

Ambassador Walter Grahammer  
Permanent Representation of Austria to the European Union  
Avenue de Cortenbergh 30  
1040 Brussels

1 February 2013

**Ref.: Support for the EU's External Spending Budget**

Dear Ambassador Grahammer,

We are writing to you on behalf of the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office and the Human Rights and Democracy Network's EIDHR Working Group to ask that Austria negotiates to protect the EU's external spending budget during next week's European Council meeting in order to fulfil the Lisbon Treaty commitments to strengthening the EU's role as a global actor.

As you will be aware, Heading 4 accounts for less than 7% of the total proposed MFF. Thus, reducing it will not result in the overall savings which certain Member States seek. It will, however, have a severe negative impact on the future of the EU's external actions.

In addition, we do not believe that the EU can realistically hope to achieve its external policy objectives without adequate financial resources, and that any attempt to make savings in the overall EU budget by reducing external spending risks undoing the significant progress which has been made in recent years in terms of supporting peace, human rights and development in its partner countries.

Furthermore, we strongly believe that channelling European external assistance through the EU budget continues to represent a major opportunity for increasing its effectiveness by supporting collective action. If EU Member States are to capitalise on the EU's comparative advantage in terms of increasing the effectiveness of external assistance, it is imperative that they provide it with the necessary financial resources it needs to do so.

Similarly, external assistance which is channelled through the EU institutions has been applauded for its high levels of accountability and transparency. This is partly reflected in the fact that the vast majority of European citizens believe that the EU should continue to support developing countries despite the current economic crisis.

To summarise, we believe that with the support of its Member States, the EU has the potential to fulfil its role as an effective global actor. However, it can only do this with an adequate external spending budget. In this context, we believe that the financial pressure which the EU is currently facing should not result in cuts to the external spending budget as this would prevent effective external action up to the end of the decade.

We, therefore, urge Austria to support the European Commission's original proposal to set the ceiling for Heading 4 of the next EU Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) at € 70 billion and to allocate €30.3 billion for the next European Development Fund.

Yours sincerely,



Catherine Woollard  
Executive Director  
European Peacebuilding Liaison Office



Sophie Deraedt  
EIDHR Working Group  
Human Rights and Democracy Network



Chiara Vallini

The following organisations are represented in the EIDHR Working Group: Association for the Prevention of Torture CBM, Coalition for the International Criminal Court, DEMAS, European Partnership for Democracy, ILGA-Europe, International Center for Transitional Justice, International Dalit Solidarity Network, International Federation of Human Rights (FIDH), International Rehabilitation Council for Torture Victims, International Partnership for Human Rights, Penal Reform International Plan EU Office, Save the Children, Terre des Hommes International Federation, World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT), World Vision International.