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Committee on Development

2005/2001(BUD)

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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Budgets

on the draft general budget of the European Union for the financial year 2006
(C6-0000/2005 - 2005/2001(BUD))

Section III - Commission

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SUGGESTIONS

The Committee on Development calls on the Committee on Budgets, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following suggestions in its motion for a resolution:

1. Endorses the European Union's efforts to support the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by providing significant amounts for "Quick Win" actions in the sector of basic education (ending school fees for primary education) and food security (distribution of free school meals, free or subsidised distribution of chemical fertilisers for smallholder farmers on nutrient-depleted soils in hunger hotspots, support for agro-forestry);
2. Urges the Council and the Commission to work together with Parliament in order to implement the Parliamentary "Quick Win" initiative by mobilising the flexibility instrument for an amount of EUR 150 million, bearing in mind that this initiative will be the first concrete donor action following the analysis of serious backlogs towards the achievement of the MDGs and the appeal of the UN Millennium Project for targeted fast-track measures;
3. Reminds the Commission, the Member States and the other donors to honour their commitments to meet the target of 0.7% of GNP to be set aside for Official Development Assistance (ODA), in order to reach the MDGs;
4. Reiterates its position that new actions in the external field should be financed by additional resources; recalls that the ceilings for the current financial perspective were agreed in 1999, when the substantial additional needs for the support of the reconstruction of Afghanistan and Iraq could not have been foreseen; deplores the fact that the appropriations provided for these two countries have reduced the possibilities of financing development actions with a view to the achievement of the MDGs; recalls that the appropriations for rehabilitation and reconstruction in the countries most affected by the tsunami, which could not have been foreseen in 1999 either, are also additional to the ceilings of the financial perspective and must be financed by new resources provided by the Member States;
5. Reiterates that the Commission should make every effort to reach the benchmarks set by Parliament within the total annual commitments for development cooperation of 35% for social infrastructure and 20% for basic health and basic education; enters a share of 20% of a number of geographical lines in reserve to urge the Commission to take the necessary steps to reach the 20% benchmark for basic health and basic education;
6. Stresses that childrens' access to education is not negotiable and that education is crucial for development; stresses that child labour is one of the principal obstacles to equal opportunities in education; introduces a pilot project to fight against child labour;
7. Supports an increase in the lending activities of the European Investment Bank (EIB) in developing countries in favour of the SME sector; introduces a pilot project to provide appropriations for adding a grant element to EIB loans in order to reduce the burden of interest for beneficiaries in Latin American and Asian developing countries;

8. Stresses the importance of the micro-credit systems in assisting the income-generating activities of local communities in developing countries;
9. Underlines the need for those departments and delegations in the Commission which manage development cooperation to be provided with sufficient human resources and to be able to provide their personnel with the necessary training, particularly in the areas of gender mainstreaming, conflict prevention, environment and human rights;
10. Underscores the challenges for the African Union in the field of peace and security and the need to increase support for its administrative and operational capacities, for the development of the legislative, budgetary and control powers of the Pan-African Parliament and for Parliaments in new democracies;
11. Underlines the need to improve assistance to the international criminal courts;
12. Insists that it be regularly informed about the implementation of humanitarian aid and assistance for reconstruction and rehabilitation in the countries most affected by the tsunami; stresses that the quality of the information provided in this field and in other areas is of utmost importance for Parliament;
13. Believes that internet technology should be used so that individual and institutional donors can see the amounts of money donated and the purposes for which they are being spent; asks the Commission to rapidly set up a system to allow the public to follow the implementation of EU development aid;
14. Is concerned that an unacceptably high proportion of aid is misappropriated, wasted, or spent on expatriate personnel and their offices, accommodation and transport, and considers that the Commission should put forward proposals for dealing with this issue including the use of available local personnel or the training of such personnel;
15. Decides to continue the funding for the prevention of poverty diseases (including the neglected diseases); invites the Council to increase by 10% the envelope provided for the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.