



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 27 May 2008  
9957/08 (Presse 147)

**GENERAL AFFAIRS and EXTERNAL RELATIONS  
COUNCIL MEETING  
DEVELOPMENT MINISTERS**

**26 and 27 May 2008, Brussels**

**Main results**

The development segment of the May GAERC revolved around four main issues:

- The role of the EU as a global partner for development - the millennium development goals
- The negotiation and implementation of economic partnership agreements
- The place of the child in EU external action
- The situation in Burma/Myanmar following the passage of cyclone Nargis

**P R E S S**

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On the **millennium development goals** (MDGs), the Council adopted comprehensive conclusions of different aspects of the challenges to be met. These conclusions set out both the EU's own internal ambitions as well as the messages that the EU will take into the various forthcoming international events that will deal with different aspects of mobilising the international effort to achieve the MDGs. This was the main achievement of the Council. A summary is in Annex.

*The full conclusions can be found in document [9907/08](#).*

The Council also adopted conclusions on **economic partnership agreements** (EPAs) with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of states and regions.

Believing EPAs to have a potential key role in accompanying and supporting regional integration and in promoting development, the Council reviewed progress, re-confirmed objectives and acknowledged concerns expressed by ACP partners. The conclusions highlight the need for EPAs to build upon, foster and support existing regional integration processes, and acknowledge that, with varying degrees of regional integration across various ACP regions, the scope of an EPA may differ from one region to another. The Council also recognised the need for a flexible and pragmatic approach when moving from interim agreements towards regional EPAs.

The Council examined the adjustments and reforms that regional integration and EPAs may entail in ACP economies and policies, and reaffirmed the EU's commitment to increasing its trade-related assistance to EUR 2 billion annually by 2010. The Council also welcomed the Commission initiative for the joint design (by Commission and Member States) of regional "aid for trade" packages and set out their aims and principles.

*The conclusions can be found in document [9629/08](#).*

Development ministers discussed **the rights of the child in development cooperation and humanitarian aid**, and adopted conclusions on the subject.

Promotion and protection of the rights of the child are closely linked to activities under the UN's millennium development goals (MDGs) agenda, as the well-being and development of children impact directly on progress towards achieving the MDGs. The Council highlighted the need for mainstreaming the rights of the child in the use of the EU's development cooperation instruments.

*The conclusions can be found in document [9739/08](#).*

In the light of the enduring humanitarian disaster, the Council reviewed the situation in **Burma/Myanmar** in the wake of cyclone Nargis, following an initial discussion at its extraordinary meeting on 13 May.

*The conclusions can be found in document [9948/08](#).*

During the informal dinner and lunch, development ministers held a discussion on the situation of women in armed conflict for which the presidency adopted conclusions. Ministers heard a presentation from Professor Michel Kazatchkine, Executive Director of the Global Fund to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. They discussed the development aspects of the recent rise in food prices with Dr Jacques Diouf, Director General of the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation and Mr John Powell, Deputy Executive Director of the World Food Programme. Ministers also exchanged views on the situation in Ethiopia and Eritrea, at the initiative of the Netherlands delegation.

Finally, the Council adopted, without debate, conclusions on implementation of the **EU's action plan on agricultural commodity chains**, dependence and poverty, and on the EU-Africa partnership in support of development of the cotton sector.

*The conclusions can be found in document 9986/08.*

## Annex

### Summary of the Council's conclusions on the millennium development goals

In this crucial year that marks the mid-way point in the timetable to achieve the millennium development goals (MDGs), the Council took stock of the situation, on the basis of texts from the Commission.

The Council adopted conclusions with a view to the European Council in June 2008 and major international events during the year in Accra, New York and Doha where the EU intends to play a leading role.

There is sufficient progress in some areas for the EU to believe that all MDGs can be achieved in all regions. However, there are serious concerns about the trends in some regions, especially sub-Saharan Africa. Immediate, concerted action is needed and it must be sustained all the way to 2015. The EU will make an ambitious, action-oriented response and will continue to play a leading role in meeting the challenges.

The EU strongly reaffirms its commitment to achieve the collective aid target of 0.56% of GNI for 2010 and 0.7% of GNI for 2015. Projections suggest that meeting these commitments could mean that the EU will account for 90% of the OECD aid increases in the period 2006-2010. The EU calls on others to share this burden. The Council also called on member states to establish rolling multi-annual indicative timetables to show how they aim to reach their aid targets. The Commission will include information on the establishment and the implementation of these timetables in the regular Monterrey reporting.

(Note: The Commission papers showed that EU aid was slightly below expectations in 2007, having been slightly ahead in 2006, on its course for the targets. The papers also showed that the EU accounts for 57% of global aid, reaching EUR 47 billion last year.)

The EU will undertake radical reforms to improve the effectiveness of its aid. Big progress was made in the policy framework, especially when a code of conduct on division of labour was adopted in 2007, but much more needs to be done in implementation. For this, the starting point is with developing countries in close cooperation with donors.

The EU will continue to improve the coherence of all of its policies that have an impact on development. (Note: In recent sessions, the Council has worked on development and security, trade and migration respectively). In relation to trade and development, the Council adopted at the current session separate conclusions on economic partnership agreements (EPAs). In relation to security and human rights, the Council also adopted conclusions on the rights of the child in EU external action.

The EU will fully implement its strategy on aid for trade, adopted in 2007.

The EU is concerned by new issues that pose additional challenges, especially climate change and the rise in food prices. The Council recalled the agreement in Bali to launch negotiations for global agreement on climate change in 2009, as well as the global climate change alliance between the EU and poor developing countries. On food prices, the EU is seriously concerned and will address the short, medium and long-term issues.

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