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*Committee on Development*

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## DRAFT REPORT

on the proposal for a Joint Declaration by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on the European Union Development Policy "The European Consensus"  
(2004/2261(INI))

Committee on Development

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## MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**on the proposal for a Joint Declaration by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on the European Union Development Policy "The European Consensus"**  
**(2004/2261(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions entitled "Proposal for a Joint Declaration by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on the European Development Policy. The European Consensus" (COM (2005)0311),
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee,
- having regard to the opinion of the Committee of the Regions,
- having regard to the Assessment of the EC Development Policy by European Centre for Development Policy Management, the Overseas Development Institute and the Instituto Complutense de Estudios Internacionales (February 2005),
- having regard to the OECD/DAC Development Co-operation Review of the European Community (2002),
- having regard to the Rome Declaration on Harmonization of 25 February 2003 and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2 March 2005,
- having regard to the United Nations 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,
- having regard to the successive Human Development Reports drawn up by the United Nations Development Programme,
- having regard to the report by the Millennium Assessment (2005),
- having regard to the 2002 Report of the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) - "Least Developed Countries: Escaping the Poverty Trap",
- having regard to the final declarations and conclusions of international conferences, in particular the International Conference on Financing for Development (Monterrey, 2002), the World Summit on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg, 2002), the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995), the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (Brussels, 2001), the Fourth World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference (Doha, 2001), the Fourth World Conference on Women (Beijing, 1995), the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) (Cairo, 1994), the UN General Assembly's 1999 special session to review progress towards meeting the ICPD goals ("Cairo + 5"), and the World Education Forum (Dakar, 2000),

- having regard to the commitments made by the EU at the Barcelona Summit in March 2002 in advance of the Monterrey Conference,
- having regard to its resolution of 1 March 2001 on the Commission communication to the Council and the European Parliament on the European Community's Development Policy,<sup>1</sup>
- having regard to the European Community's Development Policy Statement adopted by the Council and the Commission on 10 November 2000 (DPS) ,
- having regard to the Conclusions of the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) of 22-23 November 2004, and of 24 May 2005,
- having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Development (A6-0000/2005),

### *The European Consensus*

1. Welcomes the initiative for a tripartite statement on a common EU vision of development and hopes thereby to contribute significantly to the aims of improved coherence, coordination, complementarity, quality and effectiveness;
2. Welcomes the proposed Joint Declaration and proposes that its formal status be clarified as the binding development policy framework;
3. Regrets that the proposal does not contain any specific statements on the assessments of the effectiveness and lessons learnt of EU aid and the 2000 DPS and its impact on Community aid;

### *Objectives and principles*

4. Emphasizes that the overall objective of EU development cooperation should be "the reduction and ultimately the eradication of poverty within the framework of sustainable development"; stresses that the concept of poverty is multidimensional - including aspects such as freedom, security, protection, employment, identity and participation;
5. Agrees that poverty reduction - as a first step towards achieving the MDGs -, promotion of good governance and respect for human rights are key development objectives; stresses, however, that combating poverty will only be successful if equal importance is given to investing in people, first and foremost in health and education, and investing in wealth creation - with emphasis on issues such as entrepreneurship, job creation, access to credits, property rights and infrastructure; emphasises that the empowerment of women is the key to all development and that gender equality should be a core part of all policy strategies;
6. Supports the principles of partnership, ownership and policy dialogue; underlines the

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 227, 1.10.2001, p. 130.

importance of the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) of partner countries); suggests that the principles of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement be extended to all partner countries;

7. Stresses the important role of civil society and calls for enhanced support for capacity building for NGOs of partner countries;

#### *Thematic Focus and Priorities*

8. Welcomes efforts to achieve greater focus and concentration, while maintaining sufficient flexibility; regrets the absence of clear priorities among the action themes presented, notably at Community level, and calls for clarification of the selection of objectives, action themes and priorities;
9. Stresses that issues such as HIV prevention, climate change mitigation, trade reform, conflict prevention and good governance merit special attention, since if they are not effectively addressed other development efforts may be in vain;
10. Suggests that greater attention be given within the Joint Declaration to the following:
  - many low-income countries are lagging behind in their pursuit of the health-related MDGs ; the desperate shortage of medical personnel, notably in sub-Saharan Africa, is a major problem which calls both for a systems-approach to health and development, whereby the strengthening of health-systems would be given the highest priority, and for increased support being provided to the health sector and the highest priority being given to health outcomes in the PRSPs;
  - the role played by national parliaments is crucial, which is why specific support is needed to strengthen and improve the working conditions of parliaments, with Parliament's full involvement;
  - support from Community infrastructure aid must go beyond the construction of roads and give priority to access to ICT;
  - since the majority of the rural poor depend on a traditional biomass-based economy, the rapid degradation of forests, soils and marine resources and growing water scarcity in many regions constitute a serious threat to the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people; this calls for massive programs of reforestation, soil conservation, marine protection and water management;
  - present production and consumption systems have led to increasing pressure on the environment and constitute a long-term threat to the welfare of society; poor people are particularly vulnerable to environmental degradation;
  - developing countries do not necessarily have to repeat the polluting mistakes of the industrialised countries, provided that greatly enhanced support is provided for investment in clean and efficient technology;
  - hundreds of millions of poor people are extremely vulnerable to hazards such as earthquakes, tropical storms, flooding, tsunamis or severe droughts, and major

disasters put development at risk; stresses that the MDGs will be hard to attain in most low-income countries unless disaster risk reduction, including disaster social insurance schemes, are well integrated into development and poverty reduction strategies;

*Aid Modalities, Financial Resources, Effectiveness and Coherence*

11. Expresses appreciation over the commitment to increasing aid budgets within the EU with a view of reaching 0,7% of gross national income by 2015; however, stresses at the same time the need to greatly improve the quality of aid and that there is a strong need for improved measurement of results and impact;
12. Considers that the the debt initiative for the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries leaves a lot to be desired; calls for debt relief to be reinforced in countries characterised by unsustainable debt where governments respect human rights and democracy and invest freed resources in a responsible way; further stresses that debt relief should be additional to Official Development Assistance;
13. Deplores the lack of consistency in development policy within the EU, leading to high transaction costs, duplication of work and complications for partner countries; supports efforts to improve coordination, harmonisation and alignment of the ways in which donors plan and deliver aid as set out in the above-mentioned Paris Declaration ; stresses, however, that the proposed Joint Declaration is far too vague as regards implementation;
14. Suggests that the EU – on the basis of partner-country ownership – work towards the adoption of joint country strategy papers – preferably involving other major donors – , in accordance with the principle that a maximum of 2-3 EU donors should be lead agencies in any given partner country and that on specific thematic issues a clear division of labour should sought;
15. Stresses that the Commission should not be viewed as the 26<sup>th</sup> donor of the EU; instead, the added value of Community aid should be agreed upon with particular attention being given to the potential for enhancing coordination, complementarity and coherence, the scale of Community aid, the Commission's image of neutrality, its work on governance, democracy and human rights, its role as a global player, its potential role as a policy think tank etc;
16. Agrees that specific conditions for aid imposed by donors seldom work; stresses, however, that general budget support as the preferred aid mechanism requires further scrutiny and should be considered only where the conditions are right and effective control systems, e. g. through independent commissions under the supervision of national parliaments, are in place;
17. Points out the existence of serious shortcomings within the Commission with regard to mainstreaming issues such as gender, environment and children's rights; welcomes efforts to strengthen mainstreaming and stresses that, in order to achieve improvements, the situation will require a major boost in the form of education and training of staff at both headquarters and country level;
18. Supports efforts towards policy coherence which should be managed so that the objectives and outcomes of development policies, rather than being undermined, are supported by

other policies; calls for urgent action on EU policies that are particularly negative, such as trade, CAP and fisheries agreements; further asks for a time-table to be agreed upon for the elimination of agricultural export subsidies;

19. Emphasises that development policy is one of several tools for addressing the root causes of insecurity but that it should not be subordinated to security policy;
20. Stresses that international trade policy as well as the right conditions for trade in developing countries are of immense importance for development; therefore calls for increased attention to be given to capacity building for trade;

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

## EXPLANATORY STATEMENT