European Parliament Committee on Development Report on 11th EDF

On February 19th, the European Parliament Development Committee (DEVE) adopted by a large majority a resolution on the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) on the basis of a report prepared by Member of the European Parliament (MEP) Patrice Tirolien (S&D, France). An internal agreement and implementation regulation for the 11th EDF is currently being negotiated in the Council of the EU. As it is an intergovernmental fund outside the general budget, it is negotiated without the consent of the European Parliament. However, as stated in the report, this did not prevent the Parliament from drafting an own-initiative report on the 11th EDF on the basis of the Commission’s earlier proposal, bringing forward its opinion on the future funding for the EU-ACP relations.

The resolution defines the European Parliament’s priorities for the 11th EDF for 2014-2020. Five demands are put at the top of the list:

1. Regarding the financing of the EDF:
   - The resolution demands the maintenance or even increase of the current level of collective EU official development aid (ODA) to help member states achieve the common objective of 0.7 per cent of GNI on ODA. In that light, the Committee ‘deeply regrets’ the agreement reached in the European Council on February 8th 2013, which cuts the budget for the 11th EDF with 11 per cent compared to the Commission’s earlier proposal
   - The report also encourages the creation of new sources of EU budget revenue, such as the financial transaction tax in order to tackle global challenges.

2. On differentiation:
   - it welcomes the Commission’s decision to present a development aid budget under the EDF that is separate for each ACP state, regardless of the countries’ level of development.
   - It is recognised that European development aid still can have a decisive impact in some middle and higher income ACP countries, in order to support reforms aimed at reducing inequality and that there also need for a differentiated approach towards fragile states;

3. On better aid:
   - The report states that, to contribute to the eradication of poverty, at least 90 per cent of the appropriations under the 11th EDF should meet the ODA criteria, as laid down by the OECD/DAC.
   - For that aim, efforts need to be doubled for those Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) on which the least progress is made. More specifically, reference is made to basic social sectors and gender equality. The report therefore calls the European Commission and the EU Member States to earmark 20 per cent of the
11th EDF for the provision of basic social services, including health and primary education.

- It also urges the Commission and the partner countries to prioritise access to basic maternal, reproductive and child healthcare, as well as the fight against HIV/AIDS, and establish social protection mechanisms through social protection floors, while paying specific attention to the protection and social inclusion of vulnerable groups, such as but not limited to women, children and persons with disabilities in all development projects.

4. The Committee asks for an enhanced democratic ownership and development effectiveness in partnerships between the EU and the ACP States (African/Caribbean/Pacific), including ACP national parliaments and civil society organisations. It stresses specifically the importance of gender in development.

5. Last but not least, the European Parliament asks to have a right on democratic control of the EDF:

- Currently, the European Parliament does not have a voice on strategic resource allocation within the EDF, which remains separate from the EU budget. The text maintains that budgetisation of the EDF, will enhance democratic scrutiny, visibility, predictability and consistency of EU development activities. However it stressed that if the EDF would be included in the EU budget must not lead to a reduction in development expenditures.

The resolution will be presented in the European Parliament plenary session on March 11th, and will be voted on March 12th.