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NOTE

from:	General Secretariat of the Council
to :	Delegations
Subject:	Meeting of the European Parliament's Committee on Development (DEVE) on 18-19 February 2013 - Summary record

The meeting was chaired by Mme Michele Striffler, EPP, FR. The agenda was adopted subject to a change in the order of items. The minutes from the meeting of 17-18 December 2012 were approved. The coordinators' decisions and recommendations of 22 January 2013 were adopted.

Item 5 Announcements by the Commission

The Commission had no announcements to make.

Item 6 Question time

Following a question by Mr Cortes, S&D, ES as to how the Commission is trying to promote fair trade and to promote private sector participation, the Commission representative highlighted that the 2011 Communication on Trade, Growth and Development is aimed at promoting corporate social responsibility and sustainable agriculture, giving importance to small holder farming in a way that is very similar to fair trade.

In answer to Mr Deva (ECRG, UK) asking how companies could become aware about EU strategies in this context, the Commission representative replied that such rules of behaviour cannot be made compulsory, but by involving private actors in the programmes, by opening up support and encouraging producers to approach private sector business for partnership, fair trade can be promoted.

Item 7 Second amendment to the Cotonou Agreement of 23 June 2000

The Rapporteur Mr Cashman (S&D, UK) reported on the state of play on the revision of the Cotonou agreement and the unsatisfactory outcome of negotiations concerning article 8 on discrimination. Despite there being much that was positive in the agreement concerning fair trade, protection against tax evasion, human rights etc, one fundamental human rights clause, the protection of LGBT rights, has still not been accepted by ACP partners and looked unlikely to be further discussed. Mr Cashman recommended however that Parliament vote in favour of the agreement in recognition of the significant victories on other fronts that the agreement sanctions, but he remained deeply unsatisfied about the lack of protection for LGBT people in ACP countries and hoped for further revision in the coming years.

A representative from the Commission expressed his appreciation for Mr Cashman's opinion and acknowledged his reserves on the agreement. Bilateral discussions were still ongoing and the ground is being prepared for further negotiations with individual ambassadors, hoping for an unambiguous anti-discrimination clause at the next revision in 2014.

Item 8 Humanitarian situation and challenges in Mali and Syria

Kristalina Georgieva, Commissioner for international Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis response, presented the situation concerning EU initiatives in Mali and Syria. The Commissioner reported that in a short span of time the situation had got much worse in Syria and much better in Mali. No solution seemed to be in sight concerning the conflict in Syria, whilst very positive developments had taken place in Mali thanks to the French military intervention. 227,000 people remain internally displaced in Mali. In the last month, however, the number of displaced people had increased by a smaller number than in recent months. The issue at stake now was rather how to access remote areas in the North of the country. The EU, the largest donor, had committed €93million in humanitarian assistance, and a further 22 million would be announced on 19 February. In the countries surrounding Mali, 177,000 refugees sought help. NGOs are helping them in Burkina, Nigeria and Mauritania, and thanks to EU support 80% of health centres had remained operational, water supply in Timbuktu was still functional, and support had been given to the Red Cross and other NGOs helping internally displaced people in the South and the over 60 thousands children suffering from malnutrition. In discussing next steps, the Commissioner referred to the difficulties of the necessary transition to restoration of governance, especially in the North.

The Commissioner considered that the situation was further degenerating in Syria. The 1 million refugees mark will soon be crossed. The areas where aid can get to unrestrictedly are small and shrinking. A huge part of the country cannot receive humanitarian deliveries. Mrs Georgieva denied that aid is only being provided in government controlled areas, and gave a number of examples to illustrate this. Mrs Georgieva stated the importance of maintaining impartiality and stated that humanitarian aid, however insufficient, was the only thing that could be done to alleviate Syrians' suffering.

MEPs comments all recognized that ECHO was performing a fundamental task in both countries and was performing excellently. Mr Martinez Martinez (S&D, ES), expressed full satisfaction with the work of the Commissioner, including with regard to interventions in Haiti. Mrs Georgieva expressed her gratitude for these comments in particular in the light of the bad press that humanitarian intervention had received in the post-earthquake intervention in Haiti.

Mr Roatta (PPE, FR) asked the Commissioner about the strategy ahead for these and other humanitarian interventions given the cuts to the budget foreseen in the MFF recently approved by the European Council. Mr Deva (ECR, UK) argued for a more holistic approach to be taken- €3700 have been spent on each Afghani since the beginning of the conflict, although their average income is €500 circa per year. He considered that despite this, as EU troops withdraw the country would be left in the hands of the Talibans. Poor European taxpayers' money was being spent on Syria, whilst the Arab countries, he argued, do nothing. Mr Cortes Lastra (S&D, Spain) welcomed the intervention of the Commissioner and asked whether coordination talks were being held with the UN and other organizations to avoid the conflict spreading and the problem of displaced people to worsen even further.

Mrs Georgieva acknowledged that a military operation was not going to eradicate extremism and sustaining security in the long term would be more difficult, but that the situation could be improved step by step. Concerning the MFF, Mrs Georgieva stated that if the Parliament manages to make the budget more flexible both between chapters and across years, the cuts envisaged will not prevent the good conduct of the EU humanitarian missions. Furthermore, significant resources need to come from MS, and very few countries respect the commitment to give 0.7% of their GDP for aid. This needed to change. Coordination talks were already taking place with the UN and other actors, crucially in Geneva in the Syria Humanitarian Forum, to which ECHO staff was participating very actively.

Other comments revolved around the weakness of the comparison between Mali and Afghanistan, countries of very different sizes, economic structures, and history of democratic governance. Mrs Brantner (Greens, DE) asked for further clarification concerning the delivery of humanitarian aid to rebel controlled areas, towards which, she argued, there needed to be more funding. Mrs Greze, (Greens, FR) asked how the refugee population would be in a position to vote at the next elections. Mrs Georgieva answered that all was being done to deliver aid to both rebel and government-controlled areas and that refugees would be encouraged to return home to Mali to vote on a voluntary basis.

Item 9 FAO report on the State of the Food and Agriculture 2012

Mr Kostas Stamoulis, Director for Agricultural Development Economics Division presented the findings of the latest FAO report. Mr Stamoulis argued that data showed that agriculture had started to attract more attention over the last decade- a real change had taken place from 2000 to 2010 with donors' money going towards alleviation of food crisis. Private investment in agriculture had grown, probably in response to higher food prices. Private farmers investment dwarfed official development assistance and government expenditures. Investment in farmers improved labour standards and living conditions in the rural areas and was the most effective tool against poverty and hunger, but it remained too low in those regions that needed it the most. The overall investment climate was critical- the indicator for Rule of Law used in the report showed that better governance meant more agricultural investments. Structures that deal with agriculture were also fundamental- in May 2012 the Committee of World Food Security endorsed "Voluntary Guidelines on Responsible governance of Tenure"- even if not binding, there were great expectations that these guidelines would be followed and responsible agricultural tenure would gain ground. At the same time, consultations have started for the "Responsible agricultural investment principle", intended for practical guidance to governments, private and public investors. Endorsement should come in 2014. The global environment is getting better concerning food prices. Prices give incentives to farmers to invest and governments and public officials are just the catalyst.

A representative of the NGO Concord expressed her support for the views detailed in the FAO report, especially the recognition that farmers themselves are the largest and most effective investors in agriculture. She recommended MEPs to work at the political level to create an environment conducive to sustainable agriculture, in particular by:

- pushing the Commission to implement the Food Security Policy Framework, elaborated and adopted by the Council in 2010 but not yet implemented
- reforming the CAP so as to make it less trade distortive, less extracting towards third world countries and less dangerous for the environment; for example, the dependence of European cattle on imported soya and maize has been repeatedly criticised by both this Commission and the Environmental Committee
- focusing on nutrition and on making nutrition a priority of food security policy;
- giving the utmost importance to policy coherence.

Question time followed, with questions concerning in particular the problem of land distribution and monocropping (Cortes Lastra, S&D, ES), and the gap between the price paid to the producer and that paid by the consumer (Mr Roatta (PPE, FR)).

A representative of the Commission stated that a more strategic approach towards the value chain in Africa was needed; the gap between private and public investment needed to be addressed and international cooperation improved.

The speaker from FAO responded that the wedge between agricultural price and sale is huge- this was due in part to a development gap (such as the lack of infrastructure), in part to the power of the middle men and of the market. Many farmers did not have the opportunity to take advantage of the gradual increase in price since 2003 and have not been able to invest. In turn, the explosion of prices has been detrimental to everyone, especially to those who did not have the financial means to protect themselves. As for the debate between monocropping and diversification, he argued that there is no universal rule, it depends on the circumstances. The representative of Concord agreed, and highlighted that whatever strategy is adopted, sustainability is the key.

10. Coordinators' meeting

In camera

11. Establishing a financing instrument for development cooperation

- Exchange of views and feedback from DCI negotiations

In camera

12. Stepping-stone Economic Partnership Agreement between the EC and Central Africa

The Rapporteur for the opinion Sargentini (Verts/ALE) (responsible committee: INTA) presented her draft opinion, which advises the committee not to give the Parliament's consent to this agreement.

M. Berman on behalf of M. Neuser, S&D, DE indicated he shared the concerns of the rapporteur but not her conclusions and recalled that the present situation was not WTO-compatible and required some review in the form of a new agreement.

The Commission representative explained the reasons behind the conclusion of this interim agreement.

The Chair indicated that the deadline for amendments was February 27th, 2013 at noon (vote to take place on 19 March).

13. The impact of biotechnology in developing countries

Ms. Gerstetter, expert at Ecologic Institute, made a presentation on the issue of the use of GMOs in developing countries. She noted that the long-term consequences of the use of GMOs and their economic impact had not been fully estimated yet, that it was therefore difficult to provide definitive conclusions on the issue, which was however highly controversial because of the existence of vested interests related to their use. She referred to the context of food crisis and demographic explosion as one of the factors at stake in developing countries. She replied to some questions by MEPs on the use of GMOs in the food aid provided by the WFP, which had raised some concerns by some beneficiary countries.

14. Climate change from a development perspective

Ms Connie Hedegaard, Commissioner for Climate Action advocated more action and financing to be secured for the fight and preventive action against climate change notably through mainstreaming of the issue in all policies, including development policy and through the promotion of an inclusive green economy in developing countries. She warned of the risk of climate change as not only impacting on development as is the case already today, but also on security. She referred to the need to secure additional funding for climate action.

MEPs (Goerens, ALDE, LU, Deva, ECR, UK) warned against any attempts to use development funding for climate change and reaffirmed the need for climate funding to be additional to development funding. M. Goerens also asked about the modalities for joint implementation and for the implementation of the Clean Development Mechanism. M. Mitchell, EPP, IE asked about coordination with Commissioners Piebalgs and Georghieva and with the UN Special Representative for Disaster Risk Reduction.

In reply, the Commissioner confirmed that there was regular coordination with her Commission colleagues, clarified the ways in which the Clean Development Mechanism had to be reviewed to be more effective and said that the EU had to find ways to deliver on climate change mitigation without waiting for the ODA and climate commitments to be met by the EU and the wider international community. She concluded by stating that this objective could only be met through the mainstreaming of climate issues into all policy strands, including the development programmes and projects, as a means to build better resilience in developing countries. She reassured MEPs that she was a strong defender of the 0.7% ODA objective and stated that the EU had not become so poor as to give up this objective.

15. 2011 discharge: 8th, 9th and 10th European Development Funds (EDF)

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: M. Berman, S&D, NL, responsible committee :CONT) was adopted.

16. 2011 discharge: EU general budget, Section III, Commission

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: M. Berman, S&D, NL, responsible committee :CONT) was adopted.

17. Recommendation to the EEAS and to the Council on the 2013 review of the organisation and the functioning of the EEAS

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: Ms. Schnieber-Jastram (PPE, DE), responsible committee :AFET) was adopted.

18. Recommendation to the Council on the UN principle of the 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P)

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: M. Cashman (S&D, UK), responsible committee :AFET) was adopted.

19. Advancing Development Through Trade

The draft report (Rapporteur: M. Svensson (PPE, SV) was adopted

20. Preparation of the multiannual financial framework regarding the financing of EU cooperation for African, Caribbean and Pacific States and Overseas Countries and Territories for the 2014-2020 period (11th European Development Fund)

The draft report (Rapporteur: M. Tirolien (S&D, FR) was adopted.

21. Protocol between the EU and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania setting out fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the two Parties currently in force

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: Ms. Meissner (ALDE, DE), responsible committee :PECH) was adopted.

22. Association of the overseas countries and territories with the European Union ("Overseas Association Decision")

The draft report (Rapporteur: M. Tirolien (S&D, FR) was adopted.

23. Fishing opportunities and the financial contribution provided for in the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and the Republic of Madagascar

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: Ms. Lövin (Verts/ALE, SV), responsible committee :PECH) was adopted.

24. Special Report No 13/2012 (2011 discharge): ‘European Union Development Assistance for Drinking-Water Supply and Basic Sanitation in Sub-Saharan Countries’

The draft opinion (Rapporteur for the opinion: Ms. Záborská (PPE, SK), responsible committee :CONT) was adopted.

25. Presentation of the briefing on "Human Rights and Poverty Review: EU action in addressing caste-based discrimination"

Ms. Susanne Langsdorf, expert from the Ecologic institute delivered a presentation on this subject and related challenges for EU development policy.

In the exchange of views which followed, M. Donskis, ALDE, LV, supported by M. Cashman, S&D, UK remarked that relativism and cultural grounds could not be accepted as a justification for discriminatory rules and behaviours. He expressed support for the DEVE opinion. Ms. Greze, Greens/EFA, FR, asked about the Commission's strategy to use development aid as a tool to fight that kind of discrimination and the poverty related to it. M. Berman, S&D, NL, referred to the difficulties in entering in a dialogue with India on those issues whilst M. Cortés Lastra, S&D, ES stressed the role of education to change mindsets. M. Svensson, EPP, SV regretted that so little time could be devoted to an issue which has an impact on some 260 million people in the world.

Ms. Langsdorf suggested mainstreaming human rights issues such as this one in the EU's development policy.

The Commission representative explained the way in which EU programmes help fight such and other types of discriminations.

M. Cashman asked for the inclusion of this item for discussion at the next coordinators' meeting.

26. Establishing the European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps EU Aid Volunteers

The Rapporteur Ms. Striffler (PPE, FR) indicated that her report would serve as a mandate for the trilogue negotiations to come. She expressed overall support for the Commission proposal, whilst suggesting some amendments to make it more specific on a number of issues, in particular on the need to exclude the armed conflicts from the scope of the proposal and to specify the selection and certification criteria for the volunteers.

Following a few minor comments by MEPs, the Commission representative welcomed the proposed amendments, most of which were considered very helpful to specify the proposal. He expressed however concerns on some proposed amendments, notably one suggesting a multiannual programming and one on the issue of trust funds.

- Consideration of draft report
- Deadline for tabling amendments: **26 February 2013, 17.00**

27. Policy Coherence for Development: the EU approach to the Sahel Region

M. Popowski, Deputy Secretary General of EEAS, followed by an EEAS expert presented the state of play of EU action in the Sahel region and more specifically in Mali, as well as the next steps (short- and longer term) envisaged by the EU to restore political and economic stability in Mali.

M. Goerens, Rapporteur for Policy Coherence for development, asked a number of questions, notably about coordination with the UNSC and about the reasons behind the Malian crisis. He referred in this context to the possible role of Saudi Arabia and Qatar in supporting Islamist movements in Mali. He paid tribute to Commissioner Georghieva's exemplary action.

M. Berman, S&D, NL considered that the restoration of an adequate level of governance required investments in the form of budget support and asked about the amounts envisaged in this context.

Ms De Keyser, S&D, BE, supported by Ms. Striffler, EPP, FR referred to the need for the EU policy to be more preventive; to the risks of a terrorist guerilla developing in Mali and about the kind of training to be offered to the Malian army to help them counter such a scenario. She further referred to womens' rapes including by military staff and to the need to put an end to existing impunity on those issues via the contractual commitments to be concluded with the Malian authorities.

M. Neuser, S&D, DE, considered that one of the issues had been the inaccurate analysis of the current political situation in Mali, especially following the Libyan conflict and the rearmament of some populations of the North Mali.

In answer, M. Popovski confirmed that the UNSC was supporting the French intervention in Mali, but that the timetable for UN action was not known yet; that the EU action which was under preparation before the intervention had to be accelerated to follow up on events; that there were strong reservations on budget support and that its modalities and conditionality had therefore still to be defined. He indicated that the issue of impunity would be part of it. On the organization of elections in Mali, he indicated that the EU would provide assistance for their preparation and would deploy an observation mission. On the guerilla scenario, he confirmed that this risk was real and that the EU was looking at ways to help the Malians in restoring security through various means.

His colleague confirmed that there was a domino effect following the conflict in Libya and referred to trafficking as one of the major factors having led to the crisis in Mali. He noted that the coup had brought the country a decade behind, but that such developments could not have been foreseen at the time when the strategy for the Sahel had been designed. On budget support, he noted that the instrument had evolved a lot and could be a valuable instrument to promote certain issues via the conditionality.

M. Goerens noted that the crisis in Mali was not a national problem, but a regional one and that therefore a regional strategy should be developed.

28. Report of the Development Committee delegation mission to Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (30 November - 3 December 2012)

M. Kaczmarek, EPP, PL, chair of the delegation, reported on the outcome of the delegation's mission.

29. Any other business

30. Next meeting(s)

- 18 March 2013, 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)
- 19 March 2013, 9.00 – 12.30 and 15.00 – 18.30 (Brussels)