

European NGOs condemn putting aid at the service of immigration control

While European and G8 countries are failing to deliver on their international aid commitments, European Development NGOs are deeply concerned about linking immigration control and development cooperation.

On 7 and 8 July 2008, the French Presidency presented a draft European pact on immigration and asylum to its partners at the informal meeting of Justice and home affairs Ministers in Cannes. This draft Pact suggests migration should become an important element in all External Relations of the Member States. It invites Member States to conclude agreements with countries of origin or transit on migration and development.

“These agreements, which bring the fight against illegal immigration and development under the same framework, have allowed France and a few other OECD members to use aid to put pressure on developing countries when negotiating tough readmission agreements. Generalising this negotiation tactic at European level could be very damaging for developing countries” explains Vice-Chair of Coordination SUD, the French national NGO platform, responsible for European issues.

“Linking development policies and migration presents clear risks of undermining the focus on the eradication of poverty and inequalities in the poorest countries. Europe cannot tie the allocation of aid to developing countries to progress on legal or illegal migration and readmission. Whilst European Member States may sign agreements on migration with third countries, these should not become conditions for development cooperation” says Olivier Consolo, Director of CONCORD, the European confederation of relief and development NGOs.

European Development NGOs call for aid programs to retain poverty eradication and sustainable development as primary objectives, in line with the [European Consensus on Development](#) and [the Maastricht Treaty](#). While many countries of origin for migration flows are currently suffering from food shortage, European aid must support essential social services, agricultural development and poverty eradication rather than the capacity of these countries to control their potential migrants. Aid must not be retargeted on the fight against “illegal immigration” in countries of origin and transit.

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Note to editor:

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- ◆ CONCORD Aidwatch [report](#) and [press release](#) on the reality of the aid delivered by the European Union and its Member States: 5-2008.

- ◆ [Official results of the informal meeting of the justice and home affairs ministers](#) - French Presidency website
- ◆ Pictures about migration available in high definition on <http://www.concordeurope.org/Public/Page.php?ID=137>

CONCORD is the European confederation of relief and development NGOs. Its national associations and international 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. CONCORD is part of the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty'. – See www.concordeurope.org