

Who will the EU be in the world of tomorrow?

Statement from 53 groups in response to the mid-term revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and in preparation of the EU's next Strategic Agenda (2024-2029) and new MFF beyond 2027.

“The mid-term revision of the EU’s long-term budget sends a damaging message to Europe’s partners, indicating that despite the extent of interlinked global challenges and despite the eradication of poverty being a stated aim of the EU, Europe’s primary focus lies in curtailing migration. We are concerned that these cuts will diminish the bloc’s capacity to act at the global level, at the expense of global stability, security and prosperity - all of which are essential for Europe itself.

The last 5 years have underscored the critical importance of multilateral cooperation and collective action in addressing pressing global challenges and threats, from the climate crisis to health security and escalating conflicts worldwide. However, as we approach the 2030 deadline to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, it is evident that significant portions of the world population are being left behind. In this context, it is incomprehensible that the EU, along with several Member States, has opted to reduce spending on sustainable development and climate action.

Forcing trade-offs between the EU’s internal and external priorities is a false dichotomy. In an increasingly competitive, multipolar world, continued engagement on global challenges is imperative.

As the EU prepares for negotiations on the next MFF it must heed the lessons of the past five years. Retreating from global action would be not only dangerous but also short-sighted. Instead, the EU should bolster investment in international partnerships, in particular in fragile contexts. We need to protect and increase external action spending in the EU’s next long-term budget, and prioritize cooperation on global challenges in the upcoming Strategic Agenda. Failure to do so will not only jeopardize the EU’s role on the global stage but also undermine the values and objectives it aims to promote.”

Notes to Editors

- At the February European Council, EU leaders [agreed a deal](#) on the mid-term revision of the bloc’s 7 year budget, the MFF that foresees the use of 2 billion EUR of decommitted funds - *de facto* cuts - from the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument to fund other priorities.
- Article 208 of the TFEU sets out that the European Union development cooperation policy shall have as its primary objective the reduction and, in the long term, the eradication of poverty.
- At the midpoint for delivering the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN has underscored that [just 15% of the SDGs are on track](#) to be delivered by 2030.
- The global Human Development Index value fell for the first time ever in both 2020 and 2021. It rebounded to a projected record high in 2023. However, while every OECD country is projected to have recovered, only about half of the Least Developed Countries

are projected to have done so, confirming the trend that started in 2020, with inequality on the rise ([Human Development Report 2023-2024](#)).

- Low-income countries in Africa and around the world are increasingly crippled by debt and unable to invest in basic services. Analysis shows that [3/4 of Africa's population lives in a country at risk of debt distress](#).
- In 2005, EU Member States pledged to increase Official Development Assistance to 0.7% of Gross National Income by 2015. In [May 2015](#), they reaffirmed their commitment to this target by 2030.

Signatories



