



Global Europe: EU launches a global €1.5 billion programme to support civil society organisations

Brussels, 14 December 2021

The Commission has today adopted the Global Europe Civil Society Organisations programme worth €1.5 billion for the period 2021–2027. Funding will specifically support civil society organisations outside of the EU, as independent actors of governance and development in their own right and their engagement to contribute to inclusive and participatory democratic processes and better development outcomes.

Civil society organisations are vital to the attainment of human rights, the rule of law, democracy, and stability. They help devise and implement external EU policies and programmes so that they meet people's needs, reduce inequalities, and fulfil the central commitment of the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

High Representative/Vice-President Josep **Borrell** said: *“Civil society organisations play an essential role in protecting human rights, exposing their violations, and demanding action from governments to protect their citizens. Sadly, their work is under threat in many parts of the world. We are not just aware of the challenges they face, we are listening and we are taking action. This new programme is proof that we will support and stand by their courageous daily work.”*

Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta **Urpilainen** said: *“The €1.5 billion Global Europe Civil Society Organisations programme will strengthen the voice and role of civil society, and bring to light the concerns of local communities, especially youth, women, and vulnerable people. Civil society organisations are unique partners in their capacity to reach, empower, represent and defend local populations – they are the engines of change, the ones on the frontlines, fighting for equality and justice.”*

Global Europe Civil Society Organisations

The Global Europe Civil Society Organisations programme will provide targeted support, strengthen capacities, increase their participation in policy dialogue in partner countries, and contribute to an enabling environment for their work.

- **Priority area 1:** €1.33 billion to support an inclusive, participatory, empowered, and independent civil society and democratic space in partner countries, and an inclusive and open dialogue with and between civil society organisations.

Future actions include country-specific strategies (“Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society Organisations”), Financial Framework Partnership Agreements, cooperation with foundations, and enhancing the Policy Forum for Development, the EU's main forum for global dialogue with civil society organisations. Additionally, and in complementarity with the Global Europe Human Rights and Democracy programme, the EU will develop a new global initiative to monitor all aspects of an enabling environment for civil society, set off early warnings in case of shrinking space for civil society, and provide flexible short and long-term support.

- **Priority area 2:** €151 million to continue the Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) programme. The programme promotes a better-informed and more inclusive society and aims to increase and strengthen EU citizens' knowledge, skills and opportunities in promoting sustainable development and in addressing global challenges such as inequalities and ecological crises at local and global level.

Background

The Global Europe Civil Society Organisations programme recognises both the crucial role that civil society organisations play, and the increasing limitations that they face globally. Civil society space

in partner countries has increasingly been shrinking, especially in the context of the coronavirus pandemic.

The EU is a longstanding global champion of civil society, and the largest provider of support to local civil society in partner countries. During the period 2014–2019, the EU supported development cooperation actions by civil society organisations with approximately €7.5 billion. Around 47% of these were financed through geographic programmes, while 27% came from the Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO-LA) programme and the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR).

The Global Europe Civil Society Organisations programme, funded under the thematic pillar of the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) – Global Europe, builds on the civil society organisations component of the Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities programme 2014-2020. Civil Society Organisations have been fully consulted during the new programming exercise under NDICI – Global Europe.

This is a flexible programme as regards procedures, and supports civil society actions independently of the consent of partner countries' governments. The majority of the programme will be implemented at country level. Subsequent calls for proposals covering the different activities, open to civil society organisations across the world, will be published in the coming months.

The programme will engage with the full spectrum of civil society actors, including but not limited to youth, women's, and grass-root civil society organisations, trade unions, employers' organisations, cooperatives, business and consumer organisations, rural, faith-based, community-based, environmental, LGBTIQ, and minority organisations, indigenous peoples' organisations, organisations of people living with disability, cultural organisations and foundations. It will reflect key EU principles included in for example the third EU Gender Action Plan, the Human Rights Based Approach to international partnerships, and the EU LGBTIQ Equality Strategy 2020-2025.

It can support activities in any country outside the EU and at global level, and complements other EU programmes, in particular geographic programmes, which will continue to provide the majority of EU funding to civil society organisations.

For More Information

[Multi-Annual Indicative Programming for the NDICI-Global Europe Thematic Programme for Civil Society Organisations 2021-2027](#)

[The roots of democracy and sustainable development: Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations](#)

[European Consensus on Development 2017](#)

[EU engagement with Civil Society in external relations - June 2017 Council conclusions](#)

[Funding opportunities| International Partnerships](#)

[Calls for proposals and tenders](#)

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