicines, abolishing primary school fees and supplying fertilisers to small farmers) which would bring rapid and large-scale progress in the raising of living standards of millions of people in developing countries;

Debt relief

11. Stresses that all creditors, and especially international institutions and national governments, must agree to phase out the debt of the developing world, giving LDCs priority; calls, in this regard, on the Commission and the Member States to take the lead, in multilateral and bilateral fora, in cancelling the external debt of developing countries;

12. Welcomes the example set by the G8 countries and other EU Member States in pledging to provide up to 100% debt relief on bilateral and multilateral debt for the world’s poorest countries;

13. Stresses that debt relief should prioritise all LDCs and countries where relief is needed to enable them to attain the MDGs; stresses that debt relief should be undertaken with governments which respect human rights and the principle of good governance, and on condition that money gained by governments from such relief must be channelled towards helping the poorest in their communities;

International trade

14. Considers that a free, equitable and development-friendly multilateral trading system is an effective mechanism for eradicating the root causes of poverty and hunger; calls on the EU to promote such a system as a means of alleviating poverty while also ensuring greater market access for the poorest countries and providing appropriate trade-related technical assistance, including capacity building, in order to maximise the development opportunities stemming from trade;

15. Underlines the need for developing countries to protect their fledgling agricultural sectors, and stresses that the poorest countries must not be subject to demands for reciprocal trade liberalisation;

16. Calls on the EU to take concrete action against poverty by ensuring consistency in its trade, development cooperation and common agricultural policies with a view to preventing any direct or indirect negative impacts on developing countries’ economies;
Conclusion

17. Calls on the EU and the international community not to view the MDGs as a final objective but only as a halfway house on the road to ending absolute poverty;

* * *

18. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the candidate countries, the ACP-EU Council and Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the United Nations, the African Union, the IMF, the World Bank, the G8 Heads of State and the Governments of the Paris Club.

P6_TA(2005)0053

Commission legislative and work programme (2005)

European Parliament resolution on the Commission's legislative and work programme for 2005

The European Parliament,

— having regard to its resolution of 16 December 2004 on the strategic political orientations of the Barroso Commission (1),

— having regard to the current framework agreement on relations between the European Parliament and the Commission, approved by Parliament’s Conference of Presidents on 29 June 2000,

— having regard to the Commission’s Communication on its work programme for 2005 (COM(2005) 0015) and to the commitments made by the President of the Commission, Mr Barroso, to Parliament on 26 January 2005 on the legislative programme of the Commission,

— having regard to Rules 33 and 103(4) of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the annual legislative programme is an indispensable tool for the smooth functioning of the European institutions, and whereas the introduction of the multiannual strategy programme will bring a sharper focus to setting the political objectives of the Union,

B. whereas closer coordination between the institutions of the Union and a greater capacity of the European Council to provide the affairs of the Union with more credible political leadership are prerequisites for the EU to fulfil its tasks successfully,

C. whereas the Commission gives utmost priority to increasing Europe’s prosperity through enhanced competitiveness, modernisation of the European economy and structural reform, and defends the view that increased investment in knowledge and human capital are driving forces behind sustainable growth, job creation and prosperity, and thus key preconditions to Europe successfully pursuing ambitious environmental and social goals,

D. whereas the goals of economic growth, job creation and social justice will not be achieved if the Union does not strengthen integration and improve the quality of its legislative, regulatory and administrative performance,

E. concerning the central importance attached by the Commission to increasing the security of European citizens, by reinforcing efforts to fight terrorism and organised crime and by emphasising the need for a common approach to asylum and immigration, and an improved management of external borders,