Governance in the European Union's development policy

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The European Parliament adopted the own-initiative report on Governance and Development by Marieke SANDERS-TEN HOLTE (ELDR, NL). The European Parliament welcomes the Commission's broad, open and pragmatic approach to what is a critical determinant in states' ability to eradicate poverty and foster sustainable development. In addition, Parliament believes that the EC policy on governance should be integrated in development and related instruments including the projects, sector-programmes, budget support and trade agreements and it stresses, in this context, the key importance of improved assessments of the efficacy of individual developing countries' development plans to improve external trade and to stop inefficient use or waste of resources and unnecessary debt and to improving external trade. It is considered that donors may cede control to the recipient country, within the framework of agreed objectives and if transparency and adequate monitoring are assured and that the budget support can be a valuable instrument to promote governance through improvements, both in public financial management and in the function of public services. It stresses that governance indicators should be tailored to the specific needs of the partner country and insists that a flexible approach is requested as the scenarios defined by the Commission may in some cases overlap and requests an adequate adaptation of EU policy to the country concerned. Parliament highlights that the work on difficult partnerships a particularly important challenge for the EU and stresses that particular attention should be devoted to elaborating effective strategies for these partnerships and in post-conflict situations. Parliament agrees with the Commission's position that donors cannot afford to totally abandon poor performers as populations should not pay the price for the lack of commitment of their governments and therefore calls on the Commission to focus more specifically on issues of accountability and transparency, as weak accountability mechanisms tend to facilitate corruption and thereby undermine good governance. Parliament considers that the principle of "corporate social responsibility" has to be better shaped, in particular with regard to children's work, in order to create a healthy investment climate and that specific social indicators should be devised for the purpose of obtaining more precise data concerning the governance achieved by the countries in question and calls for civil society to be more extensively involved in this area. More enhanced views on human rights and fundamental freedoms are necessary and the Parliament calls on the Commission to pay particular attention to the freedom of expression and assembly, in order to allow political parties in opposition to freely express their views and to allow for independent media. Moreover, greater emphasis has to be placed on the need for the EU to broaden the perception of strengthening democracy at local, provincial and national levels. It also underlines the importance of decentralisation and local government institutions, with the aim of bringing state administration closer to the people and calls for strategies which will enable effective local-level governance to develop. Equally, Parliament : - stresses, in this regard, the importance of pursuing electoral and parliamentary reforms, beyond the establishment of multi-party electoral systems, to ensure more extensive and effective political activity among the population. It is aware that in some countries this is a long-term goal; - points to the basic function which may be performed by the European Union in assisting and monitoring electoral processes as a way of contributing to improving democracy in the countries concerned; - stresses that in the context of good governance it is essential to put an end to impunity; - points out that it is therefore essential to set up an independent judicial system and provide easy access to justice and public information for citizens; - points out that education is a very important to all to empower civil society to take part in promoting governance and democracy at each governmental level; - stresses that gender mainstreaming, a major tool in governance, is not properly prioritised in the Communication on governance and development. It calls for the EU to integrate a gender-based approach in the analysis of governance as in terms of poverty eradication it is essential that the gender aspects of the causes of poverty are explicitly included in the analysis of poverty; - stresses that increased attention should be paid to the role of the private sector in fostering good governance and voluntary control of corruption, as tackling corruption is an essential element of a

framework within which economies can prosper and be fully integrated in the multilateral trading system; - points out that the sound management of immigration is an important factor in ensuring overall good governance and calls, in this regard, for an improvement of the dialogue with developing countries; - calls on the EU to support capacity-building for governments and civil society, to place emphasis on strengthening the organisational, institutional and networking capacity of developing-country NGOs and to support independent media; - the Parliament is of the opinion that in order to offer the necessary support for capacity building there is a need for well-trained staff at delegation level; - calls for improved cooperation with UN, OECD, World Bank and other international donors concerning assistance for good governance programmes and in particular for improved coherence between donor and macro-economic policies; - stresses that the NEPAD programme, an own-African initiative, is a major instrument to assess good governance in African countries.