# Development policy: participation of non-state actors

2002/2283(INI) - 04/09/2003 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Richard HOWITT (PES, UK) on the importance of non-state actors (NSA) in development policy. (Please see the summary dated 11/06/03.) The resolution was adopted by 284 votes in favour, 8 against and 9 abstentions. Parliament also called for the setting-up of multi-stakeholder national or regional cooperation programme steering committees in each developing state or region. These should be consulted on EU aid programmes and promote all aspects of civil society participation. They should include representatives of the ACP State concerned, the head of the European Commission delegation in the country concerned, and representatives of the local NSAs. Parliament went on to endorse the Commission's figure of up to 15 % of EDF funds to be allocated to local NSA. The Commission should incorporate this target up to of 15 % for NSAs in all geographical budget lines in the preliminary draft budget for future years. Parliament asked the Commission to draw on a spectrum of 'global best practice' and lessons learnt in participatory approaches established by other international actors such as the United Nations, the World Bank, bilateral agencies and academic institutions. It rejected the artificial distinction proposed in the Commission's communication communication between NSAs as implementing partners and NSAs acting on their own initiative. This fails to reflect the diversity within the NSA community. On the question of capacity-building, Parliament called for a systematic mainstreaming of capacity-building activities for southern NGOs in all EC budget lines and all programmes related to development. Special attention should be paid to small and grass roots organisations that can reach and represent vulnerable and isolated groups of the population. Projects which have been successfully carried out via NSAs should be left under NSA management. This also avoids the risk that authorised EU funds will seep away within government structures. Finally, Parliament emphasised that there is a greater obligation on the Commission to undertake proactive consultation with southern NSAs, and to open up its procedures at local level as well as at European level.