



5 October 2020

## **Global crises demand strengthened cooperation and solidarity**

**The undersigned CSO networks call on EU leaders to reverse cuts to EU budget funds for partner countries and reinforce solidarity with crisis-affected people.**

Ahead of the next round of negotiations between the institutions on the 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), 8 networks, civil society organisations and NGOs are calling on decision-makers to reverse deep cuts agreed to the EU's external action instruments by EU Heads of State/Government in July. These cuts send an alarming signal about European solidarity with the rest of the world. They will hamper the EU's ability to tackle the global crises that hit developing countries the hardest. These crises include rising extreme poverty and inequality, the climate emergency, biodiversity crisis, unemployment and underemployment, gender-based discrimination and violence, threats to democracy, violent conflict and increasing disasters and existing and emerging pandemics.

To tackle these crises, the next decade must be a period of unprecedented international cooperation and action on Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement. The undersigned networks are convinced that if the EU reduces the level of support to international cooperation at this critical juncture, it will undermine the EU's role as a global and geopolitical actor, its commitment to strengthen multilateralism, human rights and democracy, and its ability to support people's and partners' recovery from COVID-19.

It is for this reason that we welcome the European Parliament's inclusion of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and humanitarian aid in its 15 flagship programs for the next EU MFF and that we support their call for additional funding<sup>1</sup> for them in it. This is even more pressing considering the huge additional needs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

We are particularly concerned about the reduction of resources for the thematic pillar and Rapid Response Actions pillar of the NDICI which the European Council agreed to. These pillars host funding for the programmes for Global Challenges (including climate change, global health, decent work, social protection and environmental action), Civil Society, Human Rights and Democracy, Stability and Peace, and Resilience. These are crucial to implementing the SDGs, and should stay at the centre of the EU's COVID-19 response.

The undersigned organisations and networks therefore call on EU Member States and the European Parliament to:

- Reverse the cuts to the NDICI by bringing it back to the EC's 2018 proposal of €78.994 billion in 2018 prices;
- Reinforce the humanitarian aid budget;
- Increase substantially the funding for the thematic and rapid response actions pillars of the NDICI by reducing the allocation to the "emerging challenges and priorities cushion". More specifically, the thematic pillar should be increased to at least 11.49% of the NDICI budget, while the rapid response pillar should be increased to at least 3.76% of the NDICI budget.

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1 European Parliament [press release](#), 18 September 2020

Finally, within the NDICI, ambitious binding targets on Official Development Assistance, human development, gender equality, climate and environmental action should be agreed to ensure that the EU invests in future challenges and that its development budget has lasting impact, especially for the world's most marginalised people.

Note:

The EU Heads of State and Government' cut a deal in July which resulted in less funding for the EU's long-term external action budget (Heading VI 'Neighbourhood and the World'), including the development aid budget which drops below current levels. The deal also rejected the Commission's appeal to increase both development and humanitarian assistance to support global COVID-19 response and recovery.

Heading VI, is the budget that supports 'Team Europe's Global response to COVID'. The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) and humanitarian aid will be the EU's primary tools for supporting partner countries and crisis-affected communities to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. The NDICI is also a main tool for the EU's democracy-related actions and is essential to the EU's ODA (official development assistance) commitments and climate finance commitments under the Paris Agreement. The NDICI was cut by 10%, with a disproportionate decrease to funding for targeted programmes on Global Challenges, Civil Society, Human Rights and Democracy (the already stretched 'thematic pillar'), and Stability and Peace and Resilience (the 'Rapid Response Actions pillar'). An insufficient level of funding will undermine these operations. In contrast, a huge increase in non-programmable funding has been proposed through the "emerging challenges and priorities cushion" despite concerns about its vague objectives, governance and accountability mechanisms. At this time partners need to be able to rely on long-term programmable development funding.

Undersigned:

[Climate Action Network](#) (CAN) Europe is Europe's leading NGO coalition fighting dangerous climate change. With over 170 member organisations from 38 European countries, representing over 1.500 NGOs and more than 47 millions citizens, CAN Europe promotes sustainable climate, energy and development policies throughout Europe

[CONCORD](#) is the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development. With the support of our 57 members, our Confederation, representing over 2,600 NGOs, is the main interlocutor with the EU institutions on development policy and international cooperation. Since 2003, we work towards a world in which people's human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled.

[Cooperatives Europe](#) is the voice of cooperative enterprises in Europe. On behalf of its 84 member organisations from 33 European countries across all business sectors it promotes the cooperative business model in Europe and aims at strengthening the cooperative voice in international development policies

The [European Network of Political Foundations](#) (ENoP) serves as a platform for dialogue and exchange between the European political foundations, civil society organisations, active in the fields of democracy support and sustainable development, and the institutions of the European Union. Today, the Network brings together 54 member-foundations from 23 countries and 6 political families, represented at the European Parliament: the ECR, EPP, Greens, GUE, Renew Europe and S&D. Our members are active in over 100 countries around the world, where they promote civic education and support democratic processes and sustainable development through their work with civil society and political actors.

The [European Peacebuilding Liaison Office](#) (EPLO) is the independent civil society platform of European NGOs, networks of NGOs and think tanks which are committed to peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict. EPLO aims to influence the EU so that it promotes and implements measures which lead to sustainable peace between states and within states and peoples, and which transform and resolve conflicts non-violently.

The [Human Rights and Democracy Network](#) (HRDN) is an informal grouping of NGOs operating at EU level in the broader areas of human rights, democracy and conflict prevention. Participation in the network is open to non-governmental organizations which engage at EU level in the promotion of human rights, democracy and conflict prevention in and outside the EU.

The [ONE](#) Campaign is a global movement campaigning to end extreme poverty and preventable disease by 2030, so that everyone, everywhere can lead a life of dignity and opportunity.

[VOICE](#) is the network of 88 European NGOs promoting principled and people-centred humanitarian aid. Collectively, VOICE aims to improve the quality and effectiveness of the European Union and its Member States' humanitarian aid. The network promotes the added value of NGOs as key humanitarian actors.