

## President Barroso meets the heads of European Development NGOs: European NGOs put pressure on G20 to limit effect of the crisis on developing countries

For the first time today, Chief Executive Officers of over one hundred European Development NGOs of Development met the President of the European Commission, to urge him to put pressure on European Union Member States and on the G20 to take practical decisions on tackling the impact of the financial and environmental crises in developing countries.

Just a few days ahead of the G20 summit on the financial crisis and the release of the 2008 Official Development Aid figures by the OECD, CONCORD, the European NGO Confederation, mobilised leaders from civil society organisations to explore solutions to address the impact of the crises on poor and vulnerable populations, particularly in developing countries.

Reflecting on the impact of the crises; the President of CONCORD, Justin Kilcullen explained: *“People living in developing countries are experiencing a decrease in development assistance, due to the financial difficulties in the world. These downward trends will have practical consequences for the most vulnerable and marginalized persons living in precariousness, while the vast majority of people living in poverty bear no responsibility for this crisis”.*

In recent months, three European governments have slashed their 2009 Official Development Assistance: Ireland by 95 million Euros (10% of its overall budget), Italy by 56% (or 400 million Euros). Latvia has temporarily suspended its entire aid budget.

As expressed by M. Barroso: *“in this global crisis we need a global approach and global solutions. Development is not part of the problem, but part of the global solution to the crisis. There can be no economic recovery without the developing countries. Our growth and stability is inextricably linked to theirs and vice versa.”*

Olivier Consolo, Director of CONCORD said: *“decreases in official development assistance are even more difficult to accept because thousands of billions of euros have been mobilized to support the banking system that caused the crisis. At current aid levels the actual and potential costs of bank bailouts are equivalent to official development assistance for the next 154 years! ”*

Answering these claims, M. Barroso insisted that: *“The recession must not, cannot, will not be used as an excuse for going back on our promises. European support now, in the middle of the crisis, is essential, both in objective terms, and to avoid leaving developing countries the sense that they have been abandoned. We cannot undo the hard work of so many years. We cannot permit the current crisis to kill the hope that has started to spring in the developing world.”*

Justin Kilcullen, CONCORD President, stressed that: *“now is the time for deep questioning of the current development model, a model which is founded on strong economic growth, uneven distribution of wealth and excessive exploitation of natural resources. We are also calling for reform of the global economic governance which gives developing countries more weight.”*

NGOs called for the current President of the European Commission to make use of the political and economic influence of the European Union to push for fundamental changes in terms of global economic governance, structures and policy orientations of the institutions that have an impact on development.

Olivier Consolo stressed: *“It is unfortunate that the G20, this new club that brings together the rich countries (G8) and now the `new rich" also closes its doors to developing countries so while it is more needed than ever to involve them in the search for solutions. We hope that the G20 meeting next week in London will be anything but a show of international public relations to reassure citizens worried about the current situation in the world. ”*

**Contacts:** Olivier Consolo, CONCORD Director: Tel: +32 (0)496 256 799  
Agnès Philippart, CONCORD communication officer: Tel: + 32 (0) 743 87 77

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**Note to the editor:**

- CONCORD is the European Confederation of Relief and Development NGOs. Its national associations and international networks represent over 1 600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations. CONCORD is part of the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty'. [www.concordeurope.org](http://www.concordeurope.org)
- CONCORD will react on the release to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) figures by the OECD to be launched in London at 14.00 ahead of the G20 meeting next week..
- On 14 of May, CONCORD will be releasing an "AidWatch" report analysing the reality of the delivery of aid by the European Union.
- The EU 15 old Member States committed, in 2002, to give at least 0.33% of GNI as aid by 2006 (with an average of 0.39%) and 0.7% by 2015. In 2005, they committed to give 0.51% at least by 2010 (with an average of 0.56%) The 12 New member States committed to give 0.17% of GNI as aid by 2010 and 0.33% by 2015. According to the OECD, European aid fell from 0.41% to 0.38% of Gross National Income (GNI) in 2007, getting further from, not closer to, their 2010 commitments.