

Policy coherence for development

European Parliament resolution of 13 March 2014 on the EU 2013 Report on Policy Coherence for Development (2013/2058(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to paragraphs 9 and 35 of the joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy: ‘The European Consensus’¹,
 - having regard to Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, which reaffirms that the Union must take account of the objective of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries,
 - having regard to the successive conclusions of the Council, the biennial reports by the Commission and the resolutions of the European Parliament on policy coherence for development (PCD), particularly its resolution of 25 October 2012 on the EU 2011 Report on Policy Coherence for Development²,
 - having regard to the Commission Staff Working Document on the EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment in Development 2010-2015 (SEC(2010)0265) and to the Council Conclusions of 14 June 2010 on the Millennium Development Goals in which the respective EU Plan of Action is endorsed,
 - having regard to the Commission Working Document on Policy Coherence for Development in 2013 (SWD(2013)0456),
 - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development (A7-0161/2014),
- A. whereas the EU Strategic Framework and Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy adopted in 2012 states that the EU will work in favour of human rights in all areas of its external action without exception;
- B. whereas only a European vision based on solidarity – which does not assume there to be any incompatibility between the objectives of tackling poverty inside and outside the European Union – can overcome conflicts of interest among the various policies of the Union and reconcile them with the imperatives of development;
- C. whereas PCD is now recognised as an obligation and regarded as a tool of a comprehensive policy and a process which seeks to incorporate the multiple dimensions of development at all stages of policy formulation;

¹ OJ C 46, 24.2.2006, p. 1.

² Texts adopted, P7_TA(2012)0399.

- D. whereas, since all policies of the Union have an external impact, they must be designed to meet the long-term needs of developing countries in relation to combating poverty, providing social security and a decent income, and safeguarding fundamental human rights and economic and environmental rights;
- E. whereas PCD must be based on recognition of the right of a country or region to determine democratically its own policies, priorities and strategies in order to provide its people with means of subsistence;
- F. whereas the Union must take on a strong leadership role in promoting PCD;
- G. whereas the current European framework for development lacks effective machinery to prevent or remedy incoherence arising from the policies pursued by the Union;
- H. whereas, although the European Parliament has made progress in monitoring the policies which have a major impact on development, it still has some way to go with a view to achieving optimal coherence and avoiding certain inconsistencies so as to fully perform the institutional role assigned to it;
- I. whereas, in the ‘post-2015’ framework, PCD must be based on action geared to shared but differentiated responsibilities favourable to inclusive political dialogue;
- J. having regard to the lessons learned from the experience of the OECD countries, particularly the work of the PCD Unit in the OECD’s Secretariat;
- K. whereas coordination of EU Member States’ development policies and aid programmes is an important part of the PCD agenda; whereas it is estimated that as much as EUR 800 million could be saved annually from cutting transaction costs if the EU and its Member States concentrated their aid efforts on fewer countries and activities;
- L. whereas the effectiveness of EU development policy is hindered by fragmentation and duplication of aid policies and programmes across Member States; whereas a more coordinated EU-wide approach would reduce the administrative burden and reduce the related costs;
- M. whereas the UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) report ‘ICPD Beyond 2014 Global Report’ launched on 12 February 2014 emphasises that the protection of women and adolescents affected by violence must be a priority on the international agenda of development;

Attainment of PCD

1. Proposes that an arbitration system be established, to be operated by the President of the Commission, to bring about PCD, and that in the event of divergences among the various policies of the Union, the President of the Commission should fully shoulder his political responsibility for the overall approach and have the task of deciding among them on the basis of the commitments accepted by the Union with regard to PCD; takes the view that, once the problems have been identified, consideration could be given to a reform of the decision-making procedures within the Commission and in interdepartmental cooperation;

2. Calls on the European Union, the Member States and their partner institutions to ensure that the new 'post-2015' framework includes a PCD objective which makes it possible to develop reliable indicators to measure the progress of donors and partner countries and to assess the impact of the various policies on development, in particular by applying a 'PCD lens' to key issues such as population growth, global food security, illicit financial flows, migration, climate and green growth;
3. Points out the importance of the role of the European External Action Service in implementing PCD, in particular the role of the EU Delegations in monitoring, observing and facilitating consultations and dialogue with stakeholders and partner countries on EU policy impacts in developing countries; stresses that a wider discussion with all relevant stakeholders, such as NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs), is needed;
4. Regrets the status of Document SWD(2013)0456 presented by the Commission – a mere working document – which, unlike the communication originally planned after the 2011 working document, does not require the approval of the college of Commissioners, which is paradoxical for a document concerning a field as political as PCD;
5. Calls on the Commission to maintain its commitment to the field of development and human rights, and recalls the role of the latter in imparting impetus to the Union's policies and coordinating them; considers that the Commission should actively promote a coherent and modern vision of human development in order to attain the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and honour the commitments given;
6. Asks the Commission to contract regular independent ex-post assessments of the development impact of key policies, as requested by the Council; emphasises the need to improve the Commission's impact assessment system by featuring PCD explicitly and ensuring that development becomes a fourth central element of the analysis, alongside the economic, social and environmental impacts;
7. Stresses the need to make proper arrangements for teaching about how to incorporate PCD into the various fields of political action, teaching being the key element to increase the awareness of European citizens in connection with '2015 – European Year for Development'; asks the Commission and the EEAS to provide specific training on PCD and development impact to staff in non-development services;
8. Confirms the need to appoint a permanent rapporteur on the development agenda for the period after 2015, who should also ensure that due account is taken of PCD;
9. Stresses the important role which the European Parliament could play in the process of promoting PCD by assigning it priority in Parliament's agendas, by increasing the number of meetings between committees and between parliaments relating to PCD, by promoting dialogue on PCD with partner countries and by fostering exchanges of views with civil society; recalls that structured annual meetings between the Member States' national parliaments and the European Parliament is an important way of strengthening PCD and coordination;
10. Stresses the need to establish an independent system within the Union to receive and formally process complaints by members of the public or communities affected by the Union's policies;

11. Stresses the need for PCD to ensure the active participation of civil society, including women's groups, the empowerment of women in decision-making processes as well as the full involvement of gender experts;

Priority areas of action

12. Calls for migration flow management to be consistent with the development policies of the EU and the partner countries; considers that this requires a strategy which addresses the political, socioeconomic and cultural circumstances and aims at revitalising the Union's overall relations with its immediate neighbours; stresses, furthermore, the importance of dealing with issues related to the social and professional integration of migrants and to citizenship by working jointly with the countries of origin and transit;
13. Stresses that trade and development do not always accord perfectly; considers that developing countries should selectively open up their markets; stresses the importance of social and environmental responsibility on the part of the private sector, and considers that, when liberalising trade, it is important not to forget social and environmental conditions such as ILO standards; recalls the need to include references to them in WTO agreements in order to avoid social and environmental dumping;
14. Recalls, in this context, that the cost of incorporating such standards is far less than the impact of failure to comply with them on social welfare, human health and life expectancy;
15. Welcomes the fact that the relevance of smallholder farming in combating hunger is recognised by the EU and calls for systematic assessment of the impact of European agricultural, trade and energy policies, including EU biofuel policy, which are likely to have adverse effects on developing countries;
16. Reiterates that more attention needs to be focused on maximising the synergies between EU climate change policies and the EU development objectives, especially in terms of tools and instruments used and the collateral development and/or climate change adaptation benefits;
17. Considers that the challenge of climate change must be tackled by means of structural reforms, and calls for systematic assessment of the risks associated with climate change in all aspects of political planning and the decision-making process, including in fields relating to trade, agriculture and food security; calls for the results of such assessments to be used in the context of the development cooperation instrument 2014-2020 to formulate clear and coherent national and regional strategy documents;
18. Considers that, while recognising the attention paid to several aspects of PCD, the EU should take concrete steps to combat tax evasion and tackle tax havens; calls upon the Commission to also include in the annual report on the implementation of the Raw Materials Initiative information on the impact of new agreements, programmes and initiatives on resource-rich developing countries;
19. Recognises the high level of responsibility borne by the EU in ensuring that its fisheries are based on the same standards in terms of ecological and social sustainability and transparency both inside and outside Union waters; notes that such coherence requires coordination both within the Commission itself and between the Commission and the governments of the individual Member States;

20. Recalls in particular its commitment to preventing the financing of large-scale energy infrastructure with adverse social and environmental repercussions;

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21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.