European Year for Development (2015)

2013/0238(COD) - 10/07/2013 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a European Year of Development (2015).

PROPOSED ACT: Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the EU is the **biggest donor of official development aid (ODA) in the world**, providing more than half of all aid given worldwide. Its strong commitment to supporting partner countries dates back to 1957, when the Treaties of Rome first established a European development policy.

Despite this strong commitment to supporting partner countries, EU citizens often lack information on development cooperation, why it is needed and on the added value of development policies at EU level. The October 2012 Eurobarometer survey highlighted significant areas of ignorance, with 53 % of respondents indicating that they know nothing about where EU aid goes (44 % are unaware of where their country's bilateral aid goes).

It is important to raise European citizens' awareness of global interdependence. People need information as to how an outward-looking Europe can help to ensure global sustainability.

Against this background, The EYD2015 is an opportunity to improve the level of information in all Member States

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: in October 2012, the European Parliament called on the Commission to make 2015 the European Year for Development, expressing its hope that this would raise the profile of development cooperation.

The Commission services and the External Action Service have been informally consulted on the idea of the EYD2015.

The European Parliament and Member States have been informally contacted on the organisation of the EYD2015. Furthermore, the issue is on the agenda for the regular meeting with Member States' Directors-General responsible for development in June 2013.

Given the external relations dimension of the EYD2015, informal discussions have also taken place with international organisations.

LEGAL BASIS: Article 209 and Article 210(2) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

CONTENT: the aim of this proposed Decision is to establish a European Year of Development in 2015.

Objectives: the general purpose of the European Year shall be:

- to inform EU citizens about EU development cooperation, highlighting what the European Union can already achieve as the biggest aid donor in the world;

- to stimulate the active interest of European citizens in development cooperation and foster a sense of responsibility and opportunity as regards their participation in policy formulation and implementation; and
- to raise awareness of the role of EU development cooperation.

Initiatives involved: the proposal presents the measures taken to achieve the objectives. These may include the following initiatives organised at Union, national, regional or local level:

- communication campaigns to disseminate key messages targeted at the general public and more specific audiences, including through social media;
- the organisation of conferences, events and initiatives with all relevant stakeholders, to promote active participation and debate, and to raise awareness at European level;
- concrete initiatives in the Member States aimed at promoting the objectives of the European Year, in particular through the exchange of information and sharing of experience and good practices among national, regional, local administrations and other organisations; and
- undertaking studies and surveys and disseminating their results.

A detailed Annex outlines the actions proposed and the operational means as to how the objectives may be achieved. 3 different types of actions are laid down:

1. direct Union initiatives;
2. co-financing Union initiatives;
3. co-financing Member States' initiatives.

The Commission may identify other activities as contributing to the objectives of the European Year and may allow references to the European Year to be used in promoting those activities, insofar as they contribute to achieving the objectives of the Decision.

Coordination with Member States: each Member State is invited to appoint a national coordinator to be responsible for organising its involvement in the European Year, and shall inform the Commission of that appointment. The national coordinators shall, in close coordination with the Commission, consult and cooperate with a wide range of relevant stakeholders, including civil society, national parliaments, social partners and, where appropriate, the national agencies or contact points for the relevant Union programmes.

By 1 June 2014, Member States are invited to transmit to the Commission their proposed work programme, which shall set out details of the national activities planned for the European Year of Development.

Participating countries: participation in the activities of the European Year to be financed shall be open to: (i) Member States; (ii) candidate countries benefiting from a pre-accession strategy.

Coordination at Union level and implementation: the Commission shall implement this Decision at the level of the Union, in particular by adopting the necessary financing decisions in accordance with the Regulations establishing the Financing Instruments relevant to the actions concerned. It shall cooperate closely with Member States, the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions and the bodies and associations active in development issues.

The Commission shall make the **theme of the European Year a priority** in the communication activities of its Representations in the Member States and the European Union Delegations in partner countries.

Consistency and complementarity: the Commission shall ensure that the measures provided for in this Decision are consistent with any other Union, national and regional schemes and initiatives that help attain the objectives of the European Year.

Specific provisions on financial and non-financial support: measures are provided to define the mode of access to financing of measures related to the European Year (depending on the case, procurement or the award of grants financed from the general budget of the Union. Non-financial support may be granted by the Commission for activities undertaken by public and private organisations which comply with certain conditions laid down in the Decision (use of the logo etc).

Measures are provided as regards the protection of the Union's financial interests and the fight against fraud.

Monitoring and evaluation: by 31 December 2016, the Commission shall submit a report to the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the initiatives provided for in this Decision.

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: **no additional funding is sought for the European Year of Development**. The flexibility for annual priority settings based on the budget lines and programmes of the Communication provides sufficient margin for running the Year on a EUR 15 million scale.

For 2013 and 2014, the amounts under management of DG DEVCO amount to **EUR 14.20 million** enabling the financing of the operational activities of the European Year.