

**STRENGTHENING
THE EUROPEAN UNION'S ROLE
AS A
GLOBAL PARTNER FOR DEVELOPMENT**



**The 18-Month Programme on
DEVELOPMENT POLICY
of the EU Presidencies of
GERMANY, PORTUGAL AND SLOVENIA**

January 2007 – June 2008

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On the legal basis of the European Treaties as amended in Nice, the Council of the European Union agreed in 2006 to introduce a new element into its Rules of Procedure by establishing an 18-month programme for three consecutive Presidencies. With a view to streamlining the programming of the activities of the Council, it took up elements of the proposed Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe. Every 18 months, the three Presidencies due to hold office during that period prepare, in close cooperation with the Commission, a programme of Council activities for that period. This programme reflects the political priorities of the three Presidencies in the context of the Union's longer term strategic orientations. The first 18-month programme of the Council has been established for the period from January 2007 until June 2008.

In the field of **development policy**, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia have decided to outline their **common priorities** and to conduct **common initiatives** during this period. The three Presidencies are committed to pursue these priorities both jointly and individually under their respective presidencies. They are committed to closely cooperate in order to build more **awareness** and **support** for development issues as well as to create added value in promoting them together within the European framework and in the international arena.

Fostering the EU's contribution to development

The three Presidencies of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia cover a period of **strategic importance** for further shaping the Union's future development policy and strengthening its **political role** in international processes, the EU being the world's most important donor.

The three Presidencies are taking place at a time when the EU's new financial instruments for external action and the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) are opening a new chapter in the EU's external relations with its developing partner countries. Simultaneously, the Member States that acceded to the Union on 1 May 2004 or later are becoming involved in the activities of the 10th EDF. With a view to strengthening the Union's contribution to sustainable development, poverty reduction and achievement of the **Millennium Development Goals** (MDGs), the three Presidencies shall concentrate on consistently implementing the **European Consensus on Development**. They will be striving to implement the EU's commitments made in **Monterrey** on more and better aid, explicitly implementing the EU's commitments to increasing its **Official Development Assistance** (ODA) according to plans. The three Presidencies will also work towards the EU taking a leading role in implementing the **Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness**, thus achieving better complementarity between donors and improving the effectiveness and efficiency of European aid. They will also strive to implement the EU commitments on **policy coherence for development** in order to ensure better coherence between other EU policies and the EU's development efforts.

The three Presidencies will, moreover, contribute to reinforcing the Union's development policy as a **decisive and distinct policy element** of the EU's future external action as a whole. This fully reflects the legal framework for European development policy as set out in the Treaty of the European Community. Such an independent role of development policy was also enshrined in the proposed **Treaty Establishing a Constitution for Europe** signed by the Heads of States and Governments of 25 EU Member States.

Focus and priorities during the three Presidencies

A special focus of the three Presidencies will be on **Africa**, the continent that plays a decisive political role and is of high importance to Europe as our immediate neighbour. In Africa, the development challenges are enormous and of the utmost urgency. If the MDGs are to be achieved, the successful fight against poverty in Africa is particularly decisive. Furthermore, aspects of political, economic and social stability in Africa as well as migration have a tremendous and direct impact on

Europe. In this context, European development policy has an important role to play and an overarching responsibility. Strengthening the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of European aid means, not least, strengthening Europe's political role in the African continent.

The implementation of the **EU's Strategy for Africa** is under way and will be strongly supported by the three Presidencies. The **EU-Africa Joint Strategy** will constitute a common basis and a shared vision and will serve as the strategic document for EU-Africa relations for the years ahead. The focus will be both on a broadened, deepened and strengthened political dialogue with African partners, including NGOs and other civil society stakeholders, and on continued commitment of the Union to peace and security, sustainable development and regional integration while enhancing the principle of ownership. On a more practical level, the immediate focus will be on implementing the proposed governance, infrastructure and water initiatives.

The three Presidencies shall also lay special emphasis on further integrating African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) partner countries into the global economy. They will thus actively contribute to implementing the **Cotonou Agreement** by facilitating the negotiation process on **Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)** as well as their successful conclusion and implementation as tools conducive to development and regional integration. After completion of the ratification process, a continued and proactive role of the three Presidencies in following up on the EPAs will be required, including monitoring of their implementation. The Presidencies will also call for the speedy ratification of the revised Cotonou Agreement by all Member States and the timely implementation of the 10th European Development Fund, including support for the joint programming process. As an additional and complementary element of trade-related aid, the three Presidencies will also be supportive with a view to implementing Europe's **aid for trade** commitments without delay.

The focus on Africa, however, does not mean that other regions, cooperation with anchor countries or countries in Europe's immediate neighbourhood, will be neglected.

On a thematic level, the three Presidencies will also address **issues of global relevance** for development such as energy, including energy efficiency, renewable energy, climate change and the sustainable management of natural resources as

well as the issue of fragile states, the situation of women and children in armed conflicts, migration, poverty-related and sexually transmittable diseases, women's rights and gender equality.

The three Presidencies will pursue with determination the implementation of the Paris Agenda and the related commitments on **aid effectiveness**. To that end, they will continue the process of developing operational methods and principles for a more efficient **division of labour** within the EU with a view to reducing transaction costs in delivering EU development contributions. The different dimensions of division of labour will be addressed, namely the operational principles for in-country division of labour, including joint implementation instruments such as joint programming, division of labour globally across countries and sectors, division of labour depending on the modalities and instruments as well as the role of the EU in the framework of international development aid.

Taking account of the individual priorities of the Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies, the three Presidencies will, furthermore, examine whether to possibly conduct a study on an appropriate EU strategy on crisis prevention and fragile states, with special reference to the situation of women and children in armed conflict and the general issue of poor governance.

Preliminary individual priorities of the three Presidencies

In addition to working on the wide scope of ongoing processes in the framework of the EU and international development agenda, Germany, Portugal and Slovenia will, during each of their individual Presidencies, be focusing especially on:

Priorities of the German Presidency

- The process towards a better **division of labour** which has been launched in the effort to improve **aid effectiveness**. The objective is to strengthen the profile, significance and impact of Europe's development aid including that of the Member States, to bring about more efficient interaction among donors within the framework of an effective international aid architecture.

- **Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)** with ACP countries as negotiations enter into their crucial phase in terms of a timely and development-friendly conclusion. The results of the review of the EPA negotiation process, to be conducted by the EU Commission and the ACPs in 2006, will have to be discussed and decisions by the Council will have to be taken. The German Presidency will pro-actively support the ongoing dialogue with the ACPs to strengthen, in particular, the development aspects in the agreements.
- Strengthening **energy** issues in the context of Community development policy. Further shaping the **EU's energy policy** in order to foster sustainable development will be high on the agenda. Potential areas of special emphasis will be energy access, renewable energy and energy resources, especially in Africa, reflecting that high energy prices have drastic consequences for developing countries, threatening the achievements of the EU's development aid for importers of energy and possibly threatening the achievement of the MDGs altogether. In developing countries with energy resources of their own, questions of transparency and good governance are of increasing relevance. The Strategic Energy Review and several Commission communications expected for early 2007 will be important milestones for furthering the EU's energy policy, especially with regard to external action and developing partner countries.

Priorities of the Portuguese Presidency

- Promoting the debate on the EU's approach and response to **fragile states**, considering the significant potential and responsibility of the EU as a major development partner. This shall take into account the discussions within the OECD-DAC on the principles for good international engagement with fragile states and the orientations adopted on "Governance in the European Consensus" concerning the need for exploring new, complementary approaches in fragile states. The objective is the adoption of a more coherent and effective EU approach towards fragile states and the prevention of state failure and fragility, encompassing existing instruments and policy areas (e.g. Governance, Security and Development) in a targeted and timely manner.

- **Migration and development** as well as increased coherence between migration and development policies. The objective is to promote overall effective management of migration flows, covering its multidimensional nature - international, regional and national -, and to maximize the potential development benefits of migration. Particular attention shall be given to the potential of immigrant communities for the development of their countries of origin, taking into account the role of diasporas and the need to support institutional capacity to manage South-South migration and refugee flows that especially affect some African countries.

Priorities of the Slovenian Presidency

- **Children and armed conflict.** Children affected by armed conflict as well as children in general have been a priority of the EU's humanitarian aid policy for several years. However, further efforts are necessary to make use of the EU Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict to their full potential also in the field of development cooperation and assistance. The Slovenian Presidency will therefore focus on the further development of a policy on integrating the protection of children affected by armed conflict into EU development policy and programmes, based on the Implementation Strategy for the Guidelines on Children and Armed Conflict, issued by the Council in April 2006. Furthermore, attention shall be devoted to developing possible further cooperation with the relevant international, regional and local actors in this field.
- **Women in armed conflict.** Women are a very vulnerable group in conflict and post-conflict situations. During the Presidency, special attention shall be given to further integrating the protection of women in conflict and post-conflict situations into EU development policies and programmes, based also on EU action for the promotion of gender equality, since gender equality is one of the five common principles of EU development cooperation.

Outlook

In 2007, the Union will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the signing of the Rome treaties. The EU's development policy was among the **founding policy** areas of the Union.

The German, Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies are committed to making sure that the dynamic contribution of the common development policy towards further strengthening the Union will continue and grow – through firmly addressing the global challenges ahead, reinforcing **Europe's role as a global partner in development** and further improving the quality and visibility of the development aid that Europe is offering.