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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENT ON PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY
AND ITS MEMBER STATES AT POLICY AND OPERATIONAL LEVELS

COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ON PROCEDURES FOR COORDINATION BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND THE MEMBER STATES AT POLICY AND OPERATIONAL LEVELS

In their declaration of 18 November 1992 on Aspects of Development Cooperation Policy in the run-up to 2000, the Council and representatives of Member States governments emphasized, *inter alia*, the need for the Community and its Member States to coordinate their development cooperation activities more closely, both when formulating policies and at operational level.

They also stressed that, in the light of past experience of coordination and of present needs, it would be useful to pinpoint which sectors needed such coordination and what procedures should be used to make it more effective.

The question of identifying priority areas where policy coordination between the Community and its Member States might be envisaged has been covered in a separate communication. This paper focuses on the procedures needed to strengthen coordination at policy and operational levels.

To strengthen coordination means to contribute to improving the efficiency of development aid, by ensuring coherence and complementarity of cooperation strategies and actions of the Community and the Member States. It also involves reducing the administrative burden for the beneficiary countries, caused by the multiplicity of their external partners.

It is undoubtedly a question of political will. But it is also a question of implementing adequate procedures to support this coordination and to monitor its functioning.

But the procedures will not have the desired effect unless applied consistently and differentiated in a manner appropriate to each of the three levels where coordination is needed, i.e. policy, operations and action taken through international bodies. The three levels are highly interdependent and call for a consistent approach to the question of what coordination procedures and instruments to use.

The first part of this paper sketches out the present situation regarding coordination, as brought about in response to various resolutions adopted since the early eighties.

The second part explains the new legal framework for development cooperation provided by the Treaty on European Union and the declaration of the Council and the Member States of 18 November 1992 on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000.

The third is based on past experience and the present legal framework and proposes a practical approach to strengthening and deepening coordination at the various levels.

I. COORDINATION AS PRACTISED AT PRESENT

In the last ten years there have been great changes in the form and practice of coordinating development cooperation policies between the Community and its Member States.

1.1 Form

In the resolutions of 5 June 1984 and 4 November 1985 the Council set out principles of action to strengthen operational coordination. The underlying principle was to be one of "à la carte" coordination on a voluntary basis in which coordination at sectoral level played an important part together with the more systematic exchange of information and closer on the spot coordination.

These two resolutions, and in particular that of 1984 (7621/84), constitute the basis for the coordination practice as developed to date. They have been usefully completed by the conclusions of the Council of 11 November 1986 on Lomé III aid programming and by the resolution of 16 May 1989 on structural adjustment.

These documents determine as an objective for coordination, to ensure coherence and complementarity of the effort of the Community and the Member States in terms of dialogue, objectives and investments.

Since the late eighties, therefore, in certain policy areas regarded as primordial, awareness of the need for coordination has grown and, gradually, it has become more systematic and reciprocal whilst, at the same time, there has been a noticeable alignment of the policies of the Member States.

This more systematic approach has been based on the wish to make activities in recipient States more effective and ensure that they complement each other and at the same time enhance the effectiveness of Community policies in the international context.

1.2 Practice

Despite the range of the above resolutions, it is clear that a coordination deficit continues to exist. Many measures envisaged in these documents have only partially been implemented, as the practice of coordination shows at its three levels: political and operational coordination, and coordination in international fora.

(a) Policy coordination

Because of the flexible "ad hoc" approach dominant from 1984 onwards, the coordination of general development policies was not considered a priority in the Community. Nevertheless, discussions on various aspects of the policy were held, particularly in Council working parties and informal meetings of Heads of Department responsible for development policy.

Where the coordination of sectoral policy is concerned, representatives of the Commission and the Member States held regular meetings throughout the eighties to lay down general guidelines on what projects to finance in various sectors, particularly in relation to food strategy, agricultural policy, fisheries, desertification control, etc. Currently, this aspect of coordination at Community level tends to be rather "ad hoc".

On the other hand, in the last decade, there has been considerably more coordination of specific policies in four main areas in which the Community and the Member States are heavily involved, namely structural adjustment, the management of counterpart funds, Human Rights and democratisation, and family planning.

As far as structural adjustment is concerned, the Council resolution of 31 May 1988 on the "economic situation and adjustment process in sub Saharan Africa" and the resolution of 16 May 1989 on "coordination in support of structural adjustment" not only lay down guidelines for tightening up the Community approach and for coordinating operations between the Member

States and the Community. They also provide for closer coordination of policies on external affairs, particularly vis à vis the Bretton Woods Institutions.

There has been significant progress with regard to practice in some of the areas covered by the resolutions. But there are still shortcomings as concerns coordination of discussions with the Bretton Woods Institutions, or at least with their decision making bodies on which several Member States are directly represented.

With regard to counterpart funds, the Council resolution of 27 May 1991 on the "use of counterpart funds generated by the various development assistance instruments" lays down the general principles which should govern the policies of the Community and the Member States in this field. It also suggests practical ways of coordinating activities between the latter and other donors. These principles are also adopted by the other main donors in the framework of the SPA, at the Commission's initiative. However, the implementation of these guidelines has not yet been fully realised.

In the field of Human Rights and democracy, the resolution of the Council and the Member States of 28 November 1991 formulates guidelines, procedures and specific lines of action and also provides for certain coordination measures.

Finally, in November 1992 the Council adopted a resolution on family planning which lays down guidelines for policies on this subject and sets out the underlying principles, the aims, the priorities for action and the general methods of implementing coordination between the Community and the Member States.

(b) Operational coordination

Various mechanisms are used in operational coordination in its widest sense - i.e. throughout the process which begins with formulating a strategy for each recipient country and ends with examining individual projects. The mechanisms include:

- The exchange of information on specific projects. The Commission regularly sends the Member States profile sheets on the projects it intends examining but the Member States do not systematically forward similar information to the Commission in spite of the fact that such reciprocal exchange of information is one of the obligations included in all the above mentioned resolutions and in the Internal Agreement on the financing and administration of Community aid to ACP States. The problems arising from this insufficient exchange of information which is - with a few exceptions, - "one-way", are aggravated by the fact that the little information transmitted to the Commission by the Member States is often too episodic and fragmentary for efficient use.
- The monthly meetings of the EDF, ALA and Med Committees. It is mainly when new Conventions are drafted that the development strategies of the recipient countries are determined in line with their own priorities and that the Community determines the sectors on which it will focus its aid. At this very important stage and the next, when individual projects are submitted to the Member States for their opinion, the intention of the Internal Agreement is that the Member States and the Commission should use the meetings of the EDF Committee to ensure that Community and bilateral aid complement each other and that they should thereby avoid duplication or contradiction.

In practice, Committee discussions are too often limited to examining the Commission proposals without looking at them from the more general angle of bilateral aid. The real questions of development policy relevant to each individual country are being neglected. The accessory hides the essential. There is no doubt that greater complementarity could be achieved if the Committee's method of operation was re examined. The same goes for the ALA Committee, the Med Committee and the Joint Committees.

- On-the-spot coordination. Generally there are frequent meetings between the Commission Delegations and the Member States' Representations to ensure a steady exchange of information and opinions on the policy pursued and the projects implemented in a given country. The rate varies from one country to the next, depending on the number of States represented and the importance those in office attach to the question of coordination.
- Regular informal bilateral meetings between the Member States' administrations and the Commission. The subjects covered are strategies for, or the specific kind of intervention in, a given country or region, or themes of a more general nature. These meetings are regularly organised at different levels. This is an improvement, but their informal and "ad hoc" nature gives the individuals concerned too much scope for subjective attitudes towards the importance of this coordination.
- Specific cofinancing operations. These include the joint financing of projects in a particular country, region or even a sector and are examples of specific coordination at Community level. The identification and implementation of relatively large joint operations should be given special consideration with a view to improving operational coordination even further. One Member State with which a framework cofinancing agreement has been negotiated has developed a more ambitious and probably more rational formula for this type of situation.
- Coordinated support to regional integration initiatives by the Member States concerned. The Commission and, in some cases, thus far one Member State have combined with other multilateral donors to provide intellectual skills and financial backup for implementing regional integration initiatives in West Africa, Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa and in Central America. This kind of coordinated support seems to be very promising and would gain by being spread more widely.
- The coordination of humanitarian aid has been developed very decidedly, stimulated by the importance of the events which have recently been taking place in this area. The creation at Community level of the "European Humanitarian Office" (ECHO), which regroups all means at the disposal of the Commission in this field of activities, will contribute to achieving this objective more rapidly and more efficiently. Both in operational and in financial terms, joint operations of the Member States and the Community are henceforth making great strides in the field of humanitarian action (combined operations, ECTF in Zagreb, etc.).
- Coordination concerning specific countries, or special aid programmes; over the last years, a number of coordination initiatives have been taken for the benefit of one, or a group of countries which have encountered particular constraints. For example, a "Community Platform" for Angola was created by the Council in November 1991, with a view to coordinating the Community's and the Member States' participation in programmes aimed at the social and economic rehabilitation and reconstruction of this country. Furthermore, a Programme for the rehabilitation of the african countries most affected by the drought was adopted in October 1985. Although the set up of these programmes included a very important coordination element, they have not led, in this respect, to an implementation as promising as envisaged.

(c) Coordination in the framework of international fora

The number of international bodies dealing with development questions in which the Community and the Member States participate, is very large. These include UNDP Round Table meetings, IBRD Consultative Groups, OECD meetings and sectoral meetings arranged by bodies of the United Nations system, including UNCTAD and UNCED.

This active participation at international level should allow the Community and its Member States - who, together, constitute the largest donor of official development assistance - to have considerable influence on the determination of strategies adopted by the donor community in different fields. Some progress has been made in this context with regard to Consultative Group and Round Table meetings, as well as to the Special Programme of Assistance for Highly Indebted and Low Income Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (SPA). Before plenary meetings in these fora, EC coordination meetings usually take place. However, such Community influence has generally not been maximised because no real effort is made to adopt common positions, and because there is a lack of systematic coordination.

In general terms, the above coordination meetings are useful, but have only very limited success in the search for coherence and complementarity, as discussions hardly go beyond a mutual information of positions that participants will take in the corresponding plenary sessions.

In the absence of appropriate monitoring mechanisms, it is difficult to exhaustively assess of the implementation of the resolutions on coordination. But experience shows, as described above, that although some progress was made, most of the existing instruments have not been sufficiently used.

This can be explained by several reasons : lack of political will; persistent economic or commercial interests not allowing for a transparent exchange of information; bad comprehension of the real interest of coordination, which is still too often perceived by the Member States as means to control the Commission's activities; non-respect of the (politically) binding nature of certain resolutions; absence of appropriate monitoring mechanisms of the principles adopted by the Council on coordination.

The third part of this paper formulates ways to improve this situation in the light of the existing legal framework.

II. THE NEW LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The need for moving from the present concept of coordination towards more systematic coordination in certain priority areas becomes more obvious in the light of the new political and legal framework now emerging and due partly to the prospect of political union and partly to the recent declaration of the Council and the Member States on development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000.

II.1 Treaty on European Union

With the incorporation of Title XVII in the Maastricht Treaty, development cooperation has been recognized explicitly in legal terms as a Community objective.

Article 130u stipulates that Community policy in this sphere shall be complementary to the policies pursued by the Member States. Thus, the Treaty confirms the existence of a Community cooperation policy alongside the bilateral policies of the Member States. Improved coordination is a necessary condition for exercising this complementarity.

In this context, particular importance is attached to policy coordination and the coordination of cooperative operations involving the Member States and the Community.

For instance, Article 130x(1) provides, inter alia, that "the Community and the Member States shall coordinate their policies on development cooperation and shall consult each other on their aid programmes, including in international organizations and during international conferences." Paragraph (2) of this Article offers the Commission the possibility of taking "any useful initiative to promote the coordination referred to in paragraph (1)."

Taken together, these provisions therefore envisage a considerable tightening up of coordination at each of the three levels mentioned above, namely coordination of policies, coordination of operations and coordination of action taken through international bodies.

II.2 Declaration of the Council and of representatives of governments of Member States meeting in the Council on aspects of development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000

In its communication to the Council and Parliament of 15 May 1992 (Development cooperation policy in the run-up to 2000), the Commission heavily emphasizes the coordination shortfall in the bilateral relations which (the Community) and the Member States pursue independently with each country or group of countries. The Commission calls on the Community and the Member States to coordinate the implementation of existing and future financial instruments covering a wide range of actions, projects and policies.

Paragraphs 21 to 23 of the declaration of the Council and of representatives of governments of Member States of 18 November 1992, which was adopted following the communication, note that the effectiveness of development aid could be enhanced by greater coordination between the Community and its Member States at policy and operational level.

Where operational coordination is concerned, the declaration especially emphasizes sectoral coordination and coordination in the receiving countries. Here, existing arrangements which facilitate coordination between all OECD donors should be taken into account.

The declaration also states that the Community and its Member States are ready, within their respective spheres of competence, to coordinate their positions in international development meetings.

It is against this background that the Commission is proposing a number of specific lines of action.

III. CLOSER COORDINATION: LINES OF ACTION

The following proposals cover all countries benefiting from the Community's development cooperation activities, i.e. the ACP States, developing countries in Latin America and Asia and developing countries of the southern and eastern Mediterranean.

With a view to continuing with the coordination policies which have been pursued for several years now, the Commission proposes to adopt a progressive approach, individually tailored to the various areas covered by development cooperation. But the Commission also proposes to give a dynamic impetus to this coordination, while taking account of past experience and of the legal framework, and thus to contribute to reaching optimal efficiency of development policies and actions of the Community and its Member States.

The proposals are for three main lines of action, namely policy coordination, coordination of operations and coordination of action taken through international bodies.

1. Policy coordination

The area with the largest coordination shortfall is certainly that of development policy.

Apart from the abovementioned resolutions on structural adjustment, counterpart funds, human rights and family planning, no other area of cooperation is governed by guidelines or lines of action addressed to both the Community as a whole and the Member States.

The shortfall must now be addressed, the first step being to identify a number of topics regarded as deserving of priority in view of the considerable advantage that a joint approach and alignment of the instruments used by the Community and the Member States would bring. The communication to the

Council mentioned earlier should help in this process of identification.

One of the main benefits of coordinating policy would be the greater effectiveness of the aid given. It is not solely a question of avoiding duplication but also one of working out common policies vis-à-vis the receiving countries which should no longer have to deal with donors with different, not to say contradictory, attitudes to similar problems. In view of the criticisms expressed by the donors themselves with regard to the effectiveness of aid, coordination has now become a necessity.

Such policy coordination is all the more important now that donors are tending to support policies rather than individual projects and the aid provided by the Community and its Member States is tending to level out.

Coordination is also a factor in the cohesion of the Community and its Member States which, in the absence of coordination, could easily be criticized for differences of approach not justified by the problems - the latter merely accentuated by the activities of the different donors. If the Member States coordinated their policies and cooperation activities with those of the Community, the latter would also be able to act more independently in matters concerning external relations.

Whilst greater policy coordination between the Community and its Member States is required, this objective can only be achieved by setting up coordination mechanisms more effective than most of those tried so far.

But, to be effective, such mechanisms must be governed by certain basic principles, namely:

- First and foremost, a coordination mechanism must be appropriate to the area to which it is to apply. It is therefore not a question of establishing uniform mechanisms applicable to all fields. Coordination mechanisms should be tightened up in areas regarded as important for the Community and the Member States. Elsewhere the exchange of information is sufficient (see below).
- Policy coordination should be stepped up only in clearly defined areas or sectors, as has already been done for structural adjustment, Human Rights and democracy.
- Closer coordination should, in a first stage, be brought about by means of existing mechanisms, as mentioned in the past Council resolutions. This principle to proceed through existing coordination channels, does not exclude the introduction of other instruments or mechanisms, if this is felt to be necessary.
- A resolution of the Council and representatives of governments of Member States adopted on the basis of the Commission communications is the most appropriate framework for laying down guidelines, fixing procedures and determining what lines of action the Member States should take in their bilateral policies and the Community should apply in the selected areas. The possibility of applying the other instruments provided for in Article 189 of the Treaty on European Union could also be considered if, at a later date, it proves appropriate to the needs of the moment.
- When preparing communications of the kind referred to above, the Commission may call on Member States' experts for assistance. Clearly, final responsibility for the proposals lies with the Commission but experience has shown that such consultation is desirable since it ensures that account is taken of the widest possible range of opinion and experience. Furthermore, such consultation also identifies at an early stage any points common to the policies of the Member States and the Community.
- Council resolutions addressed to the Community and the Member States must be operational. In other words they must lay down the principles to be followed by all parties in implementing a policy, must set out the priorities and determine what coordination instruments are to be used (see below). Each resolution should include jointly agreed indicators of progress and the

methods to be applied by the Member States and the Commission in checking whether the modalities have been properly applied.

- The above indicators could be used to check progress at regular intervals and the results could be written up in a report from the Commission established in cooperation with the Member States to the Council. Heads of department responsible for development policy could then meet to examine any questions raised by the implementation of decisions.

2. Operational coordination

The above degree of policy coordination will certainly also require stricter application of the mechanisms on operational cooperation.

In this regard, and independent of the classic coordination instruments (exchange of information, on-the-spot coordination, etc.), priority must be given to the programming of aid and to the definition of sectoral strategies to be supported in the beneficiary countries.

2.1. Programming

While being aware of the difficulties linked to differences in content and cycle between the Member States and the Community, the programming of aid constitutes the most appropriate moment for a common assessment of a country's main constraints, the priorities to adopt and the strategies to support. This kind of assessment should be a means to ensuring that the policies and actions of the Community and the Member States be developed in a coherent and complementary way, and towards a common objective.

Such common assessments must take place at two levels :

- . firstly, at a very early moment in the process, at the level of exchange of information and bilateral contacts;
- . secondly, at the more formal level of the existing committees for the Community development policies (EDF Committee, ALA Committee and MED Committee).

In this respect, it is indispensable to reconsider the role of these Committees, beyond the specific improvements already made.

These Committees must go beyond their function with respect to the management of Community aid, and increasingly concentrate their efforts on essential questions of development cooperation on a country-by-country basis. They must constitute, particularly in the programming phase, the adequate forum for ensuring the coordination of approach and action adopted by the Community and its Member States.

Furthermore, these Committees should function as a forum for consultation and regular verification of the application of the common principles adopted by the Council, as well as for the evaluation of the operational coordination mechanisms mentioned below.

When appropriate, the Commission will put forward proposals in this sense.

2.2. Other coordination instruments

(a) reciprocal exchange of information

This is the point of departure for any serious coordination effort. The Commission will continue to send the Member States profile sheets on all projects it intends to carry out, including those in the areas and sectors regarded as essential. To ensure that such actions are consistent and complement

each other and to prevent duplication of effort, each Member State should also regularly inform the Commission of any activities it plans to finance. This exchange of information, for which provision has already been made in the Internal Agreement where the ACP States are concerned, must be extended to include transmission of more qualitative data such as evaluation results.

(b) on-the-spot coordination

This is an essential element of operational coordination and should be stepped up in order to provide more information and serve as an instrument for maintaining a dialogue. As regards the abovementioned exchange of information, a large part of this must take place in the recipient countries through more contacts between Commission Delegations and the local representations of the Member States, which should carry out joint analyses or even evaluations of Community projects or some or all Member States' projects. Either the Commission or the Member States could take the initiative regarding the studies, analyses and evaluations.

More of such "intra-Community" dialogue could mean greater consistency in discussions with local authorities on the support measures or sectoral policies needed as backup for contributions by Community donors. Such discussions could also be coordinated more closely, or even conducted jointly.

(c) bilateral contacts

Bilateral contacts between the official experts of the Member States and the Commission in any given area must be more systematic. In addition to the consultations referred to in connection with preparing Commission communications to the Council on specific subjects, and their activities relating to on-the-spot coordination, these experts should keep up regular exchanges of information and consultations on all projects in any country or region carried out in line with jointly adopted guidelines.

(d) common or joint operations

Proposals put forward by a Member State or the Commission to undertake common, jointly financed, projects in line with policies governed by common guidelines must be favoured. Such joint operations could also be undertaken in cooperation with other bilateral or multilateral donors. Specific financing and management details could be decided individually for each operation.

(e) alignment of procedures

The Commission and the Member States must pursue their efforts to align their project/programme implementation procedures in order to reduce the administrative burden of the receiving countries. These efforts should be carried out along the lines of the similar initiative by the DAC.

All these measures are intended mainly to tighten up existing arrangements and every effort should be made to ensure, as far as country-level coordination is concerned, that they remain consistent with an essential principle underlying coordination in the Community, namely that the receiving country should be at the centre of the coordination process.

3. Coordination of action taken through international bodies

It is especially in those areas and sectors regarded as deserving priority in matters of coordination that there should also be closer coordination of action taken through international bodies. The objective of such coordination is to reinforce the Community's presence and influence in international fora in particular in those where issues are being discussed for which common policy guidelines are adopted.

As indicated above (par. II.1), the Treaty on European Union envisages in Article 130X that "the Commission may take any useful initiative" to promote the coordination of development cooperation policies of the Member States and the Community, "including in international organisations and during international conferences". Consequently, it becomes imperative to develop this type of coordination by making it more systematic.

It seems that for the moment the most appropriate instruments in this regard are the exchange of information, bilateral contacts between official experts of the Member States and the Commission, and coordination meetings to be held prior to plenary meetings of the different international bodies.

These instruments exist. They only need to be activated. Their utilisation must be adapted to each field of intervention and to the international coordination fora concerned.

This Community coordination at international level is particularly important in the field of structural adjustment, which is more and more becoming a key factor to be taken into account in all donor interventions in the developing countries concerned.

In this respect, more systematic alignment within the decision-making bodies of the Bretton Woods Institutions is now more necessary than ever.

The time has now come, in particular, to organize regular coordination meetings between the European Executive Directors in the IMF and of the World Bank whenever the Boards of these institutions are due to discuss long term strategy or adjustment programmes for given countries. This coordination must of course take account of the constraints linked to the constituencies in the Board of these Institutions.

Most of the European Executive Directors at the Bretton Woods Institutions are designated by their respective finance ministers. If consistency within the Community is to be guaranteed, this means closer coordination between finance ministers and development ministers. And this lies within the jurisdiction of the Member States themselves. Nevertheless, Community level coordination could be facilitated by organizing exchanges of views between the respective ministers for finance and for development whenever necessary.

Furthermore, the Commission and the Member States must study and decide how Community positions on questions related to the World Bank's policy could be presented to the Development Committee of this Institution, the ministerial body for policy definition.

Moreover, Community coordination prior to SPA meetings must be pursued more systematically, as donors consider this programme to be an important coordination forum.

But beside the specific nature of the relations with the Bretton Woods Institutions, more systematic and more dynamic Community coordination should also be realised in all the other international bodies dealing with issues of common interest for the Community and its Member States. It is a question of credibility and influence of the Community to pursue this kind of coordination, for example in the DAC, UNDP Round Table meetings, Consultative Group meetings of the World Bank, sectoral meetings organised by the United Nations specialised agencies and development funds, as well as by UNCTAD or the UNCED Committee for Sustainable Development.

4. Other aspects of coordination

Whilst the above lines of action for implementing mechanisms mainly concern sectors or areas regarded as deserving of priority where closer coordination is concerned, some of the mechanisms would be appropriate to any area.

In particular, the more systematic exchange of information and more regular contacts, whether on the

spot or in Europe, must come to be regarded as minimal, automatically applied, coordination mechanisms for all aspects of development cooperation. This would involve:

- in Europe:
- the exchange of project profile sheets on any projects under consideration;
 - reciprocal and systematic exchanges of information on all aid activities;
 - regular contacts between national experts and the Commission;
 - periodic meetings of senior officials responsible for development;
- locally:
- continuous contacts between Member States' representatives and the Commission's Delegations;
 - jointly drafted regular reports on aid given by the Community and the Member States, including sections on how coordination is functioning.

Between this minimum level of coordination and the more ambitious coordination of policies another level would seem to be needed to enable Member States and the Community to know each others' objectives regarding certain topics or sectors and to align their activities in these areas. Regular meetings of experts would be useful for promoting better mutual understanding and identifying topics which might, in future, benefit from policy coordination.

CONCLUSION

The proposed approach to the question of coordination put forward in this paper is an extension of the theory and practice of coordination as these have evolved in the Community in the last few years.

Because of the absence of progress indicators and monitoring mechanisms, it is difficult to strike an exhaustive and precise balance of the true range of the measures taken. However, while observing the present situation, it becomes clear that despite some important progress, coordination at Community level has its limits and its weaknesses.

This coordination is too often perceived as a systematic means of information for the Member States provided by the Commission without real reciprocity, and as an instrument for these Member States to control the Commission's activities. A coordination deficit persists even in those areas where a consensus seems to exist at Community level on strategies and actions to be implemented.

If the objective is to strengthen the Community's presence and its influencing capacity, both in the beneficiary states of its assistance and in international bodies, there is no alternative to reinforcing coordination.

The Treaty on European Union provides the framework and the means for such coordination. It also involves a number of obligations for the Community and its Member States in terms of exchange of information, coordination and complementarity. The concept of complementarity as such implies a reinforcement of coordination. It is not a question of making Community assistance complementary to the cooperation policies of each Member State. Efforts must progressively be stepped up to ensure coherence between the different policies of the Member States, and between those and the Community policy.

The approach of the Commission, which is intended to be both pragmatic and dynamic, should be seen in that light.

It is a differentiated approach, in terms of levels of coordination, according to the different areas and sectors of development cooperation. Only in a limited number of areas, to which the Community and

its Member States attach particular importance, a coordination at policy level should be envisaged. In other areas, the emphasis should be on strengthening operational coordination, through the application of the most appropriate mechanisms. The modalities of Community coordination in international fora should also be adapted in each field of intervention concerned.

The proposed measures include in particular :

- the principle to select the resolution of the Council and of the government representatives of the Member States as the appropriate instrument to fix the principles, the lines of action and the procedures to implement by the Member States in the framework of their bilateral policies as well as by the Community, in those areas identified for strengthening policy coordination. However, the possibility would remain to apply, if necessary or appropriate, any other instrument provided for in Article 189 of the Treaty on European Union, after its ratification;
- including in these resolutions progress indicators and mechanisms to monitor the application of these documents by the Member States and by the Commission;
- regular writing of reports to the Council by the Commission in cooperation with the Member States, based, in particular, on the above progress indicators;
- strengthening coordination in the phase of aid programming and the definition of sectoral strategies to support in the beneficiary countries, by
 - . the exchange of information and bilateral contacts in a very early stage of the progress;
 - . consultations in the EDF Committee, the ALA Committee and the MED Committee, specifically aimed at increasing the complementarity of policies and actions of the Community and its Member States;
- redefining the role of the EDF, ALA and MED Committees, which should function, beyond their present tasks, as
 - . fora for coordination at the Community's and the Member State's approaches on a country-by-country basis, particularly in the programming phase;
 - . fora for consultation and regular verification of the application of the common principles adopted by the Council, and for evaluating the use of the operational coordination instruments;
- regular meetings of the Directors General for Development to, inter alia,
 - . discuss essential questions of development policies and positions to adopt in that regard;
 - . discuss the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolutions fixing the principles of policies to adopt in a particular area;
 - . examine, in general terms, the practice of coordination;
- the reciprocal and systematic exchange of information on all envisaged or ongoing bilateral and Community interventions in each beneficiary country, as well as on results of evaluations;
- strengthening on-the-spot coordination, especially by
 - . an intensification of contacts between Commission delegations and Member States' representations;
 - . the possibility to jointly carry out studies, analyses or evaluations;

- more systematic bilateral contacts between experts of the Member States' administrations and the Commission, at geographical, sectoral or thematic levels;
- common or joint actions, particularly in those areas for which common policy principles have been adopted;
- continued efforts to align implementation procedures of projects;
- making Community coordination in international fora more systematic, especially through
 - . regular exchanges of information;
 - . systematic contacts between Member States and Commission experts;
 - . coordination meetings prior to the plenary meetings of different international fora;
 - . more systematic coordination within the decision making bodies of the Bretton Woods Institutions;
 - . the preparation of common positions at Community level on questions of general development policy, discussed in the Development Committee of the World Bank.

These are important measures. If systematically applied, they could contribute to a significant reinforcement of aid coordination at Community level and thus to their efficiency.

However, experience shows that a resolution is not sufficiently authoritative to ensure more effective coordination where there is no political will behind the words. What we need to do is ensure that coordination becomes automatic, and that is the aim of the Commission's proposals.

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