

## Increasing European Aid Effectiveness

*Motion presented by CDS Belgium*

In our contemporary globalized world all human beings and nations are fundamentally connected to one another. Poverty and injustice in other regions of the world can affect prosperity and stability in Europe, due to, among other factors, a potential loss in export of Europe to other regions and the danger of mass-migration headed towards Europe. Furthermore, for the European centre-right, inspired by its profoundly Christian view on mankind, every human being possesses fundamental rights, regardless of where he or she lives. 'Aid', encompassing both Development Goals & Humanitarian Aid, is therefore a crucial instrument in international politics and of fundamental importance to the European centre-right. For the EPP Group, eradicating poverty must remain at the heart of European Development Policy<sup>1</sup>.

However, over the past 20 years there has been a growing consensus that development policy is failing due to political self-interest, fragmentation or duplication of development and aid projects, and unrealistic budget constraints, among other factors. In order to address these issues, various international fora were hosted by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). During the High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness in Rome (2003), Paris (2005), Accra (2008) and Busan (2011) the important principles of harmonization between donors, alignment with receiving countries and ownership of development policy have been put forward. This has led in 2011 to the Busan Partnership Agreement endorsed by over 100 countries as the blueprint for maximising the impact of aid.<sup>2</sup>

However, when looking at the EU's and its member states' current policies towards developing countries - especially in politicized regions- only little aid effectiveness can be found today. At current the EU encompasses 28 different member state development policies. In total, the EU and the member states are the largest donor of development assistance in the world. It is something the EU applauds itself for. However, without principles of effectiveness this ends up in fragmentation and a loss of resources. More and more policymakers are recognizing that the aid effectiveness goals are not being met.

This is especially clear in the case of the Palestinian Territories. A lot of EU member states are invested in aid practices in the Palestinian Territories. Spain, Denmark, the Netherlands and Switzerland are heavily involved in agricultural projects with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), a body of the UN. France and the UK together with the EU are managing a project in AREA C on building schools, roads and social infrastructure. Norway, Finland and Germany are achieving meaningful things working together on education. Notwithstanding these impressive investments and efforts European education projects in the region have not lived up to their full potential. Projects have been stopped due to minor and symbolic issues, such as the names attributed to schools or because of politically contentious maps that can be found in school books. Negotiating contracts between EU member states and the FAO takes very long, due to the long process of micromanagement amongst EU Member States. The EU

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<sup>1</sup> EPP. (2019). Development | EPP Group in the European Parliament. Retrieved 22 October 2019, from <https://www.eppgroup.eu/how-we-make-it-happen/working-groups/wg-foreign-affairs/development>

<sup>2</sup> OECD. (2019). The High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness: A history.

<https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness/thehighlevelforaonaideffectivenessahistory.htm>



Joint Programming is a very exhausting process for diplomats due to the high amount of meetings that result in too little progress.

European development workers and diplomats seem to get stuck in arguing about small details that concern the policy of developing countries -not respecting the principle of ownership- when coordinating development projects they seem to push through political self-interests -not respecting the principle of alignment- and the duplication of for example Human Rights projects seem unavoidable because of political sensitivities - not aiming for effective impact.

It has become clear on the basis of academic research<sup>3</sup> and testimonies by policymakers and diplomats that, even after the High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness, the acknowledged problems have still not been solved. To a certain degree these problems even seem to be inherent to development policy. The EU Commission itself seems to have realised this: in the new EU commission the position of the EU Commissioner for Development has been abolished. This position is now referred to as the Commissioner for 'International Partnerships'. The consequences to development and aid policy overall remain to be seen.

The last Commissioner for Development, Neven Mimica (S&D) was given only a 20,6% performance rate by Burson Cohn & Wolfe<sup>4</sup>, making him one of the worst rated Commissioners in the last Commission. It would be too easy to blame Mimica entirely for this. His department -DG DEVCO- is known to be a puppet of DG Trade. This dire news is characterising for the field of development policy as a whole. Rather than being focused on development by itself and for itself, it is prone to economic trade and national security interests. Many institutions are dropping discourse in terms of 'development', as it creates a waste of time, energy and money.

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<sup>3</sup> Carbone, M., & Keijzer, N. (2015). The European Union and Policy Coherence for Development: Reforms, Results, Resistance. *The European Journal of Development Research*, 28(1), 30–43. <https://doi.org/10.1057/ejdr.2015.72>

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<sup>4</sup> burson cohn & wolfe. (2019). *European Commission Scoreboard 2014-2019*. [http://europedecides.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/EC\\_scoreboard\\_Report.pdf](http://europedecides.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/EC_scoreboard_Report.pdf)



**That is why, we, the European Democrats Students, the official student organization of the European People's Party (EPP):**

- Recognize that development policy is altered by other political interests such as interests of trade, security and migration and therefore standing in the way of real aid effectiveness.
- Recognize that there is a loss of resources within development policy because of a lack of coordination amongst European Donors.
- Believe that if the principles of the Busan Partnership Agreement following out of the High Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness cannot be respected, it is better to not engage in development practices at all.

**Call upon the EU Commission and the Member States to:**

- Fill in the new position of Commissioner for International Partnerships by reflecting on the flaws of the current European model of aid.
- Limit the influence of other political interests, such as interests of trade, security and migration on development policy itself.
- Strengthen coordination amongst European Donors to minimize the loss of resources within development policy.
- Make the Commissioner for International Partnerships devote herself to tackling global structural injustice and inequality.

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