

A joint call for the EU to ensure no one is left behind in the next MFF

As fragility continues to rise globally, we - the three civil society networks representing humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding actors - stand united in urging the EU to seize the opportunity of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) to establish a financial framework for external action that upholds the EU's core values and prioritises a people-centred approach.

According to the [OECD State of Fragility 2025](#), all 177 contexts analysed exhibit some degree of fragility, with 61 countries (43 highly fragile, 18 extremely fragile) being the most affected. These highly and extremely fragile contexts are home to 25% of the world's population but account for 72% of the world's extremely poor people. The convergence of climate change, conflict, and political instability, compounded by the dismantling of USAID - providing over 40% of global humanitarian funding - and cuts in external action budgets by several EU Member States, is intensifying humanitarian crises, exacerbating fragility in several contexts and reinforcing the urgent need for stronger EU engagement.

Under the next Multiannual Financial Framework:

- **We strongly advocate that Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and countries in situations of fragility and conflict remain a priority in the future development cooperation instrument.** The EU's geoeconomic interests should not take precedence over its fundamental commitments to peace, conflict prevention, poverty eradication, and disaster response, as outlined in Article 21 of the Treaty on the EU. A **robust and well-financed Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus approach** is needed for the EU to effectively address the complex challenges faced by partner countries.
- We urge the EU to **safeguard humanitarian and development funding from instrumentalisation**, ensuring that all funding remains principled and driven by a people-centred approach, rather than being influenced by political or economic shifts.
- We reiterate the importance of **keeping distinct instruments and budget lines of external financing instruments in the next MFF**. Any merger of these would force priorities to compete, reduce predictability and undermine the EU's credibility as a reliable partner of LDCs and countries in situations of fragility and conflict. Humanitarian, development and peace funding must not be linked to migration management, border control, or military spending, as this risks undermining its core purpose of supporting marginalised communities.
- The EU must enhance its **support for civil society organisations**, as they are closest to affected communities. Partnering with them is the most effective way for the EU to stay engaged in fragile contexts and ensure no one is left behind. Civil society serves as an effective, enduring and trusted partner for the EU, especially in countries where direct budget support to governments is not possible, or where state capacity, legitimacy and public service delivery are limited. **Supporting locally led initiatives** is essential for empowering civil society at national, regional, and community levels. This enables greater participation in decision-making and implementation, enhancing civil society's role in sustainable development and peacebuilding.

We, CONCORD, EPLO and VOICE, stand ready to support the EU in effectively integrating the above recommendations into the next Multiannual Financial Framework for external action, ensuring it upholds the EU's core values and prioritises a people-centred approach.

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CONCORD is the European Confederation of NGOs working on sustainable development and international cooperation. We are made up of **57 member** organisations representing more than 2600 NGOs and are supported by millions of citizens across Europe.

The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO), founded in 2001, is the largest independent European civil society platform of European NGOs, NGO networks and think tanks that are committed to peacebuilding and the prevention of violent conflict.

VOICE stands for "Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies" and is the largest European humanitarian NGO network promoting efficient and effective humanitarian action worldwide since 1992. VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on humanitarian topics and is the collective voice of its 89 member organisations that are implementing principled humanitarian responses for and with affected communities worldwide.