Basic information

2012/2059(DEC) DEC - Discharge procedure	Procedure lapsed or withdrawn
Special report 1/2012 (2011 discharge): Effectiveness of European Union development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa **Subject** 6.30 Development cooperation 6.30.02 Financial and technical cooperation and assistance 8.70.03.07 Previous discharges	

Key players

European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner
	International Cooperation and Development	PIEBALGS Andris

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
28/03/2012	Non-legislative basic document published	N7-0051/2012	Summary
18/04/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
15/11/2012	Vote in committee		
06/12/2012	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0400/2012	Summary

Technical information

Procedure reference	2012/2059(DEC)
Procedure type	DEC - Discharge procedure
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 101
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure lapsed or withdrawn
Committee dossier	CONT/7/09092

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE489.510	21/09/2012	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0400/2012	06/12/2012	Summary

Other institutions and bodies				
Institution/body	Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
CofA	Non-legislative basic document	N7-0051/2012	28/03/2012	Summary

Additional information		
Source	Document	Date
European Commission	EUR-Lex	

Special report 1/2012 (2011 discharge): Effectiveness of European Union development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa

2012/2059(DEC) - 28/03/2012 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present the European Court of Auditors Special Report (No 1/2012) on effectiveness of European Union development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa.

CONTENT: the report recalls that food security has long been, and still is, a global problem with an estimated one billion people in the world suffering from hunger. It has been defined as a condition where “all people, at all times, have physical, social and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life”. Food security is a major problem in sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of people suffering from hunger was reaching 239 million in 2010, i.e. 30 % of the total population.

For the period 2002 – 2010, the EU has funded a total of over **EUR 3.1 billion for food security interventions in sub-Saharan Africa** through the European Development Fund (EDF), which is the prime framework for cooperation with individual sub-Saharan countries, as well as three thematic instruments financed through the general budget of the European Union the Food Security Budget Line (FSBL), the Food Security Thematic Programme (FSTP) and the Food Facility which was established in 2008 to provide a rapid response to the crisis caused by volatile food prices in developing countries).

The European Court of Auditors has assessed whether EU development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa is effective by analysing whether EU development aid for food security is relevant to the countries’ needs and priorities and whether EU interventions are effective. The audit focused on EU direct development support for the three dimensions of food security, i.e :

- food availability,
- access to food,
- food utilisation (nutrition).

Court conclusions: the Court concludes that EU development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa is mostly effective and makes an important contribution to achieving food security. However, there is scope for significant improvement in several areas:

- while the Commission focused its development aid on countries with the highest number of undernourished people, it did not sufficiently consider the potential scope for EU support in other countries which also suffer from chronic food insecurity ;
- the Food Facility, set up in order to react to the impact of the 2007-2008 food price crisis, was not designed to address long term food price volatility;
- EU aid properly addresses countries’ needs and priorities as regards food availability and access to food. However, the Commission has not placed adequate emphasis on nutrition;
- often, interventions do not set sufficiently clear objectives and are sometimes overly ambitious, in particular in the case of Non- Governmental Organisation (NGO) projects;
- only half of the interventions have reasonable prospects of being sustainable.

Court recommendations: the Court recommends:

- for the programming period after 2013, that the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) should carry out a structured assessment of the food security situation in each country and systematically consider the potential scope for EU support in this area
- that the Commission should examine the feasibility of a permanent instrument to address the consequences of potential future foodcrises in developing countries;
- that the Commission and the EEAS should give adequate priority to nutrition when defining the cooperation strategy, identifying and designing interventions, and using policy dialogue with partner governments, notably in the framework of budget support programmes;

- that the Commission should set out intervention objectives that are sufficiently precise and measurable through performance indicators. It should ensure that the objectives are achievable by better assessing the risks and assumptions concerning the successful implementation of interventions;
- that the Commission should better support the financial sustainability of agricultural and social transfer programmes.

Special report 1/2012 (2011 discharge): Effectiveness of European Union development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa

2012/2059(DEC) - 06/12/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Budgetary Control adopted the report by Bart STAES (Greens/EFA, BE) on the Special Report No 1/2012 (2011 discharge): 'Effectiveness of European Union development aid for food security in sub-Saharan Africa'.

Welcoming the Court of Auditors' report and its overall conclusion (*please refer to the summary of the report dated 28/03/2012*), Members consider that there is **scope for significant improvement as regards making EU development aid for food security more efficient in this region**.

Members support the Court of Auditors' recommendation for a **structured assessment of the food security situation in each country** and a systematic consideration of the potential scope for relevant Union support by the European External Action Service (EEAS). They call on EuropeAid (Commission) to help ensure that effective early warning systems for food insecurity are in place. They also call on the EEAS to help ensure that corresponding government capacity is built to run those systems in a sustainable manner, and that prevention strategies are implemented, fostering the resilience of the most vulnerable.

Food crisis – malnutrition – food prices: given the unpredictability of new food crises and the increased volatility of food prices and speculation, Members believe that it necessary to take effective action against such speculation, including the regulation and control of derivative markets. They call on the Commission to elaborate upon response strategies for different contingencies, making any relevant proposals. They call for the **inclusion of a new Food Facility or a comparable mechanism in the multiannual financial framework for the years 2014 to 2020** to ensure the Union's ability to respond swiftly to new food crises using similar funds.

Members deplore the fact that, despite strong economic growth, one quarter of the population of sub-Saharan Africa still suffers from **malnutrition** despite the fact that the region has the technology, the knowledge and the natural resources to change this.

As regards **food security**, Members call on the Commission to:

- integrate the resources allocated under the EDF and the 'food security' budget line with a view to ensuring that they complement one another and that the funds in question are used as effectively as possible;
- take systematic account of the food security situation and chronic food insecurity, in particular when implementing Union development policy;
- strengthen the link between relief, rehabilitation and development in order to ensure the effectiveness of aid;
- prioritise agriculture in its development aid, including assistance to farmers in accessing markets given that there has been a dramatic reduction in the level of development aid allocated to agriculture since the 1980s;
- address the whole food chain, from farm to fork, in order to enhance the resilience of the agricultural sector. Members believe that long-term political commitments by governments in sub-Saharan Africa are necessary to reduce the vulnerability of the agricultural sector. Temporary subsidies, in the form of seeds that withstand extreme weather conditions, can serve as an important safety net for small-scale farmers and families. They also stress the importance of early warnings and preventive work on sanitation, seed and feed for animals;
- unite food policy and long-term social and economic development.

Maintaining the European Food Facility: Members agree with the Court of Auditors that a longer implementation period for the Food Facility (2008 to 2010) would have been more appropriate, given its objectives and the continuous volatility and high level of commodity prices.

Welcoming the resolve of the Commission expressed in its Communication on an EU policy framework to assist developing countries in addressing food security challenges (see COM(2010)0127) to integrate the nutritional dimension into Union programmes, Members reiterate their call on the Commission to draw up a specific Communication on this dimension and to integrate sound and multisectoral nutrition strategies into its development policy.

The Commission is called upon to set more realistic and measurable objectives for the interventions and to improve their definition in the general budget support programmes, where special attention should be given to encouraging entrepreneurship among the growing young population and addressing the discrimination against women in the agricultural sector.

Lastly, Members notes that the overall impact of Union action on food security is also determined by the Union's policies on agriculture, fisheries, energy and trade.