

CONCORD POSITION

The new EU Global Strategy must be visionary, address the root causes of global challenges and promote sustainable development

The EU's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, will launch a new **EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security policy** (short: EU Global Strategy) in June 2016. However, this revision comes at a time where Europe itself is facing a deep **identity crisis**.

➤ **The new EU Global Strategy as a forward-looking strategy which addresses the root causes of global challenges**

The EU needs a forward-looking strategy which addresses the **root causes** of today's global challenges, rather than crisis management of symptoms such as conflicts, forced displacement or famines.

The EU Foreign and Security Strategy must confirm the EU's commitment to a sustainable development policy grounded in international human rights and humanitarian law. The principles of "universality" and "indivisibility", enshrined in human rights law, should be reflected explicitly in the Global Strategy.

This new strategy needs to be ambitious. In formulating the Union's common interests, it should go beyond a State of Play and provide policy direction for the future. The new EU Global Strategy is also an opportunity to address Europe's identity crisis by reinforcing the importance of the European project. Tackling human rights violations, climate change, inequality and extreme poverty, supporting inclusive and transparent democratic governance and a strong civil society, promoting gender equality and providing opportunities for youth should be at the heart of the EU's vision of security. Without a root cause approach the strategy will fail to achieve its objectives and today's trends of rising conflicts, human rights violations, forced displacement, migration and increased unemployment will continue.

➤ **The new EU Global Strategy should define the interests and objectives of foreign policy beyond a narrow security mandate, in line with the Lisbon Treaty**

CONCORD is concerned that the Global Strategy, as currently envisaged and communicated, is applying a narrow security-focused lens to EU foreign policy which ignores the Council's 2007 conclusions calling for future work on security and development to include a more detailed approach to the development perspective of security challenges. CONCORD believes that Human Security, as defined in the UN GA resolution 66/290 adopted in September 2012, provides a good basis for such a development-centred approach to security challenges. Human security promotes a people-centred approach to advancing peace, security and development within and across nations; is grounded in human rights; and is prevention-oriented. Moreover, EU foreign and security policies must integrate a clear women's rights perspective, including by implementing the "UN Security

Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on Women, Peace and Security”, which aims to strengthen women’s participation as actors for peace and security, and seeks to eliminate the widespread use of gender-based and sexual violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Overall, the new EU Global Strategy’s approach to security should be in line with Art. 21 of the TEU and Art. 208 of the Lisbon Treaty: respecting the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms and the principles of equality and solidarity. It should be people-centred, recognising the multi-sectoral and inter-linked causes of human insecurity, and promoting a comprehensive approach to tackle these.

➤ **The new EU Global Strategy must tackle global inequality (both within and outside Europe)**

Rising inequality is one of the main challenges of this century and fighting inequality and power imbalances must be at the core of the EU Global Strategy. This means more attention must be paid to power imbalances in decision-making processes, as well as to the promotion of mechanisms and policies tackling inequality at European and global level. *When designing the EU Global Strategy, it is important to focus specifically on prioritising those people and countries which have been left furthest behind until now, including women and girls and the most marginalised groups. The new EU Global Strategy must also ensure at a minimum that its policies do not impact negatively on the ability of partner countries to address inequality in their contexts.*

This also means exploring the possibility, in the context of international debates and through cooperation with the ILO, of setting a maximum ratio between the lowest and highest wages and establishing minimum ‘living wages’ in a majority of countries. *The EU should take the lead in promoting ILO conventions, ‘social protection floors’, women’s and girls’ economic equality, and economic and social rights, including by addressing the unequal distribution of unpaid care work. Furthermore, the EU should support the establishment of a UN tax body comprising all UN Member States, tasked with regulating and monitoring international tax practice, including tax havens. In tandem, the EU should develop policies and legislation aimed at preventing illicit financial flows and tax evasion by European companies.*

➤ **The transformative spirit of the 2030 Agenda and the four dimensions of sustainable development need to be reflected in the EU Global Strategy**

Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development is a comprehensive, universal, ambitious and potentially transformative framework covering all aspects of sustainable development. It is therefore crucial that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda focuses not only on the goals and targets, but also on the principles underpinning the framework, notably the commitment to “leave no one behind”, and on ensuring that we respect intergenerational equity and planetary boundaries. Another overarching principle of the agenda – and a core value of the European Union (Art. 2 TEU), which also must be a core principle in the new EU Global Strategy – is gender equality. This is a goal in itself, as well as a precondition to achieve all other goals. The EU Global Strategy should reflect the four dimensions of sustainable development: economic, social, environmental and governance. *The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a universal framework adopted by all 193 UN Member States, will be a critical tool for the EU in its bilateral and multilateral relations. Its omission from the EU Global Strategy would constitute a significant policy gap. The EU Global Strategy must therefore explicitly endorse the principles and objectives of the Agenda and not undermine it in any way.*

➤ **Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) needs to be fully incorporated into the new EU Global Strategy as one of its key enablers**

CONCORD recognises that the EU is the only region to date to have accepted a binding obligation to be accountable for the impacts of its policies on the world's poorest. Policy coherence for development is embedded in Article 208 of the Lisbon treaty. But beyond commitments, many current EU policies in diverse areas such as trade, energy, agriculture or migration, generate negative impacts for poor and vulnerable people outside the EU's borders. This is counter-productive and undermines the credibility of the European Union globally. *Therefore, CONCORD expects the new EU Global Strategy to outline how the EU will carry forward Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD).*

Trade Relations and PCSD: It is essential that the new Global Strategy recognises the importance of applying the principle of PCSD in all its trade relations in order not to negatively impact on development, human rights or gender equality in partner countries. *The EU needs to keep a flexible approach to Free Trade Agreement negotiations by taking into consideration the economic realities of its partners. The EU should also conduct impact assessments and regular monitoring in order to formulate recommendations about policy changes that prevent and or remedy problems and incoherence, in particular in the case of human rights violations. Human rights clauses included in trade and association agreements should also be more systematically activated, including in cases of environmental degradation, land grabbing and population displacement.*

Investment and PCSD: Agreements such as investment treaties which protect investors from changes in domestic regulations that potentially affect their profits, as well as global tax treaties which facilitate the transfer of profits into low-tax jurisdictions, are hugely detrimental to development and human rights. Global trade, Intellectual Property Rights and financial rules consolidate the power of firms from already industrialised countries and make it difficult for new and local firms to enter the market, thus preventing the development of a lively, diversified and sustainable domestic private sector in developing countries. Therefore, to effectively address youth unemployment and rising inequality at the global level, and to anchor PCSD at the core of its trade and investment policy, *the EU should revise its trade and investment agreements where they limit developing countries' ability to develop a fair and sustainable domestic economy. The EU should also play an important role in reforming some of the global rules, including the international investment regime.*

One of the principles enshrined in the 2030 Agenda is respecting planetary boundaries. The EU Global Strategy should shift away from the current economic and exploitative model of GDP growth, to one that recognises the need to protect planetary boundaries, and one that endorses the multiple dimensions of poverty, recognising that environmental degradation and climate change threaten livelihoods, access to resources, health and wellbeing. Such a shift implies addressing Europe's development model and footprint which is so dependent on natural resources, including forests, fish, productive land and agricultural commodities. The EU should reduce its negative impact on the sustainable development of other countries, not least developing countries, by setting ambitious targets for resource efficiency.

➤ **Energy & Climate: the Paris Agreement must be translated into dynamic action at home and abroad**

The Paris Agreement on Climate Change represents a historic milestone, sending a signal of hope to the world's poorest and most vulnerable, who are the most affected by the impacts of climate

change. By confirming, in its Global Strategy, the EU's strong ambition to tackle climate change, including via the recently refreshed climate diplomacy, the EU will signal to the rest of the world, and in particular to its allies among vulnerable developing countries, that the Paris Agreement is being translated into dynamic action at home and abroad.

Climate change triggers additional stress in conflict situations, as recently illustrated by the drought in Syria which fuelled internal conflict and contributed to massive population displacement. Last year the EU engaged with the EEAS and its worldwide diplomatic network in a global climate strategy to provide support for countries to develop their own low carbon plans and to contribute to the adoption of the Paris Agreement.

In 2016 and in upcoming years, climate change should continue to be mainstreamed in the EU Global Strategy in order to provide adequate responses to conflicts, development, natural resources management, migration and other global challenges. More specifically, the EU should pursue efforts to use the High Ambition Coalition, formed in the run-up to Paris, to support the timely signature, swift ratification as well as the full implementation by all Parties of the Paris Agreement. Its role in other international processes must be strengthened in order to find long-term solutions to greenhouse gas emissions from the maritime, aviation and other industries. *EU diplomacy must also continue supporting the poorest and most vulnerable countries in dealing with climate change mitigation and adaptation, and with the growing impact of climate change.*

- **The new EU Global Strategy should outline an ambitious approach to gender equality in the EU's external relations, and be based on a human rights-based approach**

The new EU Global Strategy must adopt a human rights-based approach and place gender equality at its core, reconfirming previous commitments regarding women's and girls' rights, including SRHR. Including gender equality as a core principle of the new Global Strategy will also be essential to achieving sustainable development and inclusive peace. It will also confirm the EU's commitment to strongly promoting women's and girls' rights in all external relations. Putting gender equality at the core of the Global Strategy also means promoting the rights of LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex) individuals and communities.

The Global Strategy needs to be fully aligned with the new Gender Action Plan (GAP) 2016-2020, which applies to all 28 MS, as well as to the European Commission and the EEAS. The GAP recognises that gender equality is a matter of human rights, the foundation of democracy and good governance, and the cornerstone of inclusive, sustainable development. The GAP also opens the way for meaningful efforts to ensure that what the EU does in the arenas of macro-economic policy, trade, foreign policy, security, migration and climate, for example, promotes and supports gender equality and respect for women's rights – particularly in the context of political dialogue. *In this vein, the new Global strategy must explicitly support the re-vitalised EU comprehensive approach to UNSCR1325, and give a greater mandate for the newly appointment Principal Adviser on gender and Women, Peace and Security at the EEAS.*

- **European policies on migration should be grounded in human rights and be coherent with sustainable development objectives**

According to the Lisbon Treaty, the EU and its Member states have a legal obligation to ensure their migration policies are coherent with development objectives (article 208 on “policy coherence for development”). EU Member States are also bound by several international legal instruments for the

protection of refugees which they have ratified, and by the right to asylum as laid down in European Union law (Article 18 of EU Fundamental Rights Charter).

However, the current choices of political priorities and financial and technical assistance put an emphasis on border controls and state security cooperation, rather than ensuring that human rights treaties and the Convention (1951) and protocol (1967) relating to the status of refugees are upheld and that refugees are granted their legitimate right to apply for asylum. These choices contribute to the situation where thousands of people have lost their lives and large numbers of women and children have become victims of sexual violence and trafficking at the EU's borders and within the EU. From a long-term perspective this approach also jeopardizes the achievement of the EU's global sustainable development objectives.

CONCORD therefore urges the new Global EU strategy to place human beings, their rights, and their legitimate aspiration for a decent life, at the centre of EU external migration policies, while tackling the systemic issues and roots causes that generate forced migration and displacement.

Tackling the root causes of migration should take place within a rights-based approach rather than within a migration control paradigm.

➤ **Political and financial support for independent civil society should be a key dimension of the new EU Global Strategy**

The conditions in which civil society operates are deteriorating in many countries. A disconcerting trend of shrinking space for independent civil society has been perceptible for some time, both outside and within Europe. Governments across all continents – irrespective of their political orientation – are taking drastic action against civil society actors: against non-governmental organizations, social and ecological activists, women's rights activists, trade unionists and human rights defenders. The space for actors who are critical of government policies is shrinking massively. ***The EU Global strategy should commit the EU to fostering an empowered independent civil society, and the EU should continue to prioritise its important financial support for non-profit organisations.***

➤ **The new EU Global agenda should promote sustainable development finance**

The EU should support a definition of ODA centred in reducing poverty and fighting inequality in developing countries, and grounded in a human rights-based approach. We believe that it is extremely short-sighted to divert much needed ODA from combatting poverty and supporting democracy and human rights. We are particularly concerned about the recent development which allows more ODA to be diverted to cover short-term security-related costs involving the military and the police. Without downgrading the importance of these activities for the security and stability of states, ODA should remain genuinely focused on alleviating poverty. Development aid driven by security imperatives has historically been the least effective, and at times counterproductive.

The EU should assure that there will be no further erosion of the civilian character of development cooperation and Official Development Assistance (ODA) through the inclusion of military or quasi-military expenditures or the channelling of aid through military actors. Humanitarian aid and relief efforts should strictly respect humanitarian law and principles—humanitarian imperative, impartiality, independence and neutrality—and should never be used to pursue particular political or security objectives.

The role of the private sector in ODA is increasingly of concern, notably the trend of using ODA to leverage private sector finance for development, without clear development criteria and

benchmarks, nor proper monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. While local small and medium size companies in developing countries have a crucial role to play in creating decent and dignified jobs, the focus of the EU and member states has not prioritised supporting the grassroots private sector. In addition, private sector involvement in countries where participatory democracy and the rule of law is weak involves risks for huge human rights, and corporate accountability for human rights violations abroad has not progressed at EU level so far. CONCORD supports regulatory approaches towards European companies investing in developing countries.

Finally, the EU Global strategy should also support other means of sustainable development financing, such as increased domestic resource mobilisation in developing countries, through tackling corporate tax avoidance and other illicit financial flows involving EU companies. For this the EU needs to recognise the role and impact on developing countries of both its tax regulations and the tax practices of European multinational companies, and must take steps – at the global and regional level -, to close regulatory loopholes impacting on populations in developing countries.

Contact details: Sabine Terlecki, CONCORD Head of Policy and Advocacy,
Sabine.TERLECKI@concordeurope.org