



Council of the
European Union

Brussels, 23 November 2016
(OR. en)

14773/16
ADD 1

DEVGEN 260
ACP 168
RELEX 983
ENV 734

COVER NOTE

From: Secretary-General of the European Commission,
signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director

date of receipt: 23 November 2016

To: Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of
the European Union

No. Cion doc.: SWD(2016) 387 final

Subject: COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Assessing the 2005
European Consensus on Development and accompanying the initiative
"Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development" -
Accompanying the document COMMUNICATION FROM THE
COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE
EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE
COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS - Proposal for a new European
Consensus on Development - Our World, our Dignity, our Future

Delegations will find attached document SWD(2016) 387 final.

Encl.: SWD(2016) 387 final



Strasbourg, 22.11.2016
SWD(2016) 387 final

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Assessing the 2005 European Consensus on Development and accompanying the initiative "Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development"

Accompanying the document

**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL
COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS**

**Proposal for
a new European Consensus on Development
Our World, our Dignity, our Future**

{ COM(2016) 740 final }

{ SWD(2016) 388 final }

{ SWD(2016) 389 final }

Staff Working Document

Assessing the 2005 European Consensus on Development and accompanying the Initiative "Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development"

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Staff Working Document (SWD) accompanies the Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on a "Proposal for a new European Consensus on Development". In line with the Roadmap¹, the purpose of the SWD is to provide an overview of the outcomes from available evaluation exercises. In so doing, the SWD analyses the extent to which the EU and its Member States have aligned their policies and strategies to the objectives, values and principles of the European Consensus on Development² and also reviews the extent to which the Consensus has guided development cooperation activities entrusted to the EU and their implementation.

The findings show that the objectives of the European Consensus, such as poverty reduction, sustainable development and the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) have generally been integrated by the EU and the Member States in their development policies. A broad alignment with the Consensus' common values of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace, democracy, good governance, gender equality, the rule of law, solidarity and justice, has also been observed. A significant degree of alignment is found between the Consensus' principles, such as ownership and partnership, political dialogue, participation of civil society, gender and fragility, and the EU and Member States policies - although some principles were not always followed-up by clearly defined strategies. On working better together, the EU and Member States showed high levels of commitment to enhancing coordination and complementarity and improving aid and development effectiveness. This is illustrated by their leading role in international fora and concrete steps in enhancing transparency, inclusive partnerships and coordination, the latter notably through significant progress in Joint Programming.

The evidence points to the relevance and effectiveness of the Consensus in guiding EU development cooperation and contributing to its objectives, in particular poverty reduction, specifically through support to food security, education and health, and growth, namely through support to macroeconomic stability, trade and infrastructure. Similarly, the Consensus was translated in differentiating resource allocations towards countries most in need, the use of innovative aid modalities and increased commitment in Policy Coherence for Development.

According to Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC) peer reviews, the Consensus has been a "major strategic success"³ and a "key milestone"⁴. The evidence indeed shows that the Consensus has had an added-value in fostering a shared and common vision for EU and Member States development cooperation and, in the cases of new Member States, it had a direct influence in the shaping of their development policies. The Consensus also played an important role in

¹ http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/roadmaps/docs/2016_devco_003_european_consensus_on_development_en.pdf

² Available at [http://eur-](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2006%3A046%3A0001%3A0019%3AEN%3APDF)

[lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2006%3A046%3A0001%3A0019%3AEN%3APDF](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2006%3A046%3A0001%3A0019%3AEN%3APDF)

³ OECD/DAC Peer Review of the European Community, 2007, available at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/38965119.pdf>, p. 13.

⁴ OECD/DAC Peer Review of the European Union, 2012, available at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/50155684.pdf>, p. 28

guiding EU development cooperation, which has progressively adapted to its priorities and principles. The Consensus has also increased the EU added value by allowing the EU to play leading roles, for example in promoting Joint Programming and articulating the EU and Member States views in international agreements. Overall, the Consensus has played a key role in fostering and driving a new impetus to EU development policy.

1. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The European Consensus on Development⁵ (hereinafter referred to as ECD or Consensus) is a 2005 joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the European Commission. When setting out the EU vision of development, the Consensus sets out common objectives, principles, values and commitments for the EU and its Member States. In the part on the European Community development policy, it sets out how this vision will be translated and implemented at EU level.

This Staff Working Document (SWD) first analyses the extent to which the EU and its Member States have aligned their policies and strategies to the Consensus objectives, values and principles. It then reviews the extent to which the Consensus has guided development cooperation activities entrusted to the EU and their implementation. The SWD does not aim at establishing a direct causal link between the Consensus and the observed changes in policy making nor to quantify such changes.

The SWD is not intended to be a fully-fledged evaluation exercise, but rather to provide an overview of the outcomes from past evaluation endeavours. This exercise is considered to provide an adequate basis to assess the policy over the period of the analysis, based on evaluation practice in the period in question, in view of informing the Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on a "Proposal for a new Consensus on Development".

The Communication makes proposals to revise the ECD in line with and in response to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development⁶, which is an integral part, and global challenges and trends. It contributes to taking further the Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy⁷ and its implementation is to be coordinated with that of other global agreements, such as the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change⁸.

⁵ Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ%3AC%3A2006%3A046%3A0001%3A0019%3AEN%3APDF>

⁶ Available at http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/AAAA_Outcome.pdf

⁷ Available at https://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf

⁸ Available at http://unfccc.int/files/essential_background/convention/application/pdf/english_paris_agreement.pdf

2. BACKGROUND TO THE INITIATIVE

In over fifty years of EU development cooperation, the ECD is the first joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission, that sets out common principles, values and objectives of development policy for the EU and its Member States. The EU and its Member States engaged to formulate and implement their development policies in a spirit of complementarity. The Consensus constitutes a major innovation as “for the first time, this vision is both a European Community and a Member State responsibility”⁹. In addition, its second part sets out how to translate this vision into sector priorities and operational approaches, which should be applied to the development cooperation resources entrusted to the EU.

In the part setting out the EU vision of development, the ECD corroborates the overarching objective of **poverty reduction** in the context of **sustainable development** and integrates the **Millennium Development Goals**¹⁰ (MDGs) and the **Monterrey Consensus on Financing for Development**¹¹ that had been adopted as key global objectives for development and international guidelines for financing for development. In the Consensus the multidimensional aspects of poverty eradication are acknowledged. The ECD definition of **sustainable development**, which is "a central goal by itself", includes **good governance, human rights, political, social, economic and environmental aspects**, recognising that development activities in several areas are essential for poverty eradication. **Common values** to be promoted in partnerships with third countries are respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, peace, democracy, good governance, gender equality, the rule of law, solidarity and justice. The Consensus also introduces **the nexus between development and security**, in particular with reference to fragile states. To ensure the pursuit of such objectives the Consensus devotes considerable space to **common principles** of cooperation, such as **ownership, partnership, political dialogue, participation of civil society and gender equality**. Finally the Consensus commits to enhancing EU and Member States **aid and its effectiveness**, proposing to increase financial resources, pursue more effective aid, adhere to principles of **coordination and complementarity**, as well as strengthen **Policy Coherence for Development (PCD)**.

The part of the Consensus on the European Community development policy lays down the **priority areas**¹² and **operational** approaches for the EU development cooperation recognising the value added and comparative advantages of the EU level. In terms of operational approaches, the second part of the Consensus proposes a **differentiated approach** depending on contexts and needs, the use of **transparent and objective criteria to allocate resources**, the application of the **principle of concentration** and the use of appropriate implementation modalities, as well as ensuring **Policy Coherence for Development**. In 2011, the Communication "Increasing the impact of EU development policy: an Agenda for Change"¹³ (hereinafter referred to as AfC) and the following Council conclusions in May

⁹ OCED/DAC Peer Review of the European Community 2007, p. 25.

¹⁰ <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/monterrey/MonterreyConsensus.pdf>

¹² Areas for Community Action: Trade and Regional Integration; the Environment and the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources; Infrastructure, Communication 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

¹³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX%3A52011DC0637&qid=1412922281378&from=EN>

2012¹⁴ addressed again these issues, updating in practice some of the orientations. The AfC refers to the Consensus common objectives, values and principles and aims to increase the impact of EU development policy by prioritising **human rights, democracy and good governance** and **inclusive and sustainable growth for human development** and strengthening the application of the principles of **differentiation, concentration and coordinated EU action**.

3. METHOD

The SWD aims to inform the proposal for a new Consensus on Development. It draws essentially on the findings of two reports, which have been commissioned by the Commission, namely a Desk Analysis on the Consensus¹⁵ (hereinafter referred to as the Desk Analysis) and the Review of existing Strategic evaluations to assess the ECD¹⁶ (hereinafter referred to as the Review). In order to complement the information provided by these two reports, the SWD draws data from databases of the Development Assistance Committee of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD/DAC), Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development of the European Commission and from independent studies.

The Desk Analysis studies whether the ECD was instrumental in shaping the values, principles and objectives of the development policies of the EU and its Member States since 2005. It does so through a textual analysis of the main policy documents (strategies, specific legal texts, programming documents and other official statements) issued by the governments and related agencies of the 28 Member States and the European institutions (essentially Communications and staff working papers, adopted by the Commission, as well as Council decisions). Whenever possible, the findings of the textual analysis have been cross-checked with institutional assessments, in particular with the peer reviews conducted by the OECD/DAC between 2005 and 2016.

The Review of Strategic Evaluations is a review and synthesis of existing thematic and geographic evaluations which assesses how the values and principles of the ECD and its objectives have guided the EU development cooperation. It analyses around 145 strategic thematic and geographic evaluations managed by DG DEVCO as well as DG NEAR between 2000 and 2016.¹⁷ The list of evaluations analysed is in the bibliography in Annex I.

The SWD provides an overview of the outcomes from available evaluation endeavours, based on desk reviews of existing documentation. The views on stakeholders have also been sought in the public consultation for the revision of the Consensus, which is the subject of a separate Commission Staff Working Document.

¹⁴ http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/130243.pdf

¹⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/consensus_desk_review.pdf

¹⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/consensus_review_full_report.pdf

¹⁷ Strategic evaluations covering periods before the adoption of the Consensus were only used to assess and compare changes in EU policy in the aftermath of the Consensus' adoption.

4. STATE OF PLAY

4.1. Alignment to the objectives, the values and the principles of the ECD

This section analyses whether the EU and Member States strategies and policies have aligned to the values, principles and objectives, as set out in the part of the Consensus setting out the EU vision of development. It mostly draws from the Desk Analysis and overall it reveals that the EU and Member States development cooperation have generally been aligned to the common objectives, values and principles enshrined in the Consensus.

There is considerable alignment as regards the **common objectives**, which include the MDGs derived from the Millennium Declaration (2000), as well as development objectives agreed at the Monterrey and Johannesburg Sustainable Development Summits (both 2002).

The Member States and the EU also aligned to the concept of the **multidimensionality of poverty**, which commanded changes to the traditional approach to development cooperation, moving to a broad strategic vision that prioritises their actions to achieve poverty reduction.

All EU and Member States development policies adhere to the **common values** although each of them tends to articulate them differently. Some Member States adopt rights-based approaches or give more attention to the fight against all forms of discrimination. Others introduce equal opportunities, solidarity, peace and freedom and social equality. Academia and think tanks recognise that pursuing human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law is a strategic priority and a feature of the EU and Member States development cooperation.

There is generally good alignment to Consensus' **common principles**. The concept of **ownership** has evolved since the Consensus and has shifted from a focus primarily on governments to one that emphasises democratic ownership by different stakeholders, most notably civil society, the private sector and legislative and oversight bodies. Therefore in the EU and Member States it is often linked to respect of human rights, fight against corruption, accountability and good governance. The commitment to **partnership** is less uniformly aligned.

Among common principles, **gender equality** has become one of the strongest commitments for the EU and Member States. It is reflected in basically all development policy/strategy documents and in addition to mainstreaming it has been the objective of many dedicated initiatives. In relation to the **participation of civil society**, the EU institutions and Member States have been active in formulating policies and adopting strategies to enhance its role in development cooperation in partner countries, including the engagement in “Structured Dialogue” with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and local authorities in partner countries and in Europe. Building on these shared commitments the EU and Member States have played an important role resulting in a growing global relevance of gender equality and civil society in the context of international negotiations (e.g. Busan¹⁸, Financing for Development Agenda, SDGs etc.). **Political dialogue**, another of Consensus' principles, has received increased attention by EU institutions. It features strongly in development cooperation in particular within the Cotonou Partnership Agreement¹⁹, which has specific articles devoted to it. Recently the AfC has laid the foundation for greater investment in and attention to political

¹⁸ http://effectivecooperation.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/OUTCOME_DOCUMENT_-_FINAL_EN.pdf

¹⁹ http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/03_01/pdf/mn3012634_en.pdf

dialogue. At the EU Member States level the role of political dialogue and how it features in development cooperation is less elaborated.

The EU and the Member States are also acknowledged for playing an important role in **addressing state fragility globally**, which was one of the principles of the Consensus. The EU's 2015 Accountability Report on Financing for Development reports that "approximately half of the EU's development funding is channelled to crisis/conflict situations and fragile states."²⁰ As to the Member States, addressing state fragility has gained prominence in a number of development cooperation policy, strategy and programming. Some Member States contribute to addressing fragility within sector strategies or in pursuit of global priorities, such as climate change and good governance.

As regards the EU collective commitment to **increasing financial resources**, its share of aid as a proportion of Gross National Income has increased since 2005 and remains higher than the non-EU OECD DAC/OECD average (0.47% compared to 0.21% of GNI in 2015). Despite the financial crisis the EU and its Member States have consistently provided more than half of total Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing countries. However, the EU collective ODA to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) has not significantly increased since the adoption of the Consensus and remains around 0.11% in 2014. In view of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development in Addis Ababa in July 2015 the European Union committed, in Council Conclusions of May 2015²¹, to collectively provide 0.7% Gross National Income as Official Development Assistance within the time frame of the 2030 Agenda and individually to reach 0.7% (for the Member States that joined before 2002) and to reach 0.33% (for those that joined after 2002). Collectively, Member States also agreed to provide 0.15% of Gross National Income as Official Development Assistance to Least Developed Countries in the 'short term' rising to 0.2% in the timeframe of the 2030 Agenda. This commitment was welcomed in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda although it was not matched by any other international donor.

When it comes to delivering better aid, the EU and its Member States have been committed to the **aid effectiveness** framework referred to in the ECD, in line with the international commitments (Paris 2005, Accra 2008, Busan 2011). The international fora's outcomes, particularly the Fourth High-Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness in Busan, which agreed the Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation (GPEDC), were also heavily influenced and supported by EU actors and therefore the ECD principles gained a broader relevance. At the same time it should be noted that the GPEDC marked an important shift from aid effectiveness to development effectiveness moving away from a focus on ODA to include wider resources and partners, including by recognising the importance of domestic resource mobilisation.

The OECD/DAC regularly recognises that EU and its Member States are amongst the most advanced actors in implementing commitments to aid and development effectiveness. The EU and its Member States are front runners in improving **transparency** and **reducing fragmentation**.²² All EU Member States report their ODA to the OECD/DAC and a growing number, totalling nine EU Member States plus the European Commission, now publish data in the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI).

²⁰ 2015 EU Accountability Report Financing for Development, Section 4.4.2, Commission Staff Working Document, available at https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/eu-accountability-report-financing-development-2015_en

²¹ <http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-9241-2015-INIT/en/pdf>

²² See 2015 EU Accountability Report Financing for Development, Section 4.4.2, Commission Staff Working Document.

Overall performance on the aid and development effectiveness agenda could benefit from more focused attention and accelerated implementation in other fields, such as **country ownership** and the **use of country systems**. Alignment to countries' National Development Strategies and the participation of government counterparts in programming and implementation has been high in various countries. However, in some partner countries, progress has been hampered by limited capacities to lead in this area. The EU continues to be a lead donor in using partner countries' Public Financial Management systems (PFM) and procurement systems. The 2012 DAC - Peer Review states that "the EU institutions have made strong gains in their use of country systems, including both public financial management and procurement."²³ Similarly, the EU and EU Member States have collectively undertaken initiatives to improve **country results frameworks** and are actively supporting country level processes and platforms on results frameworks. However, results from the Monitoring Framework of the Global Partnership show that the use of country systems by the EU Member States varies from one to another, showing high, moderate and low levels of use.²⁴

Several OECD/DAC peer review reports cite a host of good practices and largely commend EU and EU Member States for improving **coordination and complementarity** in programming. The Consensus has also played a key role of convener and **driver of new shared initiatives between EU and Member States**, fostering new momentum for coordination and complementarity, from the strategic to the operation level. This includes **regional** (e.g. the EU Strategy for Africa which "*channels the Consensus principles into a regional strategy*"²⁵) and **thematic** strategies (e.g. governance in EU development policy²⁶, Gender Action Plan²⁷), but also **working better together** (e.g. 2006 action plan on financing for development and aid effectiveness²⁸, 2007 EU Code of Conduct on Complementarity and Division of Labour in Development Policy²⁹, 2011 Operational framework on aid effectiveness³⁰) and **with partners** (e.g. Civil Society Roadmaps). The Consensus has created a favourable dynamic for the EU and EU Member States to actively support a greater use of country-level coordination arrangements, including division of labour, programme-based approaches, Joint Programming and delegated cooperation. Preliminary results of ongoing evaluations show that delegated cooperation has contributed to better division of labour and reduced aid fragmentation within sectors but not across-sectors.³¹

The EU has recently made good progress in strengthening Joint Programming that aims at reducing fragmentation of development assistance and bringing together EU resources and capacity.³² As of April 2016, the state of play of Joint Programming is such that 30 have reached the stage of a Joint analysis and 25 have developed a Joint strategy since 2012, although some are still at draft level. In 2016, development partners in Laos have agreed on a Joint Multiannual Indicative Programme that for some of them (including the EU) will replace their bilateral cooperation strategies. Good progress has also been made concerning inclusive

²³ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/50155818.pdf>

²⁴ The Busan Commitment. An Analysis of EU Progress and Performance, 2015. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/study_of_eu_progress.pdf

²⁵ OECD/DAC, Peer Review of the European Community, 2007, p.25

²⁶ COM(2006) 421 "Governance in the European Consensus on Development – Towards a harmonised approach within the EU", followed by Council Conclusions in October 2006.

²⁷ EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015 (SWD, SEC(2010) 265 final), 8.3.2010

²⁸ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX:52006DC0085>

²⁹ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%209558%202007%20INIT>

³⁰ <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2015912%202009%20INIT>

³¹ See Evaluation of the EU aid delivering mechanism of delegated cooperation 2007-2014, 2016 (forthcoming)

³² A Strategic Evaluation on Joint Programming is currently ongoing.

partnerships, increased role of the private sector in development, private investment, trade, and innovative financing sources and instruments.

The analysis of the EU and Member States development policies found evidence of a general trend in the alignment of the Consensus commitments to **Policy Coherence for Development**. PCD continues to be a priority especially in relation to strengthening mechanisms and procedures and focusing on avoiding contradictions between the development policy and other policies whilst building synergies. The Commission's regular reporting on PCD also shows that the EU and a number of EU Member States are making notable progress on meeting their PCD commitments. The OECD/DAC peer reviews cite good EU and EU Member States examples as global good practices; a number of think-tanks have noted the importance of PCD and commended European development partners, and particularly the EU, for driving a "pioneering" approach, although mechanisms and tools are not yet used to their full potential and consistent, high level engagement is needed to ensure additional progress. However, the extent to which the Member States use EU work programmes and reporting processes to inform domestic policy discussions and incorporate PCD issues effectively into decision making could be further reinforced. More Member States should develop mechanisms for screening their policies and assessing their impact. Direct and consistent reporting to national parliaments on PCD efforts should be more systematically put in place. Attention to PCD in the Council has increased over the years, with more regular interaction among different Council working groups, even if so far, as the DAC peer review pointed out, achieving PCD relies to a large extent on the willingness of the EU Presidency to engage in this area.

4.2. The Consensus in EU development cooperation

This section analyses the extent to which the Consensus has guided development cooperation activities entrusted to the EU and their implementation. This section largely draws from the Review of evaluations. For the sake of clarity, the priority areas and operational approaches in part of the Consensus on the European Community development policy are clustered in six areas, which are: Implementation of the Consensus and Differentiation; Poverty Reduction; Growth and Trade; Human Rights and Peace; Environment and Climate Change; Policy Coherence for Development.

4.2.1 Implementation of the Consensus and differentiation

The EU development cooperation has translated the Consensus through a wide variety of financing instruments and aid modalities. The geographic and thematic financing instruments available for external action focused on the following main policy priorities: enlargement, neighbourhood and development cooperation. The total amount agreed for the period 2007-2013 **was about EUR 65 billion**, while the total amount agreed for the period 2014-2020 is about **EUR 82 billion**.³³ Within these instruments, those more focused on development cooperation are the European Neighbourhood Instrument (previously the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument), the European Development Fund (EDF) and the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI).

³³ Both figures include the amounts indicated in the Regulations of the following instruments: Instruments for Pre Accession, European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, Development Cooperation Instrument, European Development Fund, Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace, European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation.

The Consensus acknowledges the importance of using a wide range of modalities to respond to different needs in different countries and promotes the use of innovative approaches such as sector programmes and budget support. In line with the Consensus, in the implementation of EU development cooperation several aid modalities have been employed, including projects and programmes, budget support, contributions to Global Funds and International Organisations, delegated cooperation with Member States agencies. The Agenda for Change has added the blending of grants and loans in order to leverage further resources for development.

In the period 2007-2013, 405 **budget support operations** were committed in 79 countries and 12 overseas countries and territories (OCTs) for a total of €15.3 billion. Sub-Saharan Africa was the main recipient of budget support and education the largest sector. Evaluations of budget support confirmed that EU budget support recipients have been performing above the trends in other developing countries in terms of macroeconomic, fiscal and developmental outcomes. It has also confirmed that budget support has generally succeeded in boosting the resources available for discretionary expenditure, contributed to improve public finance management and budgetary transparency as well as to expand access to public services. The evaluations also suggest a moderate improvement in the fight against corruption, while trends have worsened in other developing countries.³⁴

Blending funding has increased sharply since 2007 and during the period 2007-2014 reached more than EUR 2 billion, representing 4% of DG DEVCO's funding in the period. A recent evaluation on blending shows³⁵ that it allowed the EU to do 'more with less' in its development cooperation, enabling the EU to engage more broadly and with strategic advantage. In many cases, blending added significant value to the EU's grant based development cooperation as well as to International Financial Institutions' loan operations. Blending also helped to widen the access to loan finance for SMEs and to increase donor coordination. Although blending has been an effective tool for cooperating with countries in transition to medium income status, in particular in the EU Neighbourhood, it has not yet fully exploited its potential and capability to address the development challenges of lower income countries. The evaluation recommends to do more to ensure that development cooperation goals, and in particular poverty alleviation, are better emphasised in project identification, design and implementation.

The Review has shown that the EU funding for development cooperation has covered all **priority areas for EU action listed in the Consensus**. More specifically, an analysis of the EU ODA commitments between 2004-2014 shows that most of the resources have been allocated to social infrastructures, including government and civil society, education, health and water and sanitation, economic infrastructures, including transport, communications and energy, and production, including agriculture, forestry and industry. In addition, it shall be underlined that a large portion of funds went to the General Budget Support, which has had a strong focus on social sectors such as education, water and health, and governance, and therefore the share of the latter sectors is likely to have been much higher. In recent years, more attention has also been paid to the productive sectors, in line with the AfC call for more focus towards inclusive and sustainable growth, including sustainable agriculture and sustainable energy, along with democratic governance.

³⁴ See Synthesis of Budget Support Evaluations: Analysis of the Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations of seven Country Evaluations of Budget Support, EC, 2016. https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/strategic-evaluation-synthesis-ec-budget-support-1335-main-report-201411_en.pdf

³⁵ See Blending Strategic evaluation, 2016 (forthcoming).

To further increase the impact and leverage of EU assistance, the Consensus calls for concentrating EU action in a limited number of areas (principle of concentration). This has been taken further in the follow up to the Agenda for Change and it has been achieved to a large degree in particular in the programming 2014-2020, where the average number of sectors per country falls below three in both the EDF and DCI.

In order to adapt to the evolution and the increasing diversity of developing countries, the Consensus commits to the **principle of differentiation**, recognises that priorities should be given to LDCs and Low-Income Countries in the allocation of resources based on objective and transparent criteria. This principle was adhered to mainly in the EDF that differentiated countries on the basis of needs and performance, as required by the Cotonou Agreement. The programming exercises of the EDF 9 and 10 showed a clear trend towards focusing more aid on LDCs. With the adoption of the Agenda for Change and the programming exercise for the period 2014-2020, the principle of differentiation was also applied to the Development Cooperation Instrument, firstly through the graduation of 16 upper and large middle-income countries out of bilateral cooperation and the reduction of the allocations to seven upper-middle income countries in view of phasing-out. The differentiation principle was further ensured by the application of a common methodology for the allocation of country level resources to both the Development Cooperation Instrument and European Development Fund. In line with criteria set out by the Agenda for Change, the methodology allows to allocate funds on the basis of country needs, capacities, commitments, performance and potential EU impact. It resulted in a substantial increase of allocations to Least Developed Countries and Low Income Countries, from 62.2% to 75.2%, and an associated reduction of allocations to Upper Middle Income Countries (from 12.6% to 3.3%) and Lower Middle Income Countries (from 25% to 21.5%).

4.2.2 Poverty reduction

Global poverty was reduced from 37.1% in 1990 to 12.7% in 2012 and it is projected to go down to 9.6% in 2015. In absolute terms, it means that the number of people living in poverty was reduced from almost 2 billion (1,959 millions) to 897 million in 2012 and it is projected to go down to 702 million in 2015. Improvements in poverty reduction are mainly a consequence of economic growth (which addresses 'income poverty') and increased access for the poor to basic social services ('non-income poverty'). Many development partners have established poverty reduction strategies since the mid-nineties.

Based on the Treaty on European Union, the Consensus calls for the EU to support the implementation of such strategies and promotes a broad approach to the eradication of poverty recognising its multidimensionality. The positive contribution of the Consensus to global poverty reduction is acknowledged by the 2012 OECD/DAC peer review³⁶, in which it is said that the EU has developed a solid framework for supporting the achievement of the MDGs and made good efforts to implement it. More specifically, the EU action, in line with the Consensus and the MDGs, has concentrated its efforts some of the key sectors to reduce poverty such as food security, human development (education, health), social cohesion and employment.

Food security

³⁶ Available at <http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/europeanunion2012dacpeerreviewmainfindingsandrecommendations.htm>

The Consensus establishes that the EU continues to work to improve **food security** at international, regional and national level. According to European Commission's data the EU specifically supported more than 60 partner countries prone to food insecurity in their efforts to improve food and nutrition security and promote sustainable agriculture and food systems. In total, 58.7 million people were assisted through food security-related social transfers in the period 2004-2014. At the national level, the Review shows that the EU has addressed food security mainly through policy and institutional support enabling recipient countries to develop strategies to face recurrent structural insecurity. Specific programmes aimed at providing direct support to food-insecure communities have also been put in place. Interventions re-establishing productive assets after crises were reported as having an important impact on household capacity to recover from shocks. However, the Review highlights that the strategic dimension and sustainability of these interventions have remained weak, often due to a lack of mainstreaming of food security into national policies. It is also noted that less effort was done to promote regional food security.

Human development – Education, health and gender

The Consensus calls for a human development policy framework for **education, health and gender equality** to improve people's lives in line with the MDGs. The Review shows that the Consensus has guided the EU development cooperation in supporting partner countries to establish and finance education and health policies, thus contributing to better and more coherent strategies, social infrastructure and services, with a focus on the poor. In line with the Consensus, the Review shows that the EU development cooperation has also contributed to greater capacity in monitoring and data analysis, national planning and sector coordination. Budget support has been a major supporting modality, while sector programmes and contributions to Global funds have increased during the last decade. The strengthened government policies and systems have led to improved equitable access to the basic services, including a remarkable increase in the enrolment rates in primary and secondary school and improved rates of access to basic health and education, with positive impacts on the literacy and basic health indicators. However, while access to health and education services has increased, the quality of government services has been somewhat overlooked and has declined. In addition insufficient human resources remain a major problem in the health sector.

The Consensus also recognises **gender equality** as a goal in its own, as well as an essential principle to be included in all development policies and mainstreamed in all activities. In the period 2007-14 the EU increased financial resources for gender equality and in 2010 and then in 2015 adopted two five-years Gender Action Plans (2010-2015 and 2016-2020) to coordinate implementation³⁷. They have supported women's political participation, their improved economic and social status, including in peace- and state-building processes, and integrated gender into sector programmes, in particular in health and education. According to Commission data, since 2004, the EU has supported 658 civil society organisations working for gender equality and has allowed 300,000 new female students to enrol in secondary education. In spite of these important achievements, the Review concludes that there is a mismatch between the EU strong political commitment and its organisational capacity to deliver on it.

³⁷ EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010-2015 (SWD, SEC(2010) 265 final), 8.3.2010; and Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020 (SWD (2015) 182 final), 21.09.2015 available https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/staff-working-document-gender-2016-2020-20150922_en.pdf.

Social cohesion and employment

The Consensus considered **social cohesion and employment** as important factors for poverty eradication and inclusive and sustainable development. According to Commission data the EU has financed projects for employment and vocational education and training totalling over EUR 2 billion in the period 2007-2013. Employment was supported either indirectly through support to macro-stabilisation and growth, or directly mainly through support to education and Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET). In the same period, the EU granted 7.7 million people with technical vocational education and training and 8.8 million people benefited from EU employment-related assistance. However, the Review also shows that the objective of increasing the employability of the youth has not been fully met and there was a weak integration of these interventions with support to Private Sector Development.

4.2.3 Growth and trade

During the implementation of the Consensus, a significant number of developing countries have experienced a relatively steady positive performance in terms of economic growth. African countries showed greater resilience to the global crisis and better performances after 2009 as compared to the world economy as a whole. The Review suggests that the EU has indirectly contributed to the economic growth of developing countries via a wide range of channels, in line with the policy orientation of the Consensus, in particular support to macroeconomic stability, strengthening Public Finance Management (PFM), trade and broadening transport networks.

Macroeconomic stability, PFM and productive sectors

The Consensus calls for a closer attention to the reforms, in terms of growth, improved business climate, macroeconomic stability and the effects on poverty reduction. According to the Review, a positive contribution has been provided to foster **macroeconomic stabilisation**, mainly through Budget Support, by assisting in limiting fiscal deficit and stabilising public expenditure levels. The Review suggests that macro stability has indirectly supported the investment climate, through greater predictability for foreign investments, coupled with an increased share of domestically financed development spending and reduced pressure on the domestic banking sector. These appear to have contributed, inter alia, to reduced interests on borrowing and reduced inflation.

The EU is one of the largest single donors supporting **Private Sector Development** in several partner countries, using a wide range of instruments from General Budget Support to sector policy support programmes and investment facilities (often in collaboration with development banks, including the European Investment Bank). According to the Review, Private Sector Development has indirectly benefited from EU support to good governance, macro-economic stabilisation, trade and transport. These interventions have improved the local business environment and created export opportunities. However, more direct support - aimed at the creation of an enabling environment, improving quality standards, and facilitating access to finance - has been relevant, but despite some positive examples, has been weakly mainstreamed in the national strategies.

Agriculture and rural development are recognised as crucial by the Consensus for poverty eradication and growth. According to the Review, the EU support has targeted some areas and types of interventions: support to agricultural commodities; strengthening food security; and support to agricultural enterprises and rural employment, mainly in the neighbourhood

context. The support to agriculture has been focused on food security and traditional commodities, while the sector approach including sustainable food value chains and rural development has not been sufficiently developed.

Trade

The Consensus calls for the EU to assist the developing countries on **trade and regional integration** through fostering equitable and sustainable, smooth and gradual integration into the world economy and linking trade and poverty reduction. According to a major study, the EU remains the most open market to developing countries.³⁸ The EU has put in place a number of international agreements and schemes, with a view to enhancing the link between trade and development. The Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) are among the most advanced agreements, creating new opportunities for the promotion of value chains and increased diversification of trade, attraction of Foreign Direct Investment and creation of regional markets. The EU **Generalised System of Preferences** and GSP+ schemes are among the most comprehensive, open and valuable schemes in the world. The GSP includes the GSP General Arrangement, the GSP+ (a special incentive scheme for sustainable development and good governance designed for vulnerable countries) and the Everything But Arms (EBA) scheme – under which all exports, except arms and ammunition, from the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) are given a completely duty free access to the EU market. In addition, especially generous non-reciprocal schemes have, historically, been available to certain African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. The EU has also Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with a number of individual developing countries, under which exports are granted duty free access in return for preferential access of EU exports to their own market.

The study also shows that the EU trade policy has significantly increased exports and economic diversification of developing countries, especially Least Developed Countries. It shows that the monetary value of EU preferential schemes to developing amounts to more than EUR 6 billion annually. The bottom line is that the EU directly attributes EUR 1.6 billion of the currently observed total of EUR 34 billion of exports by LDCs to the EU preferences. The study also indicates that, in part, these exports had a measurable positive effect on poverty reduction when combined with other appropriated domestic policies.

The EU has also supported regulatory and organisational frameworks to foster regional integration, while supporting institutional capacity development. This has been translated in some cases into investment growth and trade integration with the EU (various FTAs), especially in the southern neighbourhood area.

Trade Related Assistance as part of the larger **Aid for Trade** support is a key tool to support the economic integration role of regional organisations. The EU has helped to improve public institutions capacity and to foster reform in trade policy. By using a mix of tools such as agreements on technical barriers to trade, improving compliance with standards and export promotion, the EU has engaged successfully and relevantly in diverse contexts.

Transport, Energy and ICT

The Consensus also aims at promoting a sustainable transport sectoral approach and to respond to a growing demand of infrastructure, in particular in Africa. The EU support to the **transport sector** has concentrated on provision of infrastructure, equipment and technical

³⁸ Assessment of economic benefits generated by the EU Trade Regimes towards developing countries, 2015, available at http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2015/july/tradoc_153595.pdf

assistance. The Review has shown that the EU has brought real added values such as involvement in policy and strategy development, in-country presence, sector expertise and size of the financial support. In the context of the AfC, the EU also developed a comprehensive set of actions to help end **energy** poverty and support the goals of the Sustainable Energy for All Initiative. It is worth noting that the EU support to infrastructure - particularly large infrastructure projects mostly in the energy, transport and water and sanitation sectors - has positively benefited from blending operations, which have significantly increased in recent years as explained above.

The EU assistance for digitalisation has mainly targeted regulatory harmonisation and infrastructure deployment. The main goal was to create the enabling environment for investments and affordable connectivity. This has been done for Africa under the ‘Support for Harmonisation of ICT Policies in Sub-Saharan Africa’ (HIPSSA), its planned successor HIP Africa as well as EMERG in the Southern Mediterranean. In addition, the EU has financed submarine cables, Internet Exchange Points, and eHealth solutions. Another initiative includes a series of projects connecting European research & education institutions with peer institutions in partner countries. GÉANT was initially a Pan-European initiative to interconnect national research & education networks (NREN). It now manages networking projects serving Europe (GÉANT Project), the Eastern Partnership countries (EaPConnect), the Mediterranean (EUMEDCONNECT3), Central Asia (CAREN2), Latin America (RedClara), the Caribbean (C@ribnet) and Africa (AfricaConnect2). Initially these networks were pure infrastructure networks, but with time they have evolved into research collaboration platforms and have the potential to expand ICT cooperation even further

4.2.4 Human rights, Democratic Governance and Peace

The Consensus affirms that progress in the protection of human rights, good governance and democratisation is fundamental for poverty reduction and sustainable development and the EU has strongly increased its efforts related to broad Governance, Human Rights and Democracy, especially in the last decade. Democratic **Governance** has become one of the first sectors in terms of direct expenditure. General and Sector Budget Support programmes (including new specific tools as the State Building Contract, in fragile states) have positively contributed to Public Finance Management (PFM) reform, improved accountability and transparency of budget processes, and the fight against corruption. Beyond those entry points, sector support and projects, including capacity building, have helped support reforms in a number of other areas of Democratic Governance.

Support to **electoral and democratic processes** has expanded in recent years, as best exemplified by the European Commission's increased involvement in electoral assistance. Between 2012 and 2014 only, it provided assistance to 60 countries for a total of over EUR 220 million. In parallel, the EU deployed Election Observation Missions and Election Assessment Teams in 65 countries around the globe over the last 15 years. The EU aims to ensure that both its political dialogue and cooperation programmes work together to provide support throughout the entire electoral cycle. According to the Review the EU has contributed to the improvement of **human rights** in many countries by positioning itself in a given context to push (with Member States and other actors) for realistic progress in human rights, using its leverage capacity, its different instruments and dedicated officials. In the context of the Cotonou Agreement, where the respect of human rights is monitored through political dialogue (Art. 8) and subject to specific procedures in case of lack of convergence between the parties (Art. 96 and 97), human rights have also gained prominence in regional dialogues,

for example under the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. However, the overall results of EU actions in support to human rights were often not mainstreamed in national policies.

The vital role of Civil Society Organisations as promoters of human rights, democracy and development processes is acknowledged by the Consensus. The Review notes that the EU support to involvement of **Civil Society Organisations** has become decidedly more effective over the last decade, both in terms of dialogue for policy preparation and monitoring and service delivery. There is also evidence of positive contributions made by CSOs in delivering social services to poor communities (e.g. housing, education, health, food security, water, human rights, etc.), and through different 'gap-filling' operations where CSOs stepped in to substitute for failing/unwilling governments. Nonetheless the systematisation and the institutionalisation of civil society participation by partner governments are still weak.

In **judiciary and security reform**, the Consensus, as taken further by the Agenda for Change, resulted in the EU increased engagement through increased funding and utilisation of a wide range of financial and non-financial instruments in a broad geographical scope. EU assistance helped in many cases to enhance institutional capacities within state security and justice bodies to deliver public services.

The Consensus calls for a comprehensive prevention approach to state fragility, conflict, natural disasters. The Review shows that the EU has strengthened its policy framework and become one of the strongest actors in **Conflict Prevention and Peace Building**. Accordingly, it contributed to containment of mitigation, stabilisation of conflicts as well as to post conflict rehabilitation and reconstruction. Coherent with the orientations in the Consensus, the Comprehensive Approach to external conflict and crises³⁹ and adopted in 2014, with the aim to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the EU as a global player by bringing together all EU instruments and policies for the whole conflict cycle from prevention to resolution to stabilisation and post conflict. The Comprehensive Approach gained increasing traction with the implementation of an action plan for 2015 and the adoption of another action plan for 2016/7. The EU was also a strong supporter of civil society organisations working on conflict and peace and security issues, mainly through international NGOs and specialised networks. The EU was a major promotor of the adoption of the "New Deal for Fragile States" at the aid effectiveness conference in Busan (2011), in recognition of the fact that "business as usual" would not lead to development result in these states. The New Deal includes inter alia a focus on five peace and state-building goals, and influenced the definition of the SDGs (and notably SDG 16) adopted with the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development in 2015. The EU actions in support of capacity building of regional organisations to intervene in conflict management and peace keeping has also been enhanced, as testified by the funding of the African Peace Facility with almost EUR 2 billion, especially to support Peace Support Operations.

However, it was recognised that the EU's efforts in addressing root causes of conflict needed to be reinforced, including helping face the challenges linked to refugee and migration flows. The need to improve the EU's capacity to prevent conflicts led to the creation of a conflict Early-Warning System aimed to identify where conflicts could erupt or aggravate with a view to focus attention of all actors across the EU institutions on agreeing where EU action could have most impact and what suitable preventive action should be taken. Experience with the system is still short and every iteration (in six monthly intervals) seeks to introduce improvements. Finally, the EU's attempt to move from short-term crisis response to medium and long-term conflict prevention and resolution was often challenged in practice, particularly

³⁹ http://www.eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2013/131211_03_en.pdf

on account of the lack of capacity and/or political will of conflict parties and national authorities along with insufficient exit strategies and lack of transition interface between humanitarian assistance and rehabilitation to long-term development programmes.

4.2.5 *Environment and climate change*

The Consensus calls for an EU support to the efforts undertaken by partner countries to incorporate environmental considerations into development and help increase their capacity to implement multilateral environmental agreements. The Review shows that the EU has contributed to ensuring an increased prominence of **environment and climate change** in national development processes and to increasing the commitment of partner countries to global environmental and climate change governance through a multiplicity of instruments, flexible and adapted to the specific conditions. Positive influence can be recorded in the strengthening of the institutional capacity and the legislative framework for environmental protection, improved management of natural resources, renewable energy and investment promotion. However, implementation is often weak, indicating that the level of prioritisation in partner countries is still modest and the adoption of improved legal frameworks is difficult. As a result, long-term impact over environmental sustainability remains limited. Some of the identified challenges relate to insufficient awareness of the linkages between environment and poverty reduction, lack of a comprehensive strategy and policy dialogue or weak coordination.

Climate change has been central to the EU's actions since the UNFCCC in 1992, which was followed by the Kyoto Protocol in 1997. It is worth noting that the EU has committed to dedicating at least 20% of its entire budget from 2014-2020 to climate-related actions. The EU plays a leading role in international programmes and has developed specific tools to enhance policies and actions in partner countries (Global Climate Change Alliance). Specifically, the EU support has contributed to the creation of an environment conducive to reaching global agreements, the establishment of climate financing mechanisms, and building stronger knowledge, tools and approaches to address climate change issues. The added-value of the EU support has been its scale, consistency and coherence with other support efforts.

4.2.6 *Policy Coherence for Development (PCD)*

The strong commitment to **PCD**, as outlined in the Consensus on Development, is enshrined in Art. 208 of the Treaty.⁴⁰ The EU has made Policy Coherence for Development a central element of its policies to support developing countries and has taken a lead role in promoting PCD.

As PCD is a priority for the European Commission, mechanisms and procedures to avoid contradictions and build synergies between different EU policies have steadily continued to improve since 2005. The biennial PCD reports are an important tool to track progress both at EU and Member States level and to help raise awareness and increase ownership of PCD within the EU. These reports cover both cross-cutting (procedural and institutional) and thematic issues and present examples of progress and challenges on PCD across different policy areas.

The EU has made noteworthy advances on PCD with regard to a range of policies that can have a strong impact on developing countries: thanks to the EU trade regime, in particular the Generalised Scheme of Preferences, exports of developing countries to the EU have

⁴⁰ "The Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries."

significantly increased and contributed to their economic diversification; following the 2013 reform, the Common Agricultural Policy is now delivering support to EU farmers and rural communities in a manner that does not distort markets or trade; a wide-ranging reform of the Common Fisheries Policy came into force in 2014, which helped enhance partnerships between the EU and developing coastal states.

On the administrative side, the Commission has developed institutional mechanisms, frameworks and tools for promoting PCD, such as strengthened impact assessment guidelines⁴¹, including a toolbox containing operational guidance on how to assess potential impacts of new policies on developing countries, and enhanced involvement of EU Delegations in the monitoring of PCD issues at partner country level through regular reporting mechanisms and targeted training.

Key messages on PCD given by external stakeholders (OECD, ECDPM, NGOs) and relevant to all EU institutions are:

- PCD mechanisms and tools are not yet used to their full potential and high level and consistent engagement are needed to ensure compliance with EU commitments;
- The profile of PCD needs to be raised and its agenda disseminated more widely since PCD is in general not yet well owned by staff outside development departments;
- It is important to increase the necessary traction and evidence base of PCD through investment in research;
- Monitoring systems need to be developed to assess progress on PCD and help reconcile inconsistencies and strengthen synergies among competing policies;
- Awareness of conflicts of interest and trade-offs is low. There is a need to deal more transparently with conflicts of interest (via policy arbitration).

5. CONCLUSIONS

5.1 Relevance

Findings, peer reviews and the literature show that the Consensus was a key milestone and strategic achievement: it consolidated the acquis of fifty years of development cooperation, enshrined for the first time a common vision for EU and Member States providing a common framework and point of reference, and played an important role in shaping EU development policy, which has aligned well to the Consensus.

According to the findings, the objectives, values and principles of the ECD have had a **relatively long life**, still being relevant and compelling a decade later, anticipating some significant changes brought in by the 2030 Agenda. First, the Consensus' objectives, which include the Millennium Development Goals and reflect the Summits on Sustainable Development (Johannesburg) and on the Conferences on Financing for Development (Monterrey), have maintained their significance and they have been reflected in the EU position in the process leading to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. Second, the Consensus' objective on delivering better aid has maintained its prominence as it is shown, among others, by the progress made in Joint Programming and

⁴¹ Tool 30# of the Better regulation toolbox, available at http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/br_toolbox_en.pdf. The toolbox complements the Better Regulation Guideline presented in the SWD(2015) 111, 19.05.2015 and available at http://ec.europa.eu/smart-regulation/guidelines/docs/swd_br_guidelines_en.pdf.

other ways of working better together. The Consensus also provided a basis for ambitious EU and Member States positions in Accra and Busan and it played an important role in shaping the recently agreed Addis Ababa Action Agenda. Third, the Consensus includes values and principles that European development cooperation as a whole strongly emphasises today, and which are now reflected in Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union (EU external action), such as respect for human rights, peace, gender equality and democratic governance. The Consensus was also important in formally recognising the complementarity between development cooperation and other policy areas which have become more prominent recently, such as migration, security and the protection of the environment, including climate change. Finally, the Review shows that the EU development cooperation has been generally relevant when implementing the Consensus.

Despite the overall relevance of the Consensus in the context of the MDGs and the current relevance of some of its objectives, values and principles, it requires nonetheless a revision against the global challenges and trends emerged in the last decade and the Agenda 2030, which is the international community's response to such challenges and trends. The levels and geography of poverty and inequality have shifted and developing countries have become increasingly diversified thus requiring the EU and its Member States to develop more differentiated approaches. Similarly, the increasingly interlinked nature of development issues requires the EU and its Member States to elaborate more comprehensive policies, which integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development, i.e. social, economic and environmental. Finally, to reflect the framework for implementation set out in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and 2030 Agenda, the EU and its Member States need to define their approaches to mobilising and making effective use of all means of implementation.

5.2 Effectiveness and efficiency

The evidence shows that the Consensus has been effective in formalising a shared vision for the development cooperation policy of the EU and Member States. This framing has been an effective agenda-setting tool, even if not uniformly adopted. Similarly, it provided the basis for a consistent narrative on common values that is repeated in strategy documents and partnership agreements with recipient countries, international organisations and implementing partners. The Consensus has also been effective in the sense that it was translated and taken further in a series of common frameworks, whether geographic, thematic, financial or operational, as in the cases of gender equality, participation of civil society and joint programming shown in section 4.1.

The results point to the Consensus' effectiveness in identifying priorities for the EU development cooperation and clarifying how the objectives, principles and values of the EU development policy were to be made operational in it. In line with the Consensus, the EU development cooperation has concentrated on some of the key sectors to **reduce poverty** such as food security, education and health sectors and it has been generally effective, contributing significantly to improve food security and nutrition in several developing countries as well as equitable access to **basic social services** in the education and health sectors as evidenced in section 4.2.2. The EU development cooperation has also effectively supported macroeconomic stability, trade and infrastructure in the developing countries, significantly contributing, although indirectly, to economic growth as evidenced in section 4.2.3. Despite its commitments, EU action on human rights, gender, and private sector development has been less effective, often due to lack of mainstreaming in the recipients' national strategies.

The findings also confirm that the Consensus has been efficient in promoting the use of a wide range of aid modalities, especially innovative ones such as budget support and blending as evidenced in section 4.2.1. It is also worth noticing the recently released report by the European Commission on selected results achieved by projects and programmes implemented in partner countries and financed by the EU, which is part of a broader effort to strengthen the focus on performance and results in EU international cooperation and development, in line with the spirit of the Consensus.⁴²

5.3 Coherence and added value

The findings also show that the Consensus, by raising the commitment to PCD, has contributed to significantly increase the coherence between development policies and other EU policies, as it is evidenced in the trade, agriculture and fishery sectors in the section 4.2.6. The Consensus has greatly helped to enhance a shared and common basis for EU and Member States development cooperation. The EU and Member States policies have generally aligned to Consensus' objectives, values and principles. In the case of new EU Member States, the Consensus has also had a clear influence in shaping their development policies. The Consensus also provided a framework for more consistent policy on European development cooperation.⁴³

The Consensus has also increased EU added value by allowing the EU to play leading roles, for example in promoting Joint Programming and articulating EU and Member States views in international negotiations on such issues as aid effectiveness, gender and role of civil society in development as shown in section 4.1. The EU added value has demonstrated its full potential when coordination and complementarities with EU-Member States and other donors have been high and has improved even further in the last decade. This has been evidenced in the EU support to sensitive complex reform processes, such as in the European Neighbourhood, in delicate conflict prevention and peace building contexts, where the EU has become an important player as shown in section 4.2.4, in support to comprehensive and/or sector development strategies through the extensive use of budget support and in the contribution to global initiatives, in particular in the health and environment where it has demonstrated a high political and financial weight.

The added-value of the Consensus has fundamentally been to provide a commonly agreed vision for EU and Member States, as well as a framework for implementation at EU level, which were subsequently translated in a number of guiding documents, policies and actions, both at EU and Member States level.

⁴² See First Report on Selected Results, July 2013 – June 2014; https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/eu-results-report_2013-2014_en.pdf

⁴³ OECD/DAC, Peer Review of the European Community, 2007, p.29.

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