

Operationalising Policy Coherence for Development

A PERSPECTIVE OF CIVIL SOCIETY
ON INSTITUTIONAL SYSTEMS FOR PCD
IN EU MEMBER STATES



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About this research

In 2015, CONCORD is publishing a series of papers on Policy coherence for Development (PCD), as a new form of its traditional biennial "Spotlight on PCD" report. As part of this series, CONCORD has prepared a new comparative study that analyses how Member States of the European Union have progressed on operationalising PCD through the establishment and functioning of appropriate institutional tools and mechanisms - especially since 2013 - and how they compare with each other. In 2013 CONCORD had produced a first study called "Overview of PCD systems in some Member States", on the basis of a survey responded to by seventeen national development NGO platforms (CONCORD members)¹. This study had revealed very varied records of institutional set-ups to deliver PCD at the national level.

The present research is also based on a survey sent to CONCORD national platforms, using a methodology that was inspired by the OECD "Policy framework for policy coherence for development" (2012)². Moreover, a cross-reference with other existing researches on PCD systems has been made³ in order to give a broader and more accurate assessment of national PCD systems.

For this research, twenty-seven CONCORD national platforms⁴ have given input, hence providing a more comprehensive analysis, and indicating an increased interest in Policy Coherence for Development.

A slightly longer version of this paper is available on CONCORD website⁵ with more examples.

¹ CNCD and 11.11.11 (Belgium), Bulgarian Platform on International Development (BPID) (Bulgaria), FoRS – Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (Czech Republic), Concord Denmark (Denmark), Kehys (Finland), Coordination Sud / CFSI (France), VENRO (Germany), Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid (HAND) (Hungary), National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisations Platform (Lithuania), Cercle de Coopération (Luxembourg), Integra (Malta), Evert Vermeer Foundation / Foundation Max van der Stoep (Netherlands), Grupa Zagranica – PL Platform (Poland), FOND (Romania), Slovak NGDO Platform (Platforma MVRO) (Slovakia), Sloga Platform (Slovenia), CONCORD Sweden (Sweden), Bond (United Kingdom)

² OECD Office of the Secretary-General Unit for Policy Coherence for Development, Policy Framework for Policy Coherence for Development, Working Paper no 1, 2012

³ ECDPM, *Use of PCD indicators by a selection of EU Member States. A Brief Analysis and Overview*, Discussion Paper No. 171, January 2015

⁴ All EU Member States, except for Cyprus. The CONCORD national platforms that have contributed to the research are: AG Globale Verantwortung (Austria), CNCD and 11.11.11 (Belgium), Bulgarian Platform on International Development (BPID) (Bulgaria), Youth Initiative for Human Rights (Croatia), FoRS – Czech Forum for Development Cooperation (Czech Republic), Global Focus (Denmark), Estonian Roundtable for Development cooperation (Estonia), Kehys (Finland), Coordination Sud (France), VENRO (Germany), Hellenic Platform for Development (Greece), Hungarian Association of NGOs for Development and Humanitarian Aid (HAND) (Hungary), Dochas (Ireland), CONCORD Italia (Italy), LAPAS (Latvia), National Non-Governmental Development Cooperation Organisations Platform (Lithuania), Cercle de Coopération (Luxembourg), Integra (Malta), PARTOS (the Netherlands), Grupa Zagranica (Poland), Portuguese NGDO Platform (Portugal), FOND (Romania), Slovak NGDO Platform (Platforma MVRO) (Slovakia), Sloga Platform (Slovenia), Plataforma 2015 and Coordinadora ONGD (Spain), CONCORD Sweden (Sweden), Bond (United Kingdom)

⁵ Available at: <http://www.concordeurope.org/publications/item/421-spotlight-on-policy-coherence-for-development-2015>

Executive Summary

In the European Union, 28 Member States are committed to ensure that their policies do not hinder the achievement of global development and poverty eradication, as well as the respect of human rights, otherwise called Policy Coherence for Development (PCD). This commitment is embedded in the Lisbon Treaty and in subsequent policy documents, including a series of Council Conclusions adopted by Development Ministers.

This CONCORD research looks into how Member States have pursued PCD at national level. Both commitments and institutional mechanisms are known to be essential elements to translate PCD into fair and development-friendly political choices.

This research shows that more and more countries have now rooted their commitment into a policy or legal act at national level. One country even adopted a proper PCD implementation strategy with targets.

An increasing number of governments have also established various types of inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms that may allow addressing issues of how national policies impact developing countries. In most cases, these are general coordination mechanisms, not specific to PCD. Feedback generally shows that the effectiveness of these ministerial mechanisms is largely questionable. At the same time, the majority of Parliaments have no equivalent inter-sectoral coordination mechanism. Besides, institutional processes for assessing, monitoring and reporting on the external impacts of national policies remain quite rare.

Nice words of commitment on paper and the establishment of various sorts of coordination or assessment mechanisms have the merit to exist, but cannot be taken for real action or firm choices for fairer policies. In most EU countries, development remains unconsidered when making other policies.



The general low level of awareness amongst ministries of the need to scrutinize policies for their impacts on developing countries and the even lower level amongst Parliaments seems to indicate that the pressure for change will not come from within, in the short term.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are useful and legitimate partners in PCD implementation and can help increase a country's level of ambition for PCD. However, this research shows that in the majority of Member States, external stakeholders such as CSOs are either not or not seriously involved in PCD implementation processes. CSOs have an important role to play to generate a demand for PCD commitments and fairer policies.

Concepts of development are changing, with great implications for PCD in the light of the newly adopted universal Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is an opportunity to review the adequacy and effectiveness of the institutional set-ups in Member States - as well as in the EU - to enhance policy coherence for the well-being of the people and the protection of our planet.

This paper provides recommendations for both governments and Parliaments in the EU Member States, as well as for CSOs.

Introduction

Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) has become a legal obligation for the Member States of the European Union (EU) since its incorporation in the Lisbon Treaty in 2009⁶. In a series of Council Conclusions, all EU Member States have reiterated their political engagement to PCD and have recalled the Treaty's obligation to take into account the objectives of development cooperation in the policies which are likely to affect developing countries, as well as to pursue these objectives in the overall framework of the Union's external action.

In the latest Council Conclusions, adopted in 2013⁷, the 28 Development Ministers in the EU highlighted the following:

- the need for regular political PCD discussions on related thematic issues, at all levels
- the importance of making progress on measuring PCD and on promoting a more evidence-based approach, including through [...] further work to move towards a more focused, operational and results-oriented approach to PCD at the EU level and in Member States
- the need to promote independent assessments and strengthening PCD at country level

Beyond the EU level, EU Member States have been supporting PCD in other fora and collective commitments. PCD is a key component of the OECD approach to sustainable development, and is seen as a tool for integrating the economic, social, environmental, and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making. The concept of, and the commitment to PCD, has also become an integral part of the post-2015 process, and it is included in both the Addis Ababa Action Agenda⁸ and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁹, thereby committing all United Nations Member States to pursue Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development at all levels and by all actors.

So, Member States have committed to PCD in regional and international fora, but what about at home?

The 2015 Report on Policy Coherence for Development of the European Union states that "legal and political requirements, reporting, coordination mechanisms and coherence-related work are on the rise"; an analysis shared by the OECD¹⁰.

This research helps to verify these statements. To that end, we have used the OECD methodology as an inspiration, according to which, for a country to make good progress towards PCD, it is required that all three following building blocks are in place: political commitments and policy statements; coordination mechanisms; and monitoring, analysis and reporting.

CONCORD and its member organisations individually have been monitoring the EU PCD commitments and im-

⁶ Article 208(1) of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) states "Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty. The Union shall take account of the objectives of development cooperation in the policies that it implements which are likely to affect developing countries."

⁷ Foreign Affairs (Development) Council, Council Conclusions on Policy Coherence for Development, 12 December 2013

⁸ See Section 9 "We commit to pursuing policy coherence and an enabling environment for sustainable development at all levels and by all actors" in Addis Ababa Action Agenda, 13-16 July 2015

⁹ See Goal 17 target 14 "enhance policy coherence for sustainable development" in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 25 September 2015

¹⁰ European Commission Staff Working Document "Policy Coherence for Development", SWD (2015) 159, 3 August 2015, p.4

plementation for several years at EU and Member States levels. As recognised by the European Commission and the OECD¹¹, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), both in EU Members States and developing countries, play an important role in making sure the three building blocks are fulfilled, in their roles as watchdogs, advocates for greater transparency and coherence, advisors, and providers of evidence and links with the realities in developing countries. Thus, our research includes an overview of the involvement of CSOs in the national institutional mechanisms for PCD.

Concepts of development are changing with great implications for PCD, in the light of the newly adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Given that SDGs are universal, the scope of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) is much broader than PCD as defined by the Lisbon Treaty. Indeed, not only do EU Member States have to ensure that any of their policies are not generating negative impacts on developing countries, but they are also responsible for ensuring that coherent policies are in place to achieve the SDGs at home. The objective of coherence in PCSD is clearly defined as referring to the SDGs. It is yet to be decided whether PCD and PCSD will cohabit or be merged and whether separate or integrated institutional mechanisms will be put in place to operationalise them. CONCORD deeply hopes that the adoption of the SDGs will contribute to boost the creation or reinforcement of mechanisms to enhance the coherence of EU and Member States policies for the well-being of the people and the protection of our planet.

In our research, we have assessed Member States' progress in setting up effective institutional tools and mechanisms to operationalise PCD as defined in EU commitments.

1. Political commitments for PCD

Progress towards greater PCD starts with strong leadership and commitment at the highest political level (government and Parliament). Concretely, this can be shown through the adoption of relevant legal acts, policy documents, or proper PCD operationalisation strategies, as well as in public statements. Naturally, the higher the level of the political commitment and the more binding the political commitment is, the more likely it is to be wide-shared and meaningful with the view to avoid making policies that conflict with the objectives of sustainable development and of eradicating poverty.

It is important to acknowledge that depending on the political and legal traditions of the countries, the "strength" of a legal act, a policy document or a public statement varies; i.e. while in some countries a public statement is almost meaningless, in others it may be of great importance. It is equally important not to confuse nice wording in statements or even legal acts with a real commitment demonstrated by political will to enforce the PCD agenda and the government making it a priority.

Our findings show that since 2013 important progress has been made in terms of expressing commitment to PCD. A greater number of countries have mentioned PCD in legal and policy acts (**Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain**).

The **Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, and Slovenia** are recent examples of positive steps towards reinforcing their PCD commitment on paper.

- The new **Hungarian** Act XC on International Development Cooperation and International Humanitarian Assistance adopted in 2014 mentions PCD (section 6) and calls for the Minister of Foreign Trade to cooperate with relevant ministries and consult civil society to prepare a four year policy strategy. Moreover, section 11 requests the government to create an inter-ministerial committee for PCD purpose.

- The new **Slovenian** Foreign Policy adopted in July 2015 recognizes PCD as fundamental for the country's development cooperation.

Some countries have developed or are developing a more general strategy for development cooperation or sustainable development where PCD or PCSD is or will be mentioned (**Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Ireland, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the UK**).

The newly adopted Agenda 2030 may be seized as an important opportunity to revisit national strategies on development cooperation, tie them closely with strategies on sustainable development, and strengthen the coherence

¹¹ EU 2013 report on Policy Coherence for Development, notably p.19; OECD "Building blocks for Policy Coherence for Development", 2009

of a broader range of policies with these goals.

When addressing PCD in legal or policy frameworks, some States make an explicit reference to the EU framework, either article 208 of the Lisbon Treaty (**the Czech Republic, Finland, Luxembourg, and Sweden**) or the general EU development cooperation framework (**Austria, Bulgaria, Italy, Portugal, Slovakia, and Slovenia**).

In some countries, the commitments embedded in legal or policy acts are combined with public statements on PCD that may indicate a government's interest in mainstreaming PCD in the public discourse.

Such public statements may be made at the highest political level (**Belgium, the Czech Republic, Finland – in the previous government, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Sweden**) or at a lower level¹² (**Austria, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, and Romania**).

A very strong sign of political commitment to PCD is when commitments are translated into a clear comprehensive operationalisation strategy with action plans and targets. So far, **Denmark** has adopted such strategy, identifying some priority areas and developed action plans to address incoherencies. The PCD action plan adopted by the former government will continue to be implemented by the government that took office in 2015.

Sweden has partly done this, but the strategy currently lacks concrete targets in many regards, and incoherencies are not always subject to follow up. (see box)

Sweden: PCD challenges and incoherencies

Sweden adopted its coherence policy for development in 2003. In 2008, the previous government identified six priority areas ("global challenges") in order to focus the work on PCD and concretise the objectives. To ensure a proper follow-up on the challenges, in 2012 the government started to focus on one challenge for each biannual report to the Parliament. The recurrent criticism of avoiding conflicts of interest resulted in the identification of incoherencies for the first time in 2012. However, they were not followed up on in the 2014 report, when a new global challenge was in focus.

A new government came into office in October 2014, and introduced a re-start for the national PCD in the budget for 2015. As part of the re-start the government has given instructions to all ministries to produce work programmes for PCD, and to link them to relevant SDGs.

Remarkably though, intention to develop such a strategy of implementation for PCD is being discussed in other countries (**Italy, Poland, Slovakia, and Spain**). For instance in **Poland**, the draft of the Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2016-2020 contains a separate chapter on PCD, which defines a priority issue (tax dodging) and may oblige the Ministry of Finance to

develop annual action plans on the issue.

Finland, who used to qualify as a PCD champion, constitutes a specific case as the only Member State that has explicitly decreased its commitment to PCD since 2013 (see box).

Finland: the end of a PCD champion?

The previous government of Finland (2011-2015) had recognized PCD in its overall Government Policy Programme, which can be considered the highest level of political commitment. It had also dedicated a section to PCD in its 2012 Development Policy Programme¹³ and produced a report on the impact and coherence of development policy in 2014¹⁴.

Despite the lack of a PCD implementation strategy, the 2012 Development Policy Programme had identified specific PCD themes (food security, tax and development, trade and development, migration and development, and security and development).

Explicit political commitment to PCD has been high at times in Finland even if this has not always turned into effective coherent policy making.

The tide has turned since a new government took office in spring 2015. PCD is no longer mentioned in the Policy Programme. However, it is still to be seen whether PCD will keep its place in the new Development Policy, expected at the end of 2015. In any case it is clear that the governmental commitment to PCD has significantly decreased.

Finally, there is a group of countries (**Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Latvia, and Malta**) that has not yet recognized PCD as an important principle. No references to PCD are made in public statements, let alone in policy or legal acts, or through a PCD strategy. In **Malta**, references to coherence are made in the context of trade and finance, but as something needed among the policies of developing countries, rather than among European and national policies.

Evidence shows that pressure coming from civil society can be crucial to encourage governments and Parliaments to be more committed to PCD (see section 5).

¹² A commitment expressed at high political level is expressed by the Prime Minister or by the entire government. A lower level political statement may be made by e.g. the Minister in charge of Development Cooperation.

¹³ available at <http://ra.fi/GEa2>

¹⁴ available at <http://ra.fi/Z6e9>

2. Coordination mechanisms for PCD

Coordination mechanisms can be used to ensure that PCD is mainstreamed and implemented across national policy-making institutions (government and Parliament) and their policy departments. Such mechanisms imply an inter-departmental dialogue on policies that affect development and they involve different actors within the Parliament, the government and its administration as well as non-State actors.

2.1 In government

An increasing number of countries have developed inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms addressing PCD or PCSD (**Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden**). This group contains countries that strongly commit to PCD but interestingly also some other countries that have only recently started to promote PCD or adopted a more pro-active approach to sustainable development.

- In **Ireland**, as a result of the 2006 White Paper, the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development (IDCD) was set up in 2007 as the main institutional mechanism for supporting PCD. The IDCD is a consultative and advisory forum for interdepartmental coherence and as a forum to facilitate the best use of expertise across the public service in Ireland's development aid programme. In this capacity, the IDCD provides an administrative and institutional support mechanism for promoting PCD across government departments. The government's new Policy for International Development, One World One Future, further commits Ireland to strengthening the oversight role of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development and to producing a biennial report on Ireland's progress on PCD.

- In the **Czech Republic**, an inter-ministerial Council on Development Cooperation with a specific, though not exclusive, mandate on PCD¹⁵ has been established since 2008. In 2014 the Inter-ministerial Government Council for Sustainable Development (RVUR) was re-established and moved under the competence of the Office of the Government and is presided over by the Prime Minister himself. This should become the central body for the coordination on policy coherence for sustainable development, both in the making of Czech domestic policy and in the formulation of positions for EU decision-making. The members of the Council are representatives of central and local government authorities, social partners, NGOs and academics. RVUR has, so far, mainly focused on coherence of policies at domestic level and rather neglected their external dimension. This should however change in the light of the new SDGs agenda implementation at the national level, as RVUR will become the coordination body responsible for SDG implementation in the Czech Republic.

- In **Slovakia**, a Working Group on PCD was created in 2014 within the Coordination Committee of the Slovak Development Cooperation, which is an advisory body to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The Netherlands: a new set-up for PCD coordination mechanisms

The Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs had a special unit for Effectiveness and Coherence (DEC), which was abolished in 2014 and replaced by a flexible Project Team for PCD. The composition of the team depends on the issues on the table. Representatives from other Ministries might be seconded to the Project Team. Interestingly, the ECPDM's has pointed out that the abolishment of the DEC and the mainstreaming of its tasks will probably hamper an effective promotion of PCD at national, European, and international level. While the new minister has set a high level of ambition in terms of PCD, the capacity of her ministry to support her in this regard seems to have been inversely reduced (from an unpublished 2014 note from ECPDM about the PCD system in the Netherlands). Still, there are a few permanent inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms to ensure that the PCD dimension is taken into account.

Remarkably, at Parliamentary level, the Netherlands' Parliament has a Standing Committee for International Trade and Development Cooperation since 2012, mirroring the fact that trade and development are also joined in a same ministry in the government. While formerly trade and development were separate worlds, the new set-up enables the Parliament to have a closer look at the coherence or lack of coherence between trade and development.

Apart from these cases, most EU countries have established general mechanisms of coordination for development cooperation, but not with a specific mandate to deal with PCD (**Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, and the UK**).

NGO platforms assess that the effectiveness of these mechanisms is largely questionable (**Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal, and Slovakia**). A common problem is the lack of frequency in meetings (**Austria, Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden**).

Other countries simply have no governmental coordination mechanisms relevant for PCD (**Estonia, Greece, Latvia, and Malta**).

¹⁵ According to the Statute of the Council on Development Cooperation (Annex to Government Resolution No 1439/2007 of 19 December 2007, Art. II(1b)), the Council "is *inter alia* 'responsible for mutual coherence between the development cooperation objectives and priorities and other government policy instruments which have or might have a direct or indirect impact on developing countries'"

¹⁶ <http://www.oecd.org/dac/peer-reviews/Belgium-Peer%20Review-2015-full-report-ENG.pdf>

2.2 In Parliament

At Parliamentary level the situation is different. No national Parliament in the 27 EU Member States assessed has established a specific coordination mechanism in its Parliament that would ensure that all the policies are scrutinised for their impact on developing countries. The majority of Parliaments do not have any sort of inter-sectoral coordination mechanism that could address PCD issues (**Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Slovakia**).

A factor that can facilitate the existence of mechanisms in the Parliament is the level of awareness of PCD among key ministers and Parliamentarians.

Thus, in some countries, some general coordination mechanisms are in place, which allow for discussion of development issues and identification of possible incoherencies at Parliamentary level (**Belgium, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK**). In general, these mechanisms do not automatically ensure that PCD is effectively mainstreamed through different policies.

In **Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, and Slovenia**, the Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs welcome any individual members of the Parliament to take the floor and raise PCD issues.

In most countries, concerns about policy impacts on developing countries may be discussed in the Committee dealing with on Development Cooperation affairs.

The German Parliamentary Advisory Council on Sustainable Development has not dealt with topics discussed under PCD until now. It can be expected though that the focus of this body will shift in the wake of the SDGs, given that the German sustainability agenda will become a national SDG implementation plan. A useful coordination instrument has been the Cross-committees hearing (on e.g. on bio fuels), but these hearings do not take place very often.

3. Monitoring, assessment and reporting mechanisms

The establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and assessing (likely or effective) impacts of a country's policies on development, and the subsequent reporting on the implementation of the country's PCD commitments, represent another building block of a country's strategy to implement PCD. More than others, such mechanisms are important to enable the Parliament, citizens, and CSOs to hold the government accountable for its commitments. The path to develop effective monitoring, assessment and reporting mechanisms for PCD seems to be long in a great number of the Member States, even if some progress has been made in a small number of countries. Even when such mechanisms have been set up, many times

political willingness and pressure are lacking to make sure that these mechanisms are used effectively.

Eleven Member States, namely **Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Malta, Romania, Slovakia, and the UK** are reported not to have developed any mechanisms to measure the impact of their national policies on developing countries or to evaluate and report on whether the government has efficiently implemented its commitment on PCD, when there is one.

3.1 Assessment of policy impacts on development

In terms of assessment mechanisms that use a PCD approach, **Belgium, Italy, and Poland** have demonstrated noticeable progress.

- **Belgium** has set up a new Advisory Council on PCD, composed of academics and NGOs, which can formulate advice or provide answers to government questions. Moreover, Belgium adopted a law on Impact Analysis that covers ex-ante assessment only (the other evaluation services for development cooperation have not integrated PCD so far). Thus, since 2014, all government bills, draft Royal Decrees, and proposals for rulings submitted to the Council of Ministers are analysed for their coherence with development, using a tool known as AIR (analysis of regulatory impact). This analysis serves to flag potential changes or measures that should be introduced to ensure more development friendliness. However, OECD DAC estimates that *"While this analysis of regulatory impact is commendable, it has limited impact on coherence. There is little room to change course and the exercise has not, as yet, identified regulatory proposals that have more than a marginal impact on developing countries"*¹⁶. Moreover, the mechanism does not apply for draft legislation on national security and international treaties, even when they affect development (e.g. taxation, trade), which is a severe downside.

- In **Italy**, with the new Law 125/2014 that refers to PCD, for the first time - in response to the constant critics from the OECD DAC Peer Review -, a National Council for Development Cooperation has been established. Within this Council the public, private, profit, and not-for profit sectors are asked to express their positions on development cooperation issues and to evaluate to which extent political choices, strategies, programmes, interventions are coherent and effective. However, it is still too early to evaluate the quality of this mechanism since the National Council met only once so far.



Poland: impact assessment guidelines and reinforced PCD mechanisms

Poland constitutes a positive example of progress: an important step forward has been taken to enhance the assessment of impacts on development. Indeed, a specific question relating to PCD has been introduced in the new Impact Assessment guidelines that apply to national legislative processes.

Furthermore, PCD coordination mechanisms have been strengthened. Under the Multiannual Development Cooperation Programme 2016-2020, the reports on PCD that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) prepares for the OECD and the EU will be shared with the Development Cooperation Advisory Council (and possibly - a summary of them will be made publicly). This Council includes representatives of various ministries and governmental agencies, as well as parliamentarians and CSOs. It can give opinions on key documents that relate to development cooperation and can be a forum for policy debate.

Besides, according to the Polish Development Cooperation Act (Article 13), the MFA has the competence to give an opinion on other programmes and strategies in terms of their coherence with development cooperation objectives and priorities.

To add to this, PCD focal points have been appointed in various ministries and governmental agencies, coordinated by the MFA.

In some countries (**Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands**), initiatives have been taken to carry out some specific impact studies on specific topics and in relation to specific target countries. For these studies, different methodologies have been applied and this has positively contributed to enriching the debate on identifying the most appropriate impact assessment methodology for PCD. The debate is still going on.

- **Ireland** has taken positive steps at the field level, commissioning a number of research papers¹⁷ that look at the impact of the EU's Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) on its partner countries. One of these reports, *Trade Liberalisation and Fiscal Adjustment: The Case of EPAs in Africa*¹⁸ was presented to other EU Member States at a roundtable discussion on EPAs in Brussels to inform debate.

3.2 Monitoring and reporting mechanisms

All Member States are required to report on PCD implementation every two years, through their contribution to the EU's biennial reporting exercise on progress on PCD, coordinated by the European Commission. While the EU report contains examples of country situations, the Member States are not obliged to publicly share their input to the report, so it has been difficult for CSOs to monitor country-level situations. Yet in 2015 individual Member State contributions have been made public for the public. For some Member States, the EU report is also the occasion

to report at national level, like in **the Netherlands**¹⁹.

Beyond this, a very limited number of countries have developed proper reporting systems that would allow taking stock of progress in turning PCD commitments into reality.

A promising reporting mechanism has emerged in **France** while **Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands and Sweden** appear to be the most advanced countries, with solid PCD monitoring and reporting mechanisms. In these countries, the government regularly makes or should make regular reports on PCD.

- In **France**, the national committee on development and international solidarity is now tasked to produce a biennial evaluation report on the implementation of the PCD commitments set up by the new law. The first report issued in 2015 was an informative report, but lacked the analysis expected from an evaluation.

- In **Sweden**, the government prepares a biennial report for the Parliament on their national coherence policy (Policy for Global Development).

In **Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Spain**, monitoring and reporting mechanisms are not highly elaborated and have a questionable effectiveness.

- **Portugal** has planned to appoint PCD focal points in ministries (delays, are due to a restructuration of all Ministries) to promote PCD. These focal points will present a biennial report on PCD that should also include proposals on how to advance on PCD in different areas.

- In **Spain**, the government produces a biennial PCD Report. However, because of the methodology, this report is not considered as an appropriate instrument to monitor, assess, and report on PCD implementation. This report is intended only to collect some activities performed by different Ministries in partner countries; in most cases financed by ODA. Spain's PCD Commission (a Cooperation Council body) is working out a new methodology for the preparation of the PCD report.

¹⁷ Bilal S., M. Dalleau and D. Lui (2012), *Trade Liberalisation and Fiscal Adjustments: The Case of EPAs in Africa*, ECDPM Discussion Paper 137, European Centre for Development Management, Maastricht, the Netherlands, <http://ecdpm.org/publications/trade-liberalisation-fiscal-adjustment-epas-africa/>

Boysen O. and A. Matthews (2009), *The Economic Partnership Agreement between Uganda and the EU: Trade and Poverty Impacts*, IIS Discussion Paper No. 307, Institute for International Integration Studies, the Sutherland Centre, Trinity College, Dublin. <https://www.tcd.ie/iis/documents/discussion/pdfs/iisd307.pdf>

¹⁸ See footnote 13

¹⁹ with the promise of the Minister for Trade and Development Cooperation to move to annual report as of 2016

²⁰ The difference between these two levels has been underlined in the NGO barometer "FairPolitics".

²¹ The 25 Member States assessed are: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the UK.

4. Awareness of PCD in ministries and Parliaments

Awareness of PCD among ministers and Parliaments is of crucial importance to ensure a greater commitment on PCD, the existence of coordination mechanisms and ultimately fair policy outcomes, coherent with the fight against poverty and the promotion of human rights. The more people are aware of PCD, the more they are likely to avoid incoherent policies.

Awareness is highly subjective. Ministers or Parliamentarians who work with matters relating to development co-operation and foreign affairs are more likely to be more aware of PCD than others who deal with for example education or judicial matters. Yet, PCD needs awareness in all fields because policies of different nature can have impacts on people in developing countries.

While we cannot claim to present an objective methodology, since the national context does influence the assessment, the grading should provide a good overview of the different levels of awareness in the different EU Member States. Irrespective of the level of awareness, development remains unconsidered as an important policy in most countries in the EU. As such, a high or sufficient level of awareness does not always coincide with action, as shown in **Luxembourg**²⁰.

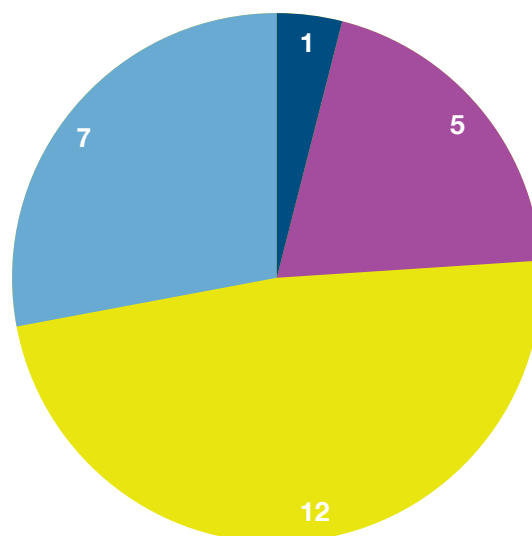
Not surprisingly, **Denmark, Luxembourg, the Netherlands**, and **Sweden** show the highest levels of awareness of PCD amongst their ministries and Parliaments, with the Netherlands and Denmark, for Parliamentary awareness. Interestingly, the **Netherlands** scores the highest for ministerial awareness level, but fairly low awareness level in the Parliament, while it is the opposite in **Denmark**.

Amongst the group with medium to fairly high level of awareness, we found the ministries of **Finland, Ireland, and the UK**; and the **Belgian, German, and Irish** Parliaments.

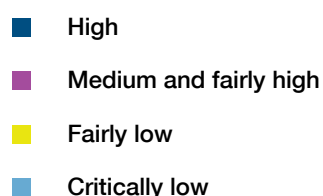
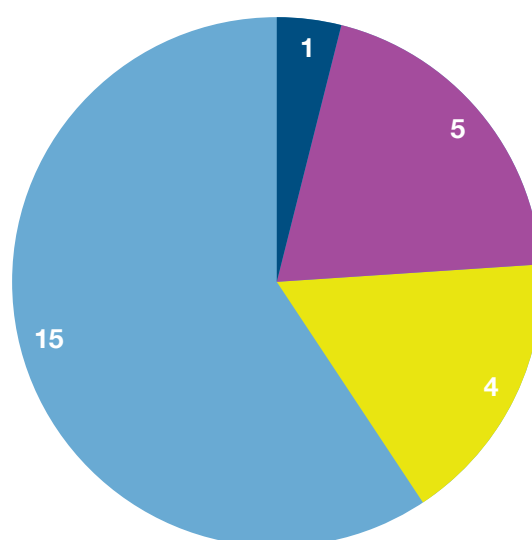
Awareness is limited in most of the countries assessed. Many times, it is reported that awareness is confined mainly to policy makers involved in the development and foreign affairs sectors. *

The situation is alarming in a significant number of Member States' governments (**Estonia, France, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, and Spain**). Overall, it is found that the level of awareness is perceived as being much lower in Parliaments than within governments. To the list of country above, the Parliaments of the **Czech Republic, Austria, Croatia, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, and Slovakia** must be added in the category of critically low awareness level (see pies²¹).

PCD awareness in Ministries
in 25 EU Member States



PCD awareness in Parliaments
in 25 EU Member States



To contrast these findings, the 2015 Eurobarometer shows that most Europeans find it important to help people in developing countries, and this is consistent across all Member States²², with an average of 85%²².

More specifically, in **Sweden** (74%), **Ireland** (56%) and **Luxembourg** (51%) an absolute majority of respondents think it is very important to help people in developing countries. Interestingly, these three countries are also among those with the highest level of awareness of PCD at governmental and Parliamentary levels, as showed in our study.

5. Inclusiveness and role of Civil Society Organisations

Inclusiveness and transparency of coordination mechanisms means that external stakeholders are allowed to participate and provide their input to coordination mechanisms. In this way, stakeholders are allowed to monitor these mechanisms and evaluate their effectiveness.

In the majority of Member States, PCD coordination mechanisms are considered not transparent enough to allow external stakeholders to either provide input or monitor and assess their effectiveness properly (**Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, and Sweden**). Even when external stakeholders such as CSO representatives can participate, this does not mean that these mechanisms are fully transparent.

CSOs are useful and legitimate partners in PCD implementation. Remarkably, all OECD DAC Peer Reviews that concerned EU Member States in 2013 and 2014 concluded that governments should work more closely with civil society networks on PCD²³. CSOs can play a significant role in getting governments and Parliaments to increase the level of ambition and the quality of the implementation with regard to PCD, by raising public and political awareness and by pushing for higher-level political commitments and adequate institutional mechanisms.

As shown in this study that mobilised 27 development NGO platforms, CSOs are increasingly aware of the need to enhance their own work and their dialogue with national institutions on PCD.

5.1 CSOs' involvement in PCD mechanisms

CSOs can provide policy-makers with valuable expertise, case studies or other type of evidences, building on their relations with their partners in developing countries. Involving CSOs in PCD mechanisms can be a way to gain more efficiency in the implementation of PCD commitments and, at the same time, can be a system to hold the government accountable.

Some governments and Parliaments are ready to accept that and have been involving CSOs in their institutional mechanisms to ensure PCD.

- In **Austria**, in 2014 the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Austrian Development Agency initiated what is planned to be an annual seminar on PCD for people working in Ministries and public services (as a specific part of the general training program for civil servants) in order to raise more awareness of PCD in the public administration. A key factor for the preparation of the seminar was the participation of representatives of Austrian NGOs and research institutions. Experts from NGOs and research institutes were invited as key note speakers and discussants.

- In **Denmark**, CSOs have worked closely with the government for the new PCD action plan which indicates also the right of CSOs to be consulted within the Action Plan.

- In **Lithuania**, the Law on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid established an inter-ministerial Commission for policy coherence and coordination of the development cooperation activities, which involves representatives from various ministries (aiming at vice-minister level) and representatives of CSOs, i.e. two development platforms in Lithuania and the association of local authorities. In Parliament, discussions on PCD in the Parliament can be initiated not only by the members of the Parliament but also by CSOs.

- In the **Czech Republic**, CSOs have been actively involved in the Strategic framework on sustainable development revision which should become the main vehicle and consolidated institutional framework for SDGs implementation. Besides, CSOs are members of the Czech Government Council on Sustainable Development (RVUR) and multi-stakeholder Committees, and they participate in the regular multi-stakeholder roundtables on inter-sectoral cooperation within development cooperation held by Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Luxembourg: CSO participation in inter-ministerial committee's meetings

In Luxembourg, representatives of CSOs (chosen by the national NGO platform "Le Cercle") are invited to share their point of view on a topic chosen by the inter-ministerial committee in charge of advising the government on PCD issues, but only after and without having been invited to the presentation of the ministries representatives. Moreover, the committee conclusions do not systematically take into consideration the CSOs' point of view.

Also, it is not clear what follow-up the minister in charge of the topic chosen will give to the advice of the inter-ministerial committee.

²² Special Eurobarometer 421, The European Year for Development – Citizens' views on development, cooperation and aid, January 2015.

5.2 CSOs efforts to promote PCD commitments and mechanisms

CSOs have launched and supported important initiatives that are useful to keep the interest for PCD alive and to mainstream it at the political level.

- **CONCORD Italy** organised several activities (researches, publications, toolkits, training, and advocacy events/meetings) on PCD during the Italian Presidency semester, involving different actors, including policy-makers. This has raised the level of political awareness on PCD and, as a consequence, it may have also positively affected government commitments.

- The evaluation carried out in 2014 by the national audit office how PCD is coordinated and implemented in **Sweden** echoed what Swedish CSOs had been advocating for, namely the need to strengthen the ownership outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to elaborate guidelines, and to clarify how to deal with conflicts of interest within the government structure. That same year, when the government announced a recommitment to PCD, the governmental follow up measures appeared to be also very similar to those advocated by CONCORD Sweden through its proposal for an “eight-point action-plan”. Moreover, in 2015, CONCORD Sweden initiated a dialogue process with seven different ministries through their PCD focal points, in order to give input on some of the PCD-related challenges faced by these ministries and to strengthen their capacity to work with a rights perspective when operationalising PCD.

Drawing from their activities and partnerships in developing countries, CSOs are able to make the link between situations on the ground and policies taken in Europe, as demonstrated in the extensive number of case studies published on various topics. These initiatives aim to feed the debate with adequate information and analyses for a better informed evidence-based policy-making process.

- In **Portugal**, in the context of the Project “Policy Coherence for Development – a challenge for an active citizenship in Cape Verde (2012-2015)”, implemented by the NGO Platform of Cape Verde and the Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr (IMVF), three studies have been carried out on environment, fisheries, and agriculture. This project also included a study called “PCD - Manual of Policy Coherence for Development in Cape Verde”, published in March 2015, with conclusions and recommendations on how to improve the performance of external partners, the government of Cape Verde, the Parliament and the Cape Verdean Civil Society in monitoring sectoral and public policies, towards development.

In **Luxembourg, Sweden, the Netherlands** and other countries, CSOs have developed interesting tools to evaluate the implementation of political commitments on PCD and how they effectively translate into coherent national policies.

- The Cercle de Coopération, the National platform of **Luxembourg** development NGOs has created a barometer called “FairPolitics”²⁴, which distinguishes between the level of PCD awareness in government and the level of action. The methodology used was immediately inspired by the work of CONCORD **Sweden**.

- In **Spain**, the Plataforma 2015 y más has developed a research programme on PCD, as part of which a PCD Index will be launched on November 2015.

²³ Reference to OECD DAC Peer Reviews in European Commission Staff Working Document “Policy Coherence for Development”, SWD (2015) 159, 3 August 2015, p.24. Countries reviewed are: Sweden, France, Italy, Ireland, UK, Austria and Belgium.

²⁴ www.fairpolitics.lu

Conclusion

Many countries have taken positive steps to reinforce the strength of commitments to PCD in their national policy or legislation. We have seen interesting initiatives for the set up of inter-departmental coordination and assessment mechanisms that could serve the purpose of PCD implementation. While these mechanisms have the merit to exist, their effectiveness is largely questionable, given the lack of frequency of meetings, the limited involvement of external stakeholders and their mostly advisory function.

Overall, this indicates insufficient political will to change the way policies are made and to engender policy changes that comply with the objective of PCD. Given the low level of PCD-awareness amongst institutions, it seems obvious that in the short term pressure for change will not come from within. Civil Society Organisations continue to have an important role to play to generate a demand for PCD-based, fairer policies.

6. Recommendations

Implementing PCD requires solid political commitments at high political level, adequate institutional mechanisms, and willingness to effectively use them, with the ultimate goal to avoid pursuing policies that may have negative effects on the well-being of people in developing countries, the respect of their human rights and the protection of the environment.

This research gives an overview of the current situation, with regard to the operationalisation of PCD “as we know it” in the European Union. However, to look ahead and propose recommendations for the future requires taking due consideration of the changing context and the adoption of the target to “enhance policy coherence for sustainable development” (PCSD) as part of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. Our understanding is that while the concept of PCSD significantly enhances both the scope of application (domestic/external) and the objective of coherence (from development to sustainable development), PCD remains part of this agenda, and a valid Treaty obligation, whether countries will deal with it as a separate process or as part of their implementation strategy for SDGs.

Recommendations to Member States

In comparison to 2013, a growing number of countries have committed to PCD and some of them have also made progress with the activation of PCD mechanisms.

Because, inherently, commitments too often depend on the goodwill of politicians, these must be safeguarded through structural institutional mechanisms that cannot be put aside with a turn of government.

Therefore, to operationalise PCD, governments of Member States should:

- 1) Throughout the entire government take political commitment on PCD by embedding it in a legally binding act and by adopting a PCD or PCSD strategy or action plan to operationalise it, including clear political objectives for policy changes that would ensure that non-development policies are compliant with PCD;
- 2) Integrate PCSD in their country's implementation strategy for SDGs;
- 3) Be more transparent with regard to how conflicts of interests and incoherencies are being handled within the government, and allow the Parliament and external stakeholders to participate in, monitor, and assess the effectiveness of mechanisms and the implementation of PCD/PCSD commitments;
- 4) Establish effective inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms with a specific mandate on PCD or PCSD and the full involvement of CSOs; and ensure regular meetings to discuss the impacts of policies in developing countries;



- 5) Introduce PCD/PCSD focal points in all ministries, in order to mainstream PCD;
- 6) Put in place ex ante and ex post impact assessments to identify potential and effective impacts of policies on sustainable development in developing countries, and make use of Embassies and Government Development Agencies;
- 7) Report on PCD/PCSD implementation at national level and make it public;
- 8) As a Member State and EU co-legislator, contribute to the reinforcement of mechanisms for and implementation of PCD/PCSD at EU level;
- 9) Seize opportunities to exchange good practices with other EU Member States, notably through active involvement in EU and OECD PCD mechanisms.

Recommendations to national Parliaments

As legislators, Parliaments have an essential role to play in implementing PCD and opting for the fairest, most development-friendly policy options. In addition, Parliaments are responsible for holding the government accountable. As elected institutions, they have a duty to listen to citizens, and CSOs, who will bring to their attention useful evidences and analyses.

Therefore, national Parliaments are advised to:

- 1) Introduce PCD/PCSD-coordination mechanisms across policy sectors in the Parliament; multiply cross-committee exchanges and hearings to discuss the impacts of policies in developing countries;
- 2) Request from the government reports on PCD implementation and increased transparency with regard to how decisions subject to conflicting interests are being made;
- 3) Introduce impact assessment mechanisms within the Parliament in order to make better-informed decisions that take into account the impacts of policy options on people in developing countries, human rights and the environment;
- 4) Regularly exchange with CSOs and academia who can provide you with evidence and analysis.

Recommendations to CSOs

CSOs play a crucial role in pushing governments for a strengthened commitment on PCD/PCSD, raising public and political awareness on the implementation of government commitments. They have useful expertise to contribute to evidence-based policy making, monitor PCD/PCSD and carry out independent evaluations. They play an important role as watchdog and hold the government accountable for its commitment.

To effectively play their role and push Member States towards PCD, CSOs should:

- 1) Push for clearer commitments on PCD/PCSD through legal and policy acts and action plans, and for more effective PCD/PCSD institutional mechanisms;
- 2) Establish collaboration with their government and Parliament through different processes (formal) and fora (less

formal), allowing to open up debates about policy impacts on development cooperation, sustainable development or other global challenges which have a development dimension, but are not necessarily perceived as a PCD or PCSD topic (e.g. tax justice);

3) Advocate for CSO involvement in and, when allowed, effectively participate in the various government coordination processes around development cooperation, as well as other related policies such as security, migration, energy, trade, or general EU policy coordination that allow for CSO input;

4) Closely monitor the performance of your government and Parliament in delivering PCD at national, EU and international levels; evaluate and/or ask for an independent evaluation of the results of the PCD commitments and implementation mechanisms in terms of whether they have effectively generated coherent policies and impacts;

5) Form coalitions and partnerships with other CSO sectors outside the development sector, and in countries affected by negative impacts of incoherent policies; and produce case studies, reports, policy analyses, and recommendations for alternative development-friendly policy options and widely share with policy makers in different policy sectors;

6) Raise awareness amongst institutions and the general public by organising trainings and events on PCD/PCSD and linking PC(S)D issues with other hot political issues in public discourse, emphasizing the sustainable development dimension;

7) Use the momentum of Agenda 2030 adopted by your government to strengthen the PCSD commitment, and advocate for an ambitious national SDG implementation framework (priorities, indicators, follow up processes) that includes adequate coordination and monitoring mechanisms, the systematic inclusion and coordination with CSO and other non-state actors; and regular and transparent monitoring and evaluation processes.



Annex 1: PCD good practices

This table shows some of the main good practices on PCD that we have identified in the assessed countries and that can be an examples and a source of inspiration for other countries.

Countries	Good practices on PCD
Austria	Seminar on PCD for people working in ministries and public services to create more awareness for PCD on the level of public administration, with inputs by CSOs.
Belgium	CSO participation in a specific Advisory Council on PCD as well as in the Federal Council on Sustainable Development and advisory mechanism at regional level.
Czech Republic	Re-establishment of the inter-sectoral and multi-stakeholder Government Council on Sustainable Development (RVUR) under the competence of the Office of the Government, presided over by the Prime Minister, as well as the ongoing revision of the Strategic framework on SD (to be adopted by the end 2016), which should become the main vehicle and consolidated institutional framework for implementation of the SDGs.
Denmark	Adoption of a PCD Action Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSOs have the right to be heard. • Relevant ministries must coordinate to work on PCD-related legislation.
Finland	Establishment of the Food Security Group that involves CSOs and research institutes, follows clear action points, and monitors progress in terms of PCD and food security.
Lithuania	Establishment of Inter-ministerial Commission for policy coherence and coordination of the development cooperation activities.
Luxembourg	Establishment of Inter-ministerial PCD committee in charge of advising government on PCD issues (with some limitations).
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of a question relating to PCD in impact assessment guidelines in the new impact assessment guidelines. • Definition of priority areas of PCD in coordination with the ministry in charge of the area and with a commitment to develop annual action plans. • Establishment of a cross-sectoral and inter-ministerial Advisory Council that can be a forum for policy debates.
Sweden	All ministries have been commissioned to produce PCD work programmes, linking their objectives with one or several SDGs.

Annex 2: Overview of PCD systems in 27 EU Member States as of September, 1, 2015²⁵

Country	Political commitments		Coordination mechanisms		Monitoring, assessment and reporting mechanisms	
	Commitment to PCD at highest level	Specific PCD implementation strategy with targets	Coordination mechanisms addressing PCD specifically or as part of its mandate	General policy coordination mechanisms	Impact assessment mechanisms	Monitoring and reporting on PCD implementation at national level
Austria	*		*			
Belgium	*		*	*	*	*
Bulgaria				*		
Croatia				*		
Czech Republic	*		*			
Denmark	*	*	*			*
Estonia	*					
Finland	*		*	*	*	*
France	*			*		*
Germany	*			*		
Greece						
Hungary	*		*			
Ireland	*		*			*
Italy	*			*		
Latvia						
Lithuania	*		*			
Luxembourg	*		*			*
Malta						
Netherlands	*		*			*
Poland	*		*		*	
Portugal	*		*			
Romania	*			*		
Slovakia	*		*			
Slovenia	*			*		*
Spain	*			*		*
Sweden	*		*	*		*
UK	*			*		

²⁵ This table provides an overview of commitments and mechanisms for PCD that exist in countries, without any assessment of their effectiveness.



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NW APRODEV (Act Alliance EU)	NP Greece: Hellenic Platform	NW Save the Children International
NP Austria: Globale Verantwortung	NP Hungary: HAND	NP Slovakia: MVRO
NP CONCORD Belgium	NW IPPF European Network	NP Slovenia: SLOGA
NP Bulgaria: BPID	NW Islamic Relief Worldwide	NW Solidar
NW CARE International	NW Handicap International	NW Sos Children's Villages International
NW Caritas Europa	NP Ireland: Dochas	NP Spain: Coordinadora ONGD
NW CBM International	NP CONCORD Italia	NP CONCORD Sweden
NW CIDSE	NP Latvia: Lapas	NW Terres des hommes IF
NP Croatia: CROSOL	NP Lithuania: LU	NP United Kingdom: Bond
NP Cyprus: CYINDEP	NP Luxembourg: Cercle	NW World Vision International
NP Czech Republic: FoRS	NP Malta: SKOP	AS World Wide Fund for Nature
NP Denmark: Globalt Fokus	NP Netherlands: Partos	
NP Estonia: AKU	NW Oxfam International	
NW EU-CORD	NW Plan International	

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