Briefing paper on the EU Country Roadmaps for engagement with Civil Society
May 2018

This briefing is prepared by the CONCORD EU Delegation subgroup.

Introduction
This year, EU Delegations are updating the EU country roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society. During the previous cycle, more than 100 country roadmaps were adopted, most of which covered the period 2014-2017.

This briefing has been designed to help CONCORD members and partners to engage with the process of consultation at country level.

As outlined in the 2012 Communication "The root of democracy and sustainable development", the EU Delegations have developed country roadmaps to strengthen the strategic cooperation and structured dialogue of EU and member states with Civil Society organizations at partner country level.

This is therefore a key moment to build capacity and mobilise local civil society organisations to engage with the EU delegations. Local, national and international CSOs working in countries across the world can engage in dialogue with their respective EU Delegation to make their, and their constituencies,’ voices heard.

In this brief you will find information on the background to, and the next steps of, the EU country CSO roadmaps, helping you to engage effectively with your local EU Delegation.

If you want to know more about EU delegations engagement with civil society at country level, we also invite you to read the CONCORD EU delegations report: towards a more effective partnership with Civil Society¹ that is based on a broad survey and provides some data, examples and country cases as well as a general assessment and recommendations on the issue.

¹ https://concordeurope.org/what-we-do/promoting-civil-society-space/eu-delegation-report/
1. Background: EU commitment to engaging with civil society

In recent years, the EU has strengthened its commitment to supporting an enabling environment for civil society and stepped up its efforts to include CSOs as development actors in their own right in dialogue concerning policy and programming of EU development aid. These commitments are enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty, as well as in the Cotonou Agreement and the new EU Consensus on Development. In the past, the EU’s dialogue with civil society has often been criticized, for not being sufficiently sustained and structured. The 2012 EU communication on Civil Society has confirmed the EU’s willingness to establish a stronger partnership and a more regular and strategic dialogue with CSOs and committed EU Delegations to adopt country roadmaps for their engagement with civil society. A first generation of roadmaps were established and implemented between 2014 and 2017 and many EU delegations are now in the process of reviewing them or adopting new roadmaps for the years to come.

2. Purpose: Why CSO Country Roadmaps?

The purpose of the roadmaps is “to improve the impact, predictability and visibility of EU actions, ensuring consistency and synergy throughout the various sectors covered by EU external relations. These roadmaps are also meant to trigger coordination and sharing of best practices with the Member States and other international actors, including for simplification and harmonisation of funding requirements.

Roadmaps should be based on a sound understanding of the CSOs arena and the wider socio-economic context in which they operate. This is a prerequisite for a more strategic engagement of the EU at country level, particularly if relevant stakeholders have to be identified in order to establish or facilitate effective and meaningful dialogue schemes. The roadmaps should identify long term objectives of EU cooperation with CSOs and encompass dialogue as well as operational support, identifying appropriate working modalities. This exercise should be linked to the programming of EU external assistance, namely bilateral, regional and thematic cooperation. The human rights country strategies developed by the EUDs together with Member States present in the country are also an important reference, although these are not public documents.

The roadmaps should be developed taking into account the views of civil society, be regularly updated and where appropriate, made publicly available and shared with national authorities.

7 reasons why the EU Roadmap Matters (from the EU Info Note of June 2017)

1. It’s an integrated approach among EU actors (EU Delegation and EU Member States)
2. It’s the framework for a strengthened and more inclusive dialogue between the EU and CSOs
3. It’s reinforcing EU commitment to promote an enabling environment for CSOs
4. It helps to raise awareness of public authorities about CSOs, their work and added value and helps to facilitate CSO’s involvement in domestic policies

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5. It identifies active support actions for the capacity development of civil society
6. It reinforces mainstreaming efforts of civil society into EU focal sectors of cooperation, increasing civil society involvement in EU interventions
7. It's promoting innovation of funding modalities and overcoming the instrument driven approach

The roadmaps are unique in their process.

In October 2017 DEVCO A5 sent to all Heads of Cooperation of the EU Delegations the invitation to consult the CSOs and Member States in order to verify if the identified priorities for the period 2014-2017 were still relevant and to update, revise or prolong the roadmaps accordingly so they can be relevant to 2020. The message was accompanied with guidelines on how to proceed. A similar note was sent by the Director General Stefano Manservisi to all Heads of Delegation in February 2018.

The official deadline for drafting the revised document is the 30th April 2018, but DEVCO being aware of the workload of the EU Delegations, expects to receive them by August 2018. There is therefore still space to engage in the discussion.

One of the features that makes this process unique is that the roadmaps can be revised or updated at the initiatives of the EU Delegations at any time. A revision could be required because of changes in, for example:
- the political context (i.e: process of democratization in Burkina Faso)
- the legal framework (i.e: new NGOs law in Israel)
- the CSOs landscape (the request can come from the CSOs).

The times, modality of the process vary from country to country. For example:
- Consultation: in some countries the EU Delegations have launched a broad and open consultation involving all types of CSOs. Several EU Delegations are still in the mapping process of identifying local organisations with whom to consult (for example Burundi asked the support of the INGOs for mapping local CSOs).
- Timing: the length of time it takes for the consultation and finalisation of the roadmap differs. For example, for Timor Leste it was a long process of more than a year.
- Complexity: Some EU Delegations require additional assistance from DEVCO at different points in the roadmap development. They can receive assistance through the roadmap facility.
- Geographic coverage: Most roadmaps cover a specific country but for some areas, such as the small Caribbean Islands the roadmaps are unified in a regional one.

4. What do the roadmaps cover?
2018 roadmap template.
The CSO roadmaps will be built on a single template, which will then be adapted to the local context. According to the latest available information, the template is structured as follows:
A brief analysis of the context and past EU engagement

EU strategy and action plan to engage with CSOs

Follow up of the process and strategy including:

- **Process indicators** like Involvement of Member States in the Roadmap, level of consultations held with CSOs regarding the Roadmap and complementarity of the Roadmap vis-à-vis related EU and other donors/partners processes

- **Outcome indicators** – with priorities, indicators, targets, baseline information and means of verification

Though the European Commission in its CSO communication has stated that the CSO roadmaps, “where appropriate, [will be] made publicly available and shared with national authorities”, it is however important to be aware that EC does not intend the CSO roadmaps to be merely a document, but a process managed by EU Delegations in coordination with Member States. It is also important to note that 60% of the roadmaps are not made public.

### 5. How civil society can engage

The roadmaps should be updated taking into account the views of civil society.

Consultations by EU Delegations are already taking place so you need to contact your EU Delegation to find out where they are in the process and what space there is for your organisation to be involved. You might want to do this in coordination with other civil society actors.

In terms of what the consultation might cover, here are the following questions were asked by the EU Delegation in the Philippines during their roadmap consultation which took place in February 2018.

1. What is your assessment of the implementation of the 2014-2017 EU roadmap for engagement with civil society?
2. What are the priority sectors the EU should work on in the next roadmap (2018-2020)?
3. What is the level of capacity of CSOs in responding to these priorities? How can the EU support the civil society sector in that regard?
4. What are the most effective channels to achieve these priorities (for instance inclusive dialogue between the EU and CSOs, promotion of an enabling environment for CSOs, facilitation of CSO’s involvement in domestic policies, active support actions for the capacity development, civil society involvement in EU interventions (through dedicated civil society instruments, bilateral focal sector programmes...)?

*Please share feedback with the EU delegation group on your experiences with the roadmap consultation or on the usefulness of this briefing: policy@concordeurope.org*

See in [here](#) the list of countries with the status of the roadmap and its review.