Funding for Development

EU Member States contribute an average of 20% of their development budgets to the European Institutions, making the European Commission the second largest donor in the world. The impact of this assistance on children is clear – between 2004 and 2009 nine million children were enrolled in primary school, and five million vaccinated against measles. We know that 85% of European citizens believe development assistance is important to lift people in developing countries out of poverty, according to a Eurobarometer poll, and we believe that EU support for the European Commission’s proposal to increase Heading 4 – “Global Europe” - is critical to meeting our commitments to the MDGs and poverty eradication.

Ensuring a place for child rights, gender, and education and health

However, increasing the overall ceiling for development cooperation is not enough to guarantee that specific EU commitments on child rights, gender, health and basic education, made in the Lisbon Treaty, in the EC Communication and Council Conclusion on the “EU Role on Global Health” and the EU Development Consensus, are met. We are concerned by gaps in the EC’s proposal in these areas, which are crucial if we want to eradicate poverty and foster sustainable economic, social and environmental development. The EU’s development objectives will not be achieved if these areas are not adequately addressed and resourced. The values and principles including democracy, fundamental rights, equality between women and men, anti-discrimination, and social justice expressed in the Lisbon Treaty, must be at the heart of the next MFF.

Furthermore, the Council conclusions on the Agenda for Change strengthen the importance of the rights-based approach and gender mainstreaming to development and that these principles will guide the design and implementation of external action instruments under the Multiannual Financial Framework 2014-2020.

We particularly urge EU Member States and the European Parliament to:

Ensure there are specific budget allocations to child rights, and that in addition child rights are mainstreamed effectively as a cross-cutting issue, including child-sensitive budgeting and indicators.

Member States already have an obligation to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), the world’s most ratified treaty. With Article 3 of the Lisbon Treaty and Article 24 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the EU has a clear objective of promoting, protecting and fulfilling the rights of the child. Ensuring that child rights are included in a meaningful way in the MFF is a critical step to implementing this commitment.

In the current DCI proposal specific references for children and youth have been removed from the Global Public Good and Challenges thematic programme. In addition, children are not considered as a priority under geographic programmes. Children make up for 1/3 of the world’s population and constitute more than half of the population in most developing countries, which means that development objectives will not be met if the specific rights of children are not addressed.

If child rights commitments are to be met, children must be visible in the EU budget through clear, traceable budget allocations. In addition, clear child-sensitive monitoring and evaluation tools, such as child-sensitive indicators, should be clearly mentioned throughout the DCI or the horizontal instrument if the EC is to be able to report on the impact they are having on children in all areas of work.
The EU has repeatedly recognised that gender equality is key to achieving development objectives and a priority for the EU. However, while gender mainstreaming is mentioned as a cross-cutting issue in the general principles of the DCI, gender has not been properly mainstreamed throughout the proposal. In line with the commitments in the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP), adequate and predictable funding for women’s and girl’s rights, as well as gender equality, needs to be provided through specific budget lines to ensure gender is consistently mainstreamed throughout EU actions. In addition a commitment to gender-responsive budgeting should be included. Gender mainstreaming must be a requirement in the EU external financial instruments.

The Programming Guidelines will be the key document to define how gender will be mainstreamed throughout much of the EC development programming and the implementation of the EU Gender Action Plan.

Ensure at least 20% of the DCI (thematic and geographic programmes) is earmarked for health and basic (primary and lower secondary) education as well as in the European Development Fund.

The current proposal includes a 20% earmarking for social inclusion and human development, which is very broadly defined to include jobs, growth and the private sector. This would mean that all these areas would receive fewer resources than in the past. Health and basic education are essential for reaching the other MDGs, and require continued investment. Allocating 20% exclusively for health and basic education is therefore essential. This also maintains the previous 20% commitment in the 2007-2013 DCI, and follows the many previous calls from the European Parliament.

This target must be applied across the DCI (thematic and geographic programmes) as well as in the European Development Fund. This will also require increased monitoring, evaluation and reporting towards the 20% benchmark target on an annual basis, and focusing the monitoring on the rights-based approach and on the MDGs most off-track, notably maternal and reproductive health and child health, and to countries and regions with the most critical MDG indicators.

Key decisions on the external aid package of the MFF will be agreed before the end of the Danish EU Presidency. It is therefore our great hope that you will be a strong supporter of the EU’s development cooperation, and children’s rights in particular, in the negotiations. We urge you to take on board our recommendations when defining your position on the main instruments under Heading 4, particularly the size and content of the DCI.

For more information please contact Sabine Terlecki, Advocacy and Campaigns Manager on 02 504 6053 or at sabine.terlecki@plan-international.org.

Founded 75 years ago, Plan is one of the largest children’s development organisations in the world. It works in 50 developing countries across Africa, Asia and the Americas to promote child rights and lift millions of children out of poverty.