



EU file

ISSUE 114
4 MARCH 2015



This edition of EU File looks into the theme which the EU has chosen for this year's activities.

2015 is the first ever European Year to deal with the European Union's external action and Europe's role in the world. For development aid organisations all over Europe it is an unparalleled opportunity to showcase Europe's commitment to eradicating poverty worldwide and to inspire more Europeans to get engaged and involved in development. 2015 is also the year in which the Millennium Development Goals that the world agreed to reach in 2000. During this year, the international community will agree on the future global framework for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The 2013 Eurobarometer gave a surprising insight into how EU citizens see development aid.

- More than 80 % believe that development aid is important,

and 60 % actually think we should be giving more aid;

- Two-thirds believe that tackling poverty in developing countries should be one of the European Union's main priorities.
- At the same time, 50 % say they know nothing about where European Union aid goes.

In 2015 the European citizens will be informed how EU development aid works and to demonstrate that it makes a real and lasting difference. the intention is to show taxpayers how their money is being put to the best possible use in empowering fellow human beings around the world who are mired in poverty through no fault of their own to make a living for themselves, their families and their communities.

During the year the spotlight on people in partner countries and highlight work in the field. Also, in a fast-changing world, the lines between the developing and developed worlds have become

The MEA Secretariat:

Director General
Mr Joseph Farrugia

Executive in EU & Legal Affairs
Dr Charlotte Camilleri

SME Helpdesk Executive
Mr Anton Vella

Secretary
Ms Dorianne Azzopardi Cilia

© EU file is prepared and circulated by:
MALTA EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATION

35/1, South Street,
Valletta VLT 1100, Malta
t: (+356) 21237585, 21222992
24/7 helpline: (+356) 21222006
f: (+356) 21230227
maltaemployers.com

CORPORATE SPONSOR



increasingly blurred. Some former developing countries have become emerging donors, while others remain trapped in poverty. Meanwhile, new sources of finance and new development partners have come forward. The development landscape has seen the traditional donor-recipient relationship give way to a world of cooperation, mutual responsibility and mutual interest. Helping developing countries worldwide to build peaceful and prosperous societies is not just about fairness. It will also make for a safer world with more economic and trading potential for Europe, too.

EU development aid

15 things you may not know about EU development cooperation in 2015

1. EU aid focuses on the countries which need it most.

EU development aid goes to around 150 countries in the world, ranging from Afghanistan to Zimbabwe. However, in recent years, several developing countries have experienced strong economic growth and have managed to reduce poverty.

2. The EU is helping to improve the lives of millions.

In 2000, countries from all over the world agreed on the Millennium Development Goals, to be achieved by 2015. They range from halving extreme poverty to stopping the spread of HIV/AIDS and giving primary education to all children. The EU played a leading role in negotiating this vision.

3. EU aid is transparent and it is easy to find out where the money goes.

The EU has repeatedly been ranked among the most transparent aid donors. Giving information about where how much of our aid goes, and on what it is spent, helps tax payers to check that their money is being used wisely. It avoids different donors duplicating each other and helps to prevent corruption and misuse of funds.

4. To prevent fraud and corruption, EU aid is regularly audited and controlled.

EU programmes undergo regular independent audits to ensure that their accounts are in order. In addition, the European Court of Auditors examines specific projects and country programmes every year. If there is a suspicion of fraud or corruption, the European Anti-Fraud Office can pursue cases that come to its attention.

5. The EU and its Member States together are the most generous donors of official development aid in the world.

Together, the European Union and its Member States are the world's largest aid donor. In 2013 they provided more than half of public aid or "official development assistance" as defined by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Together, they spent €56.5 billion in 2013 on helping countries across the world in their fight against poverty.

6. Developing countries have a strong say in how EU aid is spent, what will be done and where.

The EU makes sure that its development programmes follow the priorities which governments have for their countries' own development. The decision of whether to invest funding in, for example, health, schools, or roads is taken in close partnership between the EU and each government - which often then also takes responsibility for managing the programmes and projects.

7. The EU relies on organisations with the right experience to carry out its development projects on the ground.

The EU often gives funding to non-governmental organisations - this could be a local association of female lawyers that helps women to their legal rights or a well-known international organisation such as Amnesty International, in fighting for human rights, for example. By doing this the EU ensures that those who know the countries best and are the practical experts in each field put the funds to best effect. The EU also partners with UN organisations such as UNICEF or the Food and Agriculture Organization, or development agencies of EU Member States.

8. The EU involves civil society organisations when it plans its cooperation with partner countries.

When preparing its programmes, the EU does not only work with the governments but also makes sure that civil society organisations are included in the discussions: this could be non-governmental organisations, trade unions, human rights groups, environmental organisations, chambers of commerce and many others.

9. About 25% of EU aid is given directly to governments so they can do their work, following priorities that they define themselves, in close dialogue with the EU.

This is called “budget support”. It gives the countries the tools to take development into their own hands, for example by reforming and modernising their education or agricultural sector. By putting governments of developing countries in the driving seat, the EU directly supports the country's own policies and systems so that the results can have a lasting effect.

10. The EU has 139 delegations and offices across the world, more than any EU member state. At the same time its external aid equals less than a tenth of its budget.

The total amount which the EU reserved for external aid in 2013 was €14.86 billion, which is equal to about 9% of the overall budget of the EU. In other words, lifting people out of poverty across the world with the help of European aid costs each European no more than 8 cents per day.

11. In many countries the EU and its Member States combine their development efforts to ensure that it works more hand in hand and doesn't do the same thing twice.

Joint Programming has been started in more than 40 countries. This means that the EU and its Member States assess together what are the biggest problems and challenges in a developing country and then define what sectors we should focus on, before preparing a common framework for our work.

Each donor brings their strengths, expertise and comparative advantages to the table to then decide how the work can be divided.

12. The EU works hard to ensure that its work in areas such as trade and finance, agriculture, security, climate change, or migration helps overcome poverty in developing countries.

This is called the “Policy Coherence for Development”. A lot of what the EU and its Member States do in these areas is linked to development. For example, the EU is opening up the large European single market to developing countries more and more, which creates economic growth and jobs for them. The EU also has agreements with several countries to fight illegal logging of timber and ensure that timber that is imported to Europe has been legally harvested.

13. EU humanitarian aid and development cooperation are different but work hand in hand.

Humanitarian aid helps to save people's lives rapidly in crisis situations, and address their basic needs, for example by providing food, shelter or medical care in conflicts or after natural disasters. Development cooperation supports countries over the medium and long term so they can overcome poverty and have sustainable economic growth that benefits all parts of society. The EU works hard to ensure that the change from emergency to development assistance runs smoothly, by linking them with each other.

14. The world has managed to reduce the share of extremely poor people by more than half since 1990.

Having less than USD1.25 per day to live on is the international definition of being ‘extremely poor’. The number of people below this line has dropped by 700 million since 1990. The EU has contributed to this, for example, by helping to build and repair more than 87,000 kilometres of roads to make sure that people can transport goods and food in their countries and to strengthen local economies. The EU has also provided cash or other in-kind benefits to more than 46 million people to ensure their food security.

15. Europeans believe that they have a responsibility to help people in poor countries, and many are ready to play their part in this.

A huge majority of Europeans (85%) believe that it is important to help people in developing countries. This is the result of a recent Eurobarometer survey among 28,000 Europeans. Most people also agree that tackling poverty in these countries should be a main priority for the EU and that we should give more development aid. A large majority believe that aid that goes to poorer countries also has a positive effect on Europeans in return.

One in two people think that each individual can play a role in fighting against poverty in developing countries - and almost half would be ready to pay more for groceries or products from those countries. Europeans see volunteering as the most effective way of helping (75%), followed by official aid from governments (66%) and donating to organisations that assist developing countries (63%).

