

Broken EU aid promises push Millennium Development Goals out of reach, says CONCORD as OECD announces aid figures

Figures released today by the OECD show a reduction¹ in EU overseas development aid in 2009. At current levels the European Union will not meet commitments to provide 0.7% of GNI in aid by 2015 to reach the Millennium Development Goals. The news represents yet another broken promise by EU governments and delivers a further blow to the MDGs, which will be reviewed in New York this September.

Germany and Italy, two major European economies, cut aid to 0.35% and 0.16% of GNI respectively, taking a big chunk out of the total EU aid budget. Several other EU countries, including Austria, Ireland and Portugal also reduced their aid expenditure in 2009, with all DAC EU countries' contributions² falling by a total of 0.2%.

The UK and Belgian governments have demonstrated leadership by increasing aid in line with their promises, whilst many countries continue to blame the financial crisis for their cuts. This suggests a lack of political will, not resources. Despite feeling the effects of the financial crisis, the UK and Belgium increased aid expenditure to 0.52% and 0.55% of GNI respectively. Among the top performers are Denmark and Sweden, who spent 0.88% and 1.12% of GNI respectively.

"We've spent billions bailing out the banks but where's the bail out for the world's poor? By not paying up, EU countries are delivering a fatal blow to the MDGs", said Luca De Fraia, Deputy Secretary General of ActionAid Italy.

With EU leaders meeting on 17-18th June in Brussels to agree the EU's position for September's MDG review summit, the EU and its member states needs to make good on its obligations to fight for the eradication of extreme poverty.

"EU Member States must deliver on their aid promises, the lives of the most vulnerable people in the world depend on it", said Heinz Hödl, Vice-President of CIDSE. *"In order to get back on track on the MDGs it is imperative EU member states demonstrate how they plan to meet the 0.7% target by 2015 and hold themselves to account".*

CONCORD calls on EU Member States to publish legally-binding timetables showing how they will meet their aid commitments, submitting them to the European Commission during 2010. An annual review of aid targets should take place at Council level with a discussion of its results in the European Parliament.

"Poverty and hunger are rising worldwide with up to 90 million more people now living in extreme poverty than before the crisis. One billion people – a sixth of the world's population – go to bed hungry every night. Leaders must keep their promises to increase aid to the world's poorest people", said Justin Kilcullen, President of CONCORD.

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Notes to Editors:

¹ From US\$70,974 million (2008) to US\$67,135 million (2009); this, however, represents an increase of 0.01% in EU aid as a proportion of EU GNI, which shrunk in 2009 as a result of the financial crisis.

² The 15 countries of the Development Assistance Committee of the OECD (DAC) are: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom.

OECD figures : http://www.oecd.org/document/11/0,3343,en_2649_34487_44981579_1_1_1_1,00.html

CONCORD is the European confederation of Relief and Development NGOs. Its 24 national associations and 18 international networks represent over 1,600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe: www.concordeurope.org

CONCORD will launch its 2010 AidWatch Report on June 10th, which provides detailed analysis of how the EU and its member states are performing on development aid. Click here to read the [Aid Watch report 2009](#) and the [AidWatch position paper on European Union aid in 2010](#). [Testimonies from developing countries](#). [Pictures from developing countries](#).