

Part of the act4europe campaign initiated by the Civil Society Contact Group

Brussels, 28 August 2006

Mr Jürgen Schröder, MEP
Committee on Development
European Parliament
ASP 15E 157
Rue Wiertz 60
B-1047 Brussels

Dear Mr. Schröder,

Draft EU Budget for 2007

We would like to express our support for the amendments to the 2007 draft EU budget that you have submitted as Rapporteur for the Committee on Development. Eurostep is a coalition of European NGOs working with civil society partners in developing countries across the world. We have been following the establishment of the future legal instrument governing the EU's financing of co-operation with developing countries since the Commission published its proposals in September 2004. We have continually supported all efforts, not least by the Parliament's Development Committee, to ensure that the EU's co-operation with developing countries gives proper priority to actions targeting poverty and to achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). As 2007 will be the first year of the new Financial Perspectives it is important that the budget sets out the orientation of the EU's approach to development co-operation that will be pursued for the next seven years.

In our view the amendments you have put down do just this. They also seek to ensure the consistency needed with a Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) that is exclusively oriented to supporting strategies for the EU's co-operation with developing countries. Such strategies must be clearly directed towards the eradication of poverty and achieving the MDGs, being the principal objectives of the EU's development co-operation. We also agree that this requires priority to be given to support for social sector investment, particularly towards basic health and education, and to the promotion of gender equality. We believe that Parliament took an important initiative in 2001, with the incorporation of indicative levels of financing within the budget for social sector support. These are entirely consistent with the commitments made by the EU together with the international community as a whole, and should continue to set parameters for the EU budget over the life time of the next Financial Perspectives.

We also welcome the amendments you put forward to ensure that Asia, which you rightly identify as having the highest proportion of the world's people living in extreme poverty, has a budget allocation that is more commensurate with this fact. Additionally, we welcome your proposal to give clarity to support provided through civil society organisations, as distinct from local authorities.

We hope that the principals behind your proposed amendments will be clearly elaborated within the Development Co-operation Instrument when it is finally adopted. We are working to support the proposals of the European Parliament in its negotiations with the Council and Commission. We strongly believe that it is critical that the DCI fully reflects strategies for the effective promotion of development that have been adopted in common by the international community. The European Parliament has a crucial role to play in ensuring that the EU's development co-operation is focused on agreed priorities. It is therefore important that the role of Parliament is fully facilitated within the legal framework established by the DCI, and within the annual budget.

We look forward to your proposed amendments being included in the adopted budget and will continue to give our support to this end.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Stocker', written in a cursive style.

Simon Stocker
Director

Cc.

Mr James Elles, MEP, General Rapporteur

Mr István Szent-Iványi, MEP, Draftsman for Committee on Foreign Affairs on Budget
2007

Members of the Committee on Development in the European Parliament