Policy Coherence for Development

2021/2164(INI) - 14/03/2023 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 545 votes to 26, with 32 abstentions, a resolution on Policy Coherence for Development (PCD).

Context

The 2018 external evaluation report for the Commission revealed serious shortcomings in the implementation of PCD, including a limited role for EU delegations. Moreover, a recent study commissioned by Parliament found that major problems persist. The absence of an adequate response to the findings of the external evaluation report and the lack of evidence that appropriate action has been taken undermine the credibility of the EU's actions on development cooperation. The Council no longer holds regular exchanges with the Commission on PCD.

The current global geopolitical context is marked, in particular, by the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine and its consequences, including a severe energy crisis, the refugee crisis, global debt distress and threats to food security and biodiversity, as well as climate change, and these problems are seriously threatening the global achievement of the sustainable development goals (SDGs) such that a comprehensive response is necessary. This further increases the need for effective implementation of PCD and of coherence and consistency between different policies, as in the case of the humanitarian-development nexus.

Parliament stressed that accountability, visibility and transparency are important aspects of development cooperation and must be applied to PCD. As co-legislator and a contributor to policy-making, Parliament bears much of the responsibility for the EU's implementation of PCD. For PCD to work properly a 'whole-of-Parliament' approach is needed, with active contributions from all parliamentary committees involved in different policies.

The new geopolitical and policy context for PCD

Parliament affirmed that PCD is a substantive requirement to avoid EU policies having negative impacts on poor and vulnerable people in developing countries and to seek and take advantage of opportunities to achieve synergies and in pursuit of the development objective of reducing and, in the long term, eradicating poverty. It is reiterated that all EU institutions and Member States must comply with their PCD obligations under the Treaties in all legislative and policy initiatives likely to have an impact on developing countries.

The Commission is called on to publish, by 31 December 2023, a communication that clarifies the application of PCD in the context of the SDGs.

Stressing that PCD needs to remain a key part of the EU's external relations, Parliament called for it to be given **more visibility and for the EU to play a leading role in promoting PCD globally**. It recommended the establishment of an **EU platform for PCD** to allow for better coordination between the relevant EU and multilateral institutions, non-state actors and developing countries to ensure alignment and cooperation on PCD.

A joint EU PCD agenda and differentiated actions by the Commission, Council and Parliament

The resolution emphasised that PCD should be consistently applied to all relevant proposals.

It stressed the need for clear, high-level political commitment to PCD and calls on the Commission to:

- ensure that the necessary awareness, expertise and resources for the effective implementation of PCD are consistently present in all its Directorates-General (DGs) and the Secretariat-General;

- screen all planned Commission policy and legislative initiatives and trade agreements for possible impacts on developing countries at an early stage and in a transparent manner;

- make widespread use of systematic and transparent monitoring and carry out ex post evaluations of the impacts of existing EU policies and international agreements on the pursuit of development policy objectives;

- resume the publication of a specific annual accountability report on the performance of the EU and its Member States in relation to their development policy commitments, ensuring that this report adequately covers the implementation of PCD and the challenges met in that context, thereby increasing transparency and accountability to the public and Parliament.

While emphasising the critical role of the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) in ensuring the implementation of PCD in the Commission, Parliament called on the DG INTPA to re-establish a **dedicated PCD team** within DG INTPA to coordinate and reinforce the PCD work within the DG's thematic units, and to ensure DG INTPA's continuous support for building and maintaining PCD awareness and competence in other DGs and in the Secretariat-General.

The Commission and European External Action Service (EEAS) are called on to ensure that delegations have the necessary expertise and resources to be actively involved from the outset in the preparation of EU policy and legislation affecting developing countries. Parliament and the Council should carefully assess the impact on developing countries of their amendments to the Commission's legislative proposals.

The Council and the Member States are called on to:

- devote appropriate expertise and resources, and establish coordination mechanisms, in their national administrations to effectively implement PCD and report on its implementation;

- establish better coordination between and among Member States and their relevant ministries on PCD, to hold regular peer reviews and to implement the recommendations made in previous reports and evaluations on PCD;

- adopt Council conclusions on each of the Commission's annual accountability reports called for by Parliament;

- ensure that, at the beginning of each Council presidency, awareness is raised on PCD issues;

- hold meaningful and regular exchanges on PCD between the Council, Parliament and the Commission.

Lastly, **Parliament** declared its commitment to enhance its own PCD work, and for this purpose:

- instructed the European Parliamentary Research Service (EPRS) to regularly screen the Commission's Work Programme for PCD issues, systematically analysing how PCD is dealt with in Commission impact assessments and relevant proposals;

- called for more attention to be paid to PCD in strategic and budgetary decision-making processes;

- expressed its intention to strengthen its own awareness and expertise on PCD at political level by providing training and information on PCD for new and sitting Members, and at administrative level, in particular among the staff of bodies involved in legislation.