

European Parliament Monitoring

Meeting of the Development Committee,

June 24th 2008, 15.00-18.30

Subjects discussed:

1. Exchange of views on with Andrej Šter, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia, President -in-Office of the Council of Development Ministers (Jan.-June 2008)
2. Development perspectives on peace building and nation building in post-conflict situations
3. Draft resolution on Zimbabwe
4. Parliament's right of scrutiny concerning the Development Cooperation Instrument

1. Exchange of views on with Andrej Šter, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Slovenia, President -in-Office of the council of Development Ministers (Jan.-June 2008)

- Overview of Slovenian Presidency and the work done by the Troika of Presidencies: Slovenia (Jan.-June 2008), Portugal(July –December 2007) Germany(Jan.-June 2007).

Presentation by Andrej Šter :

- In-depth discussions have taken place on the EPAs to ensure that there would not be major discrepancies in shape and focus
- The GAERC supported the continuation of the negotiations on the EPAs, while the meeting in Addis Abeba resulted in a joint resolution on the EPAs and the integration of ACP countries.
- In the May meeting of Development Ministers there was an exchange of views with representatives of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria

- During the presidency the Action Plan on Humanitarian Aid and the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid were adopted. As of 1 January 2009 there will be a Council Working Party on Humanitarian Aid and Food Aid.
- The Slovenian presidency has cooperated closely with NGOs and with Concord and Sloga in particular in a meeting on education.
- The UNCTAD 12 Declaration included many of the EU's priorities
- The catastrophe in Burma has cost some headaches: the EU offered emergency assistance and met with the Burmese authorities on 25 May to discuss access for relief activities, but so far the promised access has not really been granted.
- He thanked the EP for the good cooperation with the presidency.

Presentation by **João Gomes Cravinho**, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Portugal:

- The Troika of 3 consecutive presidencies (Germany, Portugal, Slovenia) has been a good experience, particularly thanks to the commitments of Ms Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, the German Development Minister.
- Good progress has been made on the Paris Declaration, the Code of Conduct for the Division of Labour.
- Many regulations have been adopted on a variety of issues such as migration,
- However, the association agreements were not a success
- In Africa considerable progress has been made. The EU-Africa Summit was a success and the Action Plans are now starting to be implemented.
- However, there is a lot of concern about the future, especially as the oil and food prices have gone up which has led to demonstrations all over the world. New platforms for dialogue are needed, which should include the oil companies.
- He wishes the new Troika (France, Czech Republic and Sweden) all the best and hopes that the EP will continue to be part of the reflexion process.

Presentation of **German Representative**, representing the German Development Minister, Ms Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul:

- EU is a global player and has made progress towards achieving the MDGs, thanks amongst others to the Slovenian Presidency. The recent Council Conclusions are strong on the MDGs and will offer good input for the EU position for the Accra and Doha meetings.
- The German Presidency dealt mainly with the EPAs and the Code of Conduct for the Division of Labour.
- Work continued on Aid for Trade as part of the Paris Agenda.
- The Code of Conduct should be seen as a model for development cooperation and good practice, to be highlighted at the Accra meeting. In Germany they have already started implementing it.
- Another achievement is the Energy partnership with Africa and the Action Plan for Equality for Men and Women. The Equality criterium is to be introduced in all EU programmes as of 2009 and where this is not possible additional money is to be allocated.
- In the negotiations with the Global Fund the EU has insisted on including gender aspects in the GF's work but also stressed that the funds should benefit all the people affected by the diseases.

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Debate

Alain Hutchinson (PSE, Belgium)

- Public Aid is going down
- The Troika gave a positive view of the EPAs, but the situation is not positive at all as there are hardly any agreements signed and the EPAs are mainly being disputed.
- Speculation has a negative influence on food prices
- The migration issue has not been solved. There is only agreement on the return of illegal immigrants.

Frithjof Schmidt (Group of the Greens/European Alliance, Germany)

- Germany prides itself on achieving the Code of Conduct on the Division of Labour, however there are still doubts in many countries, so have any practical steps been taken to quell these doubts?
- The African Peace Facility (APF) has been funded through the EDF, in spite of its strong military component. Member States could also contribute to the APF. Is there any news on that?
- The May Council+ Concluyosions are very positive on the interim EPAs, but in fact they have resulted in big losses, which cannot be covered even by the Aid for Trade results.

Thijs Berman (PSE, The Netherlands)

- The decline in aid has a negative impact, so what about the Member States keeping their promises?
- How can the crisis in the food prices be challenged?

Mr. Fernandez (EPP- Christian Democrats, Spain)

- It is hypocritical to talk about achieving the MDGs or Monterey Commitments as there is no progress on either.
- He is concerned about developments in China and Cuba, especially now thyat the sanctions have been lifted.

Mr Ribeiro y Castro (EPP-Christian Democrats, Spain)

- The Troika presidency has done well, but should communicate its results better.
- The EU-Africa Summit has been a success and could be repeated every 2 years with intermediary reports.
- The EU development figures are lagging behind as to % of GNP being allocated
- The crisis in Zimbabwe is still ongoing with increased violence and cruelty. We need new strategies to deal with such crises, just have we have been doing in Dafur. At the moment we just need to recognise our impotence.

Nirj Deva (EPP-Christian Democrats, UK)

- The new crises of the rising oil prices and the chronic food shortage will lead to major inflation. An increase in ODA will not help solve this as the increase in funding will only help by the same amount of products due to the decreased value of the money.
- The EU is not really effective in its aid, so it is laughed at and everybody values US aid higher.

Glenys Kinnock (PSE, UK)

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- She thanked the Slovenian Presidency for its hospitality to the EU-ACP Joint Parliamentary Assembly.
- What the state of the budgetary negotiations taking place at the moment within the Troika countries? How can the commitments be agreed on between all the Member States? Are there any indicators included in the procedures?
- How can the financial assets of high level people in for instance Zimbabwe and Burma be tracked so that more pressure can be put on them?
- What is the state of play on the budgetisation of the EDF?

Answers by the Presidencies:

Andrej Šter :

- The approach of the new Member States to development and the MDG commitments were discussed and included in the Council Conclusions: the ERU will honour its commitments.
- The soaring energy and food prices ask for more and better aid. Both donors and recipients are responsible for making this happen.
- The EPAs will not be the solution to all the problems.
- Sanctions are not always the most appropriate way to deal with problems. Policy coherence is the essential criterium
- The French Presidency will be organising a meeting on food security in the beginning of July. The EC is willing to put up an intervention fund of some 2 billion to address the soaring food prices, as Commissioner Michel has already announced in the last EP penary session.
- Slovenia does not have the power to intervene in Zimbabwe

João Gomes Cravinho:

- There is an ongoing discussion on whether EPAs are development tools or not, but Portugal believes they are.
- Member States are presently taking stock of the situation on the Division of Labour.
- The soaring food prices create a serious problem, so there is a need to think outside the box and come up with unconventional measures.
- An ongoing dialogue with China is necessary and the ERP has adopted a solid report on the issue with good conclusions.
- The Portuguese contribution to development id bad, but it will be negotiated again within the government this summer, so hopefully it will rise.

German Representative:

- There is a decline in ODA, especially if debt relief is taken out. However, Germany has increased its contribution in the last few years.
- In Accra Germany will be playing a role as it chairs one of the Roundtables together wiuth Uganda.
- Dialogue with China will continue, but ultimately it is the recipient countries that are responsible

2. Development perspectives on peace building and nation building in post-conflict

Situations. (DEVE/6/61817, 2008/2097 (INI))

- Rapporteur: Nirj Deva

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- Exchange of views

Debate :

Alain Hutchinson (PSE, Belgium)

- The EC's Fragile State Initiative should be included, which takes 6 pilot countries and tries to introduce more flexible actions, shorter deadlines for delivering aid.
- There needs to be better coordination between humanitarian aid and development

Glenys Kinnock (PSE, UK)

- MDGs should be the objective when dealing with fragile states as well.
- The EU already has good policy frameworks such as on Security and Development and the European Consensus
- Conflict prevention needs to be an important aspect of EU policies and should be introduced as a cross cutting issue in development as development has an impact on the fragility of a country.
- Include people's security needs (cf. disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR)).

Representative of the European Commission:

- A revision of the security strategy is foreseen for the near future, which could include a follow-up of the security-development nexus.
- A study of 7 countries is to be drafted which will also involve those Member States that are interested to take the lead in them. The EC hopes that these will result in a set of paradigms and guidelines
- The EC published a Communication on Fragility last year. The EUY and the Member States need to have the same message. The EC plans to organise a Civil society on this topic some time this year.
- Trade is seen as a way forward to security and development.

3. Draft resolution on Zimbabwe.

- Exchange of views

Representative of the Council

- The EU does not have the lead on this issue, so there are no concrete proposal as to steps to be taken

Gay Mitchell (EPP-Christian Democrats, Ireland)

- Sending EP resolutions is not really a strong tool as Mugabe will just ignore it
- In fact he is no longer the president as he lost the first round in the elections

Frithjof Schmidt (Group of the Greens/European Alliance, Germany)

- The EP should propose the next steps to be taken on Zimbabwe, preferably at UN level
- But the EC and the Council should also take steps and definitely not recognise the results of the sham elections as also requested by the Zimbabwean opposition.

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- China needs to be involved in actions taken as so far they have been supportive of Mugabe's government
- South Africa could also do a lot more.

Renate Weber (ALDE, Romania)

- Are the Council and the Commission so cautious as a result of the Irish 'no'-vote?
- Will a resolution calling on actions by the Member States have any effect?
- Mugabe is a dictator so he needs no support, nor does he adhere to any procedures.

Glenys Kinnock (PSE, UK)

- Is the Council planning any targeted actions towards all the government officials, police and military staff involved in Mugabe's activities as Australia has done?
- EU military action is not an option
- The end game is in fact in sight as the South African ANC has condemned Mugabe and African leaders are also speaking out, so Mugabe is becoming more and more isolated.
- Mbeki is proposing to mediate and set up a national government led by Mugabe, but the EU should not support this proposal
- An urgency resolution is not really effective, the monitoring of Zimbabwe should be an ongoing thing.

Maria Martens (EPP-Christian Democrats, The Netherlands)

- Applauds Tsvangirai's step to withdraw from the elections
- As it will be another two weeks to the plenary it is best to draw up a skeleton resolution.
- Doubts whether everybody in Africa is aware of what is happening in Zimbabwe as she found that many parliamentarians in the PAP were supporting Mugabe when she talked to them three weeks ago.
- The existing black list needs to be adapted to also include other supporters of Mugabe and really stop them from coming to the EU on whatever pretext.

Zimmer, Gabriele (GUE/NGL, Germany)

- In the next plenary the EP must make sure to take a strong position and support the right forces, as the EU cannot interfere directly
- Sanctions will be important, but the people should not be suffering from them.
- Bringing in troops could result in an escalation of the problems. This needs to be born in mind when discussing next steps.

Alain Hutchinson (PSE, Belgium)

- An open resolution is needed that can be adapted to include developments between now and the vote in plenary, two weeks from now.

4. Parliament's right of scrutiny concerning the Development Cooperation Instrument

- Exchange of views and adoption of conclusions.

Thijs Berman (PSE, The Netherlands), acting chair

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The Working Group D on the Scrutiny of the CSPs in the South American Countries are proposing their conclusions. In the Action Plans for Brazil and Argentina the EC proposes to include funding for the exchange of teachers and student, but ODA money should not be used for sending European Teachers and students to Latin American so the Working Group proposes to reject the Action Plans for these countries and adopt the other three. (to be voted on the 25th)

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