

DÓCHAS

The Irish Association of Non-Governmental Development Organisations

Media Statement

NGOs write to EU Minister with suggestions for Irish EU Presidency

National dialogue needed on future development priorities, say Irish NGOs

24 January 2012

Meeting today, the Board of Dóchas, the umbrella group of Ireland's Development NGOs, urged the Government to use Ireland's 2013 Presidency of the European Union to set new priorities for international efforts to eradicate poverty and inequality.

"The EU Presidency comes at a challenging time, with many people deeply disappointed with the way our political leaders failed to manage the risks of our economic model. More and more people find it difficult to see the positives of European integration, in the absence of clear evidence that such integration leads to positive results for ordinary people," said Hans Zomer, Director of Dóchas.

"The EU Presidency offers Ireland a unique opportunity to define issues and legislation that can have a positive impact on the lives of millions of Irish and European citizens. And we should do our best to grab this opportunity," said Zomer.

One of the key decisions to be taken during the Irish EU Presidency will be the funding of future EU work (the so-called Multi-Annual Financial Framework), and by extension, the relative priorities for each of the many areas of influence of the European Union. Dóchas today called on the Government to use its influence to re-think the EU's economic priorities.

"During Ireland's Presidency, the EU must determine its negotiation position for the September 2013 UN summit that will set a new global models of social, political and economic development. This calls for Irish leadership, to make sure our economic model serves people's interests, not the other way around," said Hans Zomer.

Ireland's Development NGOs, through the Dóchas network, will be arguing that a new global development framework must not simply articulate a 'business as usual' approach.

Rather, the new model must provide answers to the biggest global challenges that are facing man-kind: economic inequality, social instability, environmental degradation, resource scarcity, climate chaos and political exclusion of vast numbers of people.

The members of Dóchas aim to use the Irish EU Presidency to raise awareness of the importance of the process, by promoting active discussion among domestic and international NGOs.

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NOTES FOR THE EDITOR

- The European Union is the world's biggest aid donor. In 2010, EU development aid totaled €53.8 billion (up €4.5 billion on 2009). More information is available via the Dóchas website, at <http://dochas.ie/pages/resources/default.aspx?id=35>
- European Union member states are currently negotiating a new multi-annual finance arrangement, to fund the work of the EU. More information via http://europa.eu/press_room/press_packs/multiannual_financial_framework_2014_2020/index_en.htm.
- Dóchas has welcomed the European Commission's proposals, within the Multi- Annual Framework, to increase overseas aid from 2014 onwards. See http://dochas.ie/Shared/Files/1/EU_proposes_significant_increase_in_overseas_aid.pdf
- The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), agreed in 2000 at the United Nations, must be achieved by 2015. Many of the MDGs will have been achieved, but others will not be met by the 2015 deadline. In September 2013, UN member states will gather in New York to agree a new framework, to succeed the MDGs and to focus international efforts at fighting extreme poverty. For more information, see <http://dochas.ie/pages/resources/default.aspx?id=34>
- **Dochas** is the association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations. It provides a forum for consultation and cooperation between its 43 member organisations, and helps them speak with a single voice on development issues.

For more information, visit: www.dochas.ie

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