

European Commission and EU Presidency launch European Development Days 2008

The European Commission and the French Presidency of the European Union have officially announced that the European Development Days (EDD) 2008 event will be held from 15 to 17 November in Strasbourg. EDD 2008 is one of the major events in the international development calendar, falling at a unique strategic time for Europe and its partners, two months after the United Nations General Assembly and a few weeks before the Doha Conference.

Commissioner Louis Michel said: "Local action and international action are two sides of the same impetus for development. The European Development Days 2008 will put forward new ideas, based on the premise that local action is indispensable if our development effort is to succeed. "

Alain Joyandet, French Minister of State with responsibility for Cooperation and "Francophoney", emphasised that "the EDD will provide an opportunity to spur all European players into action on the new challenges in development, by seeking to provide practical solutions to the food crisis in particular".

Following the EDD events in 2006 (on governance) and 2007 (on climate change), this third edition of the event will focus on the role of local authorities and the local dimension to development. Media and development, which will be the subject of a Forum in Burkina Faso in September (<http://media-dev.eu>), will also be on the EDD agenda.

The European Development Days provide a unique opportunity for debating, exchanging new ideas, creating synergies and launching practical initiatives. The event demonstrates Europe's commitment to addressing issues in the development field.

You can find more information at: <http://www.eudevdays.eu>

Background:

The EDD have become a regular high-level event in the European and international calendar. Every year since 2006 the event has hosted more than 3 000 participants from all continents, representing some 1 200 organisations from the development sector.

A natural platform for discussing the major issues in development cooperation and launching new initiatives, the event gives everyone a say: public administrations, parliaments, local authorities, civil society, international organisations, academics, development agencies, the private sector and the media.

The EDD are more than a not-to-be-missed institutional gathering; they also aim to raise public awareness of development cooperation issues. To this end, a number of events will be organised for the general public, including exhibitions, festivals, concerts, workshops and fairs.

The European Union is the leading development aid donor, accounting for 56% of the worldwide total, worth € 47.6 billion in 2007. EU aid will rise to €66 billion in 2010 and €90 billion in 2015. The European Union is also the developing countries' main trading partner.