

Development aid in the European Year for Development

Pomoc rozwojowa w Europejskim Roku na rzecz Rozwoju

Słowa kluczowe: pomoc rozwojowa UE, Europejski Rok na rzecz Rozwoju, milenijne cele rozwoju.

Key words: EU development aid, the European Year for Development, the Millennium Development Goals.

Abstrakt

Głównym celem europejskich lat tematycznych jest podniesienie świadomości społeczeństwa na określone tematy, zachęcenie do szerszej debaty oraz zmiana postaw. Tegoroczna tematyka dotyczy realizacji międzynarodowej polityki rozwojowej Unii Europejskiej. Europejski rok 2015 jest rokiem szczególnym, gdyż wiąże się z podsumowaniem osiągnięć na drodze do milenijnych celów rozwoju oraz wypracowaniem nowych kierunków działań na rzecz walki z ubóstwem, promowania zrównoważonego rozwoju oraz walki ze zmianami klimatu. Artykuł w sumarycznym ujęciu prezentuje wyniki europejskich badań na temat prowadzenia polityki rozwojowej UE oraz pilnych wyzwań, przed którymi staną kraje rozwijające się.

Introduction

The aim of the European thematic years is to raise the level of awareness on certain topics and thanks to additional funds for local, national and international projects, more and more citizens are engaged in social debates on individual topics and further steps to be taken towards better future.

The article undertakes the issue of the European Year 2015 trying to answer the following questions:

- *How the citizens see the European development aid?*
- *What are the most pressing challenges developing countries will face in the future?*

The first European Year was announced in 1983 and it brought a special attention to SMEs (small and medium enterprises) and the craft industry. Since then, each year the European Commission proposes a theme and agrees on together with the European

Parliament and the governments of the EU members. The list of the European Years in chronological order is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. List of European Years

No.	Year	Theme
1	2013–2014	European year of citizens
2	2012	European year for active ageing
3	2011	European year of volunteering
4	2010	European year for combating poverty & social exclusion
5	2009	European year of creativity & innovation
6	2008	European year of intercultural dialogue
7	2007	European year of equal opportunities for all
8	2006	European year of workers' mobility
9	2005	European year of citizenship through education
10	2004	European year of education through sport
11	2003	European year of people with disabilities
12	2001	European year of languages
13	1999	European year of action to combat violence against women
14	1998	European year of local & regional democracy
15	1997	European year against racism & xenophobia
16	1996	European year of lifelong learning
17	1995	European year of road safety & young drivers
18	1994	European year of nutrition & health
19	1993	European year of the elderly & solidarity between generations
20	1992	European year of safety, hygiene & health protection at work
21	1990	European year of tourism
22	1989	European year of information on cancer
23	1988	European year of cinema & television
24	1987	European year of the environment
25	1986	European year of road safety
26	1985	European year of music
27	1984	European year for a people's Europe
28	1983	European year of SMEs & the craft industry

Source: Own elaboration based on http://europa.eu/about-eu/basic-information/european-years/index_en.htm [access: 2/03/2015]

The Table 1 shows a wide variety of topics of the concern and commitment of the European Union, thus encouraging public consultations, reflection and specific activities, events throughout the EU member countries. It is also emphasizes that the problematic issues such as ageing society, combating poverty or supporting equal opportunities for all in terms of career mobility and access to education are similar all over Europe and can be dealt with more effectively when acting together.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

In September 2000, world leaders came together at United Nations Headquarters in New York to adopt the United Nations Millennium Declaration, committing their nations to a new global partnership with the main aim to reduce extreme poverty and setting out a series of time-bound targets - with a deadline of 2015 - that have become known as the Millennium Development Goals¹. There have been defined eight major goals to be achieved in the period 2000-2015:

- 1) ERADICATE EXTREME POVERTY & HUNGER
 - Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than \$1.25 a day.
 - Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people.
 - Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who suffer from hunger.
- 2) ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION
 - Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.
- 3) PROMOTE GENDER EQUALITY AND EMPOWER WOMEN
 - Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and in all levels of education no later than 2015.
- 4) REDUCE CHILD MORTALITY
 - Reduce by two thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate.
- 5) IMPROVE MATERNAL HEALTH
 - Reduce by three quarters, between 1990 and 2015, the maternal mortality ratio.
 - Achieve, by 2015, universal access to reproductive health.
- 6) COMBAT HIV/AIDS, MALARIA AND OTHER DISEASES
 - Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS
 - Achieve, by 2010, universal access to treatment for HIV/AIDS for all those who need it.
 - Have halted by 2015 and begun to reverse the incidence of malaria and other major diseases.
- 7) ENSURE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY
 - Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programmes and reverse the loss of environmental resources.
 - Reduce biodiversity loss, achieving, by 2010, a significant reduction in the rate of loss.
 - Halve, by 2015, the proportion of the population without sustainable access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation.

¹ Millennium Development Goals and beyond 2015: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/bkgd.shtml>, [access: 2/03/2015].

- Achieve, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers.
- 8) DEVELOP A GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR DEVELOPMENT
- Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system.
 - Address the special needs of least developed countries.
 - Address the special needs of landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.
 - Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries.
 - In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries.
 - In cooperation with the private sector, make available benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications².

These eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) covered variety of urgent world's problems including the need to combat extreme poverty and provide equal opportunities for primary education, all by the deadline of 2015. Hence, the Millennium goals shaped a new action plan and inspired the most developing countries to help the poorest.

The European Development aid and future challenges

In 2015 for the first time in the history of the European Years we look into what the European Union does outside its borders, how people perceive its support and what was achieved till 2015. In 2014 a special Eurobarometer survey was carried out to get some feedback on the above topic according to the methodology used by Directorate-General for Communication (Strategy, Corporate Communication Actions and Eurobarometer Unit). The survey was carried out by TNS Opinion & Social network in the 28 Member States of the European Union in September 2014 including over 28 thousand of respondents from different social and demographic groups interviewed face to face, at home, in their mother tongue.

According to the results of this survey, most respondents (8 out of 10) perceive helping developing countries as “important”. Almost 7 out of 10 respondents (69%) said that it has a positive influence on EU citizens and is also in the EU's own interest. Most of them (73%) strongly believes that combating poverty is a moral obligation for the EU. However, in Estonia (12%), the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Italy (11%) they totally disagree that it is a moral obligation for the EU to help the poorest³. On the other hand, many respondents seen the development aid as a tool towards equal and peaceful world (74%), showing Cyprus (94%), Sweden (89%) and Portugal (88%) as leading countries in reference to this topic⁴. The analysis of the education

² Millennium Development Goals and beyond 2015: <http://www.un.org/millenniumgoals/>, [access: 2/03/2015].

³ Special Eurobarometer 421 / Wave EB82.1 – TNS Opinion & Social, January 2015, p. 18, 27, 29.

⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 31.

background of the respondents shown that there is a correlation between the level of education and the level of agreement with the given statements: the higher education level, they are more likely to agree.

Considering the future engagement of the EU in helping the poorest, the opinions were almost equally divided, giving 52% for the increase of aid to developing countries despite a very difficult economic situation in the world. Socio-demographic analysis shown that surprisingly, the more financial difficulties the respondents had, they were less likely to agree that the development aid should be increased. Volunteering is considered the most effective means of helping to reduce poverty in developing countries (75%). A highly ranked were also: official aid from governments (66%) and donating to organizations that assist developing countries (63%)⁵.

Concerning the future challenges of developing countries, according to the Eurobarometer, health (39%), peace and security (36%) and education (34%) are seen as the most pressing challenges the developing countries will face in the future⁶.

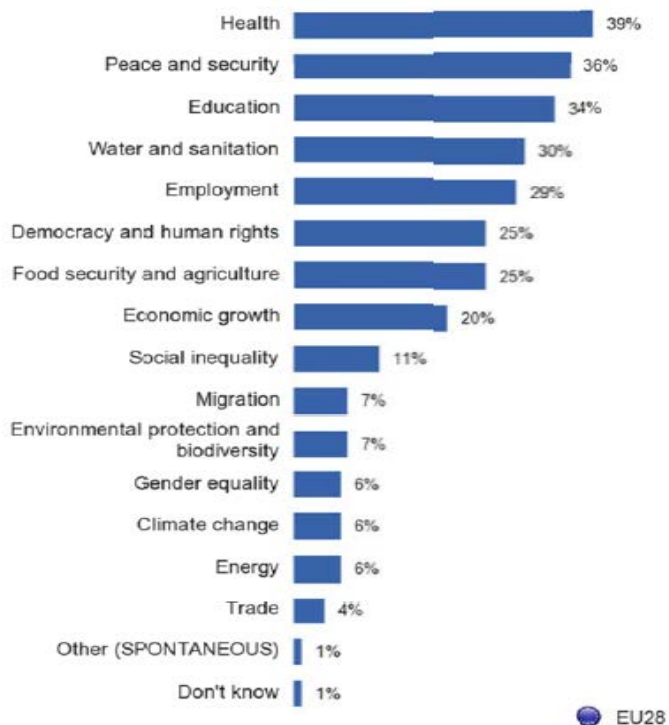


Fig. 1 The most pressing challenges the developing countries will face in the future

Source: *Special Eurobarometer 421 / Wave EB82.1 – TNS Opinion & Social, January 2015, p. 12.*

⁵ Eurobarometer 421 / Wave EB82.1 – TNS Opinion & Social, January 2015, p. 34–37.

⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 7, 12.

The most frequent answer was “health”, however as the Eurobarometer says, in Cyprus and Bulgaria “health” shared the first place with “economic development” and “employment” respectively and in the Netherlands respondents indicated “education” as first.

It is surprising that energy and climate change (6%), or environmental protection issues (7%) are not viewed as those of the most important when talking about the future hot topics in best developing countries. It is important to mention that those with the highest educational background were more likely to indicate “education” as the main challenge and the least likely to indicate “employment”. It is also worth to consider for the future action plan that 65% treat medical care as of the most importance to lead a life nowadays.

Conclusions

As found out in the Special Eurobarometer⁷, only a small percentage of people (12%) are aware of the European Year for Development. Most Europeans receive information on development issues from TV news programmes (77%) and newspapers (44%), while just over one-third get their information from the Internet (34%). Only 9% considered adverts or media campaigns as a source of information about development issues which seems to be very low. Despite 55% of Europeans are not aware of where EU aid goes, they have a positive attitude towards helping the poorest to develop faster and they declare they are ready to pay more for goods from the developing countries. Many people also declare that they will support voluntary organizations individually.

Concerning some of the above key findings from the European research, the issue of wider dissemination of the EU involvement in helping the poorest to rise global awareness on these activities as well as the issue of social trust in organizations collecting money for helping the poorest shall be re-considered.

References

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4. Special Eurobarometer 421 / Wave EB82.1–TNS Opinion & Social, January 2015.

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⁷ Special Eurobarometer 421 / Wave EB82.1–TNS Opinion & Social, January 2015, p. 7.