

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR ON CONCORD'S PRIORITIES FOR 2007

Dear CONCORD members and readers of CONCORD Flash,

CONCORD is now four years old. The "assessment and adjustment" process highlighted that the members of our Confederation feel that the greatest challenge facing CONCORD is to heighten the political impact of European NGOs. To do this, we need to improve the structuring of our advocacy work with our partners in the South and strengthen CONCORD's strategic alliances with other sectors of European civil society. This is our road map for 2007.

This year presents us with a serious opportunity for mobilising all our resources and talents in order to have a significant influence on a major political process: the future of relations between the European Union (EU) and Africa. A future that is uncertain, because it is constantly evolving under pressure from new political, economic and social agendas.

Although the Cotonou Agreement, which officially (it is an international treaty) governs relations between the EU and the ACP countries (Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific), is supposed to be in force for 20 years, many initiatives are being taken between the EU and Africa (which represents the vast majority of ACP countries) to redefine the strategy between the two continents. This is the background against which the EU and the African Union (AU) are speeding up their approval of a new political framework entitled "The EU and Africa: towards a new strategic partnership".

This is not just one more statement... It is actually about redefining the priorities for the partnership between the two regions, primarily to tackle what EU officials call "the new challenges" – security, migration, energy, the position of North African countries (which do not belong to the ACP and are at present covered by the EU's neighbourhood policy), the process of regional integration in Africa (AU), new economic partnership agreements (EPAs), priorities for aid to Africa (in particular through the current negotiations on the 10th European Development Fund, or EDF), etc.

Each of these issues deserves the fullest attention from European and African civil society. The links between these various issues are just as strategic: new conditionality, new priorities, coherence for development (something the European Commission and Member States committed themselves to at the end of 2005), institutional coherence between policies, programming, financing and implementation, etc.

It is a highly complex agenda, but what CONCORD is asking of political leaders in Europe is far simpler, and more urgent: **stop this mad rush!** Give the players involved – in particular the African States, institutions and civil society – time to start debates in their own countries on the colossal implications that all these agreements will have on the lives of millions of citizens in Africa and on the nature of the political relationship between the two regions!

This year the EU is celebrating its 50th anniversary. Colonialist Europe formally began to leave Africa 50 years ago too. The African Union, for its part, is only five years old. These anniversaries must be seen as an opportunity for thinking again, in depth, about what relationship Europe and Africa will have in the coming decades. The EU must apply and respect the founding principle of its relationship with the ACP countries: true partnership, based on ownership. It is not responsible, or reasonable, for the EU to plan to finalise these negotiations (EU/Africa strategy, Economic Partnership Agreements, 10th EDF, etc.) in under seven months.

CONCORD is already mobilising – with all our members, with our African partners and with other sectors of European civil society – to make our EU decision-makers listen to reason: give it time! Consult the national and regional parliaments (in both Europe and Africa)! Involve civil society in each country! Negotiate transparently and inclusively! Give society in each of our continents a chance to feel that they are partners and players in this new partnership!

Let's not forget, now that it is 50 years old, that the EU – enlarged to encompass 27 countries – also needs to make up for its participation deficit in relation to its citizens and reconstruct its vision of the future and its place in the world.

Without this extra time and without real democratic debates in each region and between the EU and Africa, it is very unlikely that the people and civil society concerned will feel committed to these new relations which our politicians are intending to put in place in the name of 'mutual interests'.

So this is the great challenge for 2007, and, we hope, an opportunity for more in-depth dialogue between us all (institutions, governments, parliaments and civil society) in the years to come.

Olivier Consolo

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education, while Portugal will develop indicators on the feminisation of poverty and Slovenia, indicators on the position of girls and young women in society.

The gender issue will also be raised when the EU-Africa strategy is introduced, notably at the EU-Africa summit in Lisbon next autumn and in Slovenia at the EU-ACP summit. The integration of the ACP countries into the world economy remains a priority for the institutions, and the negotiations on the Economic Partnership Agreements should be completed by the end of 2007.

Where development policy is concerned, the three presidencies are going to concentrate mainly on the introduction of the European development consensus, the Monterrey commitments and the increase in official development aid.

And we mustn't forget this year's major issue: migration. The three presidencies have undertaken to ensure regular dialogue, to cooperate with countries of origin and to assess readmission agreements. We should therefore be seeing the drafting of an EU strategy on legal migration. If so, it will be no surprise to see the European Commission's policy on consistency putting special emphasis on the links between development and migration and taking into account integration, internal security and the fight against trafficking in human beings.

Nor has enlargement been forgotten. The negotiations on the accession of Croatia, Turkey and the Republic of Macedonia will continue. And the EU's neighbourhood policy will be evaluated and strengthened in order to promote security, stability and prosperity.

For more information: Agnès Philippart (aphilippart@concordeurope.org) or see the [German website](#)

Is the European Commission's standard contract clear enough?

CONCORD is happy to present its Reader on the 2003 version of the EuropeAid Grant Standard Contract for external actions. A quick reminder of what a standard contract is: drawn up by the EuropeAid Co-operation Office, it applies specifically to grants awarded by the Commission within the framework of external actions. The Standard Grant Contract may be found on the EuropeAid website http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/tender/gestion/cont_typ/st/index_en.htm. The Reader was compiled in 2004 - 2006 by CONCORD, in regular meetings with EuropeAid unit 'Financial and contractual matters' whose head is M. Salord.

The Reader gives a clear explanation of all articles in the Standard Contract and also points out differences between it and the 2000 version. The European Commission endorses the work that has been done on the Reader. He is confident that it will help CONCORD members and other NGOs to deal better with different contractual issues to do with the implementation of the Grant Contract, even though final interpretation remains the responsibility of the European Commission.

CONCORD would like to thank Mr Salord and his team for the constructive meetings and exchanges that have resulted in this reader. Many thanks also go to Alexandra Mège and the rest of the FDR subgroup for their excellent work. In this Reader, the Confederation has yet another clear example of how intense specialist work by a group of its members is useful to all CONCORD members and other NGOs in their day-to-day work. The Reader is now available on the [CONCORD website](#).

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Bringing 'Gender' to life

NGOs are concerned about the promotion of gender equality in development. Of course, the European Commission has committed itself to promoting gender equality and equal rights. But this promise could well be just another of the many 'sleeping beauties' slumbering in the drawer of the European Commission unless it is translated into meaningful action and results on the ground.

Last December, CONCORD's Gender & Development Task Force therefore wrote directly to Mr Louis Michel, Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, asking him to bring it to life in the context of the "Investing in People" thematic programme, the only one specifically dedicated to the promotion of gender equality. In a nutshell, CONCORD's letter urges the Commission to:

- ◆ Allocate a substantial part of the budget on human and social development to the promotion of gender equality and women's and girl children's rights.
- ◆ Mainstream gender, both within the "Investing in People" thematic programme and within all the other thematic programmes.

- ◆ Ensure that gender analysis is included as part of the programming process, and provide sex-disaggregated data and gender-sensitive indicators.
- ◆ Ensure genuine participation by women and girl children in their own development, at programming, advocacy, monitoring and evaluation levels – participation being a key to their empowerment.
- ◆ Include at least one specific action on the promotion of gender equality and women's rights in each theme of the thematic programme.

Let's see if Commissioner Michel will welcome these suggestions and take them on board...

For more information or to view the full letter, contact: newing@concordeurope.org

European Development Fund programming. Will the EU deliver on its promises?

The European development aid plays a major role in setting the agenda and addressing challenges for the years to come. The 9th European Development Fund is currently being implemented in different African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP). Negotiations and consultations for the 10th EDF are in a crucial phase. Over the coming months, ACP ministers and parliaments will have to give their approval to the proposals prepared by the European Commission and the National Authorising Officers. The aid negotiations go hand in hand with the negotiations for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).

European NGOs are concerned that the programming process for the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) is likely to increase the accountability of ACP governments to the EU, as a donor and a trade partner, rather than strengthening the ways in which ACP governments can be accountable to their own citizens and parliaments, as promoted in the Cotonou Agreement. CONCORD's Cotonou Working Group has therefore published a briefing on the programming process for the 10th European Development Fund. Three key challenges arise in the 10th EDF programming process:

- ◆ Ownership: imposed priorities and additional conditionalities
- ◆ Participation: national parliaments and civil society left out of the process
- ◆ Prioritising people's needs and rights: governance and competitiveness replacing women's rights, health and education

European NGOs therefore call on ACP and EU Member States as well as on the European Commission to slow down the process of negotiating 10th EDF country strategy papers, to ensure that ACP national parliaments and civil society can participate in drawing up the priorities for European aid.

On 27 and 28 February, European NGOs organised in the Cotonou Working Group will invite several ACP partners to discuss the implementation of 9th EDF programming process and preparations for the 10th EDF.

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STOP PRESS

Civil Society Contact Group, a driving force in Europe

What's new for the Civil Society Contact Group (CSCG) in 2007? The aim of this group – which is composed of eight of the largest NGO sectors in Europe¹, and includes CONCORD – is to defend civil society's interests and rights on general issues affecting NGOs.

Its main focus for 2007 is participatory democracy in all its many and varied forms. On the 50th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome it will be championing the European cause by producing its own statement on the European Union's values and commitments, as a counterweight to the official statement issued by the institutions. This critical reflection will be accompanied by a strategy to relaunch the European Constitution and prepare for the EU elections in 2009, in order to get EU citizens more involved in the future of the European Union.

As in 2006, the CSCG will continue to fight to improve communication between civil society and the institutions, disseminating its study entitled "[Civil dialogue: making it work better](#)". In this context it will meet the Secretary-General

¹ Culture (EFAH), development (CONCORD), environment (Green 10), human rights (HRDN), lifelong learning (EUCIS), public health (EPHA), social (Social Platform) and women (EWL): www.act4europe.org

- ◆ The Danish MEP KRARUP, Ole (GUE-NGL) has been replaced by SØNDERGAARD, Søren Bo. Ms BERGER, Maria (Austria-PSE) is no longer an MEP.

As a result of the enlargement of the European Union, 18 Bulgarian representatives and 32 Romanian ones have become members of the European Parliament (MEPs):

- ◆ Bulgaria - 18 MEPs: DIMITROV, Konstantin (EPP-ED), DIMITROV, Martin (EPP-ED), DIMITROV, Philip Dimitrov (EPP-ED), BLIZNASHKI, Georgi (PSE), CHERVENYAKOV, Mladen Petrov (PSE), KIRILOV, Evgeni (PSE), LYUBCHEVA, Marusya Ivanova (PSE), PAPARIZOV, Atanas (PSE), VIGENIN, Kristian (PSE), PARVANOVA, Antonia (ALDE), ALI, Nedzhmi (ALDE), HUSMENOVA, Filiz (ALDE), ILCHEV, Stanimir (ALDE), CHRISTOVA, Christina (ALDE), KAZAK, Tchetin (ALDE), SHOULEVA, Lydia (ALDE), SOFIANSKI, Stefan (ALDE), STOYANOV, Dimitar (ITS)
- ◆ Romania -35 MEPs: ANASTASE, Roberta Alma (EPP-ED), IACOB-RIDZI, Monica Maria (EPP-ED), GANT, Ovidiu Victor (EPP-ED), KÓNYA-HAMAR, Sándor (EPP-ED), MARINESCU, Marian-Jean (EPP-ED), PETRE, Maria (EPP-ED), SZABÓ, Károly Ferenc (EPP-ED), TÍRLE, Radu (EPP-ED), ATHANASIU, Alexandru (PSE), CRETU, Corina (PSE), CORLĂTEAN, Titus (PSE), CRETU, Gabriela (PSE), DUMITRESCU, Cristian (PSE), MIHALACHE, Dan (PSE), PAȘCU, Ioan Mircea (PSE), PODGOREAN, Radu (PSE), DÎNCU, Vasile (PSE), SÂRBU, Daciana Octavia (PSE), SEVERIN, Adrian (PSE), TICĂU, Silvia Adriana (PSE), BĂRBULEȚIU, Tiberiu (ALDE), CIORNEI, Silvia (ALDE), CIOROIANU, Adrian Mihai (ALDE), MORTUN, Alexandru Ioan (ALDE), COȘEA, Dumitru Gheorghe Mircea (ALDE), HELLVIG, Eduard Raul (ALDE), KELEMEN, Atilla Béla Ladislau (ALDE), SERBU, Gheorghe Vergil (ALDE), SILAGHI, Ovidiu Ioan (ALDE), VĂLEAN, Adina Ioana (ALDE), MIHĂESCU, Eugen (ITS), MOISUC, Viorica Pompilia Georgeta (ITS), BURUIANĂ-APRODU, Daniela (ITS), POPEANGĂ, Petre (ITS), STĂNESCU, Cristian (ITS).

Political groups:

- ◆ Consequently, the number of MEPs by group is now as follows: out of 784 MEPS (instead of 732), there are 277 EPP-ED (Group of the European People's Party and European Democrats), 218 PSE (Socialist group), 106 ALDE (Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe), 44 UEN (Union for Europe of the Nations Group), 42 Green (Group of the Greens/European Free Alliance), 41 GUE-NGL (Confederal Group of the European United Left - Nordic Green Left), 23 ID (Independence & Democracy). The new ITS (Identity, Tradition and Sovereignty) Group has 20 MEPs, while 14 remain unattached to any political group through lack of shared values.
- ◆ There is no fundamental change in the balance between parties. The right wing (EPP-ED, UEN = 311MEPs) still outnumbers the left (PSE, GUE-NGL= 258 MEPs). The liberal ALDE group (which consists of centrists both from the centre-right and centre-left) is still the third largest party but it has been reinforced since some Bulgarians and Romanians have joined it. Like the Green party, the ALDE gives its preference to right or left depending on the issue involved, but only the ALDE has enough members to shift the balance in a vote. The UEN has slightly outnumbered the Greens. The new ITS group, like the nationalist ID group, can make more noise than damage. After the next European elections, in 2009, the figure of 785 will fall to 736. For more information on the national distribution of MEPs amongst political parties, see: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/members/expert.do?language=EN>.
- ◆ Joseph Daul, President of the parliamentary committee on agriculture since 2002, has been elected President of the Christian-Democratic groups in the European Parliament (EPP-ED). During its term of office he wants to focus on 10 "agreements" on "security, employment, competitiveness, solidarity, energy, the environment, global warming, food safety and the resources of the EU".

Seat changes in the European Parliament: half-way through its term of office, the European Parliament elects new presidents and vice-presidents, and members are allowed to change their membership of committees and delegations.

- ◆ New President of the European Parliament: Mr Hans-Gert Poettering (EPP-ED, German). His aims are a united Europe in which all nations have their say. Human dignity, respect for the law and solidarity between the peoples of Europe will be the principles underpinning his commitment until the election in 2009.
- ◆ The 14 new Vice-Presidents are: Rodi Kratsa-Tsagaropoulou (EPP-ED, Greece), Alejo Vidal-Quadras (EPP-ED, Spain), Gérard Onesta (Greens/EFA, France), Edward McMillan-Scott (EPP-ED, UK), Mario Mauro (EPP-ED, Italy), Miguel Angel Martínez Martínez (PSE, Spain), Luigi Cocilovo (ALDE, Italy), Mechtild Rothe (PSE, Germany), Luisa Morgantini (GUE/NGL, Italy), Pierre Moscovici (PSE, France), Manuel António dos Santos (PSE, Portugal), Diana Wallis (ALDE, UK), Marek Siwiec (PSE, Poland), and Adam Bielan (UEN, Poland).
- ◆ New presidents of the European Parliament committees:

- ★ 13 March: Policy WG meeting – Bonn
- ★ 20-21 March: FDR meeting – Brussels
- ★ 25 or 26 April: Advisory Group (tbc)
- ★ 13 April: CONCORD Board meeting – Brussels
- ★ 23-25 May: Development Education Forum – Luxembourg (tbc)
- ★ 7-8 June: CONCORD General Assembly – Brussels
- ★ 12-13 June: FDR meeting – Brussels
- ★ 28 June: CONCORD Board meeting Brussels
- ★ 6 September: Advisory group (tied to Aid Watch seminar) – Brussels (tbc)
- ★ 25 September: CONCORD Board meeting – Brussels
- ★ 23-24 October: FDR meeting – Brussels
- ★ 24-25 October: Development Education Forum – Brussels
- ★ 26 November: Advisory Group – Brussels
- ★ 27-28 November: second CONCORD General Assembly – Brussels (tbc)

For further details on any of these CONCORD-related activities, do not hesitate to contact the CONCORD Secretariat or check the extranet.

OTHER NEWSLETTERS

Have a look at the newsletter of CONCORD members, [click here](#)

Trialog - January issue: http://www.trialog.or.at/docs/tis_29_01_07.pdf

CSCG: http://act4europe.horus.be/module/FileLib/BULLETIN_45.pdf If you wish to get regular news, register on: <http://www.act4europe.org/code/en/act4.asp?Page=8&menuPage=8>

Euforic News: [click here to subscribe](#) and find out the latest news about development

The first EU Coherence Newsletter has been published. It contains, among other things, an article about the European institutions' system for monitoring policy coherence for development which the Evert Vermeer Foundation developed over the year 2006 in partnership with CONCORD. More information on www.eucoherence.org. To register for their newsletter, [click here](#)