Improving development effectiveness and efficiency of aid

2019/2184(INI) - 25/11/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 331 votes to 294, with 72 abstentions, a resolution on improving development effectiveness and the efficiency of aid.

The EU is the world's biggest donor of official development assistance (ODA), to a total of EUR 74.4 billion in 2018 representing almost 57 % of all ODA worldwide. It is committed to promoting effective development cooperation geared towards ending all forms of poverty and inequality.

The context for development cooperation has changed over the years, with the emergence of new global challenges such as climate change, migration, food insecurity, geopolitical rivalry, terrorism and violent extremism, and outbreaks of infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

The EU should take the lead in using the principles of aid effectiveness and aid efficiency to secure real impact and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, while leaving no-one behind, in its partner countries.

Increased cooperation

Members stressed that the EU should use its powerful toolbox of instruments (grants, loans, etc) and aid modalities in a coordinated manner to allow task sharing and avoid fragmentation of aid, and identify priorities where it can effectively provide the greatest value added impact. It should also closely monitor the use of funds and take all necessary measures to avoid any misuse of aid funds. In this regard, Members called for effective mechanisms to be put in place to thoroughly control the final destination of those funds and assess the projects which received funding.

The resolution highlighted the need to implement the policy objectives in the new European Consensus on Development in a more strategic and targeted manner in each partner country, thereby respecting policy coherence for development principles.

The EU is also urged to engage directly with and to build inclusive sustainable partnerships with countries of origin and transit of migration, based on the specific needs of each country and the individual circumstances of migrants.

Members stressed that, in order to make development aid more effective, deliver long-lasting results and address local needs, in particular in protracted crisis and post-crisis settings, it is imperative to improve the coordination of humanitarian aid and development assistance and to strengthen the humanitarian-development nexus and its links with actions related to peace and security in developing countries.

The Commission and the Member States are called on to enhance cooperation with local authorities in partner countries and for budget support as an aid modality to be used at sub-national level, and for redistribution mechanisms between different levels of government and across regions to be developed with the primary objective of reducing in-country disparities and inequalities.

Parliament considered that European development aid and public investments should promote joint strategic priorities and policy objectives, including poverty eradication, climate and environmental action, economic and trade policies and migration management, and should also be fully aligned with the principles of fundamental rights, democracy and good governance.

Members stressed that making humanitarian aid and emergency aid allocation conditional on cooperation with the EU on migration or security issues is not compatible with agreed development effectiveness principles.

Joint programming

Parliament called on the Commission and the Council to scale up joint programming between the EU and its Member States. Joint programming has proven to be successful in terms of policy coherence across political, trade, development and security strategies.

Members called on the Commission to publish, at least biannually, an aid effectiveness progress report, covering joint planning, joint implementation and joint results frameworks, and actions by EU institutions, Member States and local and regional authorities.

The resolution stressed that in view of the future implementation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), joint programming and implementation by the EU, its Member States and EU development financing partners should build upon the aid effectiveness principles.

In addition, the Commission should ensure that the programming and implementation of these modalities is coordinated, strategically aligned with partner countries' priorities and processes, and focused on delivering outcomes and impacts relevant to achieving the sustainable development objectives (SDGs) in the specific context of each partner country. Progress in combating discrimination and violence against women and girls in partner countries should be seen as a key aspect of aid effectiveness.

In the interests of transparency, Parliament encouraged the EU to step up its efforts to ensure public access to and dissemination of data, as well as reporting on EU development aid spending. It also stressed the importance of exchanging best practice, coordinating policies and actions and working together with other actors, such as the UN and its agencies, that provide aid in partner countries.