



First Community Meeting EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS -EDD - 2018

Wednesday, 24 January 2018, European Commission – Charlemagne

Report

The First Community Meeting for the next **EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS (EDD) 2018, which will be held on 5-6 June 2018**, aimed at bringing together relevant stakeholders interested in this annual event. Participants had been encouraged to take over initiatives for the programme submitting their proposals according to the deadlines presented by the Commission (see below).

Criticism arose among the participant organisations, since they have been sceptical about the procedure of submitting the proposals. In the way that the Commission has already organised the speakers to be integrated in the panels beforehand only pretending they need the initiative of the organisations. As a reaction to these statements, the Commission clearly stated that it will only provide the frame for the event, the content will be provided by the stakeholders. The attendees are exclusively in charge of the programmatic and substantial content. The meeting attendees were quite doubtful about this, since the organisation of sessions at the EDD is resource-intensive.

Mr. Antti Karhunen, Head of the Private Sector and Trade Unit at DG DEVCO, has explicitly mentioned that the Private Sector is warmly welcomed on the EDD 2018. The EDD should not be an event focussed only on development, but it should actively involve the Private Sector. He also stated that the recent EU-Africa Business Forum in Abidjan has been a great success and that he sees the EDD as a follow-up event, aiming at deepening the collaboration among the organisations met in Abidjan. Moreover, he highlighted the importance of the Joint Business Declaration, elaborated by several business organisations under EBCAM's coordination.

Mr. Karhunen also added that the dialogues launched at the Forum in Abidjan with respect to the "Sustainable Business for Africa" platform (SB4A) should be intensified during the EDD 2018, and that the EDD this year should also provide a platform for regular follow-up meetings among EABF participants after the successful EABF in Abidjan. Businesses have a crucial role to play in gender promotion, therefore linkages between the EDD 2018 and the EABF 2017 will be drawn. Additionally, the EIP will be took up during the EED, since it is of great importance.



This year's Agenda for the EDD 2018 is dedicated to SDG 5. There has been a strong commitment to gender issues and during the EDD 2018 a gender action plan will be presented. They are looking for a consensus regarding the development of women's empowerment, protection and investment. Consequently, this highlights SDG 5 as the main priority for the EDD 2018.

Two announcements have been very disappointing for all organisations attending the meeting: the European commission will not provide any financial support for panellists, stands nor sessions organised within the EDD 2018. A stand will cost 1.400€. Panellists and speakers will need to cover their travel costs. Only a limited number of people will be invited, in particular those taking part in the Young Leaders Programme. Furthermore it is particularly disappointing for all the business organisations being present, that the EDD 2018 are exclusively focussing on the "Gender" aspect, abandoning the important emphasis on business.

Next steps:

1. **25. January:** Submission forms are available online – www.eudevdays.eu
2. **31. January:** Communicate your interest in a given topic to (Auditorium panels only/High-level panels) programme@eudevdays.eu
3. **16. February:** Deadline for submission of session and stand proposals
4. **End of March – Beginning of April:** Announcement of session and stand selection results
5. **23.-27. April:** Second preparatory meetings