

Aid and Migration Policies
Brief note for the meeting with Nathalie Griesbeck, MEP
Brussels, 24 February 2010

Official Development Assistance

Inflated ODA figures¹

In the present world economic context of 2008-2010 (rise of oil and raw material prices, financial crisis and economic recession), temptation is higher than ever for governments to stagnate or to reduce their aid; and even to include in ODA figures, elements which previously did not appear. Out of the almost €50bn that European governments provided as aid in 2008, close to €1bn is refugee costs, €2bn is foreign student costs and almost €5bn is debt cancellation.

Migration-related expenses such as hosting refugees and the building and maintenance of irregular migrants' detention centres are calculated in the ODA figure although these expenses do not contribute to the aims of development aid. Regarding refugee costs, Spain, for example reported as "housing policy and administration management" a project related to migrants' housing. Moreover, there are clear gaps on donor country reporting and detailed breakdowns of spending on refugees are rarely available. This problem is especially relevant in some of the new Member States, such as Malta and the Slovak Republic, where the OECD DAC reporting guidelines are not yet fully implemented and local NGOs believe that not only refugee costs, but also money spent on migrant detention centres and repatriations may be being reported as ODA.

It is important to closely monitor ODA volumes and content and constantly remind donor governments that ODA is an instrument for development only. Development aid must contribute to shape a better world, and allow an enhancement of people's life condition, especially of the poor. This aid must contribute to enhancing possibilities for all, such as accessibility to basic services (water, food, health, and education), work opportunities, income growth, capacity to develop potentials (at personal, family or community level) and a secure environment sufficient for all society members. Only then, will migration become truly an option for changing environment.

Security-related conditionality on ODA

In addition, we can observe the use of new conditionality clauses for ODA, linked to the migration flow governance. Some donor governments have put forward a policy which ties ODA money to recipient's countries' cooperation on migration and repatriations. Exposed to significant migration flows, European Mediterranean countries in particular tend to allocate ODA in priority to developing countries that show willingness to improve their management of migration such as through reinforcing border controls, actively fighting irregular migration, or taking back migrants when they seek to return them.

The main advocate of this was France, which during its presidency of the EU, fostered a pact on migration and asylum allowing Member States to negotiate bilateral agreements against cooperation on migration issues. In Italy, the government has tabled a proposal to speed up cooperation interventions with countries willing to sign repatriation agreements. Similarly, Malta has chosen its priority countries according to migration patterns and concerns.

¹See CONCORD 2009 AidWatch report

http://www.concordeurope.org/Files/media/internetdocumentsENG/3_Topics/Topics/Aidwatch/AidWatch-report-2009_light.pdf

This illustrates the trend of politicising ODA spending – where aid is an instrument for pursuing political, commercial and security interests, rather than for alleviating poverty, injustices and inequalities. It is essential to separate the objective of migration control from that of development aid.

EU Migration and Development Policy

In the *EU Global Approach to Migration*² adopted in 2005, the development aspects of migration are taken into consideration but the main objective remains reducing migration to Europe.

The *European Pact on Migration and Asylum*³, adopted in October 2008, was one of the highest priorities of the French Presidency of the EU – it translates the Global Approach into different policy objectives. The main argument is the Pact is that the effective management of migration must include legal migration, the fight against illegal migration, and economic and social development of countries of origin. The Pact makes the EU's offer of opportunities for legal migration for work and study clearly conditional on a proven commitment from third countries that they will fight irregular migration. Thus, this policy document adopted by the European Council justifies new migration-related ODA conditionality.

Co-development

The term *co-development* is very much used both in French political discourse and EU discourse, but primarily in relation to migration management. For example, The EU's 1999 Tampere programme states that key elements in migration management are the development of partnerships with countries of origin and policies of co-development.

However, the impact of co-development is limited when the main objective of migration management is the reduction of immigration to the EU.

For Caritas, the concept of co-development presents the advantage that it recognises migrants as critical actors in the development of their countries of origin and destination. Caritas supports the concept of co-development provided that it is considered as fostering North-South win-win partnerships where migration is envisaged as a factor of development.

Policy Coherence for Development⁴

Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) is more than a handy tool for effective policy-making: it is an obligation under the EU Treaty. Indeed, the EU and the Member States are legally obliged to take account of the objectives of development cooperation (such as eradicating poverty and realizing human rights) in the policies that they implement, which are likely to affect developing countries⁵, including migration policy.

In the field of migration and development, sources of incoherence and challenges increasingly come from linking migration to internal security. European migration policies are focused on 'controlling migration flows' rather than on securing migrants' rights. Migrants represent a threat for security and the socio-economic system and at the same time, they are viewed through the narrow lens of economic and demographic benefits and what they can bring to Europe.

Migrants are very often neglected in their capacity as agents of change and actors in the development of their societies of origin and their hosting societies, who could help bridge the gaps between Northern and Southern countries.

² http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/87642.pdf

³ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/08/st13/st13440.en08.pdf>

⁴ See CONCORD report Spotlight on PCD (2009):

http://www.concordeurope.org/Files/media/internetdocumentsENG/5_Press/1_Press_releases/00pressreleases2009/CONCORD_PCD-Spotlight-report_light.pdf

⁵ art. 10A and 188D of the Lisbon Treaty

For example:

- Stricter migration control in developing countries as a result of the pressure by the EU and new ODA conditionality may lead to increased cases of human rights abuses such as arbitrary detentions and expulsions in EU neighbouring countries. This has been observed in Libya, Algeria and Morocco, where arbitrary detentions and massive expulsions took place.
- While presenting positive elements such as equal treatment in terms of socio-economic rights, the European Blue Card Directive for highly qualified migrant workers adopted in 2009 lacks adequate safety net to safeguard against the risk of brain drain. It does not offer concrete incentives –either in the EU nor in developing countries – to enable Blue Card holders, after their experience in the EU, to return to their country of origin in good conditions.

Incoherence between Migration and Development Policies: The Case of France⁶

A new ministry, bringing together migration, integration, national identity and development (MIIIDS) was created in 2007. The French Government clearly intends to gear development policy towards migration control, using part of the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget. Even if MIIIDS directly manages only a small proportion of French aid, its influence on overall development policy is increasingly significant.

MIIIDS has been in charge of negotiating bilateral agreements on the 'concerted management of migration flows' since its creation. In relation to these agreements the French Government has set ambitious annual targets for the repatriation of undocumented migrants from France (26,000 people in 2008, 27,000 in 2009). Most readmission negotiations not only include the repatriation of undocumented migrants, but also the repatriation of third-country nationals who transit through signatory countries. Most transit countries are reluctant to agree to repatriate such migrants. This could explain the lack of transparency in negotiations. The target set by MIIIDS is to sign seven agreements every year between 2009 and 2011.

Resources Allocation of MIIIDS:

1. At the multilateral level, France plans to set up a trust fund with the African Development Bank, dedicated to cooperative development, containing 9 million Euros allocated for 3 years. This fund would support projects in Africa only regarding migrant remittances, micro-enterprise projects or migrants' projects.
2. At the national level, 3.5 million Euros will be allocated to provide assistance to migrants resettling in their country of origin. These projects are implemented by the French Office for Immigration and Integration and have nothing to do with development policy.
3. Most of the aid managed by the MIIIDS is, in fact, allocated to the 'cooperative development' chapter of agreements on the 'concerted management of migration flows'. The geographic priorities include all countries where bilateral agreements on the 'concerted management of migration flows' have been either signed (Gabon, Congo, Benin, Senegal, Tunisia, Mauritius, Cape Verde), planned (Mali, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, Mauritania etc.), or are crucial for migration control (Algeria and Morocco) (CICI, 2008, p.177). Almost 18 million Euros used in 2009.

⁶ See the 2009 European Social Watch Report <http://www.socialwatch.eu/wcm/France.html>

Caritas Europa policy recommendations

1. For migration to become an option, development aid should primarily **focus on fighting the root causes of poverty and forced migration**, including insecurity, injustice, bad governance, human rights violations and unfair economic policies. ODA should not be an incentive for migration flow management.
2. Development and migration policies should be **human-rights based** and include a systematic human rights impact assessment. Migrants are not simply man power, but foremost human beings. Only their safety and stability allows them to become development actors.
3. Governments have to adhere to their commitments relating to the MDGs and ODA, including dedicating **0.7%** of their Gross National Income (GNI) to aid by 2015. Aid should be responding to human needs, focus on **alleviating poverty** and not be dependent on political, economical or security interests.
4. **Ending inflation of aid budgets** with debt cancellation, refugee and foreign student costs and stopping discussions on widening the definition of ODA to include other items such as climate change financing, security or migration.
5. Using development aid as a tool in the fight against migration is not only dangerous, but also counterproductive. Instead of a simplistic cause-effect relationship (more development – less migration), the migration-development nexus needs to be understood from a **triple-win perspective**, whereby migration benefits the country of origin, the host country and, first and foremost, the migrants themselves.
6. The PCD principle needs to be better promoted and implemented:
 - In addition to synergies between migration and development policy goals, a strong **coherence of all policies** that can potentially affect the development of developing countries must be guaranteed. A **multidimensional approach** to policy coherence for development should be used in order to properly address linkages such as between migration, trade, agriculture and development; or migration, climate change and development.
 - **Appropriate policy-making tools and institutional mechanisms.**
In the **European Parliament**:
 - a Standing Rapporteur for PCD should be appointed in the DEV committee, supported by PCD focal points in other relevant committees (AFET, INTA, AGRI, PECH, ENVI, LIBE);
 - the DEV committee should coordinate the drafting of a biennial report on PCD on the basis of reports given by other committees prepared by their PCD focal points;
 - a solid mechanism for regular and timely inter-committee exchanges on PCD issues should be set up;
 - MEPs should agree to set up a European complaints mechanism for ex-post control, so that the victims of damaging policies can be heard
 - MEPs should use the EP budgetary power to introduce a budget line for PCD
 - MEPs should apply their influence on the Commission, the Council as well as Member States to constantly remind them of their Treaty obligation and responsibility to implement the PCD agenda and to put in place appropriate and robust mechanisms for effective PCD implementation;
 - A structured and honest dialogue with Southern partners on the impact of EU external policies should take place and accountability of EU policy-makers with regard to policy incoherence should be reinforced.
The European Parliament should use existing inter-parliamentary platforms involving Southern partners (e.g. JPA ACP-EU, EU-Lat, EuroMed) to discuss PCD issues.