

DÓCHAS
The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

08 May 2009

**Development NGOs call on Europeans
to vote against poverty**

On the eve of Europe Day, Development NGOs are launching a campaign across the European Union to highlight the EU's role in the world and encourage people to vote in the European elections.

In Ireland, Dóchas and its 44 member organisations are bringing this campaign to election candidates and other interested groups, the media and more than 850,00 supporters – most of whom are, of course, voters in their own right.

Called "10 Days 4Development", the campaign from 8 to 18 May encourages voters to ask their MEP candidates about what they intend to do to promote international development, human rights and justice issues if elected. NGOs will then follow up with MEPs on these and related matters after their election.

All around Europe, international development NGOs are organising activities, including public meetings, meeting with politicians, campaigning stunts, opinion polls and so forth, highlighting the EU's global responsibility and the impact of EU policies on the developing world. Voters can get information about the activities taking place in the different countries by visiting <http://10days4dev.wordpress.com>.

In Ireland, Dóchas – the association of Irish overseas development NGOs – and its member agencies are holding public debates with European election candidates and other interested parties in Dublin, East, South and Northwest constituencies. Candidates will be asked to set out their stall on development and global justice issues, and will then take questions from voters and development activists.

These events will be held in:

- Callan Hall, NUI Maynooth, from 1 to 2.30pm on 12 May;
- Imperial Hotel, Cork, from 12.30 to 2pm on 13 May;
- European Parliament office, Molesworth Street, Dublin, from 10am to 12pm on 15 May;
- Harbour Hotel, Galway, from 6 to 7.30pm on Thursday 21 May.

At the Dublin debate on 15 May, Dóchas will officially launch its manifesto: *There's Power in the Parliament: 10 Ways Irish MEPs Can Make a Difference*, on which Irish NGOs will be following up with those elected between now and the end of the parliamentary term in 2014.

“European voters must decide which Europe they want: an open Europe showing solidarity with the poorest, whatever their origin; or, on the other hand, a Europe that build fences and favours an economic model that excludes millions of the world's poor, as demonstrated by the ongoing financial crisis”, says Hans Zomer, director of Dóchas.

Dóchas stands with NGO colleagues across the continent for a Europe which:

- Has coherent social, economic, trade and security policies that promote sustainable development and responsible citizenship both for citizens of Europe and the rest of the world;
- Meets its commitments for more and better development aid, which promotes human rights and contributes to the reduction of global poverty;
- Is transparent, open and accountable to its citizens.

Dóchas urges voters to use this opportunity to vote for candidates who stand with the world's poor and oppressed, who stand against poverty and for global justice.

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Notes to the editor

- The “10 Days 4 Development” campaign is being coordinated by CONCORD, the European confederation of relief and development NGOs. Its national associations (such as Dóchas in Ireland) and international NGO networks represent over 1,600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations: www.concordeurope.org.
- Dóchas election manifesto available at www.dochas.ie
- For further information, contact Dóchas, Tel 01 405 3801