## Basic information

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| **2011/2599(RSP)**<br><br>RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects | Procedure completed |
| Resolution on the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries<br><br>**Subject**<br><br>6.30 Development cooperation<br>6.40.13 Relations with/in the context of international organisations: UN, OSCE, OECD, Council of Europe, EBRD | |

## Key players

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|---|---|---|---|
| Council of the European Union | **Council configuration** | **Meetings** | **Date** |
| | Transport, Telecommunications and Energy | 3080 | 2011-03-31 |
| European Commission | **Commission DG** | **Commissioner** | |
| | Development | PIEBALGS Andris | |

## Key events

| Date | Event | Reference | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| 31/03/2011 | Resolution/conclusions adopted by Council | | Summary |
| 06/04/2011 | Debate in Parliament | | |
| 07/04/2011 | Decision by Parliament | T7-0149/2011 | Summary |
| 07/04/2011 | Results of vote in Parliament | | |
| 07/04/2011 | End of procedure in Parliament | | |

## Technical information

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| **Procedure reference** | 2011/2599(RSP) |
| **Procedure type** | RSP - Resolutions on topical subjects |
| **Procedure subtype** | Resolution on statement |
| **Legal basis** | Rules of Procedure EP 136-p2 |
| **Stage reached in procedure** | Procedure completed |

## Documentation gateway

**European Parliament**

| Document type | Committee | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0228/2011 | 30/03/2011 | |
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0229/2011 | 30/03/2011 | |
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0230/2011 | 30/03/2011 | |
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0231/2011 | 30/03/2011 | |
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0232/2011 | 30/03/2011 | |
| Motion for a resolution | | B7-0233/2011 | 30/03/2011 | |
| Text adopted by Parliament, single reading | | T7-0149/2011 | 07/04/2011 | Summary |

**European Commission**

| Document type | Reference | Date | Summary |
|---|---|---|---|
| Commission response to text adopted in plenary | SP(2011)5857 | 19/09/2011 | |

# Resolution on the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

2011/2599(RSP) - 31/03/2011

The Council adopted guidelines for the participation of the European Union in the fourth UN conference on the least developed countries (LDC-IV), to be held in Istanbul from 9 to 13 May 2011. As the world's largest donor to the least developed countries, the EU considers that the outcome from Istanbul should address three main objectives:

- combating the vulnerability and fragility of the least developed countries and further enhancing their resilience to shocks;
- creating a favourable environment for the sustainable development of the least developed countries;
- promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth for the least developed countries.

The Council's **key messages are as follows:**

- the EU is fully committed to the success of LDC-IV and is promoting a positive and ambitious outcome, with the aim of accelerating poverty eradication, with mutual responsibilities for all partners and taking due account of the current global challenges as well as the changes in the global aid architecture since the adoption of the Brussels Programme of Action for the LDCs in 2001;
- the outcomes of the major international development conferences, in particular the recent 2010 High Level Plenary Meeting (HLPM) on the MDGs, provide an important reference framework for the LDC-IV Conference. The EU considers that the Council Conclusions for the HLPM remain fully relevant for LDC-IV. The Council welcomes the Commission Staff Working Document "EU Position in view of the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries, 9-13 May 2011", which has provided important guidance for this EU position;
- the EU is the largest donor to the LDCs. It has been the **most successful development partner** at fulfilling its commitments, notably in terms of market access, rules of origin and debt alleviation and has made significant progress on ODA as well as on policy coherence for development. The EU calls upon the other donors and development partners to match its commitments and ambition;
- some LDCs have achieved good economic growth and progress in development during the last decade. However, overall progress has been uneven and considerable work remains to be done, notably in Sub-Saharan Africa and in countries in post-conflict and fragile situations, requiring strengthened efforts on important social sectors such as health and education, as well as agricultural development. The LDCs have the primary responsibility for their own development, and their political commitment to implement the necessary policy changes will be a strong signal that they are determined to do their part to sustain high growth rates and accelerate their graduation from LDC status;
- the EU underlines the interdependence of progress in the LDCs with human rights, gender equality, democracy and good governance, peace and security, as well as with climate, agricultural and energy policies. Sustainable development and long-term equitable and inclusive growth, promoting inter alia decent employment opportunities, inclusive finance and effective social protection systems as well as reducing inequality, are essential for each LDC to reduce its vulnerability. The **private sector has a crucial role to play** in this regard, and can have a huge impact on people's lives through generating wealth and employment. The potential of trade as an engine for growth and employment is considerable. Trade policy and development aid, including technical assistance for trade, need to pull in the same direction and exploit synergies;
- the EU reaffirms its commitment to increasing its aid spending to reach 0.7% of GNI by 2015 and to channel at least 50% of collective aid increases to Africa while stressing that ODA is an indispensable element of a meaningful global development partnership;
- all countries have the responsibility to help developing countries to lift themselves out of poverty and achieve progress towards the MDGs. Progress in the LDCs is interconnected with the quality and coherence of development partners' policies. Strenuous efforts should be directed

to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of aid mechanisms, and fulfilling existing commitments. While over the past decade the EU has nearly tripled the amount of its aid to the LDCs, the EU reaffirms its commitment, in the context of the abovementioned overall ODA commitment, to **meeting collectively the target of 0.15 to 0.20% of GNP to the LDCs, and calls on other donors to match these commitments** . Emerging economies should also provide their fair share of assistance;

- all other available sources of financing for development should be mobilised as well, primarily domestic resources, complemented by viable innovative financing mechanisms, and support from developed countries, the private sector, and emerging economies. The EU is seriously considering proposals for **innovative financing mechanisms** with significant revenue generation potential, especially for the poorest and most vulnerable countries;
- the EU strongly supports an LDC-IV outcome focusing on areas and measures that can add value with regard to the specific needs of the LDCs, and which should reflect the lessons learnt from the Brussels Programme of Action, while maintaining coherence with the MDGs, when setting specific goals for the LDCs. A long-term engagement through a renewed partnership with the LDCs containing suitable measures is fundamental, in a rapidly changing world, for tailored responses to country-specific circumstances.

Having this in mind the **EU proposes the following issues to be prioritised** in the outcome of LDC-IV:

**Combating vulnerability**

The EU sees reducing the LDCs' vulnerability and fragility and improving their resilience to cope with shocks and their capacity development as key elements and priorities in their development processes. The following issues should therefore be addressed:

- transition from situations of fragility to peace and security, focusing on conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace building and state building;
- excessive price volatility and food security, with specific attention to food and energy prices;
- the capacity of the LDCs to adapt to climate change, use of fast-start funding and the Green Climate Fund;
- economic diversification including through improved productive capacities;
- development of human and institutional capacities;
- disaster risk reduction, including the integration of DRR into national development policies, strategies and planning;

**Establishing a favourable environment for sustainable development**

The EU is convinced of the essential need for an environment conducive to inclusive and sustainable development, which must include respect for human rights, democracy and good governance and strengthened partnerships for development at all levels. Six key sets of issues should be addressed in this respect, including:

- promoting democracy and good governance;
- establishing favourable national policies to mobilise domestic resources and leverage international resources for development;
- promoting the role of emerging economies and stressing the expectation that they provide an increasing share of support to the LDCs;
- reinforce the impact of remittances on economic and social development, including through the reduction in transaction costs;
- responsible lending and borrowing practices;
- ensuring the coherence of public policies in both developed and developing countries to promote development objectives.

**Promoting inclusive and sustainable economic growth**

The EU considers that an important aspect of inclusive and sustainable development is more broad-based sustainable economic growth which generates employment and which benefits all of the population. Five key sets of issues should be addressed in this respect:

- developing market-oriented productive capacities by supporting infrastructure, including reliable energy supply and supporting agriculture;
- market access, with a call to developed countries to provide full Duty Free Quota Free access for all products from all LDCs, as the EU has done with the autonomous Everything But Arms Initiative, and a call for emerging economies and developing countries in a position to do so to do more to open up their markets for LDC exports;
- environmental sustainability and a green economy, including good management and governance of natural resources;
- inclusive growth with a focus on the most vulnerable segments of LDCs' populations, education, health, nutrition, water and sanitation and food security;
- contributions from the private sector and the state, including provision of public goods and services, public-private partnerships, corporate social responsibility;  Political momentum for inclusive growth and sustainable development in the LDCs.

The EU calls upon all partners to agree to establish a more systematic mechanism for granting time-sensitive concessions to countries, which have recently graduated, in order to make graduation more appealing and encourage LDCs to focus on accelerating progress towards their graduation. The systematic extension of the transition phase privileges to recently graduated countries, as the EU has been doing, is one example.

# Resolution on the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries

2011/2599(RSP) - 07/04/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries.

The resolution was tabled by the S&D, ALDE, Greens/ALE, EPP, and ECR groups.

It notes that 48 countries are currently classified as LDCs, 33 in Africa, 14 in Asia and one in Latin America, and that 75% of the 800 million inhabitants of the LDCs live on less than USD 2 per day. Only 3 countries have graduated from LDC status.

Parliament notes that LDC-IV will assess the results of the Brussels Programme of Action as it comes to an end and propose new actions (2011-2020) designed to encourage the sharing of best practices and lessons learnt and identify policy decisions and challenges that the LDCs will face in the next decade. **Parliament considers that LDC-IV should be result-oriented, on the basis of clear indicators and the objective of reducing the number of LDCs by half by 2020**, combined with efficient and transparent monitoring and follow-up mechanisms. It notes that the LDC-IV recommendation can only be achieved if crucial issues affecting LDCs, such as policy coherence between trade and development, agriculture, fisheries, investment and climate change, are properly addressed and important topics, such as governance and the fight against corruption, in particular the concept of the 'governance contract' (incorporating in particular a social threshold) between partner and donor countries, and human capacity-building, are put on the agenda. LDC-IV should therefore focus on Policy Coherence for Development as an important factor for policy shift, at national and international level. Policy-making in all areas – such as trade, fisheries, the environment, agriculture, climate change, energy, investment and finance – must support the development needs of LDCs in order to fight poverty and guarantee decent incomes and livelihoods;

Members stress that EU aid to LDCs should be geared primarily to wealth creation and the development of a market economy, which are basic prerequisites for **poverty eradication**. They call for priority to be given to economic growth as a key element for development and overall poverty reduction in LDCs. The EU is urged to honour its commitments in terms of **market access and debt alleviation**. Parliament reaffirms the importance of reaching the ODA target of 0.15 to 0.20% of GNI for the LDCs, mobilising, for this purpose, domestic resources and, as a complementary measure, innovative financing mechanisms. It wants new measures to integrate the LDCs into the global economy and improve their access to EU markets, and calls on the Commission to increase its trade-related assistance to help the poorest countries deal with the competition resulting from market liberalisation. Parliament is aware that the Everything But Arms (EBA) initiative, which was taken after LDC-III and the adoption of the BPoA, has not fully achieved its original objectives and, therefore, that **the quality and the volume of trade from LDCs to the EU market has remained below expectations**, in particular because of a lack of adequate trade-related and port infrastructure. It advocates the development of such infrastructure, which remains the key to increasing trade capacities.

It also calls on the EU, its Member States and the UN, as appropriate, to do the following:

- give priority to food security, agriculture, infrastructure, capacity-building, inclusive economic growth, access to technologies and human and social development in the LDCs;
- take effective measures on price volatility and transparency and on better regulated financial markets in order to protect the LDCs and reduce their vulnerability;
- establish fair and equitable trade rules and the implementation of integrated policies across a wide range of economic, social and environmental issues in order to foster sustainable development
- discuss the implementation of innovative development financing mechanisms at the LDC IV such as a financial transaction tax;

- seriously address at LDC-IV the adverse impact of farmland acquisition, such as the expropriation of small farmers and the unsustainable use of land and water;
- identify the LDCs' needs and strategies, to diversify trade by enhancing fair prices for LDC production and to address supply-side constraints to increase the LDCs' trading capacity and ability to attract investment which respects ILO core labour standards and protection of the environment;
- in view of the fact that the new US 'Conflict Minerals' Law is a huge step forward in combating the illegal mining of and trading in minerals in Africa, the UN should put forward a similar proposal to ensure the traceability of imported minerals on the world market.

Lastly, Members emphasise the role played by the European Parliament and its decisive role in approving the EU development budget. They are therefore convinced that Parliament should be more closely involved in preparing EU development strategy. They consider it essential, furthermore, for a reporting-back mechanism to be put in place.