

CONCORD Aid Watch Report 2007

Hold the applause! EU governments risk breaking aid promises

At the 1970 General Assembly of the AUN a target was set for rich countries to give at least 0.7% of their Gross National Income (GNI) as aid to developing countries. Yet today only 5 countries worldwide (Denmark, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) have reached this target. In 2002, at the Monterrey Conference on Financing for Development, and again in 2005, EU governments committed to substantial increases in the amount of aid they give to developing countries.

The 15 old EU member states have pledged to give as Official Development Assistance (ODA) 0.51% of GNI by 2010 and 0.7% by 2015. The 12 EU member states that joined the EU in 2004 and 2007 have committed to spend 0.17% of GNI by 2010 and 0.33% by 2015.

According to the official figures, the EU is well on track and most countries are living up to their aid promises. However, the report "Hold the Applause" that the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development (CONCORD) released in May 2007 reveals that many EU countries

are failing to meet their aid commitments. Flattering official figures fail to tell the whole story. Beneath the gloss, European governments are missing the mark. At EU average, around 30% of officially reported ODA in 2006 was in fact not genuine aid; EU member states have seriously inflated their aid figures by including spending on debt relief, refugees and educating foreign students in Europe in their statistics.

Of the 10 countries that joined the EU in 2004, several are relative newcomers to providing development assistance. Yet some are fast approaching levels of generosity comparable to the weaker performers of the more traditional EU donors. Malta, despite having decreased its aid since 2005, still gives the highest percentage of GNI as aid among the EU 10, at 0.15% (primarily spent on migrants in Malta), coming in just behind Greece. The Czech Republic, Hungary and Slovenia all reported 0.12% in 2006.

While most of these countries show rising aid levels – Cyprus jumped dramatically to 0.11% of GNI in 2006 from 0.03% in 2005 – some are showing worrying signs

of not progressing towards their 2010 target. The Slovak Republic's aid fell by more than 9% and Latvia's by 1% this year.

HOW THE REPORT WAS DONE

For the second year in a row, an unprecedented number of European development NGOs (NGDOs), in a truly pan-European and collective effort came together from all the major networks and NGDO platforms from 27 EU countries to produce this CONCORD report. The report analyses the 2005 and 2006 aid figures. It is part of a broader initiative called "European Aid Watching" under the umbrella of CONCORD.

There is much less information on ODA available for the new EU member states than for the old member states. Nonetheless national platforms in new member states (including Bulgaria and Romania) provided very interesting analyses of their countries' aid programmes and have also carried out extensive investigations of their own to supplement the limited statistical information that is publicly available.

The Aid Watch Report has helped to build a network of "aid watchers" in many new member states, where working groups on ODA have been set up within the national NGDO platforms.

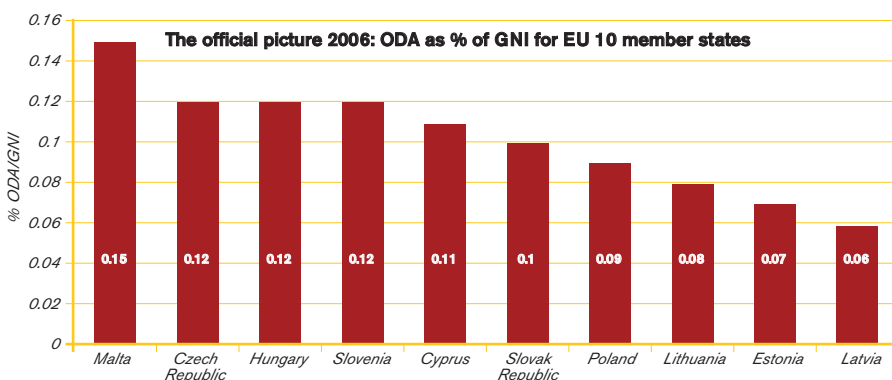
OUR MAIN DEMANDS

The report is calling on EU member states to:

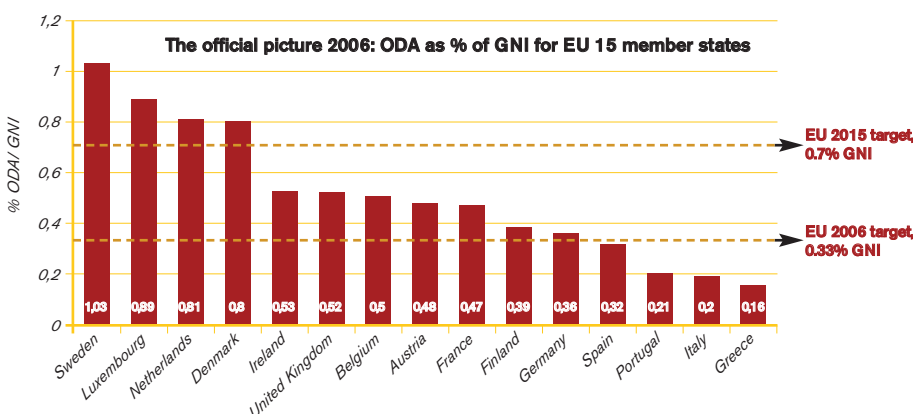
1. Provide genuine increases in European aid
2. Agree clear and binding year-on-year timetables to reach at a minimum the 2010 and 2015 targets with genuine aid resources
3. Stop including refugee costs, student costs and debt relief in official aid reporting
4. Improve transparency in aid reporting
5. Take further steps to make aid more effective
6. End all tied aid

CONCORD and development NGOs across the whole of Europe will continue to monitor and advocate for progress on these demands. We will applaud those governments who rise to the challenge of delivery but will continue to criticize those who fail to meet their promises.

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Source: European Commission (2007b), European Commission Communication (COM (2007) 164)



Source: OECD (2007) DAC preliminary figures, April 2007, www.oecd.org/dataoecd/14/5/38354517.pdf

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www.trialog.or.at/images/doku/hold_the_applause.final.pdf