

Europe's tentative steps into the big wide world

## Wobbly legs

Europe is the world's leading provider of official development assistance (ODA). But is it also an agenda setter in the global development arena? Not quite. Authoritative paradigms and policies have always originated in Washington and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in New York.

The European Commission – after gentle insistence by researchers – has realized that if Europe wants to play a more prominent role in setting development agendas, its policies and vision must be informed by rigorous and original research. The European Report on Development (ERD) is considered a step toward achieving this. The ERD is to be a flagship report that will be comparable in stature to the World Development Report (WDR) and the Human Development Report (HDR).



The Broker invited European academics and researchers to evaluate this initiative. The opinions expressed, and some general information on the ERD project, are presented in the first part of this special report. We asked the same academics for their views on the role that the European Union (EU) could or should play in fighting poverty and global inequality. Our respondents from Sweden,

Germany, the UK, Belgium, Spain, Denmark, the Czech Republic and Italy report that, in their countries, the subject of Europe's role in development is approached with 'mixed enthusiasm' or 'a fair bit of scepticism'. No big surprise there. Yet there is a growing sense that without concerted efforts and a common vision on the part of the EU member states, the potential impact of the money spent on development assistance will not be realized. That is the subject of the second part of this report.

By **Ellen Lammers**: researcher and writer based in Amsterdam. She was trained as an anthropologist (PhD, University of Amsterdam) and conducted long-term research in Uganda. She has published on forced migration and war, the ethics and politics of research, and various development issues.

A longer version of this special report and the interviews can be found at [www.thebrokeronline.eu](http://www.thebrokeronline.eu).

An extended version of the interview with Françoise Moreau appeared in *ViceVersa*, issue 42:1, February 2008 (in Dutch).