

KEY QUESTIONS

the big six

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Who are the main actors in the EU's development cooperation?

Council and European Parliament approve strategy and budget presented by European Commission; EU delegations define priority sectors of bilateral cooperation with partner countries

The **European Council**, currently chaired by President Donald Tusk and composed of all EU heads of state and government, meets regularly to set high-level political and budgetary priorities for the EU.

The **Council of the European Union** (Council; not to be confused with the European Council above) includes ministers of EU member states, who coordinate member states' policies to define strategic priorities for the EU. The Council meets in different configurations, depending on the issue at stake. The Foreign Affairs Council includes ministers of foreign affairs and/or development from all member states. They meet once a month and vote on legislative acts, coordinate policies, and decide on the annual budget, usually in co-decision-making with the European Parliament (Parliament). The Council's meeting agendas are set by the member state that holds the rotating presidency for six months; Romania holds the presidency from January until June 2019, to be followed by Finland, Croatia, and Germany. Meetings are chaired by the EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, currently Federica Mogherini. She is assisted by the **European External Action Service (EEAS)** to coordinate the EU's foreign policy tools, including development assistance and humanitarian assistance.

Together with the Council, the **Parliament**, currently headed by President Antonio Tajani, decides on the annual EU budget, which includes the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI). The Parliament has an exclusively advisory role vis-a-vis the European Development Fund (EDF), as the EDF is not currently included within the EU's general budget, though this may change in the 2021-2027 MFF. Budget allocations and strategic priorities of the EDF are approved by a Joint Council of Ministers of African, Caribbean, Pacific (ACP), and EU countries. The Parliament also scrutinizes the Commission during policy and program implementation.

Within the **Commission**, headed by President Jean-Claude Juncker, the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation – EuropeAid (DG DEVCO) is responsible for the formulation and implementation of the EU's development policy. DG DEVCO manages 50% of the EU institutions' ODA commitments, including the DCI and EDF. Other Directorates-General involved in ODA allocation and implementation include the Directorate-General for Neighborhood and Enlargement (DG NEAR, covering the EU's enlargement process and the European Neighborhood Instrument, 23%) and Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO).

EU country offices (called **delegations**) are part of the EEAS structure and are responsible for the programming of development funding, together with the Commission. EU delegations develop seven-year strategies with partner countries or regions regarding EDF and DCI allocations. These 'multi-annual indicative programs' within the DCI and 'national/regional indicative programs' within the EDF are developed based on pre-existing national development plans or strategies and with instructions from DG DEVCO and EEAS. They define priority sectors of bilateral cooperation between the EU and the partner country and state indicative amounts allocated to each sector. The agreements established within the EDF also specify the share each EU member state is to contribute ('contribution key'); the final country agreements therefore also need to be ratified by each EU member state.

On a yearly basis, DG DEVCO and EU delegations jointly prepare Annual Action Programs (AAPs) that set budget allocations and goals for each country and for the DCI's thematic programs. AAPs are usually adopted by the Commission leadership during the summer following agreement over the budget. DG DEVCO may also adopt 'addendums' to the AAPs towards the end of the year for additional financing of programs. For the implementation of the EDF, each ACP country appoints a National Authorizing Officer who, together with the EU delegation, is responsible for all program-related matters.

THE EU'S DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION SYSTEM

