



STAND FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE

6 DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES
FOR IRISH MEPS IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2009-2014



TRÓCAIRE
Working for a Just World

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A KEY ROLE FOR THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AMIDST A NEW WORLD ORDER

European citizens will elect a new European Parliament in June 2009. The new parliament will take office at a time of global upheaval and transition. It will have to take decisions on a host of challenging issues which are of huge concern to both European citizens and developing countries. These include dealing with the global financial crisis, climate change, addressing the food and energy crises and responding to the protracted situations of conflict which exist in many parts of the world. The new parliament's term of office also coincides with the lead up to the 2015 deadline for achieving the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The impact of the financial crisis on developing countries has yet to be calculated. However, it is already threatening to undo years of work to tackle poverty in the South and reverse progress towards the MDGs. On the other hand, the crisis has brought about an opportunity to reassess the way global financial institutions such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are run and to put in place a fairer system of global economic governance which includes the voice of developing countries.

Geopolitical concerns such as security and competition for natural resources are also increasingly dictating Western policies towards the developing world with a large temptation to siphon off aid budgets to secure our own interests.

The responses to these strong forces of change are largely global in nature. No single country can tackle climate change, for example. Thus, the fates of people across the world from both developed and developing countries are necessarily interdependent and this is something we must not forget particularly in times of turmoil such as the present.

In the midst of this global change, the EU has a key role to play in standing for values-based, sustainable development and showing leadership on the large-scale challenges we are now facing. As the democratically-elected voice of European Citizens, the European Parliament must oversee this process.

THIS DOCUMENT OUTLINES A NUMBER OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IRISH MEPS WHO ARE ELECTED IN JUNE 2009 AND CALLS ON CANDIDATES TO "STAND FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE".

TRÓCAIRE'S VISION OF EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION: VALUES-BASED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Trócaire's vision of EU development policy is rooted in Catholic Social Teaching which stresses the dignity of each person and their inalienable human rights, along with their responsibilities, regardless of culture, ethnicity, gender or religion. In line with this, Trócaire believes that EU development cooperation should be bound by a commitment to poverty eradication, human rights and gender equality. The EU must also ensure that its environmental, economic, trade and security policies promote the right to sustainable development.

To achieve this vision of EU development cooperation, there need to be strong development institutions within the EU including a separate Commissioner for Development who can defend the interests of development within the wider EU policy sphere.¹

A CALL TO IRISH CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT. BE A VOICE FOR:



EU LEADERSHIP ON TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change is necessitating a radical rethink of our attitudes to resources and the organisation of our societies. We cannot ignore warnings of increased flooding, hurricanes or drought. They are a reality. Whilst the developed world is primarily responsible for climate change, it is people in developing countries who are suffering its worst effects. Developed countries have a responsibility not only to dramatically reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions but also to provide financing for adaptation efforts in the South by way of compensation.

During the European Parliament's next term of office, the international community will negotiate a critical agreement on climate change under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and the EU will have a major part to play in this.

In December 2008, the EU adopted a Climate and Energy Package² which goes some way towards putting in place the mechanisms to reduce greenhouse gas emissions within the Union. However, it did not go far enough and the EU must adopt a stronger position in advance of the international negotiations so that it can show leadership on environmental justice and do its fair share to address climate change.

WE CALL ON IRISH MEPS TO

- Ensure the EU adopts an ambitious negotiating stance within the UN Climate Change negotiations in order to keep global warming as far below 2°C as possible. This will require committing to greenhouse gas emissions reductions of 40% below 1990 levels by 2020 and 80-95% by 2050
- Ensure the EU delivers its fair share of financing for climate change adaptation in developing countries including supporting a post-2012 agreement at the UNFCCC that ensures sufficient, accessible and predictable financing for adaptation in addition to existing targets

“DEVELOPMENT-FRIENDLY” EU TRADE POLICIES



Trade is a key element of the fight against poverty in the developing world. However, in order to be able to reap the full benefits of trade, developing countries need to have the freedom to choose trade and economic policies which are appropriate to their level of development. For example, they need to be allowed to determine how and when they open their markets to competition from stronger economies. International trade rules must also support food security, livelihoods, poverty reduction and sustainable development. Finally, developing countries must be given support to strengthen their systems, institutions and infrastructure so that they can trade more effectively.

Trócaire believes that the interests of developing countries are best addressed through multilateral trade agreements. However, at present, the international trade regime under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) is unfairly stacked against developing countries and the most recent attempts to redress the imbalances under the Doha round of trade negotiations have floundered.³

Despite the failure of the WTO to establish greater international trade justice, the EU has forged ahead with concluding new bilateral trade agreements with developing countries, most significantly through Economic Partnership Agreements with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. Although these agreements are being billed by the EU as “instruments of development”, they actually prioritise the EU’s own trading interests over the promotion of development.

WE CALL ON IRISH MEPS TO

- Ensure that the EU’s positions in international and bilateral trade negotiations do not erode developing countries’ policy space. Developing countries must be able to set the pace of trade liberalisation according to their development needs
- Ensure that new trade agreements are coherent with the EU’s commitment to poverty reduction and sustainable development



DELIVERY OF EU PROMISES TO GIVE MORE AND BETTER AID

The EU as a whole provides over half of world aid, giving it a huge influence on international efforts to tackle poverty as well as a responsibility to show leadership on increasing aid and making it work in the most effective way possible.

As a bloc, the EU has promised to increase its collective aid spending to 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2015⁴ to fund the MDGs and to give 50% of this increase to Africa, which is home to many of the world's poorest countries. However, many Member States are not on track to reaching these targets⁵ and the financial crisis is likely to put further pressure on aid budgets just at a time when aid levels most urgently need to be sustained and increased.

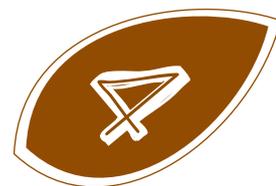
Ireland has so far been one of the European leaders on aid, having committed to increasing aid to 0.7% of national income by 2012 and the past ten years have seen Ireland significantly scaling up its aid budget.⁶ Irish MEPs must translate this commitment into European level action to ensure the EU as whole delivers more aid for the poor.

In tandem with promises to increase aid, the EU and other donors have agreed to take measures to make aid more effective at reducing poverty. These are contained in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and further elaborated under the recently agreed "Accra Agenda for Action".⁷ Key to making aid more effective is the need for greater openness of aid transactions and accountability of donors and developing country governments to citizens. Aid should also be driven by the priorities and needs of the people it is supposed to benefit.

WE CALL ON IRISH MEPS TO

- Ensure the EU delivers on its commitment to give 0.7% of GNI as ODA by 2015 or before and gives 50% of this increase to Africa
- Make EU aid more people-driven by ensuring that the priorities and needs of Southern citizens – particularly those from the poorest and most marginalised groups - are central to all EU development plans
- Make EU aid more transparent and accountable

AN EU THAT ROBUSTLY DEFENDS HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROMOTES PEACE



In many parts of the world, conflict continues to rage. Some of the most grave conflicts currently ongoing are those in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Palestine, Somalia and Darfur, Sudan. Aside from the appalling loss of life and suffering that arise from armed conflict and the human rights abuses that are frequently associated with it, conflict is, of course, one of the major barriers to development.

Women and girls are often particularly vulnerable in conflict situations with the increasing use of sexual and other forms of violence against them as a weapon of war.

Conflict can also result in large numbers of people being forced to flee their homes, often to live in terrible conditions in hugely overcrowded camps.⁸

As the world's largest provider of aid and the major trading partner for many third countries, the EU must use its influence through political dialogue, legal mechanisms built into cooperation and trade agreements with partner countries and peacekeeping missions to promote peace and ensure respect for human rights.

European parliamentarians can play a major role in highlighting instances of human rights violations, acting as champions for peace and scrutinising the EU's aid and trade policies to ensure consistency with these values.

WE CALL ON IRISH MEPS TO

- Ensure the EU includes enforceable human rights clauses in its trade and association agreements with third country governments
- Ensure the EU's operations under the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) are grounded in respect for human rights, democracy and peaceful resolution of conflict
- Ensure the EU prioritises the systematic implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 (on women, peace and security) and 1820 (on sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations)



EU MECHANISMS TO MAXIMISE THE BENEFITS OF PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT FOR DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

Although private sector investment in developing countries is an important factor for development, there is growing concern regarding the unregulated power and influence of multinational corporations in those countries, in particular in the extractive industries of oil, gas, mining and logging.

Often, there is little transparency around the terms on which companies are granted licences to operate, for example what payments the host country government will receive and what taxes will be paid by the company. Frequently, local people are not consulted as to the impacts of the companies' operations on their lives and livelihoods. This results in governments being unaccountable to their citizens and large scale corruption.

Moreover, the revenues from such transactions can serve to prop up authoritarian governments or fuel conflict. This happened most starkly in Liberia and Sierra Leone where proceeds from the extractive industry were used to fund brutal civil wars and continue to provoke instability to this day. In some cases, private sector activities in developing countries are associated, either directly or indirectly, with human rights abuses and environmental degradation.⁹

In order to ensure that the private sector grows as a positive element in the development paradigm, the EU must put in place mechanisms to ensure that private investment contributes to sustainable development and respect for human rights.

WE CALL ON IRISH MEPS TO

- Promote greater transparency and accountability of European companies operating in developing countries, particularly with regard to tax
- Support access to justice for communities in developing countries which are negatively affected by private sector investment
- Ensure EU funding to the private sector (eg through the European Investment Bank) is accompanied by robust environmental, human rights and social monitoring



EU ACTION TO END GLOBAL HUNGER

Over the past few years world food prices rose dramatically¹⁰ reaching a peak in mid-2008. This led to a global food crisis which has threatened the food security of millions of people, especially the poorest and most marginalised. Women have been particularly vulnerable to the effects of the crisis as have people living with HIV/AIDS who depend on good nutrition to fight the virus.

The crisis was largely triggered by instability in the global financial markets and in the energy sector. However, there are serious underlying causes such as the lack of political priority given to agriculture by donors and developing country governments alike. The majority of people living in developing countries live in rural areas and most of these depend on agriculture for a living. Despite this, the amount of development aid being spent on agriculture is falling.¹¹ This has been combined with agricultural trade policies which direct food to where the market will pay the highest price and not to where people are hungry. Climate change and a rise in the world's population are also important factors.

Although food prices have gone down since last year, some 938 million people (one in six) continue to suffer from chronic hunger¹² and, if the underlying causes of the food crisis are not tackled, it is likely that further food crises will arise in future.

In December 2008, the EU approved a financial package of one billion euros to deal with the immediate effects of the food crisis, however much more needs to be done in terms of fundamental reform of EU trade and agriculture policies. Ireland has made tackling hunger a cornerstone of its development aid programme and has appointed a Special Envoy for Hunger.¹³ Another way of putting this commitment into practice would be to ensure that eradicating hunger is prioritised in EU-level activities.

WE CALL ON IRISH MEPS TO

- Ensure the EU puts in place measures to bolster agricultural productivity in developing countries, in particular through support to sustainable, small-scale farmers, especially women
- Ensure the EU's agriculture and trade policies do not undermine agricultural production in developing countries e.g. the EU must phase out agricultural export subsidies which negatively impact on farmers in developing countries



STAND FOR GLOBAL JUSTICE!

Trócaire is asking Irish MEPs elected in June 2009 to make the fight against global poverty their business and to ensure that the needs of developing countries are strongly represented throughout EU policies and action.

We ask Irish MEPs to champion the cause of development in the EU. We ask you to ensure that EU aid effectively tackles poverty and inequality. We ask you to ensure that the EU's policies, in particular those on trade, environment and the private sector work in harmony with the needs of developing countries. And we ask you to be vocal in highlighting situations of injustice, speaking out against violations of human rights and in promoting the peaceful resolution of conflict in the developing world.

We ask you to **"Stand for Global Justice"**.

TRÓCAIRE: SUPPORTING GLOBAL ADVOCACY FOR JUSTICE

Trócaire's advocacy work is rooted in our collaboration with partner organisations in developing countries. We act as a channel for voices from the South as well as forming alliances with partners and carrying out joint advocacy activities. We also support local advocacy efforts and help to build partners' capacity to engage in advocacy work.

As a faith-based organisation Trócaire is united with similar organisations across the world through CIDSE (International Cooperation for Development and Solidarity) and the wider church network Caritas Internationalis (a confederation of 162 Catholic relief, development and social service organisations) to challenge global structures of injustice. Through CIDSE we link in to the European umbrella organisation for development NGOs, CONCORD, which represents 1600 NGOs across Europe. In the Republic of Ireland, we work with the association of Irish non-governmental development organisations, Dóchas. We are also a member of CADA (Coalition of Aid and Development Agencies) in Northern Ireland.

For more detailed policy positions on any of the issues in this document please contact policy@trocaire.ie

NOTES

- 1 The Lisbon Treaty, which has yet to be ratified by Ireland, would introduce new EU foreign policy structures i.e. a High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and a new “External Action Service”. Any new structures such as these must respect the nature of development as a policy separate from the EU’s foreign policy to ensure that development objectives are respected and EU aid is not used for purposes other than poverty reduction.
- 2 The “package” consists of four Directives on 1) Effort Sharing 2) Emissions Trading Scheme 3) Renewable energy 4) Carbon Capture and Storage.
- 3 The “Doha” round was launched in 2001 as a “development” round to address the trade imbalances (particularly in relation to intellectual property (eg access to medicines) and agriculture (eg dumping) which had emerged during the implementation of the Uruguay Agreements that launched the WTO in 1995. The last WTO Ministerial meeting in July 2008 collapsed when agreement could not be reached over the right of developing countries to use a special safeguard mechanism to deal with import surges and sudden price falls even though rich industrial countries have been allowed to use safeguards since the establishment of the WTO.
- 4 The EU has made a collective commitment to reach 0.7% of GNI by 2015 with an interim target of 0.56% by 2010. Individual Member States committed to reaching 0.51% of GNI as aid (for the 15 old Member States) and 0.17% (for the 12 new Member States) by 2010.
- 5 EU aid dropped from 0.41% of GNI in 2006 to 0.38% in 2007 with 18 out of 27 Member States either decreasing or just maintaining their aid levels. France’s aid fell by 16%, Belgium’s by 11% and the UK’s by almost 30%. See: “No Time to Waste: European governments behind schedule on aid quantity and quality”. Concord Annual Aid Monitoring Report, May 2008. www.concordeurope.org
- 6 Recent pressures on the Irish economy led the government to announce a large cutback of 95 million euros in the aid budget in February 2008. Whilst recognising that significant measures are necessary to turn around the Irish economy, Trócaire and other NGOs have criticised this cutback pointing out that it is disproportionate compared to other cutbacks and that the aid budget should not be considered a “soft target” for government savings. See “Aid cuts very bad news for the extreme poor says Trócaire”, press release 3/2/2009. www.trocaire.org
- 7 The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, endorsed on 2 March 2005, is an international agreement to which over one hundred developing countries, donors, regional development banks and international agencies adhered. The Declaration aims to streamline the way aid is delivered with a view to making it more effective in reducing poverty. The Accra Agenda for Action was agreed in September 2008 during a review of the Paris Declaration carried out in Accra, Ghana.
- 8 The plight of people who have been forced to flee their homes or “Internally Displaced People” is the subject of the 2009 Trócaire “Lenten” campaign. See www.trocaire.org
- 9 See, for example, the Interim report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the issue of human rights and transnational corporations and other business enterprises to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. E/CN.4/2006/97
- 10 The prices of staple crops such as wheat, rice and corn rose by 40-100% according to World Bank Commodity Price data.
- 11 Agriculture’s share of overseas development assistance fell from 17 percent in 1980 to 3 percent in 2006.
- 12 FAO estimates for 2008
- 13 Trócaire took part in Ireland’s “Hunger Taskforce” which published its report in September 2008. See http://www.irishaid.gov.ie/uploads/hunger_task_force.pdf



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