

Refinement, Not Overhaul: External action in the next MFF

Joint position paper from 34 organizations

To effectively address global challenges, the EU must significantly increase its investment in external action in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF)¹, in the context of a larger EU budget. In the push for greater simplification and flexibility in the MFF, **the external action heading should be a positive example to others, having already undergone significant simplification during the last budget cycle.** The NDICI-Global Europe instrument (NDICI-GE), in particular, has demonstrated its ability to deliver the EU's objectives.

This paper sets out a series of recommendations to maximize the efficiency and impact of the EU's Official Development Assistance (ODA) investments so that they can advance sustainable development, global climate action, human rights, and strengthen global security and stability. **By adopting ambitious targets the EU can guarantee that every Euro spent delivers tangible results.**

Overall architecture

According to the 2024 independent mid-term evaluation of the EU's external instruments, the NDICI-GE is fit for purpose and effectively delivers on its objectives. It enables the EU to promote its internal policies and priorities in a more coherent manner externally, while offering significant added value through a more integrated, sizable, and coordinated approach to external relations compared to the previous MFF. This approach has strengthened partner countries' capacity to address joint priorities with the EU and tackle global challenges.

The evaluation also highlights that current instruments have increased the collective engagement of European actors in EU external cooperation through the Team Europe approach. Moreover, the flexibility features of the NDICI-GE have proven highly relevant in pursuing EU priorities and providing targeted support to partner countries.

- **We do not recommend an overhaul of the EU's external action architecture but rather continuity with targeted improvements.**

DAC-ability

As set out in the Lisbon treaty, the primary goal of EU development cooperation is poverty alleviation. The best way to ensure that the EU's development cooperation instrument contributes to this objective is to maximize its "DAC-ability", currently set at at least 93%. We recommend:

- **Maintaining the future instrument's DAC-ability at at least 93%.**

¹ ["A budget that delivers for people and planet"](#) (November 2024)

- **Ensuring that the primary objective of the future instrument remains poverty reduction and eradication.**

The EU has developed a series of robust policies, such as the Consensus on Development, the Gender Action Plan, the Youth Action Plan, the EU Global Health Strategy, and the Human Rights Action Plan. These draw on extensive expertise both within and outside EU institutions. We therefore recommend:

- **Ensuring that the future instrument's policy basis is grounded in these key EU policies and strategies.**

Aid effectiveness principles

In response to the mid-term review of the NDICI-GE, the Council found that increased efforts should be made to reinforce local ownership, in particular among communities, local and regional authorities and civil society organisations. Upholding ownership, alongside other aid effectiveness principles, is essential for maximizing the impact of EU Official Development Assistance (ODA) and fostering effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels. We recommend:

- **Ensuring that aid effectiveness principles are applied across all aid modalities in the future instrument.**

Boosting thematic investments

Whilst it is important to reinforce the “geographisation” principle with a strong and well-resourced geographic programme driven by the needs and priorities of partner countries and their citizens, thematic programmes, such as those addressing global challenges, human rights and democracy, peace, stability and conflict prevention, preparedness and civil society, must be adequately funded and independent from geographic programmes. The persistent underfunding of these programmes under the current NDICI-GE framework severely limits their impact and undermines the objective of the flexible funding in the cushion. For example, the current Global Challenges programme is under-financed and has consistently required top-ups from the cushion to cover its priorities. We are therefore calling for:

- **Maintaining all existing thematic programmes, which must be sufficiently funded to enable the EU to effectively address cross-border issues and global priorities.**

Balancing flexibility with predictability

Flexibility is essential for responding to emerging priorities and crises in partner countries. It allows for swift action in unforeseen crises and political shifts, as well as in aligning development efforts with the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. However, increased

flexibility should complement, rather than replace, predictability. Predictability is crucial for sustainable development and peacebuilding, as it enables long-term systemic reforms and investments that address the root causes of poverty, violence, inequality, and lack of opportunity. We're therefore calling for:

- **Maintaining the cushion to ensure flexibility and enhance the EU's ability to respond to emerging priorities and crises in partner countries.**
- **Ensuring its transparent and accountable use.**
- **Greater flexibility in the new external action budget to be additional to predictable funding.**

Human Development

Partner countries value the EU's leadership in human development investments², enhancing Europe's influence and partnerships with key regions—critical for the success of the Global Gateway. These investments are both a moral imperative and a strategic priority, saving lives, empowering individuals, and creating the enabling environment for sustainable economic development and prosperity.

The EU's longstanding commitment to allocating at least 20% of ODA to human development is a key pillar of its development policy. This commitment, reaffirmed in the 2017 European Consensus on Development, has been consistently endorsed by Member States, most recently in June 2024³, and the European Parliament⁴. We therefore urge the EU to:

- **Maintain its commitment to dedicate at least 20% of its ODA to human development and social inclusion.**

ODA to Least Developed Countries and Fragile States

EU ODA should be targeted where the needs are greatest. However, in 2023, the Least Developed Countries (LDCs), which represent 13% of the world's population and 1.3% of global GDP⁵, received just 11.1% of EU ODA⁶, falling to its lowest proportion ever. This must be corrected in the next MFF. Similarly, global poverty is increasingly located in fragile and conflict-affected states (FCAS), with 44% of people living in extreme poverty located in FCAS in 2022, and projections indicating this share could rise to 60% by 2030⁷. We are therefore calling for:

² [Why does human development matter to the EU's strategic priorities?](#) - ECDPM (May 2024)

³ [Council Conclusions on the Mid-Term Evaluation of the NDICI-Global Europe external financing instrument](#) (June 2024)

⁴ [European Parliament report on the Implementation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe](#) (December 2023)

⁵ [À propos des pays les moins avancés](#), United Nations (October 2021)

⁶ [Les profils de coopération au développement](#), OECD (2023)).

⁷ [New estimates of the cost of ending poverty and its global distribution](#), UNU WIDER (July 2024)

- **50% of the EU's bilateral ODA in the next MFF to be allocated to LDCs and FCAS**

Climate

A decade after the Paris Agreement, the promises made to protect our planet remain unfulfilled. Despite global commitments, including most recently that of channelling at least \$300 billion a year in international climate finance by 2035 and a call to all actors to scale up funds from all public and private sources to at least \$1.3 trillion, these sums are inadequate against the estimates of the trillions needed by developing countries to ensure renewable energy access, just transitions to decarbonised economies, adapt to the impacts of climate change, and address their loss and damage. Currently the EU is lagging behind on its climate targets, with investments within the NDICI-GE amounting to 23.8% in 2021-23⁸ compared to the 30% target set out in the regulation. The EU must agree the following:

- **A binding spending target of 50% across external funding as climate- and biodiversity related, of which 35% should be dedicated to climate.**
- **Out of the 35% climate spending, equal support should be given to mitigation, adaptation and addressing loss and damage.** Finance to dedicated adaptation projects should increase, particularly through grants-based funding, as well as an improved approach to mainstreaming adaptation, for example supporting agroecology and using nature-based approaches where feasible to maximise co-benefits.
- **Finance to address loss and damage should increase through grants, include contributions to the new Fund for Addressing Loss and Damage,** and there should be robust tracking of spending and no double-counting between loss and damage, adaptation finance, and humanitarian aid.
- **Particular attention should be paid to directing climate adaptation finance toward climate-vulnerable, conflict-affected countries because of the low share of adaptation finance they currently receive and the particular challenges posed by the interplay between climate change, conflict and fragility.**
- **Improve climate mainstreaming methodology through improved climate tracking and an ex ante approach to targets in programming,** alignment of support to enhance and implement countries' climate plans (nationally determined contributions and national adaptation plans), stronger integration of climate action across sectors, and support to producing countries and smallholders in particular to comply with European Green Deal regulations with an external impact.
- **Strengthening safeguards for international cooperation through application of stricter 'do no harm' criteria, social and human rights safeguards and mandatory environmental and climate impact assessments across all Team Europe Initiatives and Global Gateway programs.** These should ensure all activities are compatible with biodiversity goals, the Paris Agreement's 1.5 degree Celsius goal and ensure any

⁸ [2024 annual report on the implementation of the European Union's external action instruments in 2023](#) (December 2024)

climate risks are assessed and addressed so that projects are 'adaptation-proof'. Any direct or indirect support for fossil fuels must be excluded fully.

Biodiversity

The EU must recognize nature's essential role in sustaining communities, economies, and climate resilience. To show true global leadership, the EU should address interconnected challenges—biodiversity loss, climate change, environmental degradation, health risks, and rising insecurity—while actively conserving critical ecosystems, supporting sustainable development, and alleviating poverty. Biodiversity loss, particularly in vulnerable regions, fuels conflict, displacement, and migration, undermining stability, whereas healthy ecosystems are essential for achieving SDGs and ensuring food security, water access, and climate resilience. The next international cooperation budget should prioritise biodiversity conservation and nature-based solutions, recognizing the long-term value and cost-effectiveness of investing in nature⁹. We therefore urge the EU to raise its ambition by:

- **A spending target of 50% across external funding as climate and biodiversity related, of which 15% should be earmarked to biodiversity**, dedicated exclusively to biodiversity objectives, distinct from climate and other environmental goals.
- **Mainstream biodiversity across all international cooperation sectors**, integrating biodiversity into agriculture, climate adaptation, infrastructure, and value chains, and promoting nature-based solutions in these areas.
- **Prioritize grant-based financing for biodiversity while leveraging the Global Gateway to attract private investment in conservation and nature restoration**. This will help scale impactful solutions for nature and communities while building the technical capacity to de-risk investments in biodiversity and nature-based solutions. Strengthen environmental safeguards across all Global Gateway initiatives by mandating the 'Do No Significant Harm' (DNSH) principle and environmental impact assessments to minimize negative impacts on biodiversity and ensure compliance with the Global Biodiversity Framework.
- **Expand support to Indigenous Peoples and local communities** to improve biodiversity and climate funding absorption, effectiveness, and long-term ownership, funding mechanisms must be adapted to enable greater participation from diverse groups that play a crucial role in on-the-ground conservation efforts.

Food and nutrition security

The world produces more than enough to feed everyone on the planet¹⁰, yet, since 2017 hunger has increased sharply with persistent challenges such as slow reductions in child stunting,

⁹ [Joint statement - NEXT EU EXTERNAL BUDGET: Investing in nature and people is key to delivering the Global Biodiversity Framework, Paris Agreement and SDGs](#), WWF and 20 NGOs (November 2024)

¹⁰ [Current global food production is sufficient to meet human nutritional needs in 2050 provided there is radical societal adaptation](#)
M. Berners-Lee, C. Kennelly, R. Watson and C.N. Hewitt. (2018)=

wasting, and low birthweight, alongside increasing rates of anemia¹¹. The agrifood sector is key for most low-income countries' socioeconomic development¹², and a sustainable transition of that sector also holds a central role in addressing the climate crisis.

The EU is committed to ensuring the right to adequate food for all and must honor the obligation to respect, protect and fulfil that right. We are therefore calling on the EU to:

- **Provide earmarked funding for food and nutrition security, prioritising agroecological principles¹³, nutrition outcomes and gender equality in food systems.**
- **Ensure participation by small-scale producers' organizations in programme identification, formulation and implementation.**

Gender equality

Gender equality is a key enabler for ensuring that EU ODA delivers against its objectives, including poverty and inequalities reduction. In order to make the EU's international partnerships effective, discriminatory social and gendered norms must be eradicated.

Gender equality is a core value of the EU¹⁴ and the Union has made ambitious commitments to promote gender equality through all its external actions in its Gender Action Plan III. OECD DAC 2021-2022 data shows that less than 1% of total ODA was directed towards women's rights organizations and feminist movements while they are critical actors to change harmful gender and social norms, protect rights and uphold democracy, achieve gender equality and sustainable development. Gender equality investments should operate in ways consistent with feminist principles¹⁵, be traceable in a transparent way and incorporate robust accountability mechanisms, building up on experiences of some member states with mechanisms for support to feminist civil society organisations such as the Dutch 'Leading from the South' and the French 'Fonds de Soutien aux Organisations Feministes'¹⁶. We therefore urge the EU to:

- **Strengthen the current gender equality targets by expressing them in terms of volumes of funding and increasing attention to gender-targeted actions:** the strengthened gender equality targets should therefore be 85% of ODA going to projects

¹¹ Today, up to 757 million people worldwide face hunger and about 2,8 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet. [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2024: Financing to End Hunger, Food Insecurity and Malnutrition in All Its Forms](#), FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO (2024)

¹² The agricultural sector remains of fundamental importance in most low-income countries, and in Africa, for example, 62% of employment is in agrifood systems. Working Paper, [Estimating Global and Country Level Employment in Agrifood Systems](#), FAO (2023)

¹³ As it is recognized by [the Council Conclusions of 14 October 2024](#) on desertification and land degradation, the transformation of food systems is urging and must be "based on the 13 principles of agroecology defined by the High-Level Panel of Experts on Food Security and Nutrition of the Committee on World Food Security".

¹⁴ Art. 2, 3(3) and 21 of the Treaty on the European Union (TEU), Art. 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), and Art. 21 and 23 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights.

¹⁵ [Common Ask Framework – English version – Walking the Talk](#)

¹⁶ [From talking to walking - Foundation for European Progressive Studies](#) (December 2024)

that have gender equality as a significant or principal objective (G1 + G2) and 20% of ODA going to projects which have gender equality as their principal objective (G2)¹⁷.

- **Increase funding for women's rights organisations, networks, and funds by ensuring that at least 25% of gender equality principal investments (G2) are channeled through these entities over the next financial cycle of the MFF.** This would result in 5% of total bilateral ODA flowing through them.
- **Integrate a gender budgeting approach into all funding instruments and budget lines of the next MFF**
- **Ensure that EU external funding instruments align with gender equality commitments by establishing adequate modalities.** This will enable the effective implementation of the EU Gender Action Plans and MFF gender targets

Conflict prevention and peacebuilding

The EU has played a critical role in fostering global stability through its support to civil society and locally led initiatives to prevent violence and promote peace. Preventing and addressing violent conflict is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic and economic necessity. The cost of conflict was €18.2 trillion in 2023, equivalent to 13.5% of the world's economic activity, or €2,266 per person¹⁸. Today's conflicts are disrupting critical supply chains, forcing the displacement of over 117 million people, 40% of them being children¹⁹, exacerbating impacts of the climate crisis, and creating conditions for transnational crime and armed groups to thrive. These trends highlight the urgent need for cooperative, comprehensive strategies to address interconnected global challenges. As such, we urge the EU to:

- **Include conflict prevention and peacebuilding as objectives in all External Financing Instruments.**
- **Ensure that peacebuilding objectives are integrated into all pillars of the future NDICI-GE**, including the geographic pillar, rapid response pillar and the cushion.
- **Ringfence funding to conflict prevention and peacebuilding** to ensure these funds cannot be diverted to serve shifting, short-term political interests.
- **Enhance the linkages between flexible crisis response mechanisms and longer-term programming.**
- **Ensure that all EU external action, including the Global Gateway strategy, is conflict- and gender-sensitive.**

Humanitarian Aid

United around the commitment to providing assistance to people in need, the EU, together with its Member States, is one of the world's leading donors of principled humanitarian aid. Humanitarian assistance addresses immediate, life-saving needs in crisis situations and

¹⁷ [Funding Local Womens Rights Organisations for Transformative Change](#), CONCORD Europe (2024)

¹⁸ [Global Peace Index 2024: Measuring Peace in a Complex World](#), Institute for Economics and Peace (2024)

¹⁹ [Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2023](#), UNHCR (2024)

adheres to the principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence. These principles are essential for maintaining trust and access in conflict/crisis affected zones.

In the current MFF, humanitarian assistance represents a little less than 1% of the EU expenses, however this is insufficient and does not cover the bare minimum to maintain the same level of EU supported programming. As such, each year requires reinforcements of the budget from other instruments such as the Emergency Aid Reserve (EAR). We therefore urge the EU to maintain its ambition by:

- **Preserving the separate instrument and budget line for humanitarian assistance within the new MFF structure to guarantee principled humanitarian action.**
- **Allocating at least €18.2 billion for humanitarian assistance within the MFF with an annual baseline of €2.6 billion to ensure a predictable and sufficient budget for immediate responses to crises.**

Emergency Aid reserve

Despite a constant increase in humanitarian needs, they remain challenging to fully anticipate. In this context, reserves are essential to alleviate suffering and save lives. During the current budget cycle, EU humanitarian aid has been heavily dependent on funding from the Solidarity and Emergency Aid Reserve (SEAR) and the EAR²⁰.

The next MFF should maintain the EAR and the EU Solidarity Fund (EUSF) separately. The EAR and the EUSF should have the same allocations and these should be ring fenced to preserve the external strand. Furthermore, humanitarian response should have priority access to the EAR ensuring predictability to enable EU partners to join EU's humanitarian response. The failure of the EU to take this opportunity may have catastrophic consequences for crisis-affected communities. Therefore, the EU must:

- **Maintain the Emergency Aid Reserve.**
- **Allocate 50% of the solidarity fund to the EAR with a minimum of €600 million annually.**

Implementation of the triple nexus humanitarian-development-peace

While we recommend keeping separate instruments and budgets for humanitarian and development action, we recognise there is a need to establish strong, strategic links in conducting joint analysis and, where possible, connecting humanitarian, development and

²⁰ The 2024 MFF revision adopted the division of the SEAR into two financial instruments, the EUSF and EAR, it entered into force in 2024. Under the current MFF, funds mobilised for external action under the SEAR have ranged from €334M in 2021 (15% of the final humanitarian budget), to €539M in 2022 (21%) and reached €579M in 2023 (24%). In 2024, the EAR annual allocation of €572M was fully transferred to the humanitarian aid budget line (fully depleted by September), starting at €1,819M to reach €2,391M [Proposal for transfer of appropriations No DEC 10/2024 within Section III - Commission - of the general budget for 2024](#) (September 2024)

peacebuilding operations in situations of emergency, conflicts, protracted crisis or fragility. The EU should stay engaged in conflict-affected settings, including in settings with de facto authorities, and uphold its commitments to the operationalisation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus²¹, which the EU and OECD DAC have recognised as essential to have an effective and sustainable response to complex crises²².

The Council stressed the importance of a strong and coordinated Team Europe engagement in fragile contexts and welcomed the variety of tools offered by the NDICI-GE to do so, including through geographic programming and the Rapid Response Pillar²³. We recommend the EU maintains a rapid response funding stream that enables resilience building actions and the implementation of the triple nexus in crisis contexts. The EU must ensure allocations to this rapid response funding stream are needs driven, conflict sensitive and crisis responsive. We urge the EU to:

- **Ensure there is adequate development funding for states and populations affected by conflicts.**
- **Ensure there are guarantees to protect principled humanitarian actors within nexus approaches** and that decisions are taken based on needs and vulnerabilities and not based on political considerations.
- **Maintain its commitment to strengthening resilience and linking humanitarian aid, development and peacebuilding, through funding rapid response actions and inclusion in relevant geographic and thematic programmes**, while ensuring respect of humanitarian principles.
- **Establish longer-term funding strategies, including for humanitarian aid and for peacebuilding, with multi-year programming and multi-year funding options in protracted crises**, while giving those implementing the strategies more flexibility for adapting quickly to changing circumstances on the ground.
- **Ensure local, national and international CSOs are actively involved** and supported at all levels in decision making on triple nexus and resilience programming, given their proximity to populations.

Preparedness

The interconnectedness of societies, economies, and challenges is undeniable, and solutions to the most pressing issues can only be achieved through joint efforts. Last year, former Finnish President Sauli Niinistö highlighted the need for the EU to prioritize mutual resilience in its diplomacy and external action in order to enhance the EU's preparedness and readiness for future crises. His report urged the EU to work to elevate the bloc *“as a trusted and reliable partner in a world marked by growing strategic competition.”*

²¹ [Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development Nexus](#) - Council conclusions (19 May 2017)

²² [OECD DAC Recommendation on the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus](#) (2025)

²³ [Mid-Term Evaluation of the NDICI-Global Europe external financing instrument](#) - Council conclusions (24 June 2024)

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic showcased the unprecedented ability to rapidly develop medical countermeasures, driven by prior public-private investments and collaborations, but also exposed critical gaps in global pandemic preparedness and response (PPR), especially in equitable access to medical countermeasures in the Global South.

To better address ongoing and future threats, the EU must prioritise comprehensive PPR investments, including in R&D, manufacturing, affordable access, and health systems strengthening to advance universal health coverage (UHC) in the Global South. The EU should therefore:

- **Prioritize predictable, long-term, and sustainable investments in preparedness and resilience to support strategy implementation.**
- **Maintain the Global Challenges thematic programme and increase its funding** in order to strengthen health systems and access to medical countermeasures via partnerships like the Global Fund, UNICEF, and Gavi, and stimulate local demand through market-shaping efforts via Unitaid and other multilaterals.
- **Expand health R&D capacities and partnerships in the Global South through initiatives like CEPI, Global Health EDCTP3, and Glolid-R.**

Enhancing CSO participation in EU international cooperation

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) play a crucial role in implementing EU development cooperation, while EU funding remains a vital resource for many CSOs. However, recent shifts in EU cooperation programmes under NDICI have limited CSOs' ability to contribute effectively, reducing both funding diversity and access. Structural barriers, including a reliance on indirect management—delegating funds to EU Member States and international agencies—have further restricted fair participation. This, combined with limited EU administrative capacity, has hindered CSOs from fully engaging in EU-funded programmes²⁴.

CSOs are both advocates and key service providers, amplifying marginalized voices and advancing the 2030 Agenda's "leave no one behind" commitment. To maximize their impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), CSOs require stronger, more inclusive support throughout NDICI-GE. While the EU recognises CSOs as dialogue partners, effective collaboration demands structured, transparent mechanisms, including regular consultations and diverse funding opportunities adapted to funding opportunities implemented through the Team Europe approach and the Global Gateway strategy. We therefore call on the EU to:

- **Earmark a spending target of 15% of CSO budgets across the future development cooperation instrument.**
- **Ensure accessibility of funding in indirect management and Global Gateway initiatives by mandating CSO involvement and sub-grants.**
- **Establish long-term cooperation frameworks for diverse CSOs.**

²⁴ [Who holds the lion's share? A closer look at Global Europe Funds for CSOs](#) - CONCORD (October 2023)

- **Expand direct and simplified funding for local CSOs and broader civil society in partner countries²⁵.**
- **Revise EU financial regulation to enhance flexibility and align CSO funding mechanisms with new initiatives and adapted implementing modalities.**

Addressing inequalities intersectionally

Horizontal dimensions of inequality (group-based) must be addressed together with vertical ones (wealth, income and consumption) in order to ensure intersectionality and meet the 2030 Agenda promises of Leaving No One Behind and reaching those furthest behind first. The EU's Inequality Marker (I-Marker) adopted in 2023 is a significant step in that direction.

Yet, the EU currently sets no targets and there is no publicly available information of the marker scores reached by each programme and the analyses behind those estimates.

The next MFF must embed the I-Marker to ensure meaningful and impactful implementation, including:

- **At least 85% of EU programmes and 85% of EU funding should be allocated to programmes that reach scores I-1 or I-2.**
- **As for the gender marker, we demand ambition on I-2 projects.** Considering the current reported 13%, we call on the EU to step-up efforts on inequalities as a principal objective by setting an I-2 target of 40% in number of projects and funding.
- **The three markers (gender, disability and inequality) must be implemented in complementarity.** Combined use can improve the potential to address intersectional inequalities (for instance, reaching poorer women with disabilities in a community).
- To leave no one behind, **all marginalised groups must be targeted in programme planning and implementation**, such as **children and young people**, by using available markers and tools and considering new ones.
- **Where projects are implemented in programme design, implementation and evaluation, both ex ante and ex post qualitative analyses are needed, in complementarity with the I-Marker.**

Migration

With respect to migration, it is essential that ODA is provided solely on the basis of the needs, and independently from any political consideration. Thus, any decision to fund actions related to external migration should be based on an ex-ante impact assessment and done in consultation with civil society, without diverting funds to countries along migration routes for migration management purposes. We urge the EU to:

²⁵ [Who Holds the Lion's Share](#), CONCORD Europe (2024)

- **Reject the use of ODA for restrictive migration policies or border management in line with OECD DAC rules.** Migration-related activities included in ODA should adhere to objectives and principles rooted in development, humanitarian, and human rights frameworks. These activities should generally align with the priorities of partner countries and their overarching development strategies. Activities that disregard the rights of forcibly displaced persons and migrants, or that primarily aim to intercept and return migrants to limit migration to provider countries, are excluded from ODA.
- **Adopt a human rights-based approach that prioritises the dignity and safety of people, including children on the move.** This includes funding for legal migration pathways, protection for displaced populations, and addressing the root causes of forced displacement, such as conflict, inequality, and environmental degradation.
- **Include do no harm assessment in external migration funding, to inform any decision to fund actions related to external migration (management).** Impact and conflict-sensitivity assessments have been consistently lacking in the EU's external migration policies and funding. The 'do no harm principle' is currently aimed at minimising unintended negative consequences of humanitarian interventions, especially when it comes to protection. This should be extended to interventions related to external migration. Any policies or activities that lead to human rights violations should be avoided.
- **Maintain and prioritize funding dedicated to addressing forced displacement,** ensuring adequate resources to support displaced individuals and the communities hosting them, while fostering long-term solutions to this growing challenge.

Ukraine

Resolute in its response to Ukraine, as it must be, the EU must also demonstrate its staunch commitment to other partners with whom we must work in partnership in order to tackle global challenges. We are therefore calling for:

- **Funding for Ukraine should be kept separate and be additional to the EU's ODA commitments to the rest of the world.**

EFSD+

The EU should maintain a balanced approach to funding modalities in recognition of the fact that different partner countries have different investment needs, and that budget support and grants are effective funding mechanisms.



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