

Revision of the European consensus on development

2016/2094(INI) - 02/02/2017 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Development adopted the own-initiative report by Bogdan BRUNON WENTA (EPP, PL) and Norbert NEUSER (S&D, DE) on the revision of the European Consensus on Development.

Members stressed the importance of the European Consensus on Development in providing a joint and coherent position at both EU and Member State level on the objectives, values, principles and main aspects of development policy.

They recognised the importance of a clear European external strategy, which requires policy coherence, notably on peace and security, migration, trade, the environment and climate change, humanitarian assistance and development cooperation.

They considered that the Consensus acquis must be safeguarded in particular the holistic vision of the fighting poverty and that tackling inequalities, as recognised in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), must also be a target.

In this regard, they proposed a series of recommendations which may be summarised as follows:

EU development objectives, values and principles: Members called for the fight against, and in the long term eradication of, poverty to remain the overarching and primary goal of EU development policy. Further objectives include combatting inequalities in and between countries, discrimination, injustice and strife, promoting peace, participatory democracy, good governance and sustainable growth. They also called for EU development cooperation to encourage partner countries to globalise the SDGs, in consultation with national and local civil society. Specific EU development strategies should better target, protect and support vulnerable and marginalised groups such as women and children, LGBTI people.

Differentiation: Members underlined that, for an EU development strategy to be effective, the EU must promote a fair redistribution by developing countries of wealth through national budgets, i.e. within as well as between countries.

The considered, in this respect, that European development aid should first and foremost differentiate between individual countries' situations and development needs, and not on the basis of microeconomic indicators solely or political considerations.

Members proposed a series of measures, inter alia, concerning middle income countries (MICs).

Development effectiveness: Members called for the EU and its Member States to recommit to the full implementation of the principles of effective development cooperation, namely country ownership of development priorities. They stressed the need to avoid overlaps and aid fragmentation and that simplifying funding and bureaucratic procedures can help in improving effectiveness. Effective measures are called for to improve local governance.

Financing for development: Members recalled the EU's commitment to achieving the ODA target of 0.7 % of GNI by 2030. They stressed the importance of other countries, developed and emerging, also scaling up their ODA provision. They recognised that general budget support promotes national ownership, but underlined that it should only be considered when and where the conditions are right and effective control systems are in place.

Members also called on the EU and its Member States to support low- and middle-income countries in creating fair, progressive, transparent and efficient tax systems. The Union is invited to promote investments that generate decent employment.

Policy coherence for development: Members highlighted the importance of applying policy coherence for development (PCD) principles in all EU policies and that PCD should be a major element of the EU's strategy to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Members proposed that an arbitration system should be established, under the authority of the President of the Commission, to bring about PCD and that in the event of divergences between 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 between them on the basis of the Union's PCD commitments.

The reiterated their call for the development of governance processes to promote PCD at the global level.

Trade and development: Members underlined the importance of properly regulated trade in promoting regional integration, contributing to sustainable growth and combating poverty. In this regard, they reiterated that a healthy environment, including a stable climate, is indispensable to poverty eradication.

They made another series of recommendations that strengthen the relationship between:

- security and development;
- humanitarian assistance.

Migration and development: Members stressed the central role of development cooperation in addressing the root causes of forced migration and displacement, such as state fragility, conflicts, insecurity and marginalisation, poverty, inequality and discrimination and human rights violations. They underlined that countries of origin and transit for migrants need tailor-made solutions for development that fit their respective political and socio-economic situations.

EU development policy: lastly, Members recalled the comparative advantages offered by EU development action, including its global presence, the flexibility offered by its range of instruments and delivery methods. They stressed the need for EU comparative advantages to be translated into focused action on a certain number of policy areas outlined in the report.