



# European Elections

# Toolkit

# 2024



# Introduction & how to use the Toolkit 1

## 1. Elections brief 2

### 1.1 Overview of the main EU institutions 2

Table 1: Role of the EP 5

### 1.2 The ninth legislature 6

Table 2: How many seats does my country have, and in which political groups are my MEPs? 6

Table 3: Political groups in the European Parliament 7

### 1.3 Timeline and projections 9

Table 4: Spitzenkandidat process 12

### 1.4 After the elections 13

Table 5: Keep an eye on: appointments and mandates 15

## 2. EU for Global Justice 17

### 2.1 CONCORD's priorities 17

### 2.2 Key context 22

Table 6: EU International Cooperation

## 3. Campaign materials 27

### 3.1 Electoral pledge or statement of interest for candidates 28

Electoral pledge 29

Statement of interest 30

### 3.2 Model letter to candidates 31

### 3.3 Social media kit 31

# Introduction

*Dear Members and Partners of CONCORD,*

*Elections to the European Parliament are a key milestone for democracy in Europe and a moment when citizens have a say in who will be representing them for the next five years. This choice also defines how the EU policies will be shaped in the area of sustainable development and international partnerships. For this reason, our votes matter not only for our fellow EU citizens but also for the millions of people affected by the Union's actions globally.*

*The Parliament plays an important role in this regard, enacting legislation, exercising scrutiny and defining the budget of the EU's international cooperation policy. The results of the EP elections also shape the composition and priorities of the European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.*

*The 2024 EP elections are taking place in a moment when Europe and the world face multiple crises, including climate change, growing inequalities, increasing armed conflict, erosion of multilateralism, food insecurity, polarised political debate, and action increasingly contrary to the EU's commitment to human rights, targeting migrants and minorities. In this challenging context, we must ensure the Union's external action is aligned with its own fundamental values. We are therefore launching our collective action EU for Global Justice to put the reduction of global inequalities firmly on the renewed EU's agenda.*

*As part of the initiative, we will be calling on the newly-elected MEPs and representatives of the European institutions to champion a feminist foreign policy, ensure consistent action for sustainable development, defend civic space and democracy, as well as provide sufficient and transparent funds for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.*

*Whether you officially decide to join our action or not, we invite you to use this toolkit in your pre- and post-election advocacy. It includes an elections brief explaining the role of key EU institutions in the area of sustainable development and international cooperation, an overview of major political processes leading up to and following the 2024 elections, CONCORD's key advocacy messages and campaign materials such as an electoral pledge, a model letter to candidates, illustrations and social media post samples.*

*We hope you find these resources useful in advocating for equal, just and inclusive societies in a sustainable world together with us!*

# 1. Elections brief

## 1.1 Overview of the main EU institutions

### The European Council

- The European Council (EUCO) brings together the heads of state and government of the Member States, the President of the European Commission, and the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. The group comes together at least every quarter.
- EUCO meetings are chaired by the President of the European Council, appointed by the Council itself by qualified majority for a renewable 2.5 year mandate. This position is currently held by **Charles Michel**, who, as per information available at time of publication, is expected to step down from his role in July to run as an MEP candidate.
- This group sets the EU political agenda: it defines the general political directions and priorities of the EU, that are summed up in a five-year strategic agenda.

### The European Commission

- The European Commission (EC) is the EU's executive body. It is divided into policy departments - known as Directorates-General (DGs) - that develop policies for specific areas.
- Each DG is headed by a Commissioner. The EC has one Commissioner per country, usually from national political majorities. Together, they form the College of Commissioners.
- Each Commissioner then appoints their own staff, i.e. the cabinet, that assists in the preparation of the Commission's decisions.
- Overall, the EC works under the leadership of a President, proposed by the European Council to the European Parliament for a renewable five-year mandate. This position is currently held by **Ursula von der Leyen**.<sup>1</sup>
- The EC represents the interests of the EU as a whole, and ensures that EU legislation is correctly

---

<sup>1</sup>See: [Spitzenkandidat process](#)

applied. It can also propose new legislation to the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union. The EC also manages the EU budget.

## The Council of the European Union

- The Council of the EU brings together the ministers of the Member States grouped by field of activity - which ministers participate in the meetings depends on the topic to be discussed. There are ten council configurations within the Council of the EU. Twice a year, usually in spring and autumn, development ministers meet to discuss international development matters in the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC DEV).
- The presidency of the Council rotates among the EU Member States every 6 months. Member States holding the presidency work together closely in groups of three, called 'trios'. The trio sets long-term goals and prepares a common agenda determining the topics and major issues that will be addressed by the Council over an 18-month period. The current trio is made up of the presidencies

of **Spain** (July-December 2023), **Belgium** (January-June 2024), and **Hungary** (July-December 2024).

- The Council of the EU shares the legislative and budgetary powers of the Union with the Parliament.

## The European Parliament

- The European Parliament (EP) is made up of Members of Parliament (MEPs), who are directly elected by voters in all Member States to represent people's interests for a five-year term. After Brexit, the EP is composed of 705 MEPs. MEPs sit in political groups - they are not organised by nationality, but by political affiliation. There are currently 7 political groups in the EP. One week per month of parliamentary work is devoted to meetings of the political groups.<sup>2</sup>
- MEPs are also part of various committees, each with a chair and a secretariat, where they draw up, amend, and adopt legislative proposals and own-initiative reports. There are currently twenty committees and three subcommittees in the EP. Committees meetings are held in Brussels for two weeks each month. The most relevant

---

<sup>2</sup>[See: Political groups in the European Parliament](#)

- committees for international cooperation are Development (DEVE), Foreign Affairs (AFET) and its subcommittee on Human Rights (DROI), Women's Rights and Gender Equality (FEMM), Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE), and Environment, Public Health, and Food Safety (ENVI).
- Some key figures inside committees are the chairs, political group coordinators, rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs. The rapporteur is the MEP who is responsible for a certain topic on behalf of a committee. Each political group may then have a shadow rapporteur to negotiate the topic with the rapporteur. A shadow rapporteur coordinates the position of a political group on a specific issue and represents the group in negotiations, finding compromise between political groups.
  - Intergroups may as well be formed by MEPs to hold informal exchanges of views on particular subjects and to promote contact between Members and civil society.
  - The EP has a President, who is elected by MEPs for a renewable term of 2.5 years. This position is currently held by **Roberta Metsola**.
  - The EP exercises a power of control over the institutions, and shares the legislative and budgetary powers with the Council of the EU.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup>[\*See: Role of the EP\*](#)

# Role of the EP

## Legislative power

The EP, together with the Council of the EU, adopts the Union's legislation based on the proposals of the European Commission. The EP also examines the Commission's work programme and invites it to submit legislative proposals.

## Budgetary power

The EP approves the multiannual financial framework (MFF), i.e. the EU multiannual budget. It also has the power to adopt the annual budget, on an equal footing with the Council, and to approve how the Union's budget is spent.

## Supervisory power

The EP has a range of supervisory and control powers:

- It hears the President of the Council of the EU in plenary session on their programme;
- It may set up committees of inquiry to investigate possible breaches of EU law by Member States;
- It elects the European Ombudsman, who investigates complaints about maladministration in the Union's institutions and bodies;
- It can ask the Court of Justice to take action against the Council or the Commission if it observes contradictions with European legislation;
- It is presented with an annual report from the Court of Auditors and the European Central Bank (ECB);
- It is consulted on the appointment of the Presidency and the Executive Board of the ECB by the European Council.

In addition, MEPs have the power to influence the Council's action by sending written or oral questions to request new measures or policies.

## Special procedures

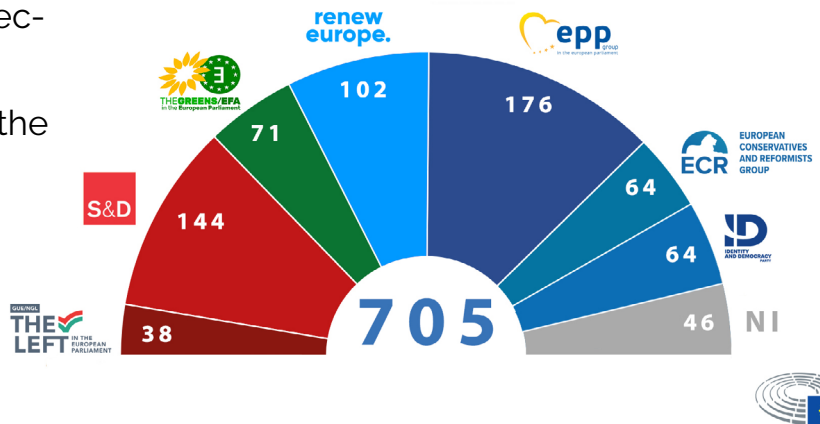
The EP also intervenes through several special procedures.

1. The **approval procedure**, which is a right of veto in 16 areas (such as the investiture of the Commission, accession to the Union, the signing of international agreements or judicial cooperation in criminal matters);
2. The **consultation procedure**, that allows the EP to give a non-binding opinion and is compulsory in some 50 areas;
3. The **right of initiative**, that allows the EP to ask the Commission to submit a proposal.

## 1.2 The ninth legislature

The 2019 European Parliament election was held between 23 and 26 May. For the first time since 1979, the turnout rose, increasing to 51%.

After Brexit, the EP is composed of 705 seats, divided as follows:



### How many seats does my country have, and in which political groups are my MEPs?

COUNTRY	EPP	S&D	RENEW	GREENS/EFA	ECR	ID	LEFT	NI	TOTAL
AUSTRIA	7	5	1	3		3			19
BELGIUM	4	2	4	3	3	3	1	1	21
BULGARIA	7	5	3		2				17
CZECHIA	5	1	5	3	4	2	1		21
CROATIA	4	4	1		1			2	12
CYPRUS	2	2					2		6
DENMARK	1	3	6	2		1	1		14
ESTONIA	1	2	3			1			7
FINLAND	3	2	3	3	2		1		14
FRANCE	8	7	23	11		18	6	5	78
GERMANY	30	16	7	25	1	9	5	3	96
GREECE	7	1	1		1		5	6	21
HUNGARY	1	5	2					13	21
ITALY	12	16	3	3	10	23		9	76
IRELAND	5		2	2			4		13
LATVIA	3	2	1		1			1	8
LITHUANIA	4	2	1	2	1			1	11
LUXEMBOURG	2	1	2	1					6
MALTA	2	4							6
NETHERLANDS	6	6	7	3	5		1	1	29
POLAND	16	7	1	1	27				52
PORTUGAL	7	9		1			4		21
ROMANIA	14	10	7	1	1				33
SLOVAKIA	4	1	4		1			4	14
SLOVENIA	4	2	2						8
SPAIN	13	21	9	3	4		5	3	58
SWEDEN	6	5	3	3	3		1		21
<b>EU 27</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>703</b>

# Political groups in the European Parliament

While some MEPs are not affiliated to any group, there are currently seven political groups in the EP.

## 1. European People's Party (EPP)



The EPP is the EU centre-right party and the largest political group in the EP for the 2019-2024 period. It currently includes 83 parties and partners from 44 countries. Both Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, and Roberta Metsola, President of the European Parliament, belong to the EPP. The largest block in the group, with 30 members, is the German delegation.

---

## 2. Socialists and Democrats (S&D)



The S&D Group is the centre-left political group in the EP that brings together social democrats, socialists, labour and democrats from 26 EU countries. It is now the second largest group in the EP. The largest national delegations are the Spanish (21 members), Italian, and German (16 members each) ones.

---

## 3. Renew Europe



Previously known as ALDE, the Renew Europe Group is the third largest political group in the EP, bringing together the European liberals and democrats. The President of the European Council, Charles Michel, belongs to this group. In terms of national delegations, the Member State most represented in this group is France, with 23 MEPs.



4. **Greens/European Free Alliance (Greens/EFA)**

The Greens/EFA parliamentary group includes members of Green movements, Pirate and Independent MEPs, and MEPs from the EFA, representing stateless nations, regions and minorities, standing up for the right to self-determination. The largest delegation is the German one, with 25 MEPs, followed by the French delegation, with 11 MEPs.

---



5. **European Conservatives and Reformists (ECR)**

The ECR is a centre-right political group in the EP, bringing together Eurosceptic and anti-federalist political groups from 16 EU countries. The group is mainly led by its 27 Polish members.

---



6. **Identity and Democracy (ID)**

The ID Group is the right-wing to far-right political group of the EP, bringing together nationalists, right-wing populists and eurosceptics from ten EU countries. The Italian delegation is the largest, with 23 MEPs, followed by the French (18 MEPs) and the German (9 MEPs) delegations.

---



7. **The Left - GUE/NGL**

The Left comprises political parties with democratic socialist, communist, and eurosceptic orientation. It is the smallest group in the EP, with the French delegation (6 MEPs) being the largest.

## 1.3 Timeline and projections

The European Parliament elections are scheduled to be held between 6 and 9 June 2024.

The EP is due to grow to 720 MEPs after the 2024 elections, 15 more than in the previous five-years term. The national distribution of seats in the new EP will see two more seats for France, Spain and Netherlands, and one more seat for Poland, Belgium, Austria, Denmark, Slovakia, Finland, Ireland, Slovenia, and Latvia.

With nearly half of the Member States holding domestic elections before or right after the EP elections, shifts in political balances at the national level and in Brussels are expected.

Some polls indicate that the elections could mark a political reshaping of the EP with growing support for conservative and far-right voices. In particular, the most sizable gains are expected to be recorded for the ID group, due to the surge in national polls of the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party, and the ECR group, featuring Giorgia Meloni's Brothers of Italy and Poland's nationalist Law and Justice party.

On the left, the Greens are expected

to lose 24 spots (the biggest loss in the EP), while the Left group would gain several seats but remain the smallest group in the Parliament.

Despite a predicted seats loss, the EPP is expected to retain its spot as the Parliament's largest group.

Likewise, the S&D would preserve its spot as the EP second-largest group. On the other hand, according to the latest projections, the ID group could overtake Renew as the third-largest group in the EP, with the ECR almost tied with the Liberals.

Overall, the traditional grand coalition of EPP, S&D and Renew Europe is still expected to maintain a majority within the EP. However, part of the EPP has been showing willingness to partner with the ECR on some Green Deal legislation, and has already shifted further right in its rhetoric.



## Belgian Presidency

### January

Start influencing the process: political groups manifestos will eventually feed into EC President priorities

### February

**2-4 | European Greens**  
Electoral Congress in Lyon

### March

**1-2 | PES** Electoral Congress in Rome

**6-7 | EPP** Electoral Congress in Bucharest

**21-22 | European Council**

**Portugal elections** 

### April

**22-25 | Last plenary of the 9th legislature**

**EP in recess:**  
campaign acceleration

### May

### June

**6-9 | European Elections**

**27-28 | European Council**

- Election of European Council President
- Adoption of Council Strategic Agenda 2024-2029

**Croatia elections** 

**Belgium elections** 

Organisation of MEPs within the EP

Reach out to political parties to influence hearings - identify key MEPs that can support in Committees and hearings.

Be in touch with political groups advisors - looking for ideas on priorities.

Create a CONCORD welcome pack for new MEPs

## Hungarian Presidency

### July

#### 16-19 | First EP plenary

- Election of EP President
- Election of EP Vice-presidents
- Size and composition of EP Committees decided

#### 22-25 | Committees meetings

- Election of Chairs and Vice-Chairs

Organisation of MEPs within the EP

Reach out to political parties to influence hearings - identify key MEPs that can support in Committees and hearings.

Be in touch with political groups advisors - looking for ideas on priorities.

Create a CONCORD welcome pack for new MEPs

### August

### September

#### 16-19 | Second EP plenary

- Proposed EC President presents his/her political agenda for the following 5 years before the EP
- Election of EC President

EC President selects class of Commissioners

### October

Commissioner designates and HR/VP hearings in the EP

**Austria elections** 

**Lithuania elections** 

### November

Commissioner designates and HR/VP hearings in the EP

**13-14** or **25-28** | EP plenary: new college of Commissioners approved

**Romania elections** 

### December

**1** | New institutions take office

## Spitzenkandidat process

Before the 2014 European Parliament elections, senior MEPs came up with the so-called Spitzenkandidat, or lead candidate, system. This procedure foresees the nomination of one lead candidate for each political party, that would also be the party's candidate to be European Commission president.

In theory, once the elections have taken place, the European Council would nominate the candidate of the winning party, who would then be confirmed by the Parliament.

MEPs stressed the democratic nature of this system for the choice of the Commission chief: according to the Treaty of Lisbon (Art 17.7 TEU), the European Council should take into account the results of the parliamentary elections when it proposes a candidate for European Commission President.

While the system prevailed in 2014, with the EPP lead candidate Jean-Claude Juncker being appointed Commission president, in 2019, the European Council nominated non-Spitzenkandidat Ursula von der Leyen as President of the new European Commission, whose nomination was subsequently approved by the European Parliament.

### Updates on Spitzenkandidaten & manifestos

Overall, compared to the 2019 elections, deadlines appear to have been delayed, and major decisions will probably be taken only in the coming months.

While it's not clear whether the Spitzenkandidat system will still be

in place, some political groups have announced they will bring forward one or more lead candidates.

Political groups are expected to publish their European manifestos a few months before the elections, following consultations between their member parties.

## 1.4 After the elections

Following the elections, political groups are formed within the EP. To form a political group, a minimum of 25 MEPs elected in at least one quarter of the EU Member States is required. The EP Bureau, including the EP President and vice-presidents, is elected. Each parliamentary committee also elects a bureau, consisting of a chair and vice-chairs, in separate ballots.

Elections for the Bureau are scheduled to take place during the first plenary session of the new EP, on 16-19 July. The election of Committee chairs and vice-chairs, on the other hand, can be expected to take place during the first committee week, on 22-25 July.

On the basis of the elections' results, and possibly taking into account the Spitzenkandidat system, the European Council proposes the candidate for the presidency of the Commission, who is then elected by the European Parliament. The Parliament vote is based on a set of political guidelines which form an outline of the EC President's policy and sets the Commission overarching priorities

for its five-year term. The candidate will have to convince the EP that they have taken on enough of the political priorities and guidance from the EP to secure the vote.

As there will only be one plenary session in July, September seems to be a safer time to elect the EC President, possibly during the second plenary of the new EP on 16-19 September. This means there is more time to influence the process during the summer.

The European Council also appoints the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP), who shapes the standing of the EU on the global stage. The appointment is subject to both the approval of the EC President and the EP vote. The High Representative also holds the role of Vice-President of the European Commission.

Once the EC President is elected, they will select their class of Commissioners in consultation with EU Member States and address each one of them with a mission letter, outlining their tasks and responsibilities. In this phase, the Commission

Secretary-General - currently Latvian diplomat **Ilze Juhansone** - plays a key role in advising the EC President on mission letters.

Each Commissioner-designate is then subject to a hearing before the responsible parliamentary committee, as well as to a vote of approval by the European Parliament, prior to his or her appointment. The EP can either approve Commissioner-designates or issue a motion of censure against them.

Given the delayed timeline compared to the 2019 elections, if all goes smoothly, Commissioner hearings are most likely going to be held in early November.

The European elections will therefore shape not only the EP composition, but also the composition and priorities of other bodies and institutions and, as a consequence, the EU's international cooperation policy. More specifically, the appointment of the EC President, HR/VP and DG INTPA Commissioner will be of paramount importance for sustainable development and international partnerships<sup>4</sup>.



---

<sup>4</sup>[\*See: Keep an eye on: appointments and mandates\*](#)

## Keep an eye on: appointments and mandates

### EC President political guidelines & mission letters

Every 5 years, the President of the Commission determines the political priorities for its mandate, setting out the areas to be focused on during that term. These areas are drawn from the Council's strategic agenda and from discussions with the political groups of the EP. Naturally, the EC President priorities will mainly reflect the manifesto of the political group they come from, but since they also need the support of other political groups, it is likely that some priorities from other groups' manifestos will also feed into the Commission guidelines.

### DG INTPA

DG INTPA is responsible for international cooperation policy and providing aid through programmes around the world. It implements part of the European aid budget and develops and carries out the EU development policy abroad. Its current mission is to contribute to sustainable development, reduce poverty, and promote democracy, human rights, and the rule of law through international partnerships that uphold and promote European values and interests.

The incumbent DG INTPA Commissioner is **Jutta Urpilainen**, a former Member of the Finnish Parliament with the Social Democratic Party of Finland.

### EEAS

The European External Action Service (EEAS) is the European Union's diplomatic service. The EEAS shapes the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy to promote peace, prosperity, security, and the interests of Europeans across the globe. The EEAS is led by the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, who is also Vice-President of the European Commission (HR/VP). This dual role would ideally allow further coordination and ensure coherence in EU foreign policy, as the European Commission has a central role in shaping EU policies on, among others, development, trade, and humanitarian aid. The incumbent HR/VP is **Josep Borrell**.

## FPI Service

The Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) reports directly to the HR/VP, and works in close cooperation with the EEAS and Commission DGs to ensure the effectiveness and coherence of EU external policies. FPI is responsible for the operational and financial management of the budgets for the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy..

## DG NEAR

The mission of the Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) is to take forward the EU's Neighbourhood and Enlargement policies. DG NEAR works closely with the EEAS, implementing assistance actions and supporting reform and democratic consolidation in Europe's eastern and southern neighbourhood.

The incumbent DG NEAR Commissioner is **Olivér Várhelyi**, a Hungarian lawyer and diplomat who took office after the rejection of László Trócsányi by the European Parliament in the hearings process.

## DG TRADE

The Directorate-General for Trade (DG TRADE) develops and implements the EU's trade policy towards non-Member States. DG TRADE is responsible for protecting the trade interests of the EU and advancing in the removal of trade barriers.

The incumbent Trade Commissioner is Latvian politician serving as Executive Vice-President of the EC for An Economy that Works for People **Valdis Dombrovskis**.

### Additional resources:

- POLITICO [Poll of Polls](#)
- The Good Lobby [Roadmap to the 2024 Elections](#)
- EU Matrix [forecasts](#)
- CONCORD Sweden's "[How the EU works](#)"

## 2. EU for Global Justice

### 2.1 CONCORD's priorities

No matter where we live, we all want a better quality of life. Unfortunately, high levels of inequality persist between countries and regions, preventing millions of people from enjoying a dignified standard of living. Many struggle to make ends meet, feeling isolated and insecure in the face of challenges such as the climate crisis and armed conflicts. Being disproportionately affected by global crises, the EU's partner countries are often unable to provide access to nutritious food, good health, quality education and other basic services to their citizens.

The COVID-19 pandemic clearly showed that what happens in other parts of the world affects our lives and vice-versa. A truly sustainable and democratic EU is not possible without addressing inequalities internally and worldwide. Together with our elected representatives, we can all contribute to creating a world where everyone thrives.

The 2024 European Elections offer a key opportunity to take on this challenge seriously.

CONCORD calls on the Members of the European Parliament elected in 2024 and the renewed EU institutions to embrace four priorities in order to transform existing power structures while building equitable and inclusive societies in a sustainable world. The EU's approach to these priorities must be developed in partnership with civil society, and the European Parliament plays a key role in taking them forward.

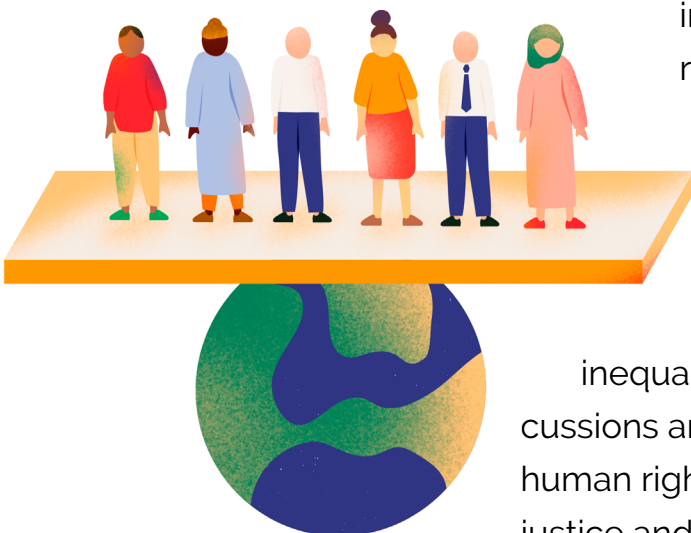
# 1. An EU Feminist Foreign Policy

**We call on Members of the European Parliament to champion an EU intersectional, feminist and rights-based foreign policy, by:**

- Promoting a foreign policy that rebalances power structures and addresses intersecting inequalities and their underlying harmful norms. It would put people, communities and countries that have been marginalised at the centre of policy-making and promote collaboration over competition. It would also enshrine human rights, pursue human security and feminist peace, sustainable development, environmental integrity, and put power- and resource-sharing and caring at the forefront. This means promoting equality for all across different areas of external action and in the work of all European Parliament's committees and delegations as well as other institutions.
- Promoting the benefits of developing an EU Intersectional Feminist Foreign Policy with the European Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Member States.
- Calling on the Commission to commit to increasing the direct funding to feminist movements and women's rights organisations, defending and expanding the civic space of these organisations, and engaging directly with them. The Commission should particularly focus on those organisations facing intersect-

ing forms of discrimination such as local and rural WROs, CSOs led by young women and girls, organisations for women with disabilities, and LGBTIQ CSOs.

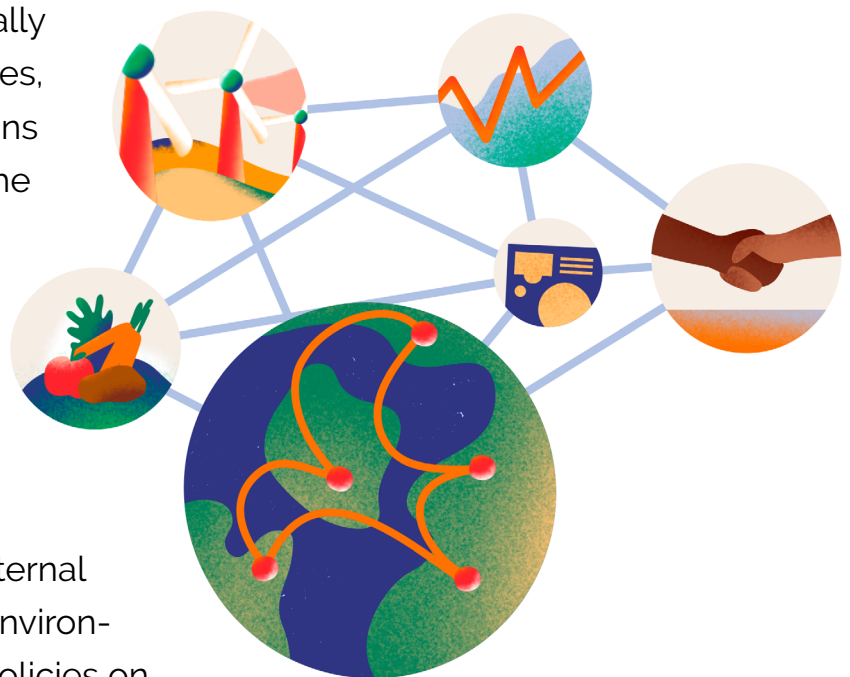
- Highlighting the importance of tackling structural and intersecting inequalities, and building their arguments and discussions around the values of European accountability, human rights, gender equality, sustainability, social justice and inclusion.



## 2. Consistent action for sustainable development

**We call on Members of the European Parliament to champion the Sustainable Development Goals and promote policy coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, by:**

- Raising awareness of potentially negative impacts of EU policies, programming and other actions on partner countries across the Parliament's committees and while working with other EU institutions.
- Calling on the European Commission to develop institutional mechanisms to assess and address the external impacts - economic, social, environmental and political - of EU policies on partner countries as an integral part of its policy-making.
- Urging the European Commission to ensure the coherence of policies aimed at promoting a just transition towards an economy that puts equality and the well-being of people and the planet at its centre in the EU and in partner countries.
- Holding the European Commission accountable for its progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals while applying a human rights-based approach and ensuring the coherence of all policies in this area.



### 3. Civic space and democracy

**We call on Members of the European Parliament to protect, promote and enable civic space globally and push for more EU engagement with civil society in a meaningful, inclusive and safe way, by:**

- Demanding that the EU increase dialogue with all types of civil society actors at all levels and throughout all stages of the policy cycle, while leading by example by consulting civil society on parliamentary files related to such key topics as the Global Gateway, the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+), environment and climate change, the EU budget, civic space and human rights, and EU - African Union partnership.
- Calling for and resourcing the full and comprehensive implementation of the [OECD DAC Recommendation](#) on Enabling Civil Society with the particular aim of shifting power and supporting the localisation agenda.
- Calling on the European Commission and the EEAS to take a strong political stand to promote an open civic space and protect human rights defenders, and actively use resources and tools to prevent the shrinking of CSO funding and spaces inside and outside the EU.
- Pushing for more transparency in EU decision-making with regards to international, regional and bilateral relations to build equal, fair and meaningful partnerships based on the principles of democracy and human rights.



## 4. Funding for sustainable development

**We call on Members of the European Parliament to scrutinise the implementation of the EU's international cooperation budget to ensure its transparency, accountability and consistency with the 2030 Agenda, by:**

- Urging the European Commission to provide more detailed figures on the implementation of the targets of the Global Europe: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), in particular with regards to Official Development Assistance, human development, climate, migration, gender and funding for CSOs. The Parliament should be also informed ahead of each mobilisation of the NDICI cushion funds.
- Maintaining regular quality consultations with civil society on the monitoring and evaluation of NDICI, including during the Commission-Parliament geo-strategic dialogue.
- Calling for the transparency of Global Gateway projects and Team Europe initiatives, including the possibility to access data in a timely, transparent, and accessible way.
- Monitoring NDICI and all Global Gateway projects with regards to their impact on equality in partner countries, including by pushing for the meaningful implementation of the Inequality, Gender and Disability Markers.



## 2.2 Key context

### EU International Cooperation

The EU, through its institutions and Member States, is the world's largest aid donor and a key player in development. The main goal of the EU's development cooperation, laid down in TFEU Art. 208, is poverty reduction and eradication.

Today, the EU's development policy targets some 150 partner countries in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia and the Pacific through the financial instrument known as Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)-Global Europe.

More recently, the EU has shifted its narrative around development cooperation and aid relations from one based on "donor-recipient" relations towards one that promotes the establishment of "international partnerships".

CONCORD has been providing recommendations and engaging with relevant stakeholders to ensure that the EU creates equal, fair, and meaningful international partnerships, by rebalancing power structures and avoiding detrimental tendencies, such as eurocentrism, limited access for stakeholders, or power games. Instead, CONCORD calls for people-centred and human rights-based partnerships that prioritise sustainable development and tackle inequalities, with an increased role for civil society.

### EU FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

#### On Gender Action Plan (GAP) III

- The joint EC and EEAS mid-term report was published on 20th November 2023 - our preliminary analysis is that it fell short in addressing the challenges faced during GAP III implementation, and it also lacks systematic data to back-up many of the claims. GAP III has been extended until 2027 (which aligns with one of our recommendations). With this extension in mind, we will push for a second report that addresses the aforementioned shortcomings to be published in 2025.
- Our parallel report "[Implementing the EU Gender Action Plan III: Turning ambition into impact?](#)" collects all our findings and recommendations around the implementation of GAP III.

## On Funding

- The EC has a target of 85% of new external actions having gender equality as a principal or significant objective by 2025, but this is not a funding target.
- Instead, we ask for 85% of ODA to programmes where gender equality is a significant component (G1/G2) and 20% of ODA going to programmes where gender equality is a principal component. More can be found in our paper "[Funding local women's rights organisations and feminist movements for transformative change](#)".

## CONSISTENT ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

### Context

Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) is a legal obligation of the EU institutions, rooted in Article 208 of the Lisbon Treaty (2009) and reiterated in the European Consensus on Development (2017). PCD means the EU cannot implement policies that may have negative impacts on partner countries, as it could undermine their development.

In 2015, a more comprehensive approach (Policy Coherence for

Sustainable Development, or PCSD) was developed in the context of the United Nations' 2030 Agenda, by integrating the economic, social, environmental and governance dimensions of sustainable development at all stages of domestic and international policy making.

Unlike the most part of OECD Member States, the EU still works through a PCD, rather than a PCSD, prism. By applying PCSD to its policy-making from the design stage, the EU could minimise the negative impacts on partner countries by identifying and addressing the spillovers of its domestic policies. This includes analysing conflicts of interests and putting EU domestic priorities aside when they clash with global sustainable development.



## EU framework

Two main bodies are currently actively involved in PCD:

- Within the EC, despite its limited capacity to take on this responsibility, DG INTPA is almost exclusively responsible for promoting PCD. The EC Secretariat General is also increasingly involved in PCD. However, this involvement is still insufficient.

In a 2023 resolution, the EP called on DG INTPA to “actively and meaningfully engage with other DGs [...] to ensure that PCD is implemented in all relevant Commission initiatives.” According to this resolution, the SecGen should coordinate inter-DG work to integrate a PCSD approach in EU policies; this should then be complemented by the re-establishment of a dedicated PCD team within DG INTPA.

- Within the EP, the DEVE Committee has the paramount role in PCD implementation. The intensity of PCD-related activities increased significantly when a new MEP, Ms Janina Ochojska, was appointed rapporteur on PCD in January 2022. However, DEVE has insufficient resources to ensure the implementation of PCD in all EP work. This is why, in its 2023 resolution, the EP

called for the establishment of a “PCD mainstreaming network” and for “all committees to consistently apply PCD” in their work where relevant.

On November 28, 2023, the DEVE Secretariat and MEP Janina Ochojska organised the first meeting of the EP PCD Network. A second meeting of the Network is scheduled to be held in March 2024, and there seems to be an intention to move forward on PCD also under the next legislature.

At the High-Level Political Forum in July 2023, the EU presented a voluntary review on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Despite addressing the negative impacts of EU domestic policies on third countries, the report is mainly descriptive and fails to properly assess the effectiveness of PC(S)D mechanisms.

## Position

- [CONCORD's Guide to Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development](#)

## CIVIC SPACE AND DEMOCRACY

### Context

According to CIVICUS' [civic space monitor](#), in 2022 only 3.2% of the world's population lives in countries with an open civic space. Out of 197 countries assessed, 117 have serious civic space restrictions. Today, attacks on civic space continue globally, with traditional tactics and new tools and trends (e.g. in the online space).

Despite only committing to protect, promote and defend civic space when it comes to its external action<sup>5</sup>, data from [FRA](#) (2023) and the [OECD](#) (2022) also show an alarming picture regarding civic space within the EU itself. Various concerning developments show the degradation of civic space inside the EU, such as the '[Pieper report](#)', the Defense of Democracy package's directive on foreign funding ([EC Proposal](#)), the removal of contacts on [who is who](#), low quality consultations and lack of funding for CSOs.

On the positive side:

- EU delegations have developed the third generation of CSO road-

maps - these are strategies to engage with CSOs and support civic space in each EU partner country. In addition, the EU aims to support a handful of delegations to strengthen their dialogue with civil society, through CSO roadmap facilities. Each EUD has a CSO focal point.

- CONCORD's Regional Alliances group and its partners successfully advocated for the creation of a Civil Society Engagement Mechanism in the EU-AU Partnership.
- CONCORD also successfully pushed for the creation of a Global Gateway CSO advisory platform - and is now asking for consistent engagement in EU partner countries.

### EU framework

- In the current EP, DROI is the sub-committee of AFET that deals specifically with human rights issues in EU external action. On internal EU civic space and human rights issues it would be mainly LIBE, although human rights and civic space may be cross-cutting in many other committees.

---

<sup>5</sup>See, for instance: [Communication on the Roots of Democracy](#) (2012); [European Consensus on Development](#) (2017); [Council Conclusions on civil society in EU Ext. Action](#) (2017); [Human Rights and Democracy Action Plan - HRDAP](#) (2020-2024); [EU commitment to OECD DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society in Development Co-operation and Humanitarian Assistance](#).

- One of the EP vice-presidents has a civil society portfolio.
- The EU has recently launched some promising programmes (although it's too early to assess their impact):
  - A new programme, "System for an Enabling Environment for Civil Society (SEE)", has been awarded to a consortium of CSOs to support civic space, in particular through monitoring, early warning and response.
  - The Team Europe Democracy Initiative, including a CSO platform, has recently been launched.

**Position**

- [Standing Strong in the Storm: an EU strategy to safeguard civic space world-wide](#)
- [7 Practices for civil society engagement paper](#)

**FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

**On ODA**

According to our last [Aidwatch Report](#), in 2022, the EU Member States continued to fall far short of their internationally agreed ODA spending commitments: close to EUR 20

billion - more than 1 euro in every 5 - is called aid but never reaches the intended communities in the majority world. We call on EU institutions to increase ODA levels rapidly to provide at least the 0.7% GNI/ODA before the 2030 deadline, and to include an explicit commitment to use ODA for reducing inequalities between and within countries.

**On CSO funding**

Our study "[Who holds the lion's share?](#)" reveals that there has been a steady decline in the diversity and accessibility of EU funding opportunities for CSOs within the NDI-CI-Global Europe, with less systematic and less meaningful references to civil society in many framework documents.

The current partnership practices and funding mechanisms restrict CSOs from exercising their right of initiative and hinder their effective contribution to the implementation of EU international cooperation programs. This, in turn, adversely impacts CSOs' ability to contribute meaningfully to sustainable development.

Despite the vital role played by CSOs, serving as crucial implementation partners where authorities fall short and amplifying the voices of those affected by poverty and inequality,

EU external action confines CSOs primarily to roles related to policy and advocacy, human rights, and humanitarian response. According to the DAC, in 2021, just 3.5% of EU institutions' ODA supported CSO activities in areas like agriculture, food security, education, social services, forestry, or environmental protection, while most EU ODA to CSOs focused on emergency response.

### On the MFF Mid Term Review

On June 20th, the European Commission proposed a targeted revision of the EU long-term budget, i.e. its Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Recognising that external action has been under severe stress since 2021 and that the EU budget is not adequately equipped to enable the EU to fulfil its geopolitical ambitions, meet its global commitments and respond to unforeseen crises, the Commission proposed an increase of €10.5 billion to Heading 6 - Neighbourhood and the World.

In October, the EP called for a further increase of €10 billion to boost areas like migration, external challenges, and the EU's strategic autonomy, and to enhance the EU's crisis-response capabilities. A proposed further reinforcement of €1 billion was deemed vital to replenish the NDICI-Global

Europe cushion.

The Council has yet to finalise its stance on the package, and the ongoing negotiations are very worrying as there have been proposed redeployments of funds, especially NDICI, to pay for migration priorities, as well as cuts in Heading 6, the NDICI cushion, and emergency funds.

These cuts to the Commission's proposal, prioritisation of migration concerns and limitations to its flexibility leave the EU with more limited resources to shape the world's responses to both existing and emerging challenges. The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated that this cushion has been a lifeline during times of crisis, notably in mobilising access to vaccines. Earmarking existing cushion funds, in addition to proposed cushion top-ups for the Southern Neighborhood, will result in only €1 billion being available until 2027 for any other priority, potentially with dramatic consequences.

---

#### Additional resources:

- Coordination SUD's ["Recommandations pour un Parlement européen moteur en faveur des objectifs du développement durable"](#)
- [CONCORD Recommendations for Food and Agriculture in the AU-EU Partnership](#)

## 3. Campaign material

### 3.1 Electoral pledge or statement of interest for candidates

Whether it be in the form of a pledge or of a statement of interest in the topics CONCORD is working on, we would like our members to use one of these tools as a conversation starter with MEP candidates. Members can choose the format they believe would work better depending on their national and political context. Please make sure each candidate receives only one version of the document to avoid confusion.

After signing this document, candidates to the European Parliament are encouraged to take a picture of themselves while holding a printed out page with our campaign logo.

To keep track of the signatories, we developed a [form](#) that can be filled out by both MEP candidates themselves or by CONCORD members who had direct contact with MEP candidates.



## Statement of interest | EU for Global Justice

As a candidate for the European Parliament, I would be interested in working alongside CONCORD and its member organisations in the following policy areas that will contribute to shaping more **equitable** and **inclusive** societies in a sustainable world.

### EU FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

If elected, I am interested in working towards the development of a European **foreign policy that promotes equality**, and in highlighting the importance of recognising, addressing, and dismantling the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by people around the world.

I am interested in discussing the benefits of developing an **EU Intersectional Feminist Foreign Policy** with the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

I am willing to promote equality in all areas of external action and in the work of all the European Parliament's committees and delegations as well as other institutions.

I am willing to urge the Commission to engage with **feminist movements** and women's rights organisations (**WROs**) in partner countries, especially those facing intersectional forms of discrimination.

### CIVIC SPACE AND DEMOCRACY

If elected, I am willing to consult civil society on parliamentary files related to topics such as funding for sustainable development, environment and climate change, and civic space and human rights, and to demand that the EU **increase dialogue with civil society** actors throughout all stages of the policy cycle.

I am willing to respect, protect and promote civic space, to support and engage with civil society, and to incentivise Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) effectiveness, transparency, and accountability, as outlined in the **OECD DAC Recommendation** on Enabling Civil Society.

I am willing to call on the European Commission and the EEAS to promote an **open civic space** and to protect human rights defenders.

I am willing to push for more transparency in EU decision-making with regards to **meaningful partnerships** based on the principles of **equality, democracy and human rights**.

### CONSISTENT ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

If elected, I am willing to raise awareness of potentially negative impacts of EU policies and actions on partner countries across the Parliament's committees and while working with other EU institutions.

I am willing to champion the Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**) and promote policy coherence for the implementation of **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

I am willing to urge the European Commission to ensure the **coherence** of policies aimed at promoting a just transition towards an economy that puts equality at its core.

I am willing to hold the European Commission accountable for its progress in achieving the SDGs.

### FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

If elected, I am interested in advocating for sufficient and transparent **funds** for addressing **global challenges** and tackling **inequalities**, and in monitoring their impact on equality in partner countries.

I am willing to scrutinise the implementation of the EU's international cooperation budget to ensure its transparency, accountability, and alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

I give my consent to CONCORD Europe and its member organisations to publish my name, political affiliation, country, and photograph taken while signing the pledge.

Name

---

Country

---

Political group

---

Signature

---

# Electoral Pledge | EU for Global Justice

As a candidate for the European Parliament, I would be interested in working alongside CONCORD and its member organisations in the following policy areas that will contribute to shaping more **equitable** and **inclusive** societies in a sustainable world.

## EU FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

If elected, I commit to working for a European **foreign policy that promotes equality**, and to highlighting the importance of recognising, addressing, and dismantling the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by people around the world.

I commit to discussing the benefits of developing an **EU Intersectional Feminist Foreign Policy** with the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

I commit to promoting equality in all areas of external action and in the work of all the European Parliament's committees and delegations as well as other institutions.

I commit to urging the Commission to engage with **feminist movements** and women's rights organisations (**WROs**) in partner countries, especially those facing intersectional forms of discrimination.

## CIVIC SPACE AND DEMOCRACY

If elected, I commit to consulting civil society on parliamentary files related to topics such as funding for sustainable development, environment and climate change, and civic space and human rights, and to demand that the EU **increase dialogue with civil society** actors throughout all stages of the policy cycle.

I commit to respecting, protecting and promoting civic space, to supporting and engaging with civil society, and to incentivising Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) effectiveness, transparency, and accountability, as outlined in the **OECD DAC Recommendation on Enabling Civil Society**.

I commit to calling on the European Commission and the EEAS to promote an **open civic space** and to protect human rights defenders.

I commit to pushing for more transparency in EU decision-making with regards to meaningful partnerships based on the principles of **equality, democracy and human rights**

## CONSISTENT ACTION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

If elected, I commit to raising awareness of potentially negative impacts of EU policies and actions on partner countries across the Parliament's committees and while working with other EU institutions.

I commit to championing the Sustainable Development Goals (**SDGs**) and promoting policy coherence for the implementation of **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**.

I commit to urging the European Commission to ensure the **coherence** of policies aimed at promoting a just transition towards an economy that puts equality at its core.

I pledge to hold the European Commission accountable for its progress in achieving the SDGs.

## FUNDING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

If elected, I commit to advocating for sufficient and transparent **funds** for addressing **global challenges** and tackling **inequalities**, and to monitor their impact on equality in partner countries.

I commit to scrutinising the implementation of the EU's international cooperation budget to ensure its transparency, accountability, and alignment with the 2030 Agenda.

I give my consent to CONCORD Europe and its member organisations to publish my name, political affiliation, country, and photograph taken while signing the pledge.

Name

---

Political group

---

Country

---

Signature

---

## 3.2 Model letter to candidates

Dear **[name of candidate]**,

Ahead of the upcoming European Parliament Elections, we urge you, as **[name of political group]** candidate, to ensure that the promotion of equality, both globally and locally, becomes one of the key objectives for the EU institutions renewed in 2024.

As the main interlocutor of the EU institutions on sustainable development representing more than 2600 NGOs in Europe, we believe the following priorities can help in building equitable and inclusive societies in a sustainable world after the 2024 European Elections:

- A foreign policy that promotes equality, by recognising and addressing the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination faced by people around the world;
- Coherent policies for sustainable development, with a positive impact in Europe and beyond;
- Ensuring that civil society and democracy have the necessary space to prosper;
- Sufficient and transparent funds for addressing global challenges and tackling inequalities.

We would like to discuss with you how, as European CSOs, we could support you to promote a sustainable development agenda pre- and post- elections.

We would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss that in more detail with you, and look forward to hearing about your availability for a meeting.

Kind regards,

**[signers]**

## 3.3 Social media kit

In order to support members in the social media arena, we have created a social media kit. In it you can find, first of all, a summary of the main messages of the campaign, which have appeared repeatedly in the toolkit. Next, the main audiences are categorised by level of importance, along with their names on

the social networks for easier tagging. In the next section you can find suggested posts on LinkedIn and X (formerly Twitter) in relation to the four key messages. Finally there are the relevant links to access the visual material and key moments.

 [\*\*Living document with the target audience and suggested posts\*\*](#)



**EU FOR  
GLOBAL  
JUSTICE**

# European Elections 2024 Toolkit

January 2024

**Content writing:** Laura Maschio

**Coordination:** Michał Rybacki

**Design and layout:** Coralie Legrand and Fernando Sanz Ocaña

**With the inputs from the European Elections Task Force  
and the CONCORD Secretariat**

**CONCORD**

European Confederation of NGOs working on  
sustainable development and international cooperation



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

This publication was co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of CONCORD Europe and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.

The "Towards an open, fair and sustainable Europe in the world - Fourth Trio EU Presidency Project" is co-funded by the European Union and implemented by national NGDO platforms HAND (Hungary); La Coordinadora (Spain), CNCD-11.11.11 (Belgium), 11.11.11 (Belgium) and CONCORD, the European confederation of NGOs working on sustainable development and international cooperation.



**CONCORD 2023**