The European Consensus on Development is a policy statement jointly adopted by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Commission and the European Parliament. It reflects the European Union willingness to make a decisive contribution to the eradication of poverty in the world and to help build a more peaceful and equitable world.

The Declaration is divided into two parts: the EU common vision on development is the subject of Part I, whereas Part II sets out the policy guiding the implementation of this vision at the Community level.

The first part of the Statement, named the European Union Vision of Development, sets out common objectives and principles for development cooperation. It reaffirms EU commitment to poverty eradication, ownership, partnership, delivering more and better aid and promoting policy coherence for development. It will guide Community and Member State development cooperation activities in all developing countries, in a spirit of complementarity.

The primary and overarching objective is the eradication of poverty in the context of sustainable development, in line with the international agenda, the Millennium development Goals (MDGs) in particular. Human rights and good governance are other important objectives.

Poverty is considered in its multidimensional aspects, in its economic, social and environmental dimensions. Therefore its eradication requires supporting poor people in all developing countries.

The fight against poverty also implies achieving a balance between activities aimed at human development, at the protection of natural resources, and at economic growth and wealth creation that benefit the poor people.

EU development cooperation will promote common values and effective multilateralism.

The common principles of development cooperation activities are ownership and partnership, in-depth political dialogue, participation of civil society, gender equality and a continuous engagement towards preventing state fragility. Developing countries bear the primary responsibility for their own development, but the EU shares responsibility and accountability for the joint efforts made in partnership.

The EU has committed to increase aid budgets and to achieve 0,7% of gross national income by 2015, with an intermediate collective target of 0,56 % by 2010; half of this aid increase will go to Africa. The EU is also committed to make public development assistance more stable and predictable. The EU will continue to prioritise support to the least developed countries and other low income countries while recognising the value of
concentrating the aid of Member States in areas and regions where they have comparative advantages.

The EU will provide more but also better aid, through the implementation and monitoring of its commitments on aid effectiveness in all developing countries, including setting concrete targets for 2010. National ownership, donor coordination and harmonisation, starting at the field level, alignment to recipient country systems and results orientation are core principles in this respect.

Where circumstances permit, the use of general or sectoral budget support should increase, as a means to strengthen ownership, to support partner’s national accountability and procedures, to finance national poverty reduction strategies and to promote sound and transparent management of public finances. Debt reduction will be used where necessary and the untying of aid will be further promoted.

The EU will advance coordination, harmonisation and alignment. It will promote better donor complementarity by working towards joint multi-annual programming based on partner countries strategies and processes, common implementation mechanisms, joint donor wide missions, and the use of co-financing arrangements. The EU will take a lead role in implementing the Paris Declaration commitments on improving aid delivery. The EU will capitalise on new Member States’ experience to strengthen their role as donors.

The EU will advance policy coherence for development in a number of areas. The purpose is that all EU non-development policies which are likely to affect developing countries, such as trade, security and migration, contribute to developing countries’ efforts to meeting the MDGs.

The EU acknowledges the contribution of development cooperation to addressing global challenges and making globalisation a positive force for all of mankind. Reducing poverty is an objective in its own right as well as an important factor to ensure long-term peace and security.

The second part of the Declaration, entitled The European Community Development Policy, defines how the Community will implement the European vision on development set out in the first part, for the resources entrusted to the Community.

The Community’s policy is complementary to the bilateral policies of Member States. The European Commission, within the competences conferred to it by the Treaty, provides added value thanks to its global presence and expertise as a delivery agent, its role in promoting policy coherence and best practices, in facilitating coordination and harmonisation, in supporting democracy, human rights, good governance and respect for international law, in promoting the participation of civil society and North-South solidarity.

The Community promotes a differentiated approach based on the particular country or region needs, priorities and assets. Development objectives are goals in their own right. Development cooperation is one major element of a wider set of external actions, all of which are important and should be coherent, mutually supportive and not subordinate to each other. The programming documents – country, regional and thematic strategy papers – reflect this range of policies and ensure coherence between them.
Resource allocation will be guided by objective and transparent criteria based on needs and performance. Priority will be given to the least developed and low income countries but appropriate attention will also be devoted to middle income countries, particularly to lower middle income countries many of which face similar problems to LICs. The principle of concentration will guide the Community in all its country and regional programming. This means selecting, through the dialogue with partner countries, a limited number of priority areas of action rather than spreading efforts in too many sectors. Responding to the needs expressed by partner countries, the Community will be primarily active in the following nine areas, keeping into account its comparative advantages in a number of these: trade and regional integration; the environment and the sustainable management of natural resources; infrastructure, communications and transport; water and energy; rural development, territorial planning, agriculture and food security; governance, democracy, human rights and support for economic and institutional reforms; conflict prevention and fragile states; human development; social cohesion and employment.

In all its activities the Community will apply a strengthened approach to mainstreaming the following cross-cutting issues: democracy, good governance, human rights, the rights of children and indigenous peoples; gender equality; environmental sustainability; and the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Support to global funds and initiatives that are clearly linked to the Millennium Development Goals and to global public goods will continue. The commitments for improved policy coherence for development will be reflected in a rolling work programme to be prepared by the Commission and the Member States.

Community decisions and choices of aid modalities will be tailored to countries’ needs and contexts; where conditions allow, budget support will be the preferred modality. The Community will use an approach based on results and performance indicators. The majority of Community aid will continue to be provided as grants, particularly suitable for the poorest countries and for those with a limited ability to repay.

In order to guarantee a maximum impact of aid for the beneficiary countries, the Community will promote synergies and enhanced cooperation with initiatives undertaken by the European Investment Bank, the UN system, the International Financing Institutions and other relevant international organisations and agencies.

The reform of external assistance launched in 2000 has speed up the implementation of Community assistance and improved the quality of aid delivery. Further improvements will continue to be made. The Commission will therefore fully take into account the lessons drawn from the assessment of the 2000 EC Development Policy and will ensure that the European Consensus on Development is applied consistently in Community development programmes in all developing countries.