Development cooperation: complementarity between community and Member states policies

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In adopting its report, drafted by Concepcio FERRER (EPP-ED, E), the Parliament deplored the fact that the important objectives for EU aid , namely complementarity, coordination and consistency, are dealt with separately and not in a coherent fashion. It calls on the Council and Commission to step up their efforts to achieve complementarity and, in particular, to implement the various resolutions on this question adopted by the Council and the European Parliament. Parliament welcomes the fact that on the basis of pilot schemes conducted in several countries, the transmission of information and consultation on the ground appear to have improved in recent times, but considers, however, that the Member States should set up information exchanges and communication with the Commission in order to improve coordination between them and enable complementarity between the development policies of the Member States and the Community and significantly influence the international coordination mechanisms which include all donors. The EP calls on the Council and the Commission to amend the comitology system so as to concentrate Member States' participation during the planning stage, in order to ensure complementarity of planning and greater flexibility in the implementation of individual projects. Parliament supports the Commission's proposals on operational coordination and the management of the Union's human resources and stresses that an indispensable prerequisite for achieving greater complementarity is the devolution of decision-making powers, both within the EU and the Member States' development cooperation administrations; it asks the Commission to present, in the near future, its plans on how it intends to strengthen decentralisation. Parliament believes that, in order to enhance the effectiveness of Community aid, an increase is necessary in the Community staff responsible for managing development cooperation funds. The Commission is called upon to draw up as quickly as possible an operational action plan to identify and propose priority action areas and instruments to make it possible to speed up the introduction of complementarity. It should also draw up an overall text addressing the issues of complementarity, consistency and coordiantion, in order to strengthen Community and bilateral development policy across the board within the EU and thus give it a higher profile. The Council and Commission are called upon to take into account the existence of NGOs, particularly NGDOs, and to support and encourage their participation in Community and Member State bodies working to achieve coordination. The Parliament regrets that, as in other areas of development policy, the Commission does not have sufficient resources to carry out the necessary studies and analyses, and was therefore obliged to use work produced by other bodies, whose political and social sensibilities differ from those of the EU. It therefore calls for the Commission's capacities to be sufficiently enhanced in this area. It also deplores the fact that the Commission has not carried out an assessment of coordination in international organisation and calls for a study to be conducted into the real opportunities for coordination between the Commission and the Member States in international organisations and conferences with a view to increasing the complementarity and efficiency of thesefora. The EP urges that the standard framework drawn up by the Commission for national strategy papers for each Community country should be implemented as soon as possible. Lastly, Parliament calls on the Commission and member States to coordinate their external services so as to ensure that complementarity is effective on the ground.