



COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION



Council Conclusions on the Annual Report 2008 on the European Community's Development and External Assistance Policies and their Implementation in 2007

*2888th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 15 September 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council welcomes the Annual Report 2008 on the European Community's Development and External Assistance Policies and their Implementation in 2007¹ allowing monitoring of Community cooperation, and commends the general improvement in the Annual Report year after year and the Commission's efforts to respond to the expectations expressed in the Council's previous conclusions.
2. Amongst those improvements, the Council welcomes in particular
 - the progress in the structure of the Annual Report,
 - the focus on the Millennium Development Goals (MDG), the European Consensus on Development² and the implementation of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness³,
 - the references to cooperation with multilateral organisations, and
 - the improved statistical data.

¹ 11137/08 + ADD 1 - COM(2008)379 FINAL + SEC(2008)2062.

² OJ C 46, 24.2.2006, p. 1.

³ http://www.oecd.org/document/15/0,3343,en_2649_3236398_37192719_1_1_1_1,00.html.

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3. The Council also welcomes the Internet site launched by the Commission to provide transparent information on the attribution of contracts to operators for the implementation of cooperation projects, showing the contractual partners' countries of origin (Member States and third countries) by year and by instrument of cooperation, as requested by the Council.
4. The Council encourages the Commission to continue its efforts to make the Annual Report a tool to assist political decision-making by taking stock of its performance so that the results of Community cooperation over the previous year can help to define future policies. To this end, the Council requests the Commission to:
 - point up the link with the MDG and the trends defined by the European Consensus on Development throughout the Annual Report,
 - focus on the results of action taken rather than on the processes used, in particular by developing results-oriented monitoring and paying specific attention to democratic governance, gender equality and climate change results,
 - systematically draw lessons from those results in order to respond more effectively to any deficiencies,
 - devote a section of the report to the implementation of budgetary assistance in all the beneficiary countries concerned, and
 - further refine the presentation of statistics wherever possible, in particular using data 1) disaggregated by gender 2) relating to the poor population 3) per capita 4) disaggregated by beneficiary country within each instrument and 5) distinguishing between Official Development Aid (ODA) and non-ODA financing, including in the disaggregated data, in order to facilitate the comparison with data from the OECD's DAC.
5. The Council emphasises the European Union's commitment to contributing to poverty eradication in all developing countries, in particular in the least developed countries (LDCs) and other low-income countries (LICs), while also supporting pro-poor development and social cohesion in middle-income countries (MICs), especially lower MICs. The Council invites the Commission to continue to act in this framework and to ensure very detailed monitoring of the geographical and sectoral distribution of Community aid, including cross-cutting aspects, explaining all developments in the Annual Report. "