Council conclusions on the annual report 2013 on the European Union’s development and external assistance policies and their implementation in 2012

FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Development) Council meeting
Brussels, 12 December 2013

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"1. The Council welcomes the Annual Report 2013 on the European Union’s Development and External Assistance Policies and their implementation in 2012\(^1\) as well as the efforts of the Commission and the EEAS to continuously improve the quality and user-friendliness of the report. The Council considers the Annual Report as a key contribution to strengthening accountability and transparency, and towards a results-oriented EU development policy and external assistance.

2. The Council recalls the importance of the new EU development policy framework set out in particular in the Council Conclusions of May 2012 on “Increasing the impact of EU Development Policy: an Agenda for Change”\(^2\). The Annual Report needs to demonstrate how key features of the Agenda for Change have been implemented, especially in terms of programming, and what results this has achieved on the promotion of human rights, democracy, the rule of law and good governance, as well as inclusive and sustainable growth. The Council also highlights the need to report on the work to provide at least 20% of EU aid to support social inclusion and human development, as well as on how the EU’s development policies will contribute to the target set in the European Council Conclusions of February 2013 on the Multiannual Framework 2014-2020\(^3\) to devote at least 20% of EU spending to strengthen energy security, building a low-carbon, resource efficient and climate resilient economy.

\(^{1}\) Doc. 13182/13.
\(^{2}\) Doc. 9316/12.
\(^{3}\) Doc. EUCO 37/13
3. The Council invites the Commission and the EEAS to also further report in the next Annual Reports on the implementation and results of budget support, taking into account the Council Conclusions of May 2012 on “The Future Approach to EU Budget Support to Third Countries”.

4. The Council notes the work made towards the implementation of a results framework for EU development cooperation and stresses in this context the need to report systematically on results. Further, the Council invites the Commission and the EEAS to report in sufficient detail on thematic programmes and projects financed through blending facilities.

5. The Council welcomes the effort made to respond to the recommendations contained in its Conclusions on the 2012 Annual Report, in particular concerning a more evidence-based approach to Policy Coherence for Development (PCD), better reporting on coordination, supporting transition countries, enhancing resilience in situations of fragility, as well as progress in the implementation of a rights-based approach to development. Furthermore, the Council underlines the significance of continued reporting on cooperation with civil society, local authorities and the private sector.

6. The Council appreciates the effort to strengthen reporting on the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues and invites the Commission and the EEAS – in future Annual Reports – to focus more on gender equality, and where appropriate, illustrate progress achieved with concrete examples such as the implementation of the Gender Action Plan. The Council looks forward to reporting on the efforts to implement the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States.

7. In addition, with only two years remaining until the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) target year of 2015, the Council underlines the need for continued reporting in the 2014 report on the EU's contribution to these efforts, as well as on the work to prepare a new post-2015 framework.

8. The Council also underlines the need for the Annual Report to report thoroughly on how the progress achieved compares with progress expected and targets set, as well as areas where EU development cooperation has encountered challenges. The analysis of lessons learned could be useful in future programming and implementation of development assistance.

9. The Council encourages the Commission and the EEAS to continue developing and refining its annual reporting, taking into account the Council Conclusions adopted on this year's report.

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4 Doc. 9371/12
5 Doc. 14539/12.