

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Development

PROVISIONAL
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DRAFT OPINION

of the Committee on Development

for the Committee on Budgetary Control

on the discharge for implementation of the budget of the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth European Development Funds for the financial year 2004
(COM(2005)0485 – C6-0430/2005 – 2005/2157(DEC))

Draftswoman: Danutė Budreikaitė

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SUGGESTIONS

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

1. Recognises the difficulty of reporting a single donor's results in a multi-donor environment; deplores, however, the Commission's intention to move to a "results-based approach" to development policy without establishing methodology to measure the specific results of Community cooperation against the key objectives of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
2. Agrees with the Court of Auditors¹ on the need for objective, useful and comprehensive indicators to measure the output of aid; trusts that these will be put in place for the period 2007-13;
3. Regrets that the Commission's total reported allocation for basic education and basic health in 2004 was only 4.98%, which was far from meeting the 20% benchmark established by Parliament; calls for a meaningful dialogue with the Commission on how these figures may be improved;
4. Insists that greater priority be given to the main MDG sectors of health and education in the next round of Country Strategy Papers;
5. Welcomes the identification of sector budget support² as a means to increase financing for education and health; considers this option more effective than general budget support, even when linked to progress in these sectors;
6. Appreciates the Commission's contribution to the Public Expenditure Financial Accountability (PEFA) Programme, which is helping to reduce the inherent risks of budget support; notes, however, the finding of the Court of Auditors that the shared responsibility for Public Finance Management between EuropeAid and DG Dev "only works because of good interpersonal relations"³;
7. Appreciates the support given to capacity building in parliaments in ACP countries; calls for such activity to be broadened so as fully to implement the Court of Auditors' recommendation that "relations with the authorities in the beneficiary states should be taken beyond the government level to include parliaments and Supreme Audit Institutions whose powers must be strengthened"⁴;
8. Congratulates the Commission on increasing both commitments and payments levels each year since the reform of the management of external assistance and for reorganising EuropeAid to provide better support to deconcentrated delegations; shares the Commission's concern⁵ over the timely availability of competent staff in delegations,

¹ Special Report No 4/2005 paragraph 63.

² Reply to question 1.4, DEVE questionnaire.

³ Special Report No 2/2005 paragraph 65.

⁴ Special Report No 2/2005 paragraph 89.

⁵ Reply to question 5.2, DEVE questionnaire.

especially for finance, contracts and audit;

9. Welcomes the increase in average staff per EUR 10 million managed from 4.1 in 1999 to 4.8 in 2004; regrets that this figure remains well below the average for European donors and is now falling;
10. Calls on the Commission to ensure that administrative capacity for development policy in Bulgaria and Romania is strengthened before they accede to the EU.