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# OVERVIEW OF PCD SYSTEMS IN SOME EU MEMBER STATES

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European NGO confederation  
for relief and development



Confédération européenne des ONG  
d'urgence et de développement

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Since the Lisbon Treaty, policy coherence for development (PCD) has been a legal obligation on the European Union (EU) and its Member States. However, designing coherent policies is not always an easy task and implementing PCD calls for the right approach and appropriate means.

Seventeen national development NGO platforms,<sup>1</sup> all members of CONCORD, participated in a survey that drew together their observations and their analyses of the political and institutional PCD landscape in their countries. The analysis in this publication is solely based upon the assessments of the national development NGO platforms.

Although common objectives and clear legal obligations with regard to PCD have been set at EU level, this study shows very varied records of setting up appropriate mechanisms for delivering PCD at the national level. Building on the OECD methodology,<sup>2</sup> and a study conducted by the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM),<sup>3</sup> our findings have been organised around three elements that are key to establishing a PCD delivery strategy at national level: political commitments, an implementation strategy with clear political objectives, co-ordination mechanisms, and monitoring and assessment mechanisms.

## Political commitments

Incoherent policies are often caused by conflicting agendas: that is why PCD needs commitments at the highest political level. These political commitments may take different forms, such as political statements by leaders, or legislation. However, good political leadership should help find solutions that actually ensure the full implementation of PCD. Despite the pressure of the commitments made at EU level, is not always easy to obtain a political commitment in a Member State. Our findings show that, in the countries analysed, a growing number of governments are making strong commitments to PCD (**Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Lithuania** (see box on Lithuania), **Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Sweden, and the United Kingdom**). Some countries have made commitments to PCD but not at a high enough political level, which makes implementation difficult (**Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia**). Finally, some have still failed to make their commitment to PCD explicit at national level (**Bulgaria and Slovenia**); interestingly, Slovenia advocates for PCD at the international level, but has so far failed to commit to it at home.

Our findings show that pressure from civil society is usually a key factor in obtaining high-level political commitments in favour of PCD, as observed in Sweden, Denmark, Luxembourg and Belgium, for example.<sup>4</sup> In the countries that have made the strongest commitments to PCD, Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have worked to promote it. Sometimes a commitment to PCD depends on the will of the government minister responsible for development. Finally, pressure from the international context (EU or OECD) can prove useful for making progress with PCD commitments.

It is however important to stress that a political commitment, even at the highest political level, can turn out to be of poor quality. In some countries (**Belgium, Luxembourg and Slovakia**), not all government members seem to understand PCD properly: they confuse it with policy coherence in general, not necessarily linking the objective of coherence with a positive outcome from a development perspective, or with internal coherence between development policy and aid coordination. In addition, a commitment to PCD without an implementation strategy will not deliver results. Some countries have adopted such a strategy, either formally or informally (**the Netherlands, Sweden**), some are currently preparing an implementation strategy (**Belgium, Denmark and Lithuania**), while the other EU Member States analysed do not have any strategy (**Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, France,**

<sup>1</sup> Belgium (ONCD-11.11.11 and 11. 11.11), Bulgaria (BPID), Czech Republic (FoRS), Denmark (Concord Danmark), Finland (Kehys), France (Coordination Sud/CFSI), Germany (VENRO), Hungary (Hand), Lithuania (Pagalba), Luxembourg (Cercle de Coopération des ONG de développement), the Netherlands (Foundation Max van der Stoep), Poland (Grupa Zagranica), Romania (FOND Romania), Slovakia (Platforma MVRO), Slovenia (Sloga Platforma), Sweden (CONCORD Sverige), United Kingdom (Bond)

<sup>2</sup> OECD (2009): *Building Blocks for Policy Coherence for Development*

<sup>3</sup> ECDPM (2013): *Insights from Developments in National Policy Coherence for Development Systems: Key Cross Cutting Issues and Dilemmas*

<sup>4</sup> Examples of CSO pressure are the monitoring reports and "barometers" regularly published by the national development NGO platforms in Sweden and Luxembourg

## Focus on Lithuania: PCD made it into the new national law on development countries?

In Lithuania's national policy provisions, PCD was included as one of the principles of its development cooperation policy as early as 2006, and in 2013 its position was confirmed through the law on development cooperation and humanitarian aid. The government also contributes input to the EU report on PCD. This seems to demonstrate a continuous commitment to PCD at the highest level of governance. With the newly adopted law, a strategy for Lithuania's development cooperation policy is currently being drawn up to develop the country's approach to PCD. To date, however, the inter-ministerial commission that was set up for coordination purposes has been meeting on a rather ad hoc basis, and PCD is seen as a routine institutional coordination procedure rather than a priority principle to be promoted and mainstreamed.

Transparency could be improved – a step forward in this direction is the opening of the inter-ministerial coordination commission to participation by CSOs from October 2013, when the newly adopted Law on Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid will come into force.

**Germany, Hungary, Luxembourg, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom).**

Even countries that have adopted strategies for implementing PCD commitments, however, have set no clear and specific political objectives linked to specific non-development policies which could be used to assess and monitor progress made towards PCD in relevant non-development policies. It is therefore important, even after a government has made a political commitment, that CSOs continue to push for full implementation of PCD. However, the Netherlands have set a number of clear political objectives notably regarding biofuels policy, financial transparency, fiscal policy and trade policy.

## Coordination mechanisms

Designing coherent policies calls for coordination mechanisms within a government and its administration, in order to ensure dialogue between the different policy sectors, including development. The form these mechanisms take varies considerably, depending on the highly specific political cultures involved. There can be no "one size fits all" model. It is significant that, of the countries that have made the strongest political commitments to PCD, only a few have effective coordination mechanisms for implementing it. Owing to its particular political system **Belgium** has several coordination mechanisms, but they do not mainstream PCD effectively. That said, Belgium is committed to setting up several PCD coordination mechanisms (e.g. an inter-ministerial conference on PCD and an interdepartmental commission to coordinate PCD in the different departments). **Denmark** currently has no formal mechanism for promoting PCD across ministries, although its government is working on a national implementation plan. In the **Netherlands**, PCD in specific policy areas is now coordinated ad hoc at the interdepartmental level, and EU policy proposals are screened on development impacts. There are no focal points across departments or ministries. It is difficult to assess to what extent PCD is effectively mainstreamed from the outside. In **Lithuania**, since the integration of PCD into the national development cooperation policy in 2006, an inter-ministerial commission coordinated by the ministry of foreign affairs (MFA) has been set up to serve as a coordination mechanism. This body involves various ministries and representatives of municipalities and (from October 2013) CSOs, but it meets irregularly, and the scope and effectiveness of its work is unclear, owing to insufficient transparency so far. In the latter two countries, a PCD focal point was set up in the MFA only, with limited resources. **Finland** and **Sweden**, on the other hand, have introduced very ambitious coordination mechanisms for the purpose of PCD. In Finland, a PCD inter-ministerial working group and a network of focal points have been set up in each ministry. The Swedish PCD inter-ministerial working group concentrates on particular topics, but has so far showed limited effectiveness. There are also focal points in each ministry in Sweden. In **Luxembourg** and **the United Kingdom**, inter-ministerial mechanisms to coordinate work on PCD

have been set up, but we lack information about their effectiveness.

The countries that have made limited commitments to PCD all have some type of coordination mechanism, but they are not always explicitly referred to as such. In the **Czech Republic** an inter-ministerial working group on agriculture also addresses issues in development countries. **France** has an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism focusing on food security, which involves non-institutional stakeholders (see box on France). In **Germany**, in 2011 the Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ) announced the establishment of a “coherence circle” at parliamentary state secretary level. This circle concentrates mainly on co-ordinating various departmental initiatives and projects that handle finance allocated to official development assistance (ODA). A division working on this has been set up at the BMZ.

**Poland** has an inter-ministerial “board” working mainly on development cooperation, with extensive access to all stakeholders. **Romania** has an inter-ministerial coordination mechanism working on PCD, but the lack of transparency prevents us from being able to draw conclusions about its effectiveness. In **Slovakia**, existing inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms focus mostly on ODA, and PCD remains largely unfamiliar to members of the government. The countries without a formal commitment to PCD have almost no mechanisms for promoting it. In the case of **Bulgaria**, this is very clear. **Hungary** and **Slovenia** have interesting inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms on development issues that could be of great use to PCD if their government would commit to it strongly. In **Slovenia**, attempts to introduce PCD into inter-ministerial coordination failed to gain the necessary support within the government.

In conclusion, there is a lack of institutional mechanisms for implementing PCD effectively. Many existing mechanisms, however, could benefit PCD if it were mainstreamed properly. In addition, greater transparency on the current mechanisms is needed to enable external stakeholders to access and feed in information, and to monitor their effectiveness.

## Focus on France: GISA – PCD by another name?

In April 2008, in response to the food crisis, the MFA and the Ministry of Agriculture (and co-chaired since then by the same two ministries), formed the GISA (French acronym for inter-ministerial group on food security): a key multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral task force for tackling food insecurity in developing countries. Its main goals are to monitor the food situation in these countries, prepare French positions in international fora like the Committee on World Food Security (CFS), and design French and European initiatives to address food insecurity.

The GISA is composed of representatives of five ministries, the French Development Agency (AFD), research institutions, the agricultural profession, foundations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It is organised into several thematic working groups (biofuels, investment, etc.) which are co-chaired by an NGO and a ministry. Participation by civil society is crucial, because it allows NGOs to influence the position of the government, ahead of the international forums.

Several NGOs mandated by Coordination SUD (the French national NGO platform) are currently working in the GISA. They have a significant role to play, influencing the French government’s position on food security in developing countries in relation to many different topics, such as biofuels, land grabbing, investment and international governance.

Peuples Solidaires, for example (which, together with the Ministry of Agriculture, is co-chair of the sub-group on biofuels and food security), has worked with other Coordination SUD members and successfully influenced the French position on biofuels. Indeed, in 2012, NGOs represented in the GISA, managed to influence the common position discussed in the sub-group and adopted by the GISA so that the negative impact of biofuel production on land grabbing was acknowledged.

## Monitoring and assessment mechanisms

In addition to political commitments and coordination mechanisms, monitoring and assessment mechanisms are crucial for two reasons. On the one hand, they are needed in order to assess continuously the potential and actual impacts of policies in developing countries. On the other, the effectiveness of the PCD “system” in the home country must be monitored and evaluated as a matter of the government’s accountability for its commitments. Unfortunately, the EU Member States analysed demonstrate a very poor record of achievements in introducing adequate monitoring and assessment mechanisms.

Only a few countries already have a mechanism for monitoring the implementation of their PCD commitments, or plan to set one up. In its new law on development cooperation, **Belgium** plans to monitor PCD implementation in the context of monitoring its development commitments as a whole. In addition, Belgium has committed itself to setting up a consultative body to assess the impacts of its policies and to allocate financial and human resources for monitoring how its coordination mechanisms operate – something that had been lacking until now. **The Netherlands** and **Sweden** regularly produce official reports on PCD implementation. These reports focus mostly on policy intentions, but do not deepen their analysis to include the actual effects of policies on the ground, although they are significant attempts to do so. In these countries it is the parliament that does this monitoring, with CSOs playing an active role. In the Netherlands, research institutions also play a role, providing useful expertise on a variety of PCD issues. In **Luxembourg**, the government produces an annual report on PCD.

Interestingly, the Netherlands has conducted a series of pilot assessments. In response to a request from the Dutch parliament, the development cooperation ministry has attempted to assess the impact of non-aid policies on two selected partner countries. The objective of the Dutch pilot project is to produce (as a first pragmatic step) so-called “coherence reports” that chart the main PCD issues in two selected partner countries. These reports do not only cover Dutch policies: for various non-aid policy variables, the impact of the EU’s PCD policies is also considered. The Dutch parliament is awaiting the presentation of the pilot studies in the autumn of 2013. In **Finland**, PCD issues are included in different reports but there is no standard reporting about PCD on its own. The Development Policy Committee, a multi-stakeholder advisory body that also includes CSO members, plays an active role in following and evaluating PCD issues among the other development issues. Finland has also embarked on an OECD pilot project that involves developing a methodology to assess the effects of its policies on food security in developing countries ([see box on Finland](#)).

In conclusion, although a growing number of EU Member States have made commitments to PCD, the implementation of those commitments is still a work in progress, at best. A “complete” political commitment to PCD, reflected in an implementation strategy and institutional mechanism,

## Focus on Finland:

### Piloting the OECD’s PCD tool on food security

PCD issues have become more and more essential to the OECD’s strategy for achieving the Millennium Development Goals in developing countries. Within this framework, since 2012 Finland has been piloting an OECD tool for policy coherence for development with a focus on food security.

The purpose of the pilot is to analyse Finnish and EU policies that impact on food security and the right to food in developing countries. The pilot project builds on the existing OECD tool for policy coherence for development.<sup>5</sup> Finland thus tests the relevance, usefulness and practicality of the tool’s institutional and sectoral guidance, and provides feedback for the OECD.

Finland aims at innovating a broad-based coordination, and strengthening policies that improve global food security. The focus is put on 1) national institutional mechanisms for promoting PCD at OECD Member State level, 2) influencing EU policies in the areas of agriculture, fisheries, the environment and trade, from a development perspective, and 3) creating a new type of broad-based cooperation, in order to strengthen Finland’s voice in various international fora that discuss global food security.

The pilot was launched in June 2012 by the high-level inter-ministerial working group on PCD, chaired by the under-secretary of state for development policy. The project’s steering group consists of representatives from relevant ministries, research institutions and NGOs. Kehys, the Finnish national development NGOs platform, a member of CONCORD, belongs to the steering group and is responsible for developing the methodology. The pilot project is expected to be concluded in autumn 2013.

All in all, the pilot is one of the key measures in the government’s latest development policy, updated in 2012. It will also provide essential substance for the Communication on Development Impact and Policy Coherence for Development that the Finnish government is due to submit to the parliament early in 2014.

<sup>5</sup> OECD (2012): Policy Framework for Policy Coherence for Development, Working Paper No 1

sms, is still lacking. The role of CSOs in obtaining this commitment and scrutinising their government remains crucial if PCD is to be well understood and properly operationalised, and if it is to deliver results for the benefit of all. The existence of coordination mechanisms is not enough. Governments must make sure that the relevant institutions have enough resources and power to assess the impact of their policies, and act accordingly. Evidence-based arguments are crucial for correcting policies, and they require further research by government, academia and CSOs.

## Recommendations

There is no single way of operationalising PCD. A good mix of political commitments and more technical institutional mechanisms are still required. This should always involve:

- a clear political commitment in favour of PCD at the highest level of the State (where PCD is clearly defined);
- political leadership supporting the point person within the government – usually the development minister – to take action on incoherence that is undermining the country's development efforts;
- an implementation strategy for this commitment that includes clear political objectives linked to specific non-development policies;
- coordination mechanisms in decision-making processes where PCD is efficiently mainstreamed. These coordination mechanisms must be set up at the appropriate institutional level, according to the political regime in place (e.g. more or less decentralised, more or less active role of parliament);
- staff dedicated to PCD in the development ministry and point people across ministries;
- ex-ante assessment mechanisms to ensure that for every policy that the potential, differentiated impact on development of the different possible policy options is identified;
- ex-post assessment mechanisms to ensure that existing policies do not counteract PCD;
- monitoring of PCD commitments and policy impact assessments with the participation of stakeholders.

## Overview of PCD systems in some EU Member States as of September 1, 2013

Country	Political commitments			Coordination mechanisms		Monitoring and assessment mechanisms	
	Commitment to PCD at the highest political level	PCD implementation strategy	PCD political objectives	Specific institutional mechanisms for PCD	General policy coordination and coherence mechanisms <sup>6</sup>	Impact assessment mechanisms	Monitoring of and reporting on PCD implementation
Belgium	*	*			*		
Bulgaria							
Czech Republic	*				*		
Denmark	*						
Finland	*			*		*	*
France	*				*		
Germany	*				*		
Hungary	*				*		
Lithuania	*	*		*			
Luxembourg	*			*			*
Netherlands	*	*	*		*	*	*
Poland	*				*		
Romania	*				*		
Slovakia	*						
Slovenia					*		
Sweden	*	*		*			*
United Kingdom	*			*			

PCD institutional set up are on-going processes in most EU Member States and this presentation only reflects the situation at the date of September 1, 2013

<sup>6</sup> Mechanisms mainstreaming PCD issues without being specific to PCD



**CONCORD**

the European confederation of development NGOs

**OUR MEMBERS****NP** National Platform Member, **NW** Network Member, **AS** Associate Member

<b>NW</b> ActionAid	<b>NP</b> Austria: Globale Verantwortung	<b>NP</b> Greece: Hellenic Platform for Development
<b>NP</b> Czech Republic: FoRS	<b>NW</b> Eurostep	<b>NW</b> Oxfam International
<b>NP</b> Ireland: Dochas	<b>NP</b> Lithuania: LU	<b>NP</b> United Kingdom: Bond
<b>NP</b> Romania: Fond	<b>NW</b> Solidar	<b>NW</b> CBM International
<b>NW</b> ADRA EU	<b>NP</b> Belgium: CONCORD	<b>NW</b> Handicap International
<b>NP</b> Denmark: CONCORD Denmark	<b>NP</b> Finland: Kehys	<b>NW</b> Plan International
<b>NW</b> Islamic Relief Worldwide	<b>NP</b> Luxembourg: Cercle	<b>NW</b> World Vision International
<b>NW</b> Save The Children International	<b>NP</b> Spain: Coordinadora ONGD	<b>NW</b> CIDSE
<b>AS</b> Alda	<b>NP</b> Bulgaria: BPID	<b>NP</b> Hungary: HAND
<b>NP</b> Estonia: AKU	<b>NP</b> France: Coordination SUD	<b>NP</b> Poland: Grupa Zagranica
<b>NP</b> Italy: CONCORD Italia	<b>NP</b> Malta: SKOP	<b>AS</b> World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)
<b>NP</b> Slovakia: MVRO	<b>NP</b> Sweden: CONCORD Sweden	<b>NP</b> Cyprus: CYINDEP
<b>NW</b> APRODEV	<b>NW</b> CARE International	<b>NW</b> IPPF European Network
<b>NW</b> EU-CORD	<b>NP</b> Germany: VENRO	<b>NP</b> Portugal: Plataforma ONGD
<b>NP</b> Latvia: Lapas	<b>NW</b> Netherlands: Partos	
<b>NP</b> Slovenia: SLOGA	<b>NW</b> Terres des hommes IF	
	<b>NW</b> Caritas Europa	



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