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Eurostep welcomes agreement on the EU's Instrument for Development Cooperation

Eurostep welcomes today's agreement on the shape and form of the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), achieved under the leadership of the Finnish Presidency. Agreement was reached between the European Parliament, Council and Commission after many months of difficult negotiations. *"This instrument will provide the legal framework for the EU's aid programme for at least the next seven years so it was important to get it right"* said Simon Stocker, Director of Eurostep. *"We now feel that its orientation and content provide a meaningful basis on which the EU's cooperation with developing countries can target poverty, the principal objective of its development policies"* he continued.

Eurostep has consistently supported the European Parliament's Development Committee which has strived to establish an instrument dedicated to the EU's cooperation with developing countries, based solely on the development article of the EU treaties. *"We congratulate the Parliament's Development Committee for ensuring that the legal framework for the EU's future aid focuses unequivocally on tackling poverty, with the implementation of the Millennium Development Goals firmly at the centre of its actions"* said Paddy Maguinness, Chair of Eurostep and Deputy CEO of the Irish NGO Concern. *"The incorporation of binding commitments on support for social spending is particularly welcome. Prioritising investment in basic health and education is crucial for successful development"* he continued. *"The DCI now provides a solid foundation for the EU's future aid programme. The next step is to translate it into reality and we are already looking towards its implementation in practice"*

The agreement will be formally adopted in the coming weeks and take effect early 2007.

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