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Press Release of 1 September 2014

The EU should look outwards or risk further instability – warn leading European think tanks

On the first day the European Parliament resumes, the European Think Tanks Group (ETTG) is calling for a drastic move away from the current mandate of the Commission to one that connects Europe's problems with those of the world backed by radical changes in the way the European Commission is run.

The ETTG, consisting of leading think tanks from the UK, the Netherlands, Germany and Spain, calls for a new global plan for the EU detailed in the report titled 'Our Collective Interest: why Europe's problems need global solutions and global problems need European action' launched today.

"The new EU leadership must step up and realise that to ensure stability and economic growth at home, global issues must be tackled head on. Europe will prosper if the world is prospering," said **Kevin Watkins**, Executive Director of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI).

"We are seeing worrying signs that the focus of the EU is too much on internal issues. With climate change, the EU is prioritizing macro-economic stability and short-term growth and loosening its commitment to improve energy efficiency," said **Dirk Messner**, Director of the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE).

The ETTG is calling for the High Representative for Foreign Affairs to have overall responsibility for EU external relations, including international development. This move recognises the interconnected nature of poverty, prosperity, trade, peace and climate change in today's world and that the European Parliament would benefit from a reorganisation to strengthen accountability.

"Now is the time for an overhaul as the European Parliament and member states select its new leadership team led by European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker," said **Paul Engel**, Director of the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM).

It also calls for the commissioners to stop working in silos, and to work together to tackle the five challenges set out below. Presented by ETTG directors to the Foreign Affairs European Parliament Committee in Brussels today, the five areas that should lie at the heart of EU strategy until 2020 are:

- **The world economy:** As the world's largest trading block, the EU must contribute to better, more inclusive and responsible trade and finance regimes.
- **Climate change:** Without a strong EU commitment to a green economy within Europe, the world will not be set on a more sustainable path.
- **Peace and security:** Violent conflict in the Middle East, Africa and the European neighborhood is affecting more than 1.5 billion people and has a direct impact on the EU and its citizens. The EU must do more to prevent conflicts and act in a decisive and coordinated way.
- **Democracy and human rights:** The EU must do more to support people living in countries where human rights are threatened.
- **Poverty and inequality:** With 1.2 billion people living in extreme poverty on \$1.25 a day, 2.4 billion people living on \$2 a day and seven out of ten people living in countries where economic inequality has increased in the last 30 years, the EU must continue to tackle poverty and inequality with its development aid budget.

Next year provides two major opportunities that will require European leadership: finalising the new sustainable development framework for the period post-2015, a successor to the Millennium Development Goals, and achieving a global climate agreement at UN talks in Paris.

“Europe has an opportunity to project its values and vision on a world stage next year, but only if it works collectively to do so,” said **Giovanni Grevi**, Director of the Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior (FRIDE).

About the European Think Tanks Group:

The [European Think Tanks Group](#) (ETTG) brings together four leading European international development think tanks, the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik ([DIE](#)), the Overseas Development Institute ([ODI](#)), the European Centre for Development Policy Management ([ECDPM](#)) and Fundación para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Diálogo Exterior ([FRIDE](#)). In 2010, the ETTG published a report addressed to a new leadership in the European Union. In 2014, welcoming a new generation of European leaders, the ETTG calls attention to the importance of a global perspective in European policy-making.

The Institute in brief:

The German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) is one of the leading Think Tanks for development policy world-wide. It is based in the UN City of Bonn. DIE builds bridges between theory and practice and works within international research networks. The key to DIE's success is its institutional independence, which is guaranteed by the Institute's founding statute. Since its founding in 1964, DIE has based its work on the interplay between Research, Consulting and Training. These three areas complement each other and are the factors responsible for the Institute's distinctive profile.

Every Monday, the German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) comments the latest news and trends of development policy in [The Current Column](#).

The German Development Institute / Deutsches Institut für Entwicklungspolitik (DIE) is headed by [Dirk Messner](#) (Director) and [Imme Scholz](#) (Deputy Director).