
Development cooperation and the EU

Changes and Trends for 2010-2012

Briefing Paper
August 2011

Since the Lisbon Treaty entered into force in December 2009, the European Union has undergone a number of substantial changes to how it approaches and manages development cooperation. As Ireland undertakes a review of the [White Paper on Irish Aid](#) and gets set to hold the [Presidency of the Council of the European Union](#) in January 2013; Irish development organisations need to be clear on what's happening at EU level in relation to development and identify the areas on which the Irish development sector may wish to focus during the Irish presidency in 2013.

In this paper, Dóchas seeks to provide an overview of the current issues which are dominating discussion in Brussels both in general and in relation to Development Cooperation. In particular, it outlines:

1. The big picture: Europe in crisis

- A. Financial crisis
- B. Arab spring
- C. Public perceptions and the political landscape
- D. Relevancy for development

2. Recent changes to EU development policy and practise

- A. Legal basis for development cooperation
- B. Institutional restructuring of the EU
- C. Civil Society
- D. EU Financing of development cooperation
- E. EU Policy on development cooperation

3. Trends for future focus and priorities of next Presidencies

- A. Rescuing and resurrecting the EU financial system
- B. Negotiation of the MFF and progressing with CAP reform
- C. External Relations
- D. Priorities of the next presidencies

1. The big picture – Europe in crisis

For many, the entering into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 was to be a water-shed moment for the European Union heralding a period in which the EU could work more effectively both domestically and on the International stage. The wrangling over Treaty provisions and referenda today, however, seems both distant and incidental in the face of a growing crisis within the EU.

A. The financial crisis

Since the collapse of the American sub-prime housing market and the fall of Lehman Brothers over three years ago, European governments have been continuously fighting to stave off bankruptcy and deep economic recession. While most of the focus remains on the headline countries of Greece, Ireland and Portugal; the crisis has affected all member states in various ways through the introduction of bailouts, austerity programmes and a rise in unemployment in eight member states.¹

More significantly, few commentators or financial experts believe that the current measures promoted by the EU and ECB actually deal with the underlying causes of the problems. Indeed fears persist regarding the possibility nay inevitability of sovereign defaults and the unknown effects such events could have in relation to contagion and the future of the euro zone.²

While the crisis raises many questions regarding domestic governance systems and domestic economic policy; it also highlighted some of the continuing **weaknesses at the heart of the EU**:

- poor regulation of the financial markets;
- an incomplete Euro currency system;
- imbalance between core and periphery members;
- governance of European Institutions in particular the European Central Bank.³

Despite the achievements of the Lisbon Treaty in terms of institutional reform, as of July 2011, the future of the EU has perhaps never been open to as much question as it is today.

B. Public attitudes towards Europe

With austerity measures currently being imposed across a variety of EU states; many anti-poverty organisations have repeatedly expressed concern that such policies, especially

¹ Eurostat Unemployment Update, July 2011, http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_PUBLIC/3-01072011-AP/EN/3-01072011-AP-EN.PDF

² Financial Times, 12 July 2011, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/f3efcbe2-aca7-11e0-a2f3-00144feabdc0.html#axzz1S5gkqSbl>

³ Der Spiegel, 03 October 2009 <http://www.spiegel.de/international/europe/0,1518,682432,00.html>

those involving the Troika (EC, IMF, ECB) are jeopardising the basic rights of Europe's weakest.⁴ In addition, people, in countries like Ireland, are clearly annoyed with the perceived horse-trading which is occurring at European Summits regarding matters which are outside the remit of the EU. In contrast, given the nature of European bailouts, citizens of the larger member states have expressed strong reservations about using such large amounts of tax-payer's money to bailout states whose downfall has largely been of their own doing and whose futures remain very uncertain. The response to the financial crisis in Europe has therefore impacted on European public attitudes in different ways.

Firstly, and not surprisingly, there exists widespread lack of confidence in national governments.⁵ Secondly, in 2010, for the first time, the EU Barometer showed that **more Europeans register distrust than trust in the EU**.⁶ Thirdly, the same survey found that most Europeans still feel that the response to the crisis is going in the wrong direction.⁷ Growing distrust therefore, in both national governments and EU institutions combined with a lack of confidence in the measures being taken, means that support for euro-sceptic and far-right political parties continues to grow.⁸ Such an increase also leaves the EU short on political support for progressive initiatives.

C. The Arab Spring

While the impact will not be known for many years to come, 2011 is likely to be remembered as the year the Arab World rejected authoritarian rule in favour of freedom, democracy and human rights. The implications for the EU are numerous including in areas such as security, migration and trade.

On another level, however, the Arab Spring highlights the **weakness at the heart of EU foreign policy** in the region. Though the treaties state that EU Foreign Policy must promote values including democracy and Human Rights and that development cooperation must support poverty reduction; European relations with states like Egypt have over recent decades prioritised economic, security, migration and trade concerns despite evidence of widespread human rights violations, high levels of poverty and the emergence of an autocracy.⁹

It would seem, however, that the EU now accepts that such practise is ultimately counter-productive and very damaging to the EU's international legitimacy. In March 2011, a Joint Communications from EU Institutions entitled 'Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity' declares that 'the EU should be ready to offer greater support to those countries ready to work on such a common agenda, but also reconsider support when countries depart from this track.'¹⁰

⁴ 'Europe needs a New Heart', European Anti-Poverty Network, General Assembly Final Declaration, June 2011

⁵ EU Barometer, Autumn 2010, 67% of Europeans distrusted their own governments, p27

⁶ Ibid, p 43

⁷ Ibid, p 30

⁸ Eurosceptic party makes strong gains in Finnish election, Irish Times 18 March 2011.

⁹ In 2008, the EU announced an Aid package to Egypt of €558m.

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/08/394&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

¹⁰ *Partnership for Democracy and shared prosperity with the Southern Mediterranean*; Joint Communication from the High Representative and the European Commission http://eeas.europa.eu/euromed/docs/com2011_200_en.pdf.

Such a statement represents a change in approach to dealing with our Southern neighbours, but it remains to be seen how it will be implemented in practice and whether it will serve as a precedent for EU relations with third countries which are clearly undemocratic and/or involved in widespread human rights abuses or be used selectively when doing so serves European economic and security interests.

Conclusion: Relevance for Development Cooperation

The crisis in the Arab world is forcing the EU to ask fresh questions of itself about the effectiveness of a foreign policy which selectively ignores obvious human rights abuses, inequality and high levels of poverty. Such reflection is welcome and represents an opportunity for development CSOs to further promote human rights conditionality in development cooperation.

The current financial situation and its impact on the public attitudes of Europeans is a source of major concern for development cooperation at national and European levels. Firstly, an EU in economic and political crisis will naturally be less well placed to make major **contributions at International summits** on matters such as Climate Change, Sustainable Development and the post-MDG Framework.

Key points for Dóchas members

- *The financial crisis in Europe raises many questions about current levels of EU political integration;*
- *The Arab Spring shows that providing aid while ignoring human rights standards is ultimately counter-productive;*
- *Lack of public confidence in national and European democratic institutions can be exploited by the far right;*
- *A struggling EU is less effective on the international stage*

Secondly, the ongoing financial crisis and the political fallout at national and European level could also **jeopardize the future EU ODA budget**, progress on reforming the Common Agricultural Policy and the make-up of EU development instruments as negotiations around the Multi-annual Financial Framework 2014-2020 focus on austerity.

Finally, in the long run, unless national leaders provide strong and coherent leadership in outlining a clear and realistic roadmap towards achieving financial stability and sustainable economic growth, the **EU risks the dissolution of the Euro-zone** at a major cost to the European economy, solidarity, integration and ultimately the overall European project – including the EU's role in Development Cooperation.

2. Recent changes to EU Development policy and practice

A. Legal basis for Development Cooperation

Following the passing of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, how the EU approaches development cooperation has become much clearer.

Key point for Dóchas members

According to EU Treaties, the primary aim of EU development cooperation is poverty reduction

Articles 208-214 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union stipulate *inter-alia* the following:

- the primary objective of EU Development Cooperation is the reduction and eradication of poverty reduction;
- EU development cooperation and that of member states shall compliment and reinforce each other;

- All EU policies must take account of the objectives of development cooperation.¹¹

In addition, the Lisbon Treaty created the position of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The High Representative (also Vice-president of the European Commission) is responsible, amongst other things, for conducting the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy by chairing the EU Foreign Affairs Committee, ensuring consistency in EU external action and managing the EU Foreign Delegations.

B. Institutional restructuring of EU development cooperation

Following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, Baroness Catherine Ashton was appointed High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy establishing the European Diplomatic Corps known as the **European External Action Service (EEAS)**.

Key point for Dóchas members

DG Development Cooperation maintains responsibility for the development budget and programming

Many feared, however that the appointment of a High Representative with her very own Diplomatic Corps would blur EU development cooperation's focus on poverty reduction.

European treaties, however, are both very clear about the aim of development cooperation and make development cooperation subject to co-decision i.e. decisions are not made by any one institution alone.¹² But, pressure from European NGOs and MEPs eventually ensured that responsibility for the development budget and programming remains with the Commission.

The latter's structures for dealing with development cooperation have also been reformed with DG Development and DG Europe Aid merging to form **DG Development Cooperation** (DG-DevCo). It is led by Commissioner Andris Pielbalgs

C. Civil Society

¹¹ Consolidated Version of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, Official Journal of the European Union, C83/49

¹² Ibid, Article 201.1

The European Commission launched an initiative in 2009 called the **Structured Dialogue**¹³ which sought to increase the effectiveness of all stakeholders involved in EC development cooperation. It involved a number of meetings between the Commission, Parliament, member states, Local Authorities and Civil Society Organisations both in Europe and in EU partner countries.

The dialogue came about on the back of challenges in relation to the proliferation of development actors and the multiple roles played by CSOs, the prominence given to participatory democracy in various European policies, the modalities of engagement with CSOs and Local Authorities and the implementation of provisions 13 and 20 of the Accra Agenda for Action.

Overall, the initiative focussed on **three major areas**:

- The roles and added-value of CSOs and Local Authorities in external cooperation
- Accra Agenda for Action and how the European Commission works with Civil Society
- Improving the current EU aid funding mechanisms for CSOs and Local authorities

Various NGO platforms participated in the Dialogue including CONCORD who put forward detailed positions on a number of these issues. Apart from a call for EU development cooperation to use a human rights based approach, other proposals put forward by CONCORD included:

- Funding modalities to remain both Geographic and Thematic;
- Funding for Civil Society to amount to at least 15% of EC ODA;
- Current thematic programmes and initiatives be maintained and;
- New or more focussed thematic programmes on the Promotion of Civil Society

Organisations, the promotion of Human Rights and Democratic Processes, an initiative which links Relief, Reconstruction and Development specifically addressing disaster preparedness.¹⁴

Key point for Dóchas members

Many CSO asks put forward during the Structured Dialogue have made it into the MFF proposals published in July 2011.

By and large, the Structured Dialogue was welcomed by Civil Society as a meaningful platform for discussing some of the key issues on this subject. Though the conclusions were broadly

supportive of the asks put forward by CONCORD; a major indicator of the impact and thus value of the process will be found in the Multi-Annual Financial Frameworks to be negotiated over the coming years and discussed further below.

D. EU Financing of Development Cooperation

Development cooperation funds provided directly by European member states and indirectly by the European Commission make the EU the largest Aid donor in the world.

The EC funds development cooperation through various instruments which underwent reform in 2006. The largest instrument is known as the **Development Cooperation**

¹³ http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/who/partners/civil-society/structured-dialogue_en.htm

¹⁴ CONCORD Discussion paper for the Structured Dialogue; Towards new instruments for CSOs, March 2011

Instrument (DCI) which covers aid to specific regions and countries as well as aid to address specific themes such as Food Security. In addition, the **European Development Fund (EDF)**, which lies outside the official EU Budget, is used for cooperation with the African-Caribbean-Pacific Countries in line with the Cotonou Agreement.

Decisions regarding the make-up of such instruments and the EU's overall budget are made during the conclusion of **Multi-Annual Financial Frameworks**. Annual funding for each instrument is agreed during the conclusion of the Annual EU Budget.

(i) Budget 2012

Since 2008, ODA levels have dropped significantly across the EU. A recent report from AidWatch showed that **EU has missed its 2010 interim target of 0.56% GNI by over €11bn.**¹⁵

Key point for Dóchas members:

External Action received the smallest increase of any EU policy area in the 2012 budget.

While the EC met its own ODA target, a substantial amount of that was provided to implementing EU neighbourhood and enlargement policies as opposed to fighting against poverty and inequality in the poorest countries.¹⁶

Worryingly, the **proposed EU budget 2012** suggests that Europe's External Action is no longer a major Commission priority. According to proposals, the envelope for External Action would increase by a mere 0.8% - the smallest increase across all EU policy areas. In addition, it proposes reducing DCI by €70million and the Global Fund by €65m – in neither case was a clear reason given for the proposed reduction. Finally, proposals for 'new and additional' Fast Start Climate Action under DCI were found to be anything but additional given that DCI budget falls by €70m overall.¹⁷

(ii) The Multi-Annual Financial Frameworks (MFF)

The most important decisions relating to how EU member states fund the work of the Union are made through '**Multi-Annual Financial Frameworks**' (MFF). The MFF is a projection of the EU's Annual Budget over a substantial number of years. It sets out:

- the maximum contribution which Member states will be asked to make during that period to fund the running of the Union;
- the envelope available to each sector (e.g. external action, Internal Market, Social Cohesion, EU Administration) and
- the various mechanisms/instruments to be used by each Directorate General.

MFFs are ultimately made operational through the EU's Annual Budget passed in December of each year.

¹⁵ Penalty against Poverty, AIDWATCH Report 2010, www.concordeurope.org

¹⁶ Ibid, p 21

¹⁷ For more detailed analysis of the EU Budget Proposal 2012 from a development perspective, see CONCORD response <http://www.concordeurope.org/Public/Page.php?ID=44595&language=eng>

With the current MFF coming to an end in 2013, negotiations have already begun for the **MFF 2014-2020**. The Commission released the first draft of the MFF on 29 June 2011.¹⁸ Though EU Parliament President, Jerzy Buzek, welcomed the proposal as ‘an intelligent starting point for negotiations’;¹⁹ the framework was **received negatively** by various member states including France, Germany and the UK.²⁰ Most critics focussed on the following:

- an apparent contradiction lying at the heart of the commission’s request for an overall increase of between 3-5% in member state contributions to the EU, while encouraging member states to undergo widespread austerity;
- a proposal to end the system of rebates;
- a proposal to impose a tax on international financial transactions for the Commission’s own budget;
- a proposal to reduce funds for the Common Agricultural Programme by 3% (from 39% to 36% of the EU budget) and to increase environmental conditionality on direct payments to 30%.

(iii) The MFF and Development Cooperation

In relation to development cooperation, the outcomes of current negotiations will give a strong indication of:

- whether the EU is planning to meet the 0.7% ODA targets by 2015;
- how the EU is planning to fund its development cooperation activities;
- what type of funding lines will be available to CSOs
- whether the EDF remains outside the General Budget framework;
- EU plans relating to agricultural subsidies and other areas of concern for policy coherence.

The Commission’s first draft was welcomed by European development CSOs²¹ as it proposes:

- an increase in funding for development cooperation in line with commitments on reaching 0.7% GNI by 2015;
- by and large to maintain the current collection of financial instruments used for development cooperation.

Other proposals of interest in the current draft relating to development cooperation include:

- development cooperation instrument (DCI) funding will continue to be both geographical and thematic;
- continued funding line for Non-state actors under DCI;
- creation of pan-African Financial Instrument under DCI which can be financed through various means;

Key points for Dóchas members

The first draft MFF proposes:

- *an increase in funding for development cooperation in line with commitments on reaching 0.7% GNI by 2015;*
- *By and large to maintain the current collection of financial instruments used for development cooperation.*

¹⁸ A budget for 2020, European Commission, <http://ec.europa.eu/budget/reform/>

¹⁹ European Parliament Press Release, 29 June 2011

²⁰ EU budget rise a step too far, say member states, Irish Times, 1 July 2011

²¹ CONCORD welcomes EU budget increase for development, Press Release 1 July 2011

- EIDHR to focus on building Civil Society capacity to protect Human Rights as well as Electoral Observation;
- European Development Fund for ACP countries to continue to receive funds from Voluntary Contributions thus remaining outside of EC Budget;
- the replacement of the ICI instrument with a 'Partnership Instrument' putting greater emphasis on emerging economies including DCI partners, such as India.

It remains to be seen whether the current proposals on funding and policy for External Action will be accepted as negotiations with member states begin in earnest over the coming months.

E. EU policy on Development Cooperation

Informed by Treaty obligations, the EU's primary development policy document is the **European Consensus on Development** (2005)²². This document sets out the primary objectives, principles, approach and thematic understanding of the EU in the area of development cooperation. Despite widespread support for the European Consensus, three specific initiatives by the EU over the past few years seem to contradict the core aims of that policy.

(i) *Policy Coherence for Development*

In line with its treaty obligations, the European Commission published, in 2005, a **Communication on Policy Coherence for Development**.²³ It identified 11 areas where the EU would work to ensure that its policies support the objectives of its Aid programme.

Two reports have since been published by the Commission outlining the progress made on PCD in 12 areas plus the institutional framework for PCD. The 2009 report, however was overshadowed by another Commission Communication entitled '**Policy Coherence for Development - Establishing the policy framework for a whole-of-the-Union approach**'²⁴. The Communication stated that changing circumstances demanded a new approach to dealing with PCD.

The 'whole-of-the-Union' approach claims to bring two distinct changes:

- a focus on five major themes (food security, climate change, migration, intellectual property rights, Security and Peace Building);
- the introduction of the ODA Plus concept to financing development cooperation (using ODA to mobilise greater Non-ODA resources for development).

This communication was met with great concern by development NGOs who felt that this **new approach** was a departure from the 2005 Communication and **blurred the focus on PCD**. It was also felt that the five themes did not comprehensively cover all major EU Policy areas which impact on the aims and objectives of EU development cooperation. In addition the ODA+ proposal is seen as an effort to deflect from ODA obligations of member states.²⁵

²² 'The European Consensus', Joint statement by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on European Union Development Policy: 2006/C 46/01

²³ *Policy Coherence for Development*, Commission Communication, 12 April 2005, COM(2005) 134

²⁴ *Policy Coherence for Development - Establishing the policy framework for a whole-of-the-Union approach*, Commission Communication, Brussels, 15.9.2009, COM(2009) 458

²⁵ *Spotlight on Policy Coherence* report, CONCORD update note, March 2010

Key points for Dóchas members

The European Commission's 2011 report on PCD will be an important indication of the EU's commitment to policy coherence for development.

The Communication was followed in **Spring 2010 by a Work Programme** on PCD 2010-2013 which identified targets for each of the five areas. The first report on progress in this regard will be published in September 2011. It is worth noting that the ODA+ concept did not feature in the Work Programme however some member states are still pushing this approach as evidenced by the draft Busan Declaration on Aid Effectiveness.

(ii) EC Green Paper on EU Development policy in support of inclusive growth and sustainable development²⁶

The Commission's Green Paper was published in November 2010. It seeks to launch a debate on:

- how to ensure high impact EU development policy;
- how to facilitate more inclusive growth in developing countries, as a means of reducing poverty;
- how to promote sustainable development as a driver for progress;
- how to achieve durable results in the area of agriculture and food security.

The Green paper was initially intended to serve as the basis for a **new 'EU Development Policy'** and is clearly influenced by the current 'value for money' trend in International Development. An outcome report from Commission consultation with stakeholders on the Green Paper shows that clear divisions exist as to the direction which the new EU Development Policy should take.²⁷

What direction for a new European Policy on development?	
Green Paper	NGO concern
GP seeks to revise the European Consensus on Development	- GP fails to adequately consider the relationship between Human Rights, Democracy and the role of women in development - GP offers little explanation as to the meaning of terms such as 'added value' and 'inclusive development' - It is therefore an unsuitable starting point for discussions on reviewing the European Consensus.
GP suggests a greater focus on the economic growth aspect of development cooperation albeit one which is inclusive and sustainable;	- GP must protect against a one size fits all approach as experienced in previous decades - GP focus on economic growth comes too soon for fragile states and developing countries with very high-levels of poverty and weak social support mechanisms;
GP proposes that ODA focus on LDCs;	- GP fails to address the 70% of the world's poor who live in middle-income countries.
GP suggests that Climate Change must be integrated into development policy	- GP must ensure that Climate Change projects are not funded from ODA budget

²⁶ *EU development policy in support of inclusive growth and sustainable development - Increasing the impact of EU development policy*, Commission Green Paper, 10 November 2010, COM(2010) 629

²⁷ Report on the consultation on the Green Paper on "EU Development Policy in support of inclusive growth and sustainable development – Increasing the impact of EU development policy", http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/how/public-consultations/5241_en.htm

Though Commissioner Piebalgs appears to accept that now is not the appropriate time for redrafting the European Consensus on development, many fear that the Green Paper will be used in negotiations around the MFF as a source of substance instead of the relevant treaty provisions or the European Consensus.

(iii) Reform of the EU General System of Trade Preferences (GSP)

The GSP scheme comprises three preferential agreements whereby the EU grants reduced or zero-sum import tariffs to developing countries on a non-reciprocal basis albeit subject to certain conditions regarding Human Rights, Governance and Democracy. As the GSP scheme is due to expire in December 2013, the Commission issued a proposal for its **reform by EU Regulation** in May 2011.²⁸

The proposals have been **heavily criticised by development CSOs** who claim the proposals risk undermining the stated aim of the GSP namely providing trade preference to those in greatest need. The following issues are deemed to be particularly unsatisfactory: Proposal to remove a significant number of countries from the list of beneficiaries pushing them into new FTA negotiations as the only way to preserve their preferences; Imposition of new policy conditionality relating to developing country exports; Exclusion of 7 ACP countries, exacerbating the failure of proposals to provide favourable solution for ACP states unable to enter into Economic Partnership Agreements.²⁹

Key point for Dóchas members

Current European Commission proposals to reform the GSPs would push many developing countries into Free trade agreements with Europe.

3. Trends for future focus and priorities of the next EU Presidencies

There can be little doubt regarding the major focus of the EU over the next two years, however, the EU will also play a key role on a number of matters specific to development cooperation.

A. Rescuing and resurrecting the European Financial System

Dealing with unsustainable levels of debt in various EU states, stabilising and reforming the Euro, regulating the international financial markets, reducing the scope for dangerously high levels of state debt, facilitating inclusive growth and jobs during a time of austerity, and ensuring that a two-tier Europe does not develop further will be the key issues in this regard.

B. Negotiation of the MFF and Progression on CAP Reform

Proposals from member states in reaction to the Commission MFF proposals of June 29 are due in December 2011. MFF and CAP negotiations are expected to be completed by December 2012 and enter into force in January 2014.

²⁸ Commission Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council applying a scheme of generalised tariff preferences, 10 May 2011, COM(2011) 241

²⁹ Recommendations by the CONCORD Trade Reference Group for a development centred reform of the EU's Generalised System of Trade Preference, 30 June 2011

C. External Relations

The following issues are likely to dominate the External Action agenda in the next two years:

- the political situation in a number of Arab states;
- the accession of Croatia to the EU, rapid advancement of Iceland's candidature for membership;
- ongoing review of EU Development Policy;
- ongoing negotiation of Doha Trade Agenda;
- reform of the GSP;
- global food security;
- Fourth HLF on Aid Effectiveness in Busan (November 2011) ;
- UNFCCC negotiations in Durban (December 2011) on solutions post Kyoto Protocol;
- Rio +20 Earth Summit on Sustainable Development (September 2012);
- MDG Summit 2013 to establish the framework for Post-2015.

D. Priorities of the next Presidencies

Poland, Denmark and Cyprus will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from **July 2011 – December 2012**. They outlined their collective priorities for the 18 months in June 2009. Overall, they aim to compliment the EU 2020 Strategy by focusing on economic governance, sustainable growth and a secure Europe. Reference to development cooperation is frequent in the Strategic Framework but very vague in the actual operational programme. With general elections taking place in Denmark in late 2011, only Poland has so far officially outlined a programme of activities during its presidency.

The next trio of countries taking over the Presidency from January 2013 – June 2014 will be **Ireland, Lithuania and Greece**.

The Irish Government sees the Presidency as an opportunity to re-establish Ireland's reputation overseas. Though preparations have been ongoing since 2010, so far there is little indication as to the government's major priorities.³⁰ In the area of external action, the following key matters could be decided during the Irish presidency:

- Croatia officially enter the European Union;
- the EU agree on an official position in relation to the MDG Summit in late 2013 and the post 2015 Agenda;
- if negotiations become very cumbersome, concluding the MFF could well fall to the Irish Presidency.

Key points for Dóchas members

- *Ireland takes over EU Presidency in January 2013*
- *Focus likely to remain on European Financial situation*
- *Development related focus on MFF or preparation for the High-level UN Meeting on a post MDG agenda*

³⁰ Reply by Minister of State for European Affairs, Lucinda Creighton to Parliamentary Question, 13 July 2011, <http://www.kildarestreet.com/debates/?id=2011-07-13.358.0>

Polish EU Presidency priorities in the field of external action

1. Implementing and expanding the European Neighbourhood Policy
2. Development and Humanitarian Affairs
 - a. Future of EU development policy, aid effectiveness and issue and joint programming;
 - b. Discussion on future shape of development instruments under MFF**
 - c. Implementation of EU-ACP commitments
 - d. Sixth Edition of EU Development Days in December 2011
 - e. Review of European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid Action Plan
 - f. Identifying role and tasks of European Voluntary Humanitarian Aid Corps
 - g. Continued Negotiation of the Food Convention**
3. Trade
 - a. Agree on Trade Package for LDCs at WTO Ministerial Conference in December 2011**
 - b. Laying down roadmap for finalising other areas of Doha Round
 - c. Advancement of EU Trade Agreements with Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova, India, Singapore, Canada, Mercusor and Central American countries;
 - d. Principles for implementing common investment policy
 - e. Beginning of negotiations on GSP reforms**