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

**On the implementation, results and overall assessment
of the European Year for Development 2015**

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

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Context: 2015 as the European Year for Development

The European Year for Development ('EYD2015' hereafter) was the first European Year¹ to be devoted to external relations. It came at an important moment for major international policy decisions: the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were replaced by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2015. A major breakthrough took place in July 2015 when the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on a global framework for financing sustainable development was agreed upon. Finally, in December, at the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris (COP21), 195 countries adopted the first-ever universal, legally-binding global climate deal.

It is against this backdrop that the European Union coordinated an innovative communication campaign on development that aimed to bring these global decisions closer to European citizens and their everyday life. Preparatory conferences were organised to make the campaign as inclusive as possible. All partners – including Member States, EU institutions, international organisations, civil society, and the private sector – agreed that the campaign should be a multi-stakeholder celebration of development cooperation.

1.2. Objectives and principles

Decision No 472/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council designating the European Year for Development 2015² ('EYD2015 Decision' hereafter) identified three objectives:

(a) to inform Union citizens about the development cooperation policies and actions of the Union and its Member States, highlighting the results achieved in this field by the Union as a global actor, and the commitment to continuing to play a leading role in development in line with the emerging post-2015 framework;

(b) to foster direct involvement, critical thinking and active interest among Union citizens and stakeholders in development cooperation, policy formulation and implementation; and

¹ European Years addressed since 1983 specific subjects to encourage debate and dialogue within and between countries.

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014D0472>

(c) to raise awareness of the benefits of the Union's development cooperation not only among beneficiaries but also among Union citizens, to achieve a broader understanding of policy coherence for development, and to foster among citizens in Europe and developing countries a sense of joint responsibility, solidarity and opportunity in a changing and interdependent world.

1.3. EYD2015 resources

The financial resources mobilised for the campaign totalled EUR 10,579,345.11³.

Contributions to the national work programmes of the European Union Member States involved in the campaign amounted to EUR 5,268,613.31; CONCORD (the Civil Society Alliance) received EUR 938,639.50; EUR 170,258.55 was invested in developing the communication campaign strategy in 2014; EUR 3,451,833.75 was allocated to the implementation of the strategy, EUR 500,000 to the temporary recruitment of additional support staff; and EUR 250,000 went to the external evaluation study.

1.4. Corporate and partnership approach

The EYD2015 was a corporate communication priority for the European Commission and other EU institutions. An Inter-institutional Working Group⁴ was set up to help the Year reach wide audiences, while an Inter-service Working Group (within the Commission) ensured coherent messaging with an emphasis on policy coherence for development. The coordination meetings with the working groups were vital in exchanging information, producing EYD2015 material and organising public debates.

A new network was set up between the Commission and participating Member States.⁵ Six workshops were organised in Brussels to bring all implementing parties together and to develop methods to promote development communication at European level. There is a firm commitment by all participating sides to sustain this network.

The non-institutional partnerships of the campaign brought diversity and dynamism to it. The coalition around the EYD2015 included international organisations, local authorities, civil society groups, the private sector, academia, and youth organisations.

1.5. Eurobarometer results on development

Two Eurobarometer surveys⁶ were conducted, one at the start of the campaign and one at the end. The purpose was to gauge public opinion on development topics and

³ Resources coming from the following Decisions: C/2013/8977; C/2013/9197; C/2014/5179; C/2015/4689

⁴ Participants were representatives from the European Commission services, the European External Action Service as well as representatives from the Council, the European Parliament, the Committee of the Regions, the European Economic and Social Committee and CONCORD.

⁵ Twenty-five National Work Programmes were signed but all EU Member States participated in some of the regular workshops.

⁶ Special Eurobarometer 421 (2015) "The European Year for Development – citizens' views on development, cooperation and aid": http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/archives/ebs/ebs_421_en.pdf ; Special Eurobarometer 441 (2016) "The European Year for Development – citizens' views on development, cooperation and aid": http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/sp441-devco-report-final_en.pdf

to track any shifts in these attitudes during the year. The 2016 Eurobarometer survey on Development showed a clear increase of the proportion of citizens who support development (from 85% to 89%) and confirmed that the European public had acquired greater knowledge of the new SDGs, with 36% of the public stating that they had heard or read about them. In relation to the EYD2015 itself, from an initial 12% recognition rate in January 2015, the Eurobarometer survey showed a 50% increase by the end of the year.

2. IMPLEMENTATION AT DECENTRALISED LEVEL

The EYD2015 Decision stated the need for broad support for development, as "the primary responsibility for raising citizens' awareness of development issues rests with Member States".⁷ At the same time, consensus was reached regarding the importance of multilateral partnerships to Member States' ability to achieve the objectives of the European Year.⁸

2.1. Working with EU Member States

The cooperation with EU Member States became a cornerstone of the campaign in establishing a network of development communicators. Twenty-five Member States implemented an EYD2015 national work programme. The EYD2015 offered an opportunity to focus on the results of the MDGs and on the 2030 Agenda on SDGs and to increase interest and engagement in development issues. In all EU Member States combined, some 3,828 events took place, with a total of 1,923,240 participants.

A variety of activities were organised, ranging from special development days, cultural events and TV and radio programmes, to literary, photo and video competitions, conferences and learning events. The European Parliament Information Offices organised 35 events, seminars and debates on development issues in the Member States, in many cases with Members of the European Parliament present.

Special emphasis was placed on educational work targeting young people. The Commission produced an educational toolkit on development with a Teacher's Handbook, 12 lesson plans and a quiz booklet in 23 EU languages.⁹ These educational materials were distributed through Education Ministries to educational institutions, mostly secondary schools, but also universities, and teachers' unions through relevant educational ministries. Many Member States appointed national ambassadors whose popularity was instrumental in increasing the campaign's reach.

Media and press partnerships were established in all Member States; altogether 45 such partnerships supported the campaign, and – notably in Ireland, Spain, and Austria - provided some strong examples targeting young audiences.

Good News for Europe – a special day

The Commission worked closely with the Danish NGO *World's Best News* in support of a series of special European Development Days celebrated in nineteen Member

⁷ Decision No 472/2014/EU. Link: <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014D0472>

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ <https://europa.eu/eyd2015/en/content/teachers-corner>

States to spread positive messages on EU development cooperation and on the progress seen in partner countries.¹⁰

To mark the occasion, a special newspaper in all EU languages was created, with a total print run of 250,000. The distribution of the newspaper by volunteers and in most cases in cooperation with private sector partners enhanced the outreach of the Year. The European Development Days were often organised in relation to international days, such as the Global Day of Action for the Global Goals or other national occasions.

2.2. Working with Civil Society and Development Education Awareness Raising (DEAR)

The European Civil Society Alliance, led by CONCORD, used the EYD2015 as an opportunity to foster critical discussion and active engagement on global justice among EU citizens. In a period of 15 months, 17 smaller projects were awarded sub-grants by CONCORD and implemented in 20 countries in Europe reaching approximately 17 million people at local, national, European and global level. At the end of 2015, CONCORD published a Policy Recommendations booklet.¹¹

Civil society was further involved in the campaign through the requirement for DEAR beneficiaries in all 28 Member States to take EYD2015 into account in their programmes for 2015. Outputs included photo exhibitions and competitions, film and music festivals, writing contests, development summer camps, exhibitions, cultural events and teachers' fora.

2.3. On the international stage: working with international organisations

The United Nations (UN) and the World Bank played an important role in the campaign by contributing to the website, social media co-curation and spreading awareness of the campaign both inside and outside the Union. The UN Regional Information Centre for Europe (UNRIC) played a particularly valuable coordination role throughout the Year. Fifteen UN agencies contributed with posts, stories and event announcements on the EYD2015 website, and by co-curating the EYD2015 social media accounts.

The many joint events organised included the meeting of young people with the UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon at Bozar Brussels, the UN Day at the Grand Place in Brussels, the labelling of the Ciné-ONU screenings in Brussels, and the Conference on the SDGs in the context of the "Quinzaine de la Solidarité internationale" in Brussels. International conferences on development cooperation entitled "*Engage. Cooperate. Share Experience*" (Lithuania) and "*Advancing Women's Economic Empowerment via the Post 2015 Development Framework*" (Poland) were supported by the World Bank in the context of the EYD2015 campaign.

¹⁰ The EU Member States that participated were Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

¹¹ http://concordeurope.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Policy_RecommendationEYD2015_Civil_Society_Alliance-1.pdf?1d6b43

2.4. Commitment of the private sector

Twenty new partnerships with the private sector were set up during the year.

The private sector used EYD2015 visuals and materials for their own communication purposes, including events, magazines, and newsletters, which were distributed through the networks of the collaborating companies/associations. As an example, the 160,000 European enterprises making up the agribusiness association Cooperative Europe and the 10,000 member-companies of Corporate Social Responsibility Europe in Energy were all recipients of EYD2015 messages.

3. IMPLEMENTATION AT CENTRALISED LEVEL

Acting in a spirit of inclusiveness and co-ownership, the European Commission, in collaboration with other EU institutions, played a central coordinating role in the running of the campaign.

3.1. The campaign materials

A comprehensive campaign toolkit was made available online through the EYD2015 website, with most materials translated into 23 EU languages. The materials consisted of: two EYD2015 videos; a radio spot; 52 'Stories of the week'; a monthly newsletter; monthly thematic factsheets and infographics; EYD2015 thematic posters; PowerPoint presentations; two editions of the EYD2015-World's Best News newspaper; an educational toolkit on the EYD2015; a full visual identity toolkit; a photo-bank; roll-up templates; a limited number of giveaways; and after the end of the year, a widely distributed hardcover publication of all 'Stories of the week'. The European Parliament created its own special campaign toolkit for the EYD2015.

The production of the graphic representation of the EYD2015 motto was essential in reinforcing the visual identity of the campaign. Further, the "thematic months"¹² approach (with one key theme assigned to every month of the year) was useful in helping partners to communicate effectively about a topic, event or area of particular interest to them.

3.2. Young people in focus

The EYD2015 Decision recognised young people as a key target group. Many activities organised by the European Commission, other EU institutions and Member States directly targeted young people. Among them were the 12 young leaders from across the world selected to speak in high-level panels at the European Development Days (EDD) in June 2015. In the same spirit, an interactive debate was organised at Bozar Brussels in May between youth ambassadors and UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon on the post-2015 agenda and the role of young people. The event was web streamed and the hashtag #AskBanKimoon appeared in the Twitter feeds of over 10 million people.

¹² The 12 thematic months were: Europe in the World (January); Education (February); Women and Girls (March); Health (April); Peace and Security (May); Sustainable Green Growth, Decent Jobs, Businesses (June); Children and Youth (July); Humanitarian Aid (August); Demography and Migration (September); Food Security (October); Sustainable Development and Climate Action (November); Human Rights and Governance (December).

Leading global thinkers discussed development issues in the framework of the Kapuscinski Development Lectures, organised jointly by the European Commission and the UN Development Programme (UNDP). At least one Kapuscinski Development Lecture took place in each Member State during the campaign, involving leading national universities and speakers such as Thomas Piketty, Julia Gillard, Dani Rodrik and Carl Bildt, who gave fascinating lectures.

A special EYD2015 video was prepared through a unique collaboration with a popular young blogger. The video became the most viewed audio-visual output ever of the Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) with 1 million views on YouTube; on Facebook, the campaign reached 6,073,539 impressions in total; and in cinema showings, the video reached an audience of 335,389 people.

3.3. Flagship events, wide visibility, diversity of targets and activities

The opening and closing ceremonies (in Latvia and Luxembourg respectively) were attended by the College of Commissioners and the political leadership of the two Presidencies. In March 2015, a conference on gender took place with specialists and stakeholders to analyse the state of inequalities in Europe and beyond. On 9 May 2015, the EYD2015 was the main theme on Europe Day when more than 30 000 citizens visited the Open Doors Day in EU institutions.

The EYD2015 was also promoted by the EU institutions at the 20K Run in Brussels and the EYD2015 logo decorated the European Parliament skywalk plaza with a large banner throughout the year. In addition, EYD2015 was integrated in the European Parliament's Euroscola that welcomed thousands of 16-18 year-old students in Strasbourg in February 2015. The European Parliament guest photographer contest was based on the monthly EYD2015 topics and the winning photos were featured in an exhibition at the Bronisław Geremek Agora in Strasbourg in November 2015. Similarly, the "Family Meal" photo exhibition was on display at the Parlamentarium between May and November.

The EYD2015 campaign was present at the main international events of the year: a special EYD2015 stand was set up at the COP21 conference in Paris; and a special Kapuscinski Development Lecture was organised on the occasion of the adoption of the 2030 Agenda by the UN General Assembly in New York.

The campaign was present at the Milan EXPO2015, where EYD2015 visuals were strongly featured alongside the nutrition theme of the Expo (*Feeding the Planet: Energy for Life*) at the EU pavilion.

The EYD2015 also played an active part in the celebration of the 70 years anniversary of the UN on 25 October 2015, with a large stand at the Grand Place in Brussels which attracted around 5 000 visitors.

3.4. Working with EU Delegations: A year of stories

Story-telling was the centrepiece of the campaign. EU Delegations prepared more than 150 stories showing the tangible impact of EU development on the lives of people in partner countries. The stories combined simple language, compelling, first-hand narratives, and key facts about the positive results of EU development assistance. The best stories were selected for the campaign's 'Story of the Week'

thread, translated into 23 languages, posted on the website, and disseminated via social media. Most of the remaining stories were published in their original language.

Given the quality of the stories and the encouraging feedback received, a single book gathering all the 'Stories of the Week' was issued in a special publication. "*EYD2015: a Year of Stories*"¹³ was distributed at the closing event in Luxembourg, and by European Commission Representations, Europe Direct Information Centres and EU Delegations in 23 languages.

3.5. An innovative campaign website

The EYD2015 website was a platform that forged new relationships between the EU and development partners and allowed genuinely interactive communication. While set up and managed by the Commission, it gave partner organisations full editorial control of their content. More than 200 accredited partners were free to post information about themselves, events, stories and other information in the language of their choice. Among them were 24 Member States, 30 international organisations, 137 civil society/non-governmental organisations, and 9 private sector companies.

Social media co-curation

The work with social media – Facebook and Twitter¹⁴ - was both a success for the EYD2015 and an investment in future online campaigning. Over 330 000 mentions were recorded of the EYD2015 hashtag. The event that attracted most attention to the #EYD2015 hashtag was the youth takeover of DG DEVCO's social media accounts in October 2015.

One of the key successes was the co-curation of the EYD2015 social media accounts by a different partner every week in 2015; demand for co-curation slots exceeded the number of weeks in the year. Our co-curators came from all walks of public life, from private sector companies to NGOs. Co-curation was successful in producing varied content, leveraging existing networks and building new partnerships.

3.6. Media work

Bringing development cooperation to the attention of the media was an important part of the campaign. The EYD2015 ensured major coverage in top quality media across the EU. A good number of well-informed articles were published, some of them using the motto of the Year in their reporting. Altogether, 3,914 articles mentioned the EYD2015. DG DEVCO regularly briefed journalists on the campaign by setting up press seminars and briefings. A press trip to Tanzania was organised as part of the campaign in order to focus on climate change ahead of the COP21 Conference.

4. LEGACY AND FOLLOW UP OF THE EYD2015

The EYD2015 campaign resulted in stronger partnerships in development communication. The Commission will continue to bring the topic of development cooperation closer to European citizens.

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/year-stories-european-year-development-2015_en

¹⁴ <https://twitter.com/eyd2015>

4.1. EYD2015 legacy

The European Parliament, the Council and the Commission signed a Joint Declaration on the European Year for Development at a special ceremony in Luxembourg on Wednesday, 9 December 2015.¹⁵ The Joint Declaration included the following key elements:

- **Build on partnerships and engage new stakeholders beyond the development community:**

The networks set up with Member States, parliaments, regions, civil society, the private sector, regional/local authorities, academia, and research/educational institutions during the EYD2015, have proved to be very efficient for building synergies, agreeing on joint activities and sharing lessons learnt.

- **Address young people:**

Efforts in the education sector will continue to play an important role in the run up to 2030, ensuring that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development.

- **Put people at the centre:**

The story-telling approach was one of the most popular ways of communicating on development cooperation's global challenges and efforts affecting people's everyday lives.

- **Be interactive:**

Building on the highly participatory manner in which the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development was developed, interaction among and with stakeholders will continue to be key.

- **Be fact-based:**

A results-based communication campaign will be an important contribution to the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

- **Keep the spirit of the EYD:**

The motto of the EYD2015 – *our world, our dignity, our future* – can be a tool for conveying messages around the 2030 Agenda.

4.2. Conclusion

The Commission welcomes the positive overall findings of the independent evaluation of the EYD2015¹⁶, while acknowledging that some conclusions need to be considered in the light of the data gathering constraints encountered, and the fact that the evaluation draws extensively on a survey of stakeholders who themselves implemented campaign activities, which implies a potential risk of positive bias.

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/declaration-eyd2015_en.pdf

¹⁶ See Commission Staff Working Document on the implementation, results and overall assessment of the European Year for Development 2015 (SWD(2016)286)

The Commission welcomes the evaluator's conclusions as to the *relevance* and *complementarity* of objectives and activities. EYD2015 combined EU and Member State input to ensure an appropriately pitched campaign that helped to increase awareness, knowledge and understanding among the general public and young people in particular. Having a broad set of objectives and target groups helped Member States and other partners to better tailor messaging to their own priorities and interests, although clearer communication on specific political messages would have been helpful in mitigating the attenuation of the European dimension in some cases. The Commission notes with satisfaction that the storytelling approach made communication on development more relevant to the different audiences, and that campaign activities - including those involving international organisations - were complementary at national at European level.

The Commission acknowledges the interlinked conclusions regarding *effectiveness* and *impact*. While, no direct causal link can be established between the campaign and the increase of the proportion of citizens in favour of development shown in the 2016 Eurobarometer survey, given the volume of activity and evidence of the new audiences reached, it is reasonable to assume that the EYD2015 contributed to improving public and political support for development cooperation. The online and social media strategy was particularly successful in projecting the EU as a global player and informing citizens about the development activities of the EU and its Member States. The Commission notes that the opening up the website and social media accounts to partners was an effective way to build partnerships, which could usefully have taken place even earlier. The evaluation also highlights good press coverage of the campaign and effective coordination across all major players.

As regards *efficiency*, *coherence* and *EU added-value* of the EYD2015 activities, the partnership model was perceived as an efficient way to reach the development community as multipliers, the general public, and young people in particular. The Commission notes that some partners considered the monitoring and reporting requirements burdensome. The Commission further acknowledges the evaluator's suggestion that more human and financial resources could have been allocated to the EYD2015, and submits this report on the basis of the resources available to the project, taking account of the broader context of financial and human resources constraints.

On the *sustainability* of the EYD2015 activities, the evaluation concludes that the campaign provided stakeholders with an opportunity to develop new forms of engagement, notably through storytelling, making use of new tools, or learning about communicating with new audiences. The foundations have been laid for sustainable outcomes, including through the Joint Declaration; the challenge will be to ensure that the motivation and momentum generated by the EYD2015 are sustained and the requisite financial and human resources made available.

The new global framework of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the SDGs, will require innovative and inclusive campaigns. Future campaigns will benefit from the lessons learned during the EYD2015, and the cooperation networks and good practices developed and implemented. Thanks to the EYD2015, the EU has significantly improved its capacity to communicate with European citizens on development.