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**DEVELOPMENT AID COOPERATION – Contribution to the Second
Assembly of the Convention of European Students**

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As we have stated in our contribution on the foreign and security policy for the first Assembly, we deem extremely important that the Union use instruments such as development aid as its main ways to express itself externally.

The aim of the European development aid policy is, on the economic side, to encourage a sustainable development, to eradicate poverty in developing countries, and to integrate them in the world economy; on the political side, to consolidate democracy and the rule of law, by pursuing the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Especially from the political point of view, we deem important to have a clear coherence on the part of the Union in projecting externally the European space of justice and security. Without such a commitment, the European space of justice and security cannot actually be a credible objective for the Union.

In the opinion of our delegation, one of the main drawbacks of this proposed Constitution is the lack of exclusive competence of the Union in the field of development aid. A consequence of this lack of power will be a major lack of coherence in the EU's external action. Coherence has been one of the main objectives the Convention's working groups had set themselves. The European Foreign Minister is supposed to enhance coherence by functioning as a link between the Council, the Commission and Member States. Such a post is, hence, meant to coordinate CFSP and commercial policies: but if development aid is still left out of this coordination, the EU can lose a lot of its external influence and levers. Additional influence and levers could well be used by the Union to better achieve its stated objectives.

Coherence in development aid policy should be based on coordination of Member States' aid policies within the EU's framework: the fields of area strategies and funds release should be harmonised. If such a harmonisation is not put in place, Member States' development aid will be focused on those few countries that are strategically important for each Member. This will hamper EU's external objectives, and also promote a less fair distribution of funds and therefore of wealth. According to the European Commission, in the last decade, direct foreign investments in

developing countries have increased by E158 billion, while their distribution has been considerably unfair: of that money, about 55% went to the 5 most developed countries. African countries received less than 1% each.

In order to have a fairer distribution we advise a heavier use of multilateral conventional agreements, as opposed to the use of bilateral agreements. That would ensure a clearer link between area and regional objectives and the distribution of allocated funds. As stated by the working group on trade and development policy of the Convention of European Students in its final contribution, EuropeAid should be organised on the basis of regional actions. Regional programmes ensure a far greater level of achievement in terms of actual progress towards development. Single countries cannot be totally decontextualised from general human and economic development of their region, as regional interdependence is always high.

As far as coherence is concerned, development aid should be widely taken into account when a comprehensive reform of the Common Agricultural Policy will be put in place.

Developing countries heavily depend on agricultural products exports, and since a CAP reform cannot be postponed anymore as candidate countries become Members, we think that the forthcoming discussion on its reform cannot in anyway neglect the impact of the policy on developing and neighbouring countries. Since the final form of the future Constitution is pretty much already decided, we think that a thorough discussion on the CAP and developing countries is an open question that can still have a significant impact on European development aid matters.