

Working Group VII

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Working group VII – "External Action"

Subject: "Reform of EC Development Policy"

– Paper by Mr Peter Hain, member of the Convention

Members of Working Group VII will find hereafter a paper by Mr Peter Hain, UK government representative of the European Parliament, member of the Convention.

CONVENTION – EXTERNAL RELATIONS WORKING GROUP

REFORM OF EC DEVELOPMENT POLICY

PAPER SUBMITTED BY PETER HAIN (UK GOVERNMENT REPRESENTATIVE)

Introduction

The Convention is an opportunity to bring the EU's approach to international development up to date. The international development agenda has evolved significantly since the Development Co-operation Title of the Maastricht Treaty was drafted. There is now an internationally agreed set of objectives – the Millennium Development Goals - and wider recognition of the links between development policy, security and sustainable development. For the EU to achieve its wider external goals of promoting security and stability it needs to have a more effective and coherent development policy and to ensure that its development activities are coherent with other areas of policy.

The EU has overarching external goals of promoting stability, prosperity, security and sustainable development. The EC's development policy and programmes need to be more streamlined and better targeted in order to make a more effective contribution to these objectives. This paper proposes some principles to achieve this, which should be reflected in the output of the external relations working group.

Principles

- *Policy objectives:* the EC's external programmes are intended to serve a range of objectives: promotion of stability, prosperity and security. The Treaties need to recognise that, as stated in the Council/Commission declaration of November 2000, poverty reduction is the principal aim of the Community's development policy, a policy which concerns all developing countries. The EC programmes involved should therefore be refocused to reflect this objective by pursuing internationally agreed targets (eg the MDGs) and promoting good governance, economic reform, respect for human rights and conflict reduction. The importance given to development objectives should be reflected in resource allocation, which should be done through a longer-term, strategic approach, based on objective criteria, not an annual negotiation in which political and sectoral interests tend to prevail.

- *Links with other External Policies:* the EU's external policies should be mutually supportive. External action on poverty reduction will help achieve a range of the EU's wider objectives, including those identified by successive European Councils, most recently Seville, on security, stability, migration flows and the environment. Equally, policies on eg trade and environment have a crucial role in delivering development objectives. The European Council, supported by the GAERC, should ensure that programme decisions reflect the range of EU's longer-term objectives, particularly development objectives. The Council should review annually the implementation of these programmes to ensure this.
- *Coherence with other EU policies:* the EU is the world's largest single market and the main trading partner of many developing countries. To ensure genuine coherence across EU policies, the Council needs to consider whether internal aspects of EC policies, eg in agriculture, environment or health, might have negative implications for EU external actions, including development objectives. Ministers need to be able to take decisions in an integrated manner with a full assessment of the potential impact of proposals, including for developing countries.
- *Competence:* international development should remain an area for which both Member States and the EC have competence. At national level, there is extensive experience and expertise and the present authority of Member States to act in this area must be safeguarded. At EU level, an enhanced collective development effort can mobilise resources from across the Union and the ability of the EC to act must therefore also be safeguarded. However, EC programmes need to provide added value. In particular they need to be based on collective, objective, long-term strategies about promoting development, rather than short-term and more narrow considerations. There should be close collaboration and complementarity between national programmes and EC programmes.
- *Effectiveness and simplification of instruments:* in order to secure the necessary improvements in effectiveness it is essential to simplify the highly complex set of instruments established for EC development programmes. Along with clearer objectives, there should be a significant reduction in the number of regional and sectoral Regulations and greater autonomy for the Commission in managing the programmes to achieve those objectives. This simplification should also be reflected in the budgetary arrangements for external programmes.

- *External representation*: there is a widely shared international development agenda, which EU countries have significantly influenced. In international fora in which international development policy is established, the EU should establish an agreed common position or view, wherever possible. In bodies whose main purpose is to exercise management responsibility in accordance with shareholdings or other contributions of its members, member states should continue to exercise their responsibilities in accordance with their membership of those organisations. In exercising such responsibilities they should respect common policy positions adopted by the EU. In third countries, individual representation of member states will continue to be essential in order to implement national development programmes effectively.

UK Delegation

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