

EUROPEAN FREE ALLIANCE
SARDINIA - 2-4 MAY 1988

TOWARDS A EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT POLICY

1. The European Free Alliance recognises that the underlying causes of hunger in the world are political in origin, and directly linked to trade between the richer industrial countries of the north and the poorer under-developed countries of the south.

The European Free Alliance believes than any serious development policy must consist of two approaches:

1.1. The North-South dialogue, or the international regulation, in accordance with international laws and treaties, of the relationships between rich industrial countries and countries of the third world. This dialogue will cover political as well as economic, financial, cultural and military areas.

1.2. International cooperation, or the way in which rich States aid and support countries in the third world and stimulate development in the different areas of social life.

All European policies for the development of the third world must take account of these two aspects; they must work towards these two objectives and set out the means to achieve and harmonise them simultaneously.

The North-South dialogue

2. The European Community must take measures without delay to re-launch the North-South dialogue, to nurture it and to conduct it successfully. To this end, the Council of Ministers must be guided by the European Parliament, on the basis of the resolution adopted during the February 1987 session.

3. Even if other industrial countries outside the Community are not inclined to take up this dialogue, the Community must, in its own interest, seek to establish contacts and to take up the discussion with the partners who are willing to do so. Preparations for dialogue might be made under the auspices of the Lomé Convention, without excluding the other developing regions.

4. In terms of the current problems, the following initiatives must be taken:

4.1. financial and debt problems: because of the current international debt crisis, the EEC should encourage western countries to adapt the interest rates accruing to repayments to reflect the per capita GDP of developing countries, while arrangements for future loans should be linked to the encouragement of social and development programmes and the fair distribution of income.

4.2. problems concerning raw materials, price-setting and the build-up of stocks: a study is required into any coordination of STABEX-SYSMIN systems with UNCTAD agreements on raw materials, and their extension to countries outside the Lomé Convention and the poorest countries, along with a study into the possibility of setting up a 'stabimp' (stable import) system for strategic imports (or example oil).

4.3. in terms of current proposals for detente and disarmament, the European Community must present suggestions for the allocation of these newly-available budgets to development, in rich and poor countries alike. The Community must use its influence to ensure that disarmament benefits development throughout the world,

4.4. universally applicable rules must be drawn up for multinational companies and financial institutions, in parallel with the universal rules of conduct for labour relations, social laws and the prohibition of child labour, all in accordance with the standards laid down by the International Labour Office with human rights, etc.

4.5. agreement must be reached on an international code of conduct protect the different cultures, the rights of peoples, tourism, etc.; this code must be based on openness and the meeting of cultural communities everywhere in the world, while giving priority to dynamic development,

4.6. efforts must be made to establish democratic structures both between countries and within the states themselves, without imposing a model of unity but giving pride of place to the rights of every citizen to participate in social life.

5. The European Community must prepare carefully for the international conferences which are organised on the North-South problem, and the European Parliament must be involved in these preparations. The same also applies to the UNCTAD and GATT, to international conferences on food or health and population issues, etc.

To improve preparation for these conferences and to ensure that the voice of Europe is better heard, the Community must without delay join the following organisations: the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, the FAO and the UNDP.

International cooperation

6. The European Community must ensure that the Member States respect their undertaking to devote 0.7% of their gross national product to development aid, and declare its intention of increasing this figure to 1% of GNP, while ensuring that this aid is not bound to the purchase of products or services provided by the EEC.

7. In terms of international cooperation, the European Community has a dual task:

7.1. it must coordinate the different measures taken by its Member States and regions in developing countries; it must harmonise them and provide monitoring,

7.2. where applicable, it must itself take certain initiatives, for both special and trans-regional projects.

8. Within the Community itself, it must ensure that public awareness is raised appropriately in the course of education and socio-cultural training, through non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and voluntary fund-raising.

9. International cooperation, on the part of the Community itself and of the separate Member States and NGOs, depends on a fair partnership, respect for different cultures and local support. In many third world countries, the delimitation of borders has divided peoples and cultures unnaturally. Decolonisation cannot be regarded as an end in itself, but as a step on the way to self-determination for all peoples.

10. The Lomé Convention has need of new resources, and the strands relating to culture and human rights must be more detailed. To date, the Lomé Convention has been focused on the former European colonies. The Convention must be extended to the poorest countries.

11. International cooperation must primarily aim at self-sufficiency in food supplies. To this end, the food strategy set out by the former European commissioner K. Pisani provides an ideal framework.

12. In this context, the European Community must review its food aid. Food aid is only acceptable as a way of meeting needs in an emergency. In every other case, food aid must be removed to terminate the current practice which puts food aid at the service of the national interests of farmers and European consumers instead of benefiting developing countries. European agricultural policy itself must take account of the consequences of this option. The EEC must increase its financial aid to developing countries in order to demonstrate the extent of its commitments.

13. Maintaining the habitability of the planet must be the starting point for development cooperation. The community must therefore lend its aid to the conservation of forests and to water supplies. It must prevent the tipping of harmful substances in developing countries.

14. To exploit their own natural resources, these countries must be provided with the means to educate junior and senior management personnel, equipping them with sufficient knowledge and technical skills to enable them to conceive and execute plans.

15. Projects must give preference to the poorest groups in the population and call for their cooperation. Projects must meet the needs of the region receiving aid. They must be planned and implemented in close collaboration with the local population, and be appropriate to their culture. Projects must be such as to produce lasting results, hence the need to include measures ensuring continuity from the start. Instruction, training, infrastructures and adapted technologies all play an important part.

Given that the majority of farmers in rural zones are women, who also in the main provide food and health care to the community, priority should be given to projects directly aimed at serving women.

16. The projects set up by the Community must also encourage cooperation between different developing countries in the same region and cooperation between regions.

17. In the context of rules of conduct and international social laws, the Community must encourage its own economic sector (in particular SMEs) to invest in developing countries in the area of knowledge and technology transfer and promote scientific research into issues relating to health, energy supplies, and biotechnology. Policy should reflect the needs of the population and be appropriate to the infrastructure of the developing country.

18. The Community should encourage local councils, municipalities, and regional authorities to take aid initiatives by entering into twinning arrangements with third world regions. The parties which are members of the European Free Alliance could promote this initiative in the regions in which they have a political impact.