

Building Bricks for Heading VI: Neighbourhood and the World May 2018

The European Union (the EU) and its citizens have been proud of the EU's reputation as a top, principled, effective aid donor. The next EU long-term budget is a key moment for the future of Europe and the planet. Never before has it been so important for the EU to get the Budget right. The Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement must act as a blueprint for the EU Budget. However, CONCORD Europe believes that the external action architecture proposed by the European Commission represents an unfortunate departure from its own principled approach to development aid. The EC's proposal published on 2 May clearly departs from sustainable development interests and positions the EU's foreign policy and shorter term political interests as the central guiding principles. Placing political self-interest at the centre of external action, as reflected in the current proposal, will erode trust in the EU's influence and reputation.

The EU should respect development effectiveness principles and preserve development objectives, which by their nature, must be kept autonomous from foreign policy interests. While we would welcome simplification and increased flexibility of the MFF architecture, the merging of many tried and tested instruments into one overarching instrument with neighbourhood, development, and foreign affairs policies will not be able to deliver upon the international commitments the EU has made. The merging of such an array of different policies into a single instrument dilutes their distinct objectives and will jeopardize and endanger the life-saving and transformative work achieved by previous development, human rights, and peacebuilding work.

CONCORD Europe is advocating for a different and more ambitious structure which will allow for simplification without endangering the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

- a. A Sustainable Development Instrument that is 100% ODA eligible, fully aligned with aid effectiveness principles, and targeted at poverty eradication and the achievement of the SDGs and the Paris Agreement.
- b. Separate instruments on human rights and democracy, peace and stability and the neighbourhood due to the unique and important role of each of these instruments plays.
- c. Overall 90% ODA eligibility for the "Neighbourhood and the World" heading in line with existing Council Conclusions.
- d. Mainstreaming of the SDGs, gender, climate change and environment, and the principle of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development across the whole EU Budget.

For a detailed dissection of CONCORD Europe's position on the single external instrument, please see [here](#) or consult <https://concordeurope.org/what-we-do/promoting-civil-society-space/eu-budget-mff-2021-2027/>.



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