

## CONCORD shocked by disgraceful EP report: Denying aid on the basis of EU migration objectives is wrong

*Brussels, 27 November 2020* - On Wednesday, after a surprise move by the Chair of the Development Committee, Tomas Tobé, the European Parliament voted in favour of making EU aid to developing countries conditional on their compliance with EU migration control objectives.

The Development Committee of the European Parliament has been working on the report “Improving development effectiveness and efficiency of aid” since January 2020. However, shortly before the plenary vote on Wednesday, Tomas Tobé of the EPP group, suddenly added an amendment to allow the EU to refuse to give aid to partner countries that don’t comply with EU migration requirements.

“The process that led to the European Parliament vote on this report is scandalous”, said Tanya Cox, Director of CONCORD. Up until a few hours before the plenary vote, the report represented a forward-looking contribution to EU aid policy. But without any discussions in committee or in plenary, and with a quick turn-around ahead of the plenary vote, rapporteur MEP Tobé presented an amendment to his own report saying that EU development aid could be conditional on migration management. “This is not a minor change. It is a dangerous precedent and a major policy reversal”, said Cox. Ironically, the Development Committee had previously adopted this report with a paragraph explicitly opposing making aid conditional on partner countries’ cooperation with EU migration policies.

Over and above the untransparent and undemocratic process, the outcome itself is shameful. “**Development assistance must help to reduce poverty and inequalities** in partner countries; it **must support the most marginalised people and contribute to achieving the 2030 Agenda**. Most importantly, it must do this without imposing conditions for partner countries to align with the EU’s migration objectives” said Letizia Polizzi, EU Advocacy Officer, Terre des Hommes International Federation (TDHIF).

**Denying aid on the basis of the EU’s migration objectives is simply wrong and will seriously damage the EU’s reputation in the world.** Horse-trading development assistance sends a very bad signal: peoples’ lives are less important than EU migration objectives. This makes a mockery of the EU’s claim to want to create partnerships of equals with partner countries.

Crucially, the report contradicts the established European Parliament position on this subject and its mandate for negotiating the important Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument. CONCORD calls on the European Parliament to stick to its mandate in the ongoing NDICI negotiations. That mandate was democratically debated and voted on in the European Parliament in 2019. The adoption of this week’s report must not result in a dramatic reversal of the EP’s clear, and consistent opposition in the budget negotiations to conditioning aid on the basis of migration objectives.

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