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Action against hunger and poverty

Gomes (PSE). - (PT) It is shameful that most European countries have not yet honoured their commitment to allocate 0.7% of their GDP to development aid. Even so, the European Union today contributes 55% of total development aid. Strengthening Europe's role in the fight against poverty and in development aid enhances the credibility and effectiveness of the EU's foreign, security and defence policies throughout the world. Europe can make a difference to hunger and poverty if it supports the initiatives of President Lula da Silva and Prime Minister Rodríguez Zapatero and also if it is able to mobilise funds and take the lead in projects with a strategic impact.

An example is the eradication of malaria, as recommended by the director of the United Nations Millennium Project, because malaria strikes above all at the poorest countries with devastating effect, causing incalculable economic damage. According to the WHO, malaria is the disease that causes most death and disability: more than a million people die each year, 90% of them in Africa. According to UNICEF, malaria kills a child every 30 seconds. Three children have died of malaria while I have been speaking.

Europe can do more and it can do better. The Commission must therefore launch and take the lead in a global anti-malaria campaign, increase funding and channel it into control programmes in the countries affected, support national policies prioritising malaria control, and encourage the private sector in vaccine production and the distribution of treatment drugs and impregnated mosquito nets.

Poverty and misery feed injustice and despair, and these feed global insecurity. By committing to a malaria strategy, Europe will be making a decisive contribution to the Millennium Objectives, which are binding commitments, and also to a fairer and more secure world, the world that Europe's citizens hope that the European Union will help to build.