

2015

EUROPEAN YEAR FOR DEVELOPMENT

Upholding international solidarity, peace & democratic values

European United Left • Nordic Green Left

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY GROUP



GUE/NGL
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Upholding international solidarity, peace and democratic values

This is a key year for the future of international development as it is the deadline for the 2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDG). In addition, the EU will have an opportunity to shape future development and financing frameworks and ensure that they make a strong contribution to ending poverty and inequality.

EU policies can have serious impacts on people in developing countries. From cheap subsidised exports that local food producers cannot compete with to EU companies eating up precious natural resources; it's often a case of giving with one hand and taking with the other. Policy areas that impact upon development include trade, security, migration, energy, environment and climate change, agriculture and fisheries policy. All must respond to Policy Coherence for Development as stipulated in article 208 of the Lisbon Treaty.

Building an EU based on peace and solidarity goes hand in hand with establishing the political will for more development.



GUE/NGL priorities for development

GUE/NGL is committed to a true development policy rooted in self-determined social and economic development and the fight against poverty. The current global crisis demands a real policy of development promotion.

An effective development policy must:

Recognise essential human rights such as access to water, land, energy, health and education. These rights cannot depend on market rules;

Recognise the right to food and food sovereignty with the right for countries to protect themselves from imports, to protect their own natural resources, to support their local or subsistent production and trade, and to reject technological packages like agrochemicals, GMOs and biofuels;

Defend and promote a fair financing framework for development.

Comply with internationally agreed principles on aid effectiveness and aid quantity; set a concrete binding timeline at 0.7%;





Defend and promote labour law, safety at work and equality between women and men;

Cancel developing countries' foreign debt;

Promote transparency and accountability of the role of the private sector on development;

Promote an international democratic body on tax issues to promote tax justice, combat illicit financial flows, tax avoidance and tax evasion;

Recognise the right to access medicines by promoting a model which helps countries to produce or import medicines without paying commission to pharmaceutical companies;

Promote developing countries' ownership of development policies;

Safeguard and strengthen public services as indispensable elements to resolve problems such as healthcare and poverty;

Reject structural adjustment policies, reductions in social spending (health, education), dismantling public services and the reduction of medium and small farmers' subsidies;

Reject the repressive nature of EU immigration policies. The EU must assume its responsibility for the situation created in countries of origin and draw up a real cooperation policy with them;

Reject the use of development funds for military aid;

Set ambitious targets to tackle climate change as well as measures to help developing countries cope with global temperature increases through technology transfer and other means. Defend climate finance as new and additional to development financing.

Promoting international solidarity and peace

The GUE/NGL opposes militarisation, the deployment of EU intervention forces and any other action that creates conflict and tensions in international relations. International and political solutions are the best existing ways for ending and preventing conflicts peacefully.

The GUE/NGL group upholds international solidarity, peace, democratic values, and the sovereignty and liberty of peoples.



Promoting more effective flows of development finance to developing countries

In recent years, development institutions have dramatically increased their lending and investments to the private sector. The increasing shift towards the private sector in development finance is based on the uncontested assumption that greater private financial flows to developing countries are an effective way to support development, regardless of the terms and conditions under which they take place. We believe that conditions need to be put in place to make sure that private investments have a positive impact on the poor. GUE/NGL works to put forward proposals to increase the development effectiveness of increasingly diversified North-South financial flows, and to ensure that all these flows comply with responsible financing standards.



Promoting international tax justice and domestic resource mobilisation

It is a contradiction to support increased development assistance, yet turn a blind eye to actions by multinationals and others that undermine the tax base of a developing country. Cross-border illicit financial flows from developing countries amount to US \$1.3 trillion each year. More than half of these illicit flows are related to trade mispricing. As a result of multinational companies tax dodging, poor countries lose massive financial resources, approximately US \$160 billion per year. Curbing cross-border illicit capital flight and tax havens is crucial for eradicating unethical financial behaviour, and a means to boost domestic resource mobilisation as a predictable source of development finance. We work to improve tax cooperation and financial transparency to prevent cross-border tax avoidance and evasion by multinational companies (and individuals).





Addressing debt sustainability

In a situation of increased financing needs in developing countries combined with declining levels of aid, debt continues to be a problem in developing countries. This is both a symptom of a skewed global financial system and a cause of imbalances and poverty. Nevertheless it is the lenders that dominate in setting the rules and definitions surrounding debt issues. The framework fails to take human needs into account and bases its analysis on limited financial considerations, and debt repayments keep diverting money away from poverty reduction and equitable development. We call for a binding set of standards to define responsible lending and borrowing; debt audits and fair debt workout mechanism, which should assess the legitimacy and the sustainability of countries' debt burdens; a human needs based approach to debt sustainability; cancellation of unsustainable and unjust debt.

Protecting developing countries against the spillover effects of TTIP

GUE/NGL opposes TTIP and all other neoliberal free trade agreements, as they have harmful economic, social and environmental consequences on developing countries. It demands a thorough analysis of the likely impact on developing countries and the future sustainable development goals. The wording of the negotiating mandate is so general that TTIP's content and possible spillover effects on developing countries are still not known. TTIP will accentuate the centre-periphery divergences of the world economy, plunging developing countries into a primary model of exporting countries and condemning them to underdevelopment.

The EU has among its fundamental principles 'Policy Coherence for Development' This means that the external action of the EU must not contradict the objectives of development policy and ultimately the obligation of eradication of poverty. The TTIP, like many other trade agreements subscribed by the EU, mine these objectives. We are building with one hand what we are demolishing with the other. It's time to be coherent!



Addressing the impact of climate change

Climate change, loss in biodiversity and pollution all have profound impacts on agriculture, farmers, indigenous people's lives, lands and oceans throughout the world. This ever-growing environmental deterioration considerably increases levels of poverty and inequality. The solution will not come from market mechanisms, but from ambitious international legally binding agreements.

The GUE/NGL's vision of climate change is based on the principle of historical common but differentiated responsibilities.

We believe it is necessary to establish an Adaptation Fund exclusively to address climate change as part of a financial mechanism that should be managed in a sovereign, transparent and equitable manner for all states. This Fund should assess the impacts and costs of climate change, loss in biodiversity and pollution in developing countries. It should also include a mechanism for compensation for current and future damage and the loss of opportunities due to extreme and gradual climatic events. Compensation must be direct and additional to the funding as promised by developed countries.



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The GUE/NGL group in the European Parliament is made up of 52 MEPs from 14 countries working for peace, solidarity, social justice, equality, democracy and human rights in Europe and beyond.

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