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PART 1/2

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Accompanying the document

REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL

2023 Annual Report on the implementation of the EU's External Action Instruments in 2022

{COM(2023) 717 final}

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1. Introduction: EU response to world developments in 2022

This report outlines key elements of the EU's financial support for international cooperation and development, humanitarian aid, foreign policy and enlargement in 2022.

In 2022 the EU's external actions were conducted in a context heavily affected by Russia's illegal aggression and war against Ukraine and its multidimensional effects in the EU, its neighbours and the world at large. While still recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic, in February 2022 the world faced a new geopolitical crisis that created an unprecedented humanitarian emergency and an increase in food prices across the world, further exacerbating global food insecurity, and an ensuing energy crisis. The EU's external action instruments and its international partnerships addressed the regional and global consequences of the war stepping up its political, humanitarian and financial support to Ukraine, to neighbouring countries and to other partners, especially those least developed and most vulnerable.

The war in Ukraine provoked a blockade of Ukrainian exports and destruction of crops which aggravated global food insecurity. The EU pooled resources and expertise and, through a 'Team Europe' approach, stepped up its food security mechanisms and mobilised substantial assistance to support the most affected countries in Africa, the Middle East, Caribbean and the Pacific.

In 2022, enlargement assistance supported rural development and investment in key areas for the region such as transport, energy security, digital and green transition. During 2022, the EU opened enlargement negotiations with Albania and North Macedonia, offered European perspective to Georgia, and granted EU candidate status to Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Kosovo* applied for EU membership on 15 December 2022.

The EU continued the implementation of the Economic and Investment Plans for the neighbourhood and enlargement regions, as part of its Global Gateway strategy[1]. In the Eastern Partnership region, the bulk of EU support was dedicated to small and medium-sized companies and the green digital transition. In the Southern Neighbourhood, priority areas were green transition, climate change resilience, connectivity and support to the private sector.

Based on a 'Team Europe' approach, in the first year of its implementation the Global Gateway strategy made key investments in hard and soft infrastructure to boost digital connectivity through underwater data cable and terrestrial connections between the EU and its partners, to increase renewable energy production with investments in solar plants and wind farms and to increase access and manufacturing capacity of vaccines, medicines and health technologies. Important infrastructure investment packages were launched during the EU-African Union (AU) Summit in February 2022. The EU-ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) Commemorative Summit in December 2022 launched the EU-ASEAN energy dialogue as well as Global Gateway initiatives for sustainable connectivity, digital transition and energy and climate change to enhance EU-ASEAN cooperation. In November 2022, at the Samarkand Conference on Connectivity, the EU and its partners discussed possibilities for increased cooperation between the EU and Central Asia on digital, transport and energy connectivity.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 (1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

[1] Global Gateway (europa.eu)

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The EU continued to provide humanitarian aid across the world covering a variety of sectors, including food security, healthcare, shelter provision and education. In 2022, the EU also set up the European Humanitarian Response Capacity to fill identified gaps in its humanitarian response to sudden-onset natural hazards and human-induced disasters.

The EU continued its support to democratisation and human rights by deploying, in 2022, six election observation missions (Colombia, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor Leste) and conducting follow-up missions in eight countries.

The EU reaffirmed its commitment to security in the world. The European Peace Facility supported peace in partner countries and regions such as Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, the Republic of Moldova, Georgia and the Western Balkans. It also provided military equipment, security infrastructure and training to the Ukrainian Armed Forces.

The EU also continued to create synergies between the funding under the Global Gateway strategy and the Horizon Europe programme, by creating capacity building on research and innovation (R&I) in areas of mutual interest aiming at tackling global challenges. Examples include the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, the Mediterranean Initiative and the preparation of a new EU-Latin American and Caribbean initiative. This is done in line with the EU Strategy on international cooperation on research and innovation, the Global Approach, promoting openness on R&I cooperation while seeking respect for key R&I values and reciprocal access.

This Annual Report covers the following external financing instruments under the MFF 2021-2027: the NDICI-Global Europe[2], the Decision on the Overseas Association, including Greenland (DOAG), the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC) and the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III).

This Annual Report also covers ongoing programmes financed through instruments managed by European Commission departments in previous MFFs: the European Development Fund (EDF) and all instruments funded by Budget Heading IV (Global Europe), namely: the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA), the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Partnership Instrument (PI), Humanitarian Aid, the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC) and the Instrument for Greenland.

1.1. The EU response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine (including support to Ukraine and partner countries in addressing the global consequences)

The Russian war of aggression caused unprecedented human suffering and destruction of physical infrastructure. Almost 4 million persons fleeing Ukraine registered for temporary protection in the EU while over 6.6 million people were internally displaced in Ukraine itself. The economic situation in Ukraine

[2] Under the multiannual financial framework (MFF) 2021-2027, a single instrument, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument-Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe), integrates most former external financing instruments that existed as separate basic acts under previous MFFs.

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deteriorated dramatically: over 2022, GDP fell more than 30 %. Since October, Russian armed forces have targeted critical infrastructure in Ukraine, in particular energy.

Since the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, in a 'Team Europe' approach, the EU, its Member States and the European financial institutions committed EUR 18.9 billion[3] for Ukraine. This combines the support enabled by the European Union budget and guarantees[4] and further bilateral support from Member States (EUR 7.3 billion). This financial support addresses challenges faced by Ukraine on multiple fronts: humanitarian aid, crisis response measures, support to the Ukrainian budget in the form of grants and concessional loans, and assistance to civil society. The EU's support included mobilising EUR 330 million in grant funding to support emergency response (including under the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes) in several areas including housing and critical infrastructure repairs, resilient digital transformation and cybersecurity, independent media and countering disinformation.

Another nearly EUR 200 million worth of EU programmes and projects was repurposed to address the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine.

The total disbursements of EU Institutions' assistance[5] in 2022 amounted to EUR 10.1 billion[6], of which EUR 7.2 billion was in macro-financial assistance loans and EUR 686 million in budget support operations.

Outside the EU budget, the Council decided on measures to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces under the European Peace Facility worth EUR 3.1 billion, and an EU military assistance mission for the Ukrainian Armed Forces with a budget of EUR 123 million as of end of 2022. The EU Member States also delivered in kind assistance via the EU Civil Protection Mechanism of more than EUR 400 million.

The EU agreed on the establishment of a new instrument (MFA+) that combines balance-of-payment support with support for the rehabilitation of damaged critical infrastructure, relief and a reform agenda geared towards supporting Ukraine in its European path. EUR 18 billion will come in the form of highly concessional loans, disbursed in regular instalments as of 2023.

During 2022, in close coordination with the G7 and other partners, the EU adopted nine packages of unprecedented sanctions against persons and entities responsible for the invasion, targeting key Russian financial, energy and transport sectors and state-owned enterprises, and resulting in about EUR 24.1 billion worth of assets frozen in the EU. Those relate to wealth of sanctioned oligarchs located in the EU (yachts, real estate, financial assets, etc.), corporate assets of sanctioned entities such as Russian banks, and industrial assets of companies owned or controlled by a sanctioned person. The impact of these sanctions could already be seen in 2022, especially in terms of weapons production, maintenance of rolling stock that re-supplies Russia's invasion forces, maintenance and renewal of weapons systems to be taken out of storage, and overall decreasing revenues for the state budget.

The decision to grant Ukraine candidate country status was a strong signal of the EU's support to Ukraine and recognition of the pro-European reform efforts made over many years, bearing in mind that the aspiration to join the European Union has for many years been an important priority for Ukraine, its

[3] Excluding the share of EBRD support not directly covered by EU guarantees.
[4] Combining humanitarian aid, macro-financial assistance loans, support through EU guarantees, budget support and other grants.
[5] In this particular case, referring to the European Commission and European Investment Bank.
[6] Without taking into account repurposing toward conflict-related actions.

governments and citizens. This decision created new momentum for reform, including in the areas of rule of law and anti-corruption.

At the same time, the consequences of Russia's war against Ukraine have impacted all regions of the world, affected food and energy prices and exacerbated fiscal fragilities. The global food crisis, triggered by climate change, conflicts, and COVID-19 consequences, has been significantly aggravated by the war: the number of people acutely food insecure reached a record level of around 258 million in 2022 (*Global Report on Food Crises*[7] of May 2023), compared with 193 million at the end of 2021.

In reaction, the EU has put together a comprehensive 'Team Europe' response to global food insecurity, adopted in June at the Foreign Affairs Council (FAC). The overall 'Team Europe' response provides support from the EU and Member States of around EUR 18 billion for 2021-2024. The response includes four strands:

1. Solidarity – stepping up our humanitarian aid especially for those populations most at risk, and increasing the short-term response, including actions to support food affordability and macro-economic stability;
2. Production – supporting over 70 partner countries around the world to boost local food production, as part of the transition to resilient and sustainable food systems, while decreasing the dependence on unsustainable agricultural inputs, e.g., chemical fertilisers;
3. Global trade – taking measures to keep markets open and fighting unjustified trade restrictions;
4. Multilateralism – working with partners to promote coordinated multilateral solutions and a comprehensive and timely United Nations (UN) led response.

In addition, the EU has played an important role in contributing to lowering global food prices by helping to keep Ukrainian grains and food products flow to the global markets and to countries most in need.

By getting food to the global markets, by the end of 2022 the EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes and the Black Sea Grain initiative had contributed jointly to a 15 % drop in global food prices since the food price peak in March.

The EU has also stepped up its efforts to address fertilisers' shortages and price increases globally as highlighted in the new Communication on Fertilisers published on 9 November 2022[8].

1.2. International Partnerships

The EU worked with partner countries across the world to address the challenges of multiple overlapping crises. EU efforts with partners addressed a wide range of areas including poverty reduction, security and defence, migration, trade and investment.

In 2022 the EU started to implement its new investment response to complex global challenges, Global Gateway. Global Gateway aims to narrow the global investment gap, boost global economic recovery and build partner countries resilience to current and future crises. Together with its partners, the EU and its Member States developed policy priorities per region and a set of flagship Team Europe initiatives (TEI) focussing on boosting digital and physical connectivity, accelerating the green transition, improving

[7] Global Report on Food Crises 2023 I Global Network Against Food Crises
[8] COM(2022) 590 final/2 of 9 November 2022.

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education and training, increasing sustainable growth and decent job creation, and strengthening health systems.

During 2022, Global Gateway was reflected in major summits with partners. In February, at the sixth EU-African Union Summit, Heads of State and Government agreed a transformative Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package worth at least EUR 150 billion. In December, the EU-ASEAN Summit marking 45 years of EU-ASEAN relations mobilised EUR 10 billion under Global Gateway for infrastructure investments in ASEAN countries. Preparations also started to develop a similar Global Gateway Investment Agenda for Latin America and the Caribbean in 2023.

Global Gateway seeks to mobilise resources from all sources, public and private. In terms of public finance, the EU and its 27 Member States collectively remained the largest provider of official development assistance (ODA) with EUR 92.8 billion in 2022[9], accounting for 43 % of global ODA[10] (0.59 % of gross national income (GNI)).

In 2022, the EU and its Member States continued to support partner countries in the response against the COVID-19 pandemic in a 'Team Europe' approach. Over 500 million vaccine doses were shared with partner countries[11], mostly via the COVAX Facility. In November, the European Commission adopted the EU Global Health Strategy[12], the EU's agenda in health action for the next 10 years, to improve global health security and deliver better health for all. The EU also helped create and contributed to the new international Pandemic Fund[13].

In line with the priority given to health in the Global Gateway strategy, the EU continued to strengthen international partnerships for health. These included the Universal Health Coverage Partnership with the World Health Organization (WHO), to which the EU announced a new contribution of EUR 125 million for the period 2023–2027.

In multilateral partnerships, the first EU-UN High Level Dialogue led by President Von der Leyen and UN Secretary-General Guterres took place in July 2022. The Dialogue underlined the common political directions shared by the UN and the EU and the value in working together to address global challenges. As one of the outcomes from the Dialogue, it was agreed to strengthen EU-UN cooperation through structured dialogues at global/Headquarters and country levels, with participation of EU Delegations and UN Resident Coordinators (RCs)/UN Country Teams (UNCTs) in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas and the Caribbean, the Neighbourhood and Asia and the Pacific. This has resulted in a strengthened EU-UN cooperation at global and country levels. Building on the High-Level Dialogue, the annual Strategic Political Dialogue between the UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and EU Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen took stock of progress to advance the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and related aspects of the UN Secretary General's Report 'Our Common Agenda' and of Global Gateway. In addition, Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen took part of the EU High-Level

[9] Based on preliminary 2022 data from OECD, published in spring 2023.
[10] Global ODA is defined here as including the ODA reported by the EU collective and all other donor countries.
[11] From the beginning of the pandemic up to the end of 2022.
[12] European Commission, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, *EU global health strategy – Better health for all in a changing world*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2875/22652
[13] Financial Intermediary Fund for Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness and Response – PPR FIF (worldbank.org)

delegation led by President Ursula von der Leyen at the 77th UNGA high-level General Debates, in September 2022.

The EU continued to pursue its strategic interests through fostering dialogue on values and global challenges with key partners across the world and through economic cooperation, trade and investments. This boosts the EU's position as a credible partner that delivers and contributes to fundamental principles related to human rights and gender equality, which are cross-cutting themes in all EU policies. At the Paris Peace Forum in November, for example, the EU contributed to the discussion of new ideas, experiences and opinions, not only promoting inclusive multilateralism and new solutions to today's most urgent governance challenges, but also raising its visibility worldwide.

Tackling climate change, the global energy transition and protecting biodiversity remained one of the key priorities of the EU. Initiatives were launched through multilateral fora (UN, G7, G20 and through sectoral organisations and agencies) to support partner countries, illustrating the EU's efforts to honour global commitments.

The EU and its Member States remain the world's largest provider of public international climate finance. In 2021, the EU and its Member States committed EUR 23.04 billion in international climate finance, 54 % of which was dedicated to climate adaptation or cross-cutting actions addressing both mitigation and adaptation. The EU further strengthen its climate cooperation with key partners through Green Alliances and Partnerships (such as the EU – Japan Green Alliance agreed in 2021). The EU and Morocco signed the EU-Morocco Green Partnership in October 2022. This partnership will foster joint engagement on ambitious objectives and actions promoting the green transition.

In recognition of 2022 as the European Year of Youth, the European Commission and the High Representative adopted the first-ever Youth Action Plan in EU external action[14], to enhance youth participation and empowerment and its role in building a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable future. Implementation of the Gender Action Plan III[15] also continued, taking account of the disproportionate impact of multiple global crises on women. The European Commission stepped up the implementation of its increased education funding globally and, as a recognized education champion at the UN Transforming Education Summit, urged all to increase investments in education.

1.3. European Neighbourhood Policy

In the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the EU continued to assist Neighbourhood countries in tackling the causes of instability. In 2022, the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) mobilised significant political and financial support for its four priorities[16] and fully integrated the principles of inclusivity, differentiation and shared ownership.

Given the global impact of the war in Ukraine, including on Neighbourhood partner countries, some priority domains, in particular energy and food security, required specific focus. A large share of ongoing and planned regional programmes in the Eastern Neighbourhood, amounting to over EUR 60 million, was

[14] JOIN(2022) 53 final of 4 October 2022. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en

[15] JOIN(2020)17 final of 25 November 2020, and its accompanying SWD(2020)284 Joint Staff Working Document.

[16] The ENP's priority areas: are good governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law; economic development for stabilisation; security; and migration and mobility.

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repurposed to address emergency needs in Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova. In addition, EUR 61 million was directly programmed under the Regional Action Programme 2022 to respond to emergency needs in the two countries. Significant efforts continued to be made at country and regional levels to reinforce the capacity of civil society, and to strengthen the transparency and accountability of governments.

In June 2022, in a landmark decision[17], the European Council decided to grant European perspective to Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, and EU candidate status to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova therefore bringing the countries in the EU's enlargement policy.

Against the backdrop of Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine, and the June 2022 European Council decision, Ministers of Foreign Affairs of 27 EU Member States and five Eastern Partnership countries met in December 2022 to reaffirm the EU's and its partners' commitment to the Eastern Partnership regional policy, and its 'Recovery, Resilience, and Reforms' Agenda endorsed at the Eastern Partnership Summit in 2021. At the same time, stakeholders called for a more flexible, strategic, focused and tailored approach, which corresponds to the new geopolitical reality. This is being taken forward in 2023.

Through the regional Economic and Investment Plan (EIP), the European Commission will mobilise up to EUR 2.3 billion of funding from the EU budget over the next five years to support socio-economic recovery in Eastern partner countries. Using specific tools, including blending and guarantees, this could leverage up to EUR 17 billion in public and private investments across the region. Flagship initiatives have been identified under the Plan for each partner country to kick-start implementation. The Plan for Belarus will be activated once the country embarks on a democratic transition.

Despite the Russian military aggression, EU-Ukraine relations deepened throughout 2022, with reinforced legal and policy approximation, increased exploration of the full potential of the Association Agreement, speeding up implementation of the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA), and further integration of energy and transport networks. The various European Commission services and the EU-funded programmes played a major role in these efforts.

In 2022, while the Neighbourhood South countries were still coping with the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine put additional constraints on their socio-economic conditions, aggravating the macro-economic situation, inflation, unemployment rates and food insecurity.

Furthermore, the protracted crisis in Syria as well as the fragile situation in Lebanon continued to impact on the stability of the whole Middle East, while Libya's prospects for unity did not materialise. The process of normalisation offered new perspectives with respect to the stalled Middle East Peace Process despite growing tensions between the Palestinian Authority and Israel.

The governance and human rights situation across the Southern Neighbourhood remained worryingly fragile, underlined by the shrinking of the civil society space and of freedom of expression.

[17] Council Conclusions EUCO 24/22 of 24 June 2022.

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In this challenging context, the EU moved ahead with the implementation of the Agenda for the Mediterranean[18], through financial assistance and its dedicated EIP, committing EUR 3.3 billion of grants by the end of 2022 to support Southern neighbours' long-term socio-economic recovery and stability.

As part of the EU's wide-ranging response to mitigate the impact of the war in Ukraine, in 2022, the European Commission set up the Food and Resilience Facility, worth EUR 225 million.

Generating growth and jobs, particularly for the youth, continued to be a priority for the EU. Sustainable development, inclusive economies, green and digital transition, along with energy security, were also important objectives of EU cooperation for the Southern Neighbourhood in 2022.

Migration remained high on the EU agenda, especially in the context of increased flows via the Mediterranean routes. The EU continued building on successful actions under the newly adopted multiannual indicative programme (MIP) for a Multi-country Migration Programme for the Southern Neighbourhood (as the follow-up to the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa). In this context, actions in North Africa focused on strengthening border management in Libya, Egypt and Tunisia, overall migration management in Morocco, and fostering returns, legal migration in Algeria and anti-smuggling and anti-trafficking at regional level. Actions were also adopted to address the needs of refugees from Syria and host communities in Lebanon and in Jordan, as well as in support of the Syrian people, focusing on resilience and early recovery needs. In the Eastern Neighbourhood, the EU was quick in responding to the refugee crisis stemming from Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, not only with humanitarian measures, but also with concrete support to the transit, repatriation and reintegration of affected people, as well as support to border management in the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine.

The European Commission's institution building instruments contributed to the overall reform process in the European Neighbourhood in line with EU political priorities, notably the green and digital transition, and the regional EIPs. TAIEX (Technical Assistance and Information Exchange) mobilised over 8 000 participants and Twinning pooled EUR 155 million worth of assistance in public-to-public projects between Member States' administrations and partner countries.

1.4. EU enlargement

In 2022, enlargement came back to the forefront of the political agenda. Following the applications for EU membership submitted by Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia in spring 2022, the European Commission presented its Opinions on the three applications[19] and on 23 June 2022 the European Council endorsed the European Commission's recommendations, recognised the European perspective of the three applicant countries and granted the status of EU candidate country to Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

On 19 July 2022, the first intergovernmental conferences on accession negotiations took place with North Macedonia and Albania. The European Commission immediately launched the analytical examination of the EU *acquis* (screening) for both countries, starting with the first cluster, for which the meetings are now completed. The first cluster, also known as the Fundamentals cluster, addresses issues related, *inter*

[18] JOIN(2021) 2 final of 9 February 2021.
[19] COM(2022) 407 final, COM(2022) 406 final, and COM(2022) 405 final of 17 June 2022.

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alia, to the functioning of democratic institutions, public administration reform, rule of law, fundamental rights and economic development.

On 12 October 2022, the European Commission adopted the 2022 Enlargement Package[20]. As in previous years, the Package took stock of developments since the previous Enlargement Package adopted in October 2021. It examined the progress made by the Western Balkans and Türkiye, the challenges encountered and reforms to be addressed, and set out conclusions and recommendations for the period ahead. In line with the European Council Conclusions of June 2022, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia will be included in the Enlargement Package as of 2023.

In December 2022, the Council granted candidate status to Bosnia and Herzegovina and reached an agreement on visa liberalisation for Kosovo*. Kosovo also applied for EU membership on 15 December 2022.

The Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) for the Western Balkans entered its implementation stage and continued to be the blueprint for EU assistance to bridge the socio-economic gap between the region and the EU and to help its green and digital transition. The EIP relies on the successful roll-out of the Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III)[21], which was adopted in the last quarter of 2021. Two high-level geopolitical dialogues were held between the European Commission and the European Parliament in 2022 (May and December) to discuss the general approach to the implementation of IPA III, its objectives, and the programming of IPA funds.

In November 2022, the European Commission also put forward an Energy Support Package of EUR 1 billion for the Western Balkans[22], to address immediate, short-term, and medium-term needs in the Western Balkans in the context of the energy crisis and to help Western Balkans partners to decrease their dependence on Russian fossil fuels, accelerate decarbonisation, and improve the energy security of the region.

The commitment of the EU and its Member States to close cooperation with the region was also epitomised in the various Summits held in 2022: the EU-Western Balkans leaders meeting in Brussels (June), the Berlin Process Summit in Berlin (November) and the EU-Western Balkans Summit held in Tirana (December), where the EU leaders expressed their unambiguous commitment to integrating the Western Balkans in the EU. The Summits focussed on progress on political aspects, tightening regional cooperation, and addressing the economic consequences on the region of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine. In particular, the Berlin Process Summit led to a significant breakthrough in the Common Regional Market with the adoption of three agreements that will facilitate the mobility of citizens of the Western Balkans to travel, work and study freely across the region.

Dialogue and cooperation with Türkiye continued in line with the guidelines of the European Council of 2021. High-level meetings took place, notably on climate change, agriculture, education, research and

[20] COM(2022) 528 final of 12 October 2022.

[*] This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 (1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

[21] Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III).

[22] WBIF Energy support pack 221202.pdf (europa.eu)

innovation. The European Union is ready to engage with Türkiye in a phased, proportionate, and reversible manner to enhance cooperation in a number of areas of common interest, provided that de-escalation of tensions is sustained and that Türkiye engages constructively, and subject to the established conditions set out in recent European Council Conclusions[23,24,25,26,27].

The 2016 EU-Turkey Statement[28] continued to yield results and remained the key framework for cooperation on migration. Türkiye sustained its remarkable efforts to host over 4 million refugees from Syria and other countries. However, problems continued over the implementation of the Statement. Irregular migration flows from Türkiye substantially increased in 2022.

1.5. Humanitarian aid and civil protection

The year 2022 was largely marked by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. It triggered both a major humanitarian aid operation and the largest, longest and most complex civil protection response operation since the creation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)[29]. The European Commission allocated EUR 485 million to address immediate humanitarian needs on the ground in Ukraine, including winterisation, cash assistance, protection, healthcare and education. Through its humanitarian partners, EU humanitarian assistance has contributed to reaching approximately 16 million people across Ukraine. In response to 126 requests from Ukraine for UCPM assistance, more than 80 000 tonnes of in-kind assistance was delivered, 1 700 Ukrainian patients were evacuated to 20 European hospitals and 28 shipments of life-saving assistance from the rescEU strategic reserve were dispatched. Furthermore, the swift establishment of three UCPM logistics hubs in Poland, Romania and Slovakia facilitated the pooling of assistance for Ukraine.

In 2022, the humanitarian situation also continued to drastically deteriorate in many other parts of the world, due to persistent conflict and insecurity, the impact of climate change, failed governance, the continuing impact of COVID-19 and other epidemiological outbreaks, as well as the indirect impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, resulting in unprecedented levels of humanitarian needs. The EU remained a key global humanitarian donor, provided humanitarian assistance of EUR 2 619.8 million in 62 countries, teamed up and engaged with Member States to deliver effective and adequate humanitarian assistance and advocated for preserving humanitarian space and respecting International Humanitarian Law. In particular, the European Commission managed to increase its humanitarian food and nutrition assistance to around EUR 1 billion, i.e., 79 % more than in 2021 and was instrumental in setting up and facilitating a comprehensive 'Team Europe' response, adopted by the Council in June 2022. EUR 42.5 million in humanitarian emergency funding was mobilised through the Emergency Toolbox, composed of ALERT (Acute Large Emergency Response Tool), Epidemics tool, Small-scale tool and DREF (Disaster Response Emergency Fund), to respond to unforeseen events around the world.

[23] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/48976/250321-vtc-euco-statement-en.pdf
[24] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/50763/2425-06-21-euco-conclusions-en.pdf
[25] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/53454/st15033-en21.pdf
[26] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/60797/st15935-en22.pdf
[27] https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/57442/2022-06-2324-euco-conclusions-en.pdf
[28] EU-Turkey statement, 18 March 2016 (europa.eu)
[29] EU Civil Protection Mechanism (europa.eu)

As regards civil protection, in relation to the wider discussions on EU crisis management structures, a priority in 2022 was to further consolidate and expand the central role of the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) as a 24/7 single operational hub managing and facilitating the EU's swift and effective response to a broad range of cross-sectoral crises at home and around the world, as well as improving the ERCC's anticipatory planning and foresight capacities and capabilities. The European Commission strengthened further the EU-wide UCPM response by ensuring full implementation of the revised legislation[30]. The European Commission also successfully negotiated the enlargement of the UCPM to two new Participating States (Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania).

In addition to the activation of the UCPM following the Russian war in Ukraine, the mechanism was activated 44 times in 2022 in the context of in-kind assistance to third countries triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic (mainly for distribution of vaccines), for other medical emergencies (provision shortage of medicines, health crisis) and for various natural and human induced disasters. In 2022, the UCPM had a 90 % response rate to requests submitted to the Mechanism.

Lastly, the first edition of the European Humanitarian Forum (co-organised with the French Presidency of the Council in March 2022) and the Seventh European Civil Protection Forum were two occasions to re-affirm the EU leadership and engagement on humanitarian aid and civil protection respectively.

1.6. Security and defence

The unprovoked Russian military aggression on Ukraine on 24 February 2022 went on to define the year and reshape the EU Common Foreign and Security Policy in a fundamental way. EU Member States and Institutions stepped up to the challenge and provided essential support to Ukraine. The EU remained fully committed to security, peace and stability far beyond Europe's borders, working with partners across the world.

The Strategic Compass for Security and Defence was adopted by Member States on 21 March 2022[31], taking into account the new security context following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. It provides a shared assessment of the strategic environment and threats and challenges facing the EU, covering all aspects of EU security and defence policy.

The Compass calls for a reinforced EU-UN strategic partnership based on the renewed set of priorities for the EU-UN partnership on crisis management and peace operations, endorsed by the Council in January 2022. It also calls for a more dynamic approach to early warning, conflict prevention and mediation. The High Representative, together with the Commission, coordinates conflict analysis in line with the requirements of the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation[32], and 22 inter-service conflict analysis exercises were completed in 2022.

[30] Regulation (EU) 2021/836 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2021 amending Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism.

[31] A Strategic Compass for Security and Defence - For a European Union that protects its citizens, values and interests and contributes to international peace and security, ST 7371/22, 21 March 2022.

[32] Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009.

The EU continued to support the Ukrainian Armed Forces. With the adoption before the end of 2022 of a sixth support package of EUR 500 million under the European Peace Facility[33], the total amount of the EU military support to Ukraine equalled EUR 3.1 billion, in addition to that provided bilaterally by EU Member States.

The mandate of the civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) mission EUAM Ukraine (European Union Advisory Mission Ukraine) was urgently adapted to address Ukraine's pressing needs in the areas of border support and international crimes. On 17 October 2022, the EU established, in record time, a new EU Military Assistance Mission in support of Ukraine (EUMAM). The Mission was launched on 15 November 2022 with the aim of strengthening the capacity of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. EUMAM is the first CSDP mission providing assistance to the military forces of an EU neighbour (and a candidate to EU accession) at war. The mission is unprecedented in terms of scale, location (on EU soil) and financial and command and control solutions. EUMAM is accompanied by European Peace Facility assistance measures for the provision of equipment for training purposes.

Cooperation on security and defence was considerably enhanced with the Republic of Moldova. In March 2022, a High-Level Political and Security Dialogue was launched. Concrete cooperation on tackling hybrid threats, including strengthening cyber security and fighting disinformation, was put in place. The EU supported also the modernisation of the Moldovan Armed Forces with a European Peace Facility assistance measure amounting to EUR 40 million.

On 11 July 2022, the EU and the Republic of Moldova launched the EU Support Hub for Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova, supporting cooperation on internal security and border management.

In Georgia, cooperation on security and defence remained strong. The EU assisted Georgia in reducing its vulnerabilities to hybrid threats, while cyber security remained one of the priorities of EU-Georgia cooperation. In 2022, the EU supported Georgia's defence forces with EUR 20 million through the European Peace Facility.

The EU support to peace and security in 2022 covered a range of tools, instruments and policies from human rights, climate security and cultural heritage, to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) and security sector reform (SSR).

In February 2022, the sixth EU-African Union (AU) Summit in Brussels renewed the two side's commitment on peace and security and more particularly on strengthening and scaling up autonomous peace operations of African defence and security forces. In November 2022, the EU and the AU agreed on the establishment of a structural dialogue on preventive diplomacy, mediation and dialogue.

In October 2022, the EU developed a new Stabilisation Concept to define principles underpinning EU action and ways forward to review and enhance its stabilisation practice across the globe.

2022 also saw the development of two new Political Frameworks for a Crisis Approach: the first focusing on the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to strengthen stabilisation efforts, and a second on the West African Coastal States in the Gulf of Guinea to address the spill over of instability.

[33] Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/509 of 22 March 2021 establishing a European Peace Facility, and repealing Decision (CFSP) 2015/528.

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The EU and NATO continued their cooperation on the basis of the three Joint Declarations, with tangible results across all agreed areas and in particular on resilience through a new Structured Dialogue, countering hybrid and cyber threats, disinformation, capacity building of partners (with a dedicated Staff Coordination on Ukraine) and military mobility. The EU Integrated Resolve 2022 (Parallel and Coordinated Exercise, EU IR22 PACE), a EU joint exercise co-led by the European External Action Service, the European Commission and the Council, in parallel with NATO, was carried out until the end of 2022 to test the ability to respond to complex crises of a hybrid nature and help to improve cooperation with NATO[34].

1.7. Peace, stability and conflict prevention

Just as the world wrestled itself out of the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the war of aggression against Ukraine came to dominate the year. The EU swiftly responded to needs in Ukraine and its surrounding region, while at the same time responding to other needs around the world through its 'integrated approach' to conflicts and crises.

This included timely crisis response interventions under the Rapid Response Pillar of the NDICI-Global Europe instrument, which addressed some of the main conflicts and post-crisis contexts in the world. This included Ukraine, Armenia/Azerbaijan, Belarus, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Ecuador, Somalia, Nigeria, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Significant actions were launched in the area of natural resources, stabilisation, confidence building, cyber security, disinformation as well as sexual violence and accountability. Actions continued to support and complement multilateral actions and processes, including also Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) actions across the world. NDICI-Global Europe emphasises conflict prevention by means of early warning, conflict-analysis capacity building, training, promoting good governance and respect for universal human rights.

Through its actions, the EU contributed to:

- conflict prevention;
- mediation, dialogue and peace building;
- stabilisation and human security;
- strengthening the rule of law;
- the fight against violent extremism, stigmatisation and disinformation; and
- security sector reforms.

The EU also continued to work with partner countries worldwide through long-term actions to build and enhance capacities to tackle global and trans-regional threats, ranging from terrorism and organised crime to threats to cyber and maritime security, and to tackle the security implications of climate change and environmental degradation. These actions contribute to bolstering the external dimension of EU internal security policy objectives and priorities.

The EU seeks to respond rapidly and flexibly to changing priorities and emerging threats. To this end, it seeks to broaden partnerships, promote European values and build new cross-regional alliances and project influence, thereby contributing to the security of the EU and its citizens from an internal and external perspective.

[34] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/crisis-response-eu-institutions-integrated-resolve-exercise-pace_en

Engagement with international organisations remains an EU priority and is reflected in its sustained commitment to the rules-based multilateral order. Regular situational awareness exercises and information-exchanges take place with the United Nations, the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and with other international organisations and agencies to coordinate efforts, avoid duplication and thereby optimise the results of the EU's external action.

Apart from actions addressing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons at country and regional levels, the EU also contributes to international security and peace by supporting non-proliferation and disarmament efforts at the global level through support to the effective implementation and, when relevant, universalisation of global non-proliferation and disarmament treaties, conventions, mechanisms and programmes[35], as well as the activities of the relevant international organisations, such as the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons or the Preparatory Commission of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organisation. The EU also supports a global reporting mechanism on illicit conventional arms and their ammunition to reduce the risk of their diversion and illicit transfer (iTrace).

1.8. Human rights and democracy

In a global context of continued shrinking civic and democratic space and multiple attacks on the universality of human rights, the EU reaffirmed its unconditional support to the protection and promotion of human rights, including gender equality, and democracy worldwide. The need for accountability for serious violations of international human rights law has been exacerbated by the various conflicts in countries like Ukraine, Ethiopia, Myanmar or Yemen and crackdowns on civilian populations in countries like Afghanistan or Iran.

The EU used its unique set of tools at multilateral, regional and country level, engaged with or supported civil society and mobilised the NDICI-Global Europe thematic programme on human rights and democracy to support multilateral actors, such as the International Criminal Court and the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR), and to promote human rights in a challenging global environment. In 2022, the EU renewed its political commitment to the protection of human rights defenders by doubling its budget (EUR 30 million) for a new phase (2022-2027) of the EU Mechanism for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders (Protectdefenders.eu). It also put forward a call for proposals to establish an Early Warning and Monitoring Mechanism (EUR 50 million) to be able to swiftly prevent and respond to early signs of shrinking space for civil society. In addition, 18 electoral missions, including six election observation missions (Colombia, Kenya, Lebanon, Lesotho, São Tomé and Príncipe and Timor Leste), were deployed worldwide to increase the quality of elections and support democratic processes and institutions. A priority has been given to follow-up missions deployed in 7 countries.

The European Union co-organised with a network of human rights NGOs (HRDN) the 24th EU-NGO Human Rights Forum[36], which gathered more than 230 human rights defenders from over 70 countries discussing

[35] Amongst others the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention, the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004), the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, the Arms Trade Treaty, the Hague Code of Conduct, the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction or the Convention on Prohibitions and Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons.

[36] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/stop-impunity-%E2%80%93-road-accountability-and-justice_en

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how to end impunity and build the road to accountability and justice. The EU also launched a call for proposals (EUR 20 million) for civil society actors to establish a Global Observatory on the fight against impunity for serious human rights violations.

A Global Team Europe initiative on Democracy (TED) was launched to strengthen coordination and complementarity of programmes and projects to support democracy worldwide following a 'Team Europe' approach. The initiative comprises an information exchange network with EU Member States at its core, while supporting global and local projects with research and expertise in three focal areas: Accountability and Rule of Law; Political and Civic Participation; and Media and Digital.

Regarding the defence and promotion of human rights at the global level, throughout the year the EU Special Representative for Human Rights continued to enhance the effectiveness, presence and visibility of EU policy on human rights and to ensure the integration of human rights in all areas of the EU external action, through constructive consultations, country visits and human rights dialogues. These included with Pakistan, United States, Uganda, Egypt, India, Ethiopia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Indonesia, ASEAN, Saudi Arabia, South Sudan, Zimbabwe and Colombia[37].

[37] *Report of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy: 2022 annual report on human rights and democracy in the world*, UNDP, 2022.

2. Delivering on our commitments: Promoting EU values and interests and fostering sustainable development globally

2.1. Global Gateway

In 2022, the European Commission - together with other actors in a 'Team Europe' approach - continued its work on the operationalisation and implementation of the Global Gateway strategy. Throughout the year, the strategy gained more traction with the official launch of key Global Gateway Investment Packages in the context of the EU-African Union Summit and the EU-ASEAN Summit, and implementation of concrete Team Europe initiatives (TEIs), including: vaccine manufacturing in Rwanda, Senegal and South Africa; a hydropower dam in Tajikistan as presented during the Sustainable Connectivity Conference in Samarkand[38]; increasing the capacity of a hydropower plant in Vietnam; promoting green hydrogen technologies in Namibia and Chile; and strengthening our partners climate ambition in the context of the Green Blue Alliance for the Pacific and Timor-Leste as presented during the Indo-Pacific Ministerial Meeting[39].

Furthermore, Global Gateway represented the aegis of the 15th edition of the European Development Days, placing the focus of the events on building sustainable partnerships for a connected world.

As part of the efforts to speed up the operationalisation of the strategy and shift the focus to implementation and delivery, agreement was reached with Member States on a clear Global Gateway governance set-up, reflecting the 'Team Europe' approach and continued implementation of the Economic and Investment Plans. Placed at the highest political level, the Global Gateway Board, chaired by the President of the European Commission and comprising the EU Member States at Minister of Foreign Affairs level, has been designed to provide strategic guidance on Global Gateway implementation. The European Parliament is an observer and representatives of European financial institutions such as the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and Member States national development banks are invited on an ad hoc basis.

The first Global Gateway Board was convened on 11 December 2022, and identified operational priorities for a 'Team Europe' approach to roll out of Global Gateway with partners in 2023. Work to further mobilise private sector finance and expertise as well as supporting access to sustainable finance for Global Gateway priorities made progress at a practical level with the organisation of different business fora, such as the EU-Africa Business Forum and the EU-ASEAN Business Council (in the context of the EU-AU and EU-ASEAN Summits). The necessity for the Global Gateway Business Advisory group was also confirmed at the Board meeting.

To further support dialogue with civil society involvement about Global Gateway policy priorities, the EU focused on leveraging existing mechanisms for dialogue and engagement to ensure coherence and avoid duplication. Notably, the EU engaged with civil society through the Policy for Development (PFD), which is a multi-stakeholder dialogue platform including civil society and local authorities; through global, regional and country TEIs; and through the EU Civil Society Roadmaps.

[38] Joint Declaration: EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference: Global Gateway | EEAS Website (europa.eu)
[39] Commissioner Urpilainen highlights 'Global Gateway opportunities' at EU-Indo-Pacific Forum (europa.eu)

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As an important step towards the mobilisation of the envisaged EUR 300 billion in investments by 2027, the Operational Board of the European Fund for Sustainable Development plus (EFSD+) gave a positive opinion to assigning EUR 6.05 billion in financial guarantees to support 40 investment programmes in Sub-Saharan Africa, Americas and the Caribbean and Asia and the Pacific. The guarantees are expected to generate more than EUR 50 billion in investments in Global Gateway key sectors, such as renewable energy, digital infrastructure and climate resilience and health, including a new green bond programme.

2.2. A 'Team Europe' approach

In line with the EU and Member States' long-standing commitment to 'working better together', European leaders continued to demonstrate their solidarity with partner countries in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences. This collective response, including the EU, Member States, European development finance institutions and implementing agencies as well as European multilateral banks (EIB and EBRD), was branded a 'Team Europe' approach. Originally designed to support partner countries in their path to a sustainable recovery aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, it has become an integral part of the EU External Toolbox and embedded in the day-to-day activities of EU External Action, especially through Team Europe initiatives (TEIs).

TEIs are forerunners of the 'Team Europe' approach. They are joint initiatives, focused on tackling a core developmental challenge around which European funding instruments and modalities coalesce to bring a transformational impact in and with our partner countries. Since the EU's current programming cycle began in 2021 and by the end of 2022, the EU and its Member States (together with the EIB and ERBD) have jointly designed 163 TEIs: 127 country, 31 regional and 5 thematic/global TEIs.

TEIs have already shown a qualitative improvement in how European actors on the ground are joining up and improving partner countries' understanding of European values and the impact of European cooperation. Designing and implementing TEIs has notably improved coordination between the EU and its Member States to enable a more policy-oriented approach, including gender mainstreaming and targeted action in line with the Gender Action Plan III[40].

Alongside the implementation of TEIs, the EU has also continued to pursue joint programming as preferred approach as set out in the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation[41]. Where TEIs coalesce focus and funding around a selected priority area or sector of intervention, joint programming takes a more comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach to align and coordinate under common objectives all of actors part of the 'Team Europe' approach (i.e. EU, Member States, EIB and EBRD) development cooperation portfolios in a partner country. By December 2022, there were 18 joint programming documents in place (the European group in Bolivia endorsed a new joint programming document in 2022) or in the final stages of drafting globally and efforts are underway in a further 20 partner countries.

The EU continued to actively reinforce its partnerships with the UN and the International Financial Institutions (IFIs), in particular with the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to ensure a stronger voice in a 'Team Europe' approach around EU priorities. As to the WBG, in

[40] JOIN(2020)17 final of 25 November 2020, and its accompanying SWD(2020)284 Joint Staff Working Document.
[41] Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009.

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2022, for the first time, common messages with Member States were drafted ahead of the Spring and Annual Meetings. In addition, in a 'Team Europe' approach, following unanimous approval of the EU member States to recommit decommitted EDF funds, the EU contributed EUR 100 million to the IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust (PRGT). These funds will allow the IMF to make about EUR 630 million worth of zero interest loans for PRGT eligible Sub-Saharan African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries facing balance of payment difficulties. This complements pledges by EU Member States to channel Special Drawing Rights. Targeted policy exchange continued with UN and the IFIs on thematic and geographic files. The EU identified a number of TEIs with scope for enhanced cooperation with several IFIs, especially the WBG.

2.3. Implementing the 2030 Agenda and other international and European commitments and policies

While progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) was often already challenging, the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine have led to significant setbacks in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its SDGs. Nevertheless, under the new geopolitical circumstances, the importance of the 2030 Agenda is even more relevant, as it is the only realistic, agreed blueprint for action to ensure a sustainable way forward on the global level.

Within the European Commission, 2022 was the first year that the SDGs were actively integrated in the EU Better Regulation framework[42]. Every legislative proposal and impact assessment had to assess and show how it contributes to achieving the SDGs, having regard to synergies and trade-offs.

Building on the 2017 European Consensus on Development[43], which marked a clear collective determination of the EU and its Member States to support partner countries to progress towards the SDGs, the multiannual financial framework, NDICI-Global Europe, strongly reflects the SDG perspective. In 2022, numerous actions have been launched under this financing instrument, contributing to progress towards the SDGs at global level.

2022 was also marked by the roll-out of Global Gateway initiatives. Each individual Global Gateway initiative financed from the EU budget identifies and integrates the relevant SDGs at all stages - from design to implementation and reporting. Given its focus on the essential elements of the 2030 Agenda, the Global Gateway is inherently aligned to the achievement of the SDGs, as well as other major commitments such as the Paris Agreement.

The year was further dedicated to the preparation of the first EU Voluntary Review on the implementation of the SDGs, to be presented at the UN High-Level Political Forum in July 2023. The EU Voluntary Review will show in practical terms how the EU has been contributing through its internal and external action to progress towards the SDGs. This includes, in its external part, a clear presentation on how Team Europe initiatives and flagships that contribute to Global Gateway are geared to support, in substantive ways, relevant SDGs. The presentation of this Voluntary Review in 2023 will also enhance the visibility of the EU's commitment to SDGs ahead of the upcoming SDG Summit in September 2023.

[42] Better regulation (europa.eu)
[43] European Consensus on Development, 30 June 2017.

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2.4. Means of implementation

A mix of financial and non-financial resources are required to implement the 2030 Agenda, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. In line with the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the EU supports a comprehensive and integrated approach to mobilising financing from all available sources to meet the SDGs, and the EU has been further expanding its financial toolbox. This is enhanced by closer cooperation with and between partners in a 'Team Europe'[44] approach, especially in joining forces as regards the Team Europe initiatives (TEIs) and the implementation of the Economic and Investment Plans (EIPs). Working in a 'Team Europe' approach should lead to more complementarity, synergies and multiplier effects, in line with the Council Conclusions on the European Financial Architecture for Development[45].

The EU is helping partner countries make the most of the diverse financing sources available to support SDG implementation. In 2022, the EU continued to support countries in their implementation of Integrated National Financing Frameworks (INFFs). Thanks to EU support, INFF development is underway in more than 16 countries, while overall INFFs are being developed in more than 80 countries.

The EU continued supporting mobilisation of public and private investments for sustainable development in partner countries. Following the adoption of the NDICI- Global Europe Regulation in June 2021[46] and its related delegated act in July 2021, the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) started to be operationalised. Out of the total capacity of the EU External Action Guarantee (up to EUR 53.45 billion), nearly EUR 40 billion of the guarantee cover is planned to be made available to reduce the risk of investment in partner countries and support their sustainable development.

The EU also scaled up work in the field of sustainable finance to facilitate the mobilisation of additional private international and domestic investors towards developing countries. In view of a future EU Sustainable Finance Strategy for low- and middle-income countries, the EU set up a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) and organised its first three meetings in 2022 after a thorough selection process to ensure world-class expertise from all backgrounds and regions.

The private sector is a major contributor to sustainable and inclusive growth and the creation of decent jobs as well as a key actor for the success of the SDGs. The EU took measures to promote local private sector development in partner countries, notably through entrepreneurship and access to finance support. Attractive investment climates and regulatory frameworks are also of paramount importance for the private sector and, accordingly, the EU promotes public-private dialogue processes and events and has stepped up its assistance to investment climate reforms.

2.5. Mobilisation of the NDICI-Global Europe cushion

The European Commission made full use of Global Europe's Emerging challenges and priorities cushion's 2022 budget of EUR 1 538 million.

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[44] 'Team Europe' consists of the EU, its Member States and European financial and implementing agencies.

[45] Council Conclusions 9462/1/21 of 10 June 2021.

[46] Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009.

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The response to the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has been one of the main drivers of mobilisations. A total amount of EUR 501 million was mobilised to support the Ukrainian Government in providing basic services to internally displaced people in Ukraine, as part of European Commission President von der Leyen's announcement at the pledging event Stand up for Ukraine, and 5 May International Donors' Conference for Ukraine.

The use of the cushion has also supported the EU response to challenges related to migration and forced displacement. Following the Brussels V Conference on the Future of Syria and the region, EUR 519 million was mobilised to support Syrians and communities hosting refugees from Syria, both inside the country and in the region, as part of a wider financial package of support. Similarly, EUR 30 million was mobilised for migration-related actions in North Africa in order to ensure the continuity of ongoing activities.

EUR 413 million was mobilised to reinforce the Global challenges, Human rights and democracy, and civil society organisations thematic programmes, as part of the top-ups embedded in recital 70 of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation.

Lastly, a EUR 75 million contribution was mobilised to support rollout of COVID-19 vaccines in countries most in need.

2.6. Policy Coherence for Development

The European Commission made further progress on policy coherence for development (PCD). This principle requires the EU and its Member States to take account of the objectives of development cooperation in all its policies which are likely to affect developing countries.

Following up on the strengthening of the PCD dimension in the 2021 review of its Better Regulation framework, notably regarding the guidance on assessing impacts of its initiatives on partner countries, the European Commission fostered the implementation of the new guidelines. Training sessions were organised with specific focus on developing countries for European Commission staff who are tasked with carrying out (ex-ante) impact assessments.

In accordance with the European Consensus on Development of June 2017[47], which recognises PCD as a crucial element of the EU's strategy to support its partner countries achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the European Commission further integrated PCD in its overall work related to SDG implementation. For instance, PCD reporting is no longer a stand-alone exercise but forms part of a comprehensive EU reporting on the SDGs. Consequently, the European Commission took steps to make the reporting on impacts of EU policies on developing countries part and parcel of the first ever EU Voluntary Review on progress in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2.7. Development effectiveness

The EU actively promotes the effectiveness of its development cooperation to achieve the best, fastest and most sustainable impact for those most in need, including through the 'Team Europe' approach.

As an active member and supporter of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), where the EU represents European development providers on the GPEDC steering committee, the EU took the lead on the GPEDC Action Area on Demonstrating the Impact of Effectiveness. It initiated

[47] European Consensus on Development, 30 June 2017.

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a research project to showcase how effectiveness delivers better impact and promotes country level initiatives to strengthen the effectiveness and impact of development management processes in individual sectors in partner countries. The EU has also taken an active part in developing the new GPEDC Monitoring Framework which will take effect from 2023. The EU has also promoted a renewed focus on effectiveness at the OECD-Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) to help DAC members to strengthen the effectiveness of their programmes.

3. Thematic Overview

Working together towards the SDGs and results achieved with EU support

The priorities of the European Commission have been translated into cooperation actions: human development; green deal; sustainable growth and decent jobs; digitalisation; migration; and governance, peace and security. They provide the basic structure for the sections within this chapter on the thematic overview of international partnerships. At the same time, implementing these EU priorities is key to helping our partners implement the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In this report, the main achievements of the EU's actions are presented within the EU global priorities, alongside illustrative trends in relation to respective associated SDGs and available results. For the purpose of this chapter, each SDG is mentioned only once under an EU priority to which it is particularly related. However, the cross-cutting nature of the SDGs and the strong interlinkages among them imply that the content reported under each SDG will often also be relevant to other EU priorities.

The EU's partnerships are based on dialogues aiming to converge EU priorities and the objectives of each partner country, with the SDGs as a central shared reference. In 2022, the EU and its Member States consolidated their commitment to contribute to the achievement of the SDGs through the roll-out of the Global Gateway strategy following a 'Team Europe' approach to enhance effectiveness. Through Global Gateway, the EU supported partner countries by contributing to a range of SDGs in each of its investment priorities.

3.1. Human Development

Main achievements

The unprecedented challenges, including conflict, climate change and health pandemics, on human development have reversed progress seen in recent years. The EU redoubled efforts in the fields of health, social protection, education, youth and gender equality and progress on achieving the SDGs.

In 2022, under the NDICI-Global Europe, all decided actions contributed to the social inclusion and human development spending target for a total of EUR 3.7 billion (corresponding to 27 % out of the total committed amount). Cumulative figures 2021-2022 resulted in contributions to this spending target of EUR 7.946 billion[48].

Health

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the forefront the need for better prevention, preparedness and response to cope with future health crises and put health to the fore as a global priority. In the line with the Global Gateway strategy, the launch of the new EU Global Health Strategy[49] on 30 November 2022 delivers on the revamped global health architecture. The European Commission was also instrumental in creating the new Pandemic Fund[50]. The Strategy highlighted the importance of functional and inclusive

[48] Data subjected to regular quality checks.
[49] European Commission, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, *EU global health strategy – Better health for all in a changing world*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2875/22652
[50] The Pandemic Fund (worldbank.org)

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health systems and the need to address health security preparedness while improving equitable access to vaccines, medicines and medical technologies. Commission services have helped operationalise the European Commission's commitment to ensure universal access to COVID-19 vaccines, including through continued support of the COVAX Facility, and in response to the needs of African and American and Caribbean partners have started rolling out 'Team Europe' support to increase their autonomy in the local production of vaccines and medicines.

Inequalities

In 2022, the European Commission worked on an innovative Inequality Marker to measure how interventions contribute to the curbing of inequalities and address the needs of the bottom 40 % of the population. A key policy area to ensure progress in the reduction of inequality is social protection, as proven by the 40 countries' multiannual indicative programmes for 2021-2027, which have chosen to support national social protection system building as a priority area. In 2022, the European Commission also advanced in the formulation of social protection interventions in 10 countries and through two global facilities with a focus on systems building, digitalisation and registry and specific social protection schemes for women and informal workers. The thematic flagship programme linking Social Protection and Public Finance Management continued in 2022 its implementation in 24 partner countries including a component to address the socio-economic impact of the pandemic.

Gender equality

The implementation of the Gender Action Plan III (2021-2025)[51] has been pursued robustly at country, regional and global levels and progress is registered on the main targets, with 131 GAP III country level implementation plans being rolled out and progress towards the targets of 85 % of all new actions contributing to gender equality.

The EU continued to highlight gender equality and Women, Peace and Security in relevant multilateral and regional fora as well as in bilateral dialogues and continued to enhance and ensure coordination of its gender mainstreaming efforts, including in the context of the European Commission's Taskforce on Equality. A Gender Responsive Leadership pilot programme was conducted in cooperation with the Swedish government agency Folke Bernadotte Academy, with managers participating from Commission headquarters services and delegations.

The second year of implementation of the GAP III showed the EU's commitment to making gender equality and empowerment of women and girls a priority. The EU committed to ensuring that at least 85 % of all new external actions have gender equality and women's and girls' empowerment as a significant or principal objective by 2025 – the figure had grown from 69 % in 2021 to 72 % in 2022. For the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation only, the target is linked to the entire MFF period (2021-2027), and also 71 % of all 2021 and 2022 committed actions had gender equality as a significant or principal objective.

Youth and culture

The unprecedented challenges of conflict, climate change, and health pandemics have had a huge impact on children and youth. Representing more than 1.8 billion individuals, young people are key agents of change to help shape more resilient, inclusive and prosperous societies, and progress towards global

[51] JOIN(2020)17 final of 25 November 2020, and its accompanying SWD(2020)284 Joint Staff Working Document.

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commitments such as the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. In October 2022, the European Commission adopted the first ever Youth Action Plan (YAP) in EU external action[52]. The YAP recognises young people as drivers of positive change and aims to empower them to shape solutions towards a greener, fairer, more equal and peaceful planet. The European Commission also put young people's voices at the centre stage by taking the initiative of co-leading a Youth Civic and Political Engagement Cohort in preparation for the next Summit for Democracy of March 2023 and starting to set up Youth Sounding Boards in EU Delegations to advise and dialogue on policy and programmatic issues.

The EU continued to protect children and children's rights around the globe, including children in armed conflicts. In doing so, it met its commitments under the EU strategy on the rights of the child for 2021-2024[53].

The European Commission participated alongside EU Member States at MONDIACULT convened in Mexico. This was the first international culture conference in 40 years and contributed to setting priorities and action for the years to come, based on culture as a global public good and fundamental part of sustainable development. The EU-ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) culture programme[54] financed by the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) continued providing support for cultural and creative industries and audio-visual co-production. With more than 500 ongoing projects managed from six regional hubs, mainly in Sub-Saharan Africa, a mid-term evaluation was launched late 2022.

Education and skills

2022 was a key year in raising the alarm on the silent education crisis. At the UN Transforming Education Summit the international community made commitments towards reversing the worrying slide on SDG 4. The European Commission was acknowledged as an education champion by promoting education financing and increasing its own rate of investments in quality teaching and learning. Through the EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package education initiatives, Team Europe initiatives (e.g., Youth Mobility for Africa), country programmes, and global partnerships, investments are focussing on teachers, more equitable and inclusive education systems, and on skills that will enable partner countries to make the most of the digital and green transitions and in expanding mobility opportunities.

To further increase the focus on education and skills, the President of the European Commission Ursula von de Leyen announced in her 2022 State of the Union that 2023 will be the European Year of Skills.

In 2022, under the NDICI-Global Europe, all decided actions contributed to the education spending target for a total of EUR 1.0 billion (corresponding to 13 % out of the total committed amount). Cumulative figures 2021-2022 resulted in contributions to the education spending target of EUR 1.421 billion[55].

[52] JOIN(2022) 53 final of 4 October 2022. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en

[53] https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/rights-child/eu-strategy-rights-child-and-european-child-guarantee_en

[54] ACP-UE CULTURE (acp-ue-culture.eu)

[55] Data subjected to regular quality checks.

SDG #1 Reduced Poverty

For almost 25 years, poverty has steadily declined, and the poverty rate halved in our partner countries on average. EU cooperation has helped achieve this result, but the quest to end poverty has suffered a setback with the COVID-19 crisis.

The pandemic crisis has had particularly devastating consequences for the most vulnerable people, resulting in an unprecedented increase in global poverty. The World Bank estimates that over 100 million people have been pushed into extreme poverty and around 118 million more people have faced chronic hunger, making the economic and social consequences of the COVID-19 crisis more serious than the virus itself. The EU has been instrumental in supporting countries to face the consequences of the pandemic and mitigate its impact on the poorest population, as evidenced by the external evaluation of the EU global response to the COVID-19 crisis. This was done through Budget Support, when possible, to provide partners with extra fiscal space and contribute to keeping key public services functional.

The EU's international partnership interventions all pursue the primary objective of poverty eradication. They promote inclusive public policies in partner countries, which leave no one behind, notably through Budget Support implementation modality. In this context, given the multidimensional dimension of poverty, EU actions aiming at poverty eradication contribute actively to the pursuit of a range of SDGs.

Social protection, through its redistributive nature, proved to be a powerful instrument to mitigate increasing levels of inequalities and poverty when aligned to partner countries' policies. In 2022, the EU continued its support for building comprehensive and resilient social protection systems in partner countries. Humanitarian assistance contributed to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable.

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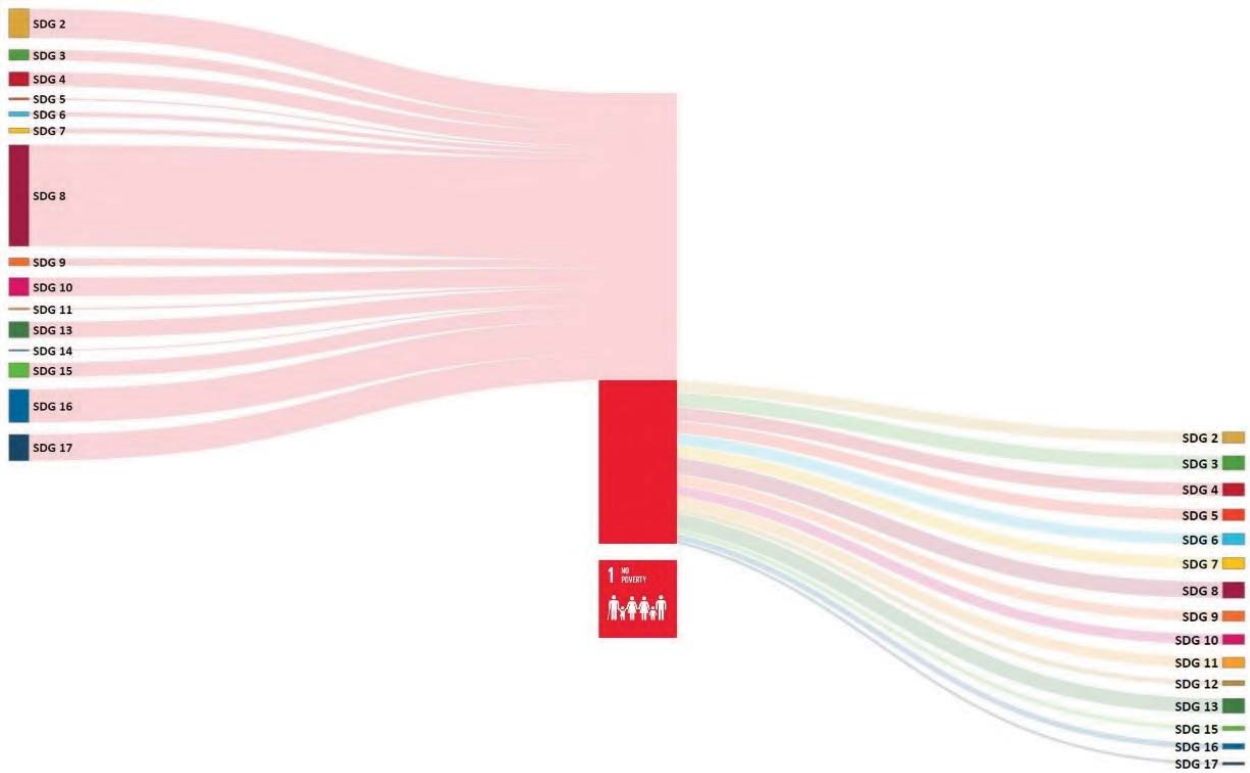
As an example, the strong interlinkages between SDG 1 and other SDGs are shown in the graph here below.

Figure 1. ODA to SDG 1 and interlinkages with other goals[56]



EU data for 2022 shows that a total of 170 EU funded projects targeted SDG 1 as the main SDG, whereas SDG 1 was also reported as a significant SDG in 593 projects where other SDGs were marked as main SDG.

SDG #2 Zero Hunger

The spill over effects of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine have exacerbated an already dire global food insecurity situation, with the strongest impacts felt by the most vulnerable in Africa and the Middle East, as well as in Latin America, Asia and the Pacific.

In this framework, the Council adopted Council Conclusions on the 'Team Europe' response to global food insecurity on 20 June 2022[57], framing a comprehensive response along four strands of action: EU solidarity assisting vulnerable populations; EU support for production and resilience; Facilitating global food trade and supporting the export of Ukrainian grains notably through the 'EU-Ukraine Solidarity Lanes'; and EU

[56] Source: SWD/2023/701 final of 15 May 2023. Drawn up by JRC using EU Dashboard data on ODA (2022, commitments). The figure shows interlinkages among SDGs measured by number of projects reported. The bottom (darker) section of the bar shows how projects where SDG1 was marked as the main SDG contribute to other SDGs (right side). The top section (lighter) shows projects where other SDGs were selected as the main target, but that also contribute to SDG1 (left side).

[57] Global food insecurity: Council approves conclusions on the Team Europe response - Consilium (europa.eu)

commitment to effective multilateralism anchoring the global food security response in the multilateral system and supporting multilateralism. The overall contribution in a 'Team Europe' approach for 2021-2024 is an estimated EUR 18 billion, with EUR 8.3 billion from the EU and around EUR 9.6 billion from Member States. In 2022 the EU disbursed around EUR 2.6 billion.

As part of this response, the EU mobilised more than EUR 1 billion in humanitarian food assistance in 2022 (a 79 % increase compared with 2021), and an additional EUR 450 million to support affected Sub-Saharan African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP)[58] countries from EDF decommitted funds (following Council's approval) and EUR 225 million for the Middle East and North Africa region from NDICI-Global Europe. Nearly half of EU development and humanitarian financial flows on food systems related activities in 2022 have been channeled through multilateral institutions.

The EU humanitarian food aid was primarily directed to the countries most affected by food insecurity, such as Yemen, Syria, Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan. The EU mobilised EUR 395 million to mitigate the most pressing humanitarian consequences. In Somalia, the EU has nearly doubled its humanitarian aid funding in 2022 to EUR 79.5 million, to respond to the catastrophic food security situation caused by the prolonged drought. The EU Humanitarian Air Bridge operating in the country transported lifesaving medical and nutritional supplies to the hardest hit locations via 70 flights, directly responding to the need to scale-up the humanitarian response. In Yemen, the EU allocated EUR 35 million to address the needs of the 6 million Yemenis in severe food insecurity.

In 2022, the EU stepped-up its investment in sustainable value chains. An example is the progress on the Sustainable Cocoa Initiative. Stakeholders from the cocoa sector, the EU, and representatives of Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, and Cameroon established an Alliance on sustainable cocoa in June 2022 that endorsed a Roadmap with objectives, next steps and indicators to improve the sustainability of the cocoa value chain including living incomes for farmers, standards, traceability in respect to child labour and deforestation, regulation with the focus on due diligence, and sustainable production of cocoa.

The EU has pioneered various innovative forms of blended finance instruments, combining EU grants with loans or equity from public and private financiers. Concessional funding allocated to blended finance vehicles aims to attract capital towards sustainable development projects by de-risking investors, improving their returns and enhancing developmental impact.

The EU has invested in three blended funds (the ABC Fund, AATIF, and Huruma Fund) as well as one blended facility (AgriFI) focused on agriculture. These four blended funds provide short-term credit, long-term loans and occasionally equity to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), cooperatives, microfinance institutions, banks and companies active in the agri-food sector. The financing provided by these funds varies from EUR 200 000 to EUR 20 million, depending on the vehicle. Over the last four years these four vehicles have invested in 45 companies, representing an investment total of EUR 174 million.

[58] Overall EUR 600 million from unspent EDF funds were mobilised, supplementing support from the EU budget. Out of these additional funds, EUR 450 million were devoted to food security actions and EUR 150 million were devoted to humanitarian food assistance (accounted in the EUR 1 billion mentioned before). Out of the humanitarian food assistance funds mentioned, EUR 136 million were allocated to support African countries, EUR 9.5 million were allocated to support Caribbean countries and EUR 4.5 million were allocated to administrative costs. Along with the EUR 9.5 million for humanitarian food assistance, Caribbean countries also received EUR 27 million for food production and resilience of food systems, resulting in a total envelope of EUR 36.5 million for food assistance in the region.

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Most of these projects are in Sub-Saharan Africa (Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, Tanzania, Tunisia, Uganda and Zambia) but also Latin America (Bolivia, Ecuador, Panama and Peru) and Asia (India).

The EU continued to support global Land Governance processes seeking to promote more transparent and equitable land tenure systems and to support the application of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Governance of Tenure. In this regard, the EU signed in 2022 a new agreement with the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) to support the work of the International Land Coalition, the Land Portal and two research programmes: the Land Matrix and the Prindex.

The EU and its Member States substantially contributed to the follow-up of the UN Food Systems Summit (FSS) and the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in 2022. In partnership with FAO and *Centre de coopération internationale en recherche* (CIRAD), the EU continued to finance Food Systems Assessments in 50 countries worldwide that provide a basis for national and subnational analyses and dialogue on transforming food systems. EU Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen participated in the first Ministerial meeting of the School Meals Coalition highlighting the essential role of education and nutrition for healthy and productive lives of children.

The EU continued outreach activities with partners to engage in dialogue on the Farm to Fork strategy[59] on how it creates opportunities, not only in the EU, but also in third countries for making food systems fair, healthy and environmentally friendly. The EU published a new Communication on fertilisers on 9 November[60], including an important external chapter on supporting partner countries to address fertilisers challenges by increasing the support to more sustainable soil fertility solutions. The EU helps its partners to reduce their dependency on imported mineral fertilisers by investing in improved efficiency of use, alternative green and organic fertilisers, sustainable agricultural practices and soil fertility management (e.g., agroecology). The EU has joined the Global Fertiliser Challenge (GFC) initiative, with a contribution of USD 25 million. Jointly with our Member States, the EU has provided almost USD 68 million of the overall USD 135 million committed for this initiative.

SDG #3 Good Health and Well-being

The pandemic made health and health systems strengthening a major priority of the European Commission's international cooperation and notably of the partnership with the African Union (AU). In 2022, the European Commission's global actions were focusing on assisting lower-income partner countries to access and use quality prevention and response measures to the COVID-19 crisis (through vaccines, treatment, and diagnostics), channelling funding through and working together with the global health initiatives such as the ACT-A, its vaccines pillar COVAX, Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI) and the Global Fund. Commitments to support Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by funding the WHO led UHC-Partnership, women's health through United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) supplies, the fight against infectious disease (HIV, Tuberculosis, Malaria) through the Global Fund, and childhood vaccinations through GAVI have continued over the year. During the Seventh Replenishment

[59] COM(2020) 381 final of 20 May 2020. More info at: https://food.ec.europa.eu/horizontal-topics/farm-fork-strategy_en

[60] COM(2022) 590 final/2 of 9 November 2022.

Conference, hosted by US President Biden in New York, the EU made a historic EUR 715 million[61] pledge to the Global Fund. A new global fund hosted by the World Bank to ensure permanent and agile funding for pandemic prevention, preparedness and response beyond the current pandemic, the Pandemic Fund[62], was launched in 2022, with the European Commission being one of the main funding donors and contributors to the governance and operations design.

At the regional level, under the 'Team Europe' approach, the European Commission launched and advanced five health initiatives agreed at the last EU-AU Summit. The most advanced is the Team Europe initiative (TEI) on Manufacturing and Access to Vaccines, medicines & health technologies in Africa (MAV+). The objective of MAV+ is to increase equitable access to safe, effective, high quality and affordable essential vaccines, medicines and health technologies for all Africans. It follows a 360-degree approach around three dimensions: the supply side, the demand side, and the creation of an enabling environment. Several projects are advancing with EU support in Senegal, Rwanda, South Africa and Ghana and primarily target vital continental vaccine production. The other health TEIs for Africa, namely on pandemic preparedness through a One Health approach[63], public health institutes, sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and digital health are preparing to launch collaborative actions with African regional counterparts.

On 30 November 2022, the European Commission launched the new EU Global Health Strategy[64] developed after an extensive consultation process with internal and external stakeholders. It focuses on key priorities (strengthening health systems and advancing universal health coverage, including through improving global health markets, improving health of the poorest people and fighting health inequalities, enhancing resilience and linking health to other relevant policy areas) leveraging lessons from the pandemic and contributing to achieving the SDGs. It intends to respond to broad global challenges, promoting health through a health in all policies line, and combating health threats through a One Health approach.

SDG #4 Quality Education

The COVID-19 pandemic has wiped-out years of educational progress and exacerbated further existing vulnerabilities. Work has progressed on anchoring the European Commission's education priorities on equity and equality, quality education with a focus on teachers, and building 21st century skills into actions.

At a global level, several milestones established the European Commission as a global education champion, including on education financing as the sole donor to commit to increasing its official development assistance for education. The SDG 4 High-Level Steering Committee became operational with EU Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen as a member of the Leader's group.

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[61] For the period 2023-2025. EU announces historic €715 million for the Global Fund (europa.eu)
[62] The Pandemic Fund (worldbank.org)
[63] One Health (who.int)
[64] European Commission, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, *EU global health strategy – Better health for all in a changing world*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2875/22652

The European Commission played a visible and leading role in the UN Transforming Education Summit, that offered visibility for our joint work with EU Member States via the 'Team Europe' approach. The European Commission's support to the *Global Education Monitoring Report*[65] provided important education data and evidence to improve the effectiveness of EU and global education support.

As the leading donor to the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), the European Commission played an active role in both governance and education coordination groups at country level, ensuring that GPE grants respond to bottlenecks and critical needs in the aftermath of school closures during the COVID-19 pandemic. The European Commission contributed to the new strategy for Education Cannot Wait[66], aligning with EU priorities in bridging humanitarian and development cooperation efforts.

Education, skills, and vocational education and training were positioned as enablers in the comprehensive EU-Africa: Global Gateway Investment Package presented at the EU-AU Summit. This is in recognition of the need to equip children and youth with crucial basic skills from an early age, as well as to enable investments in various sectors and prepare young people for job opportunities that these investments bring.

The EU continued its strong leadership in education in emergencies, dedicating 10 % of the EU's initial humanitarian aid budget to restore and maintain access to safe, quality and inclusive primary and secondary education during humanitarian crises. In 2022, the EU invested EUR 220 million in education in emergencies projects to support the education of 6.3 million children living in crisis situations.

Erasmus+ is the EU flagship programme in the fields of education, training, youth and sport. The programme strengthens our relations with partner countries in all continents. This is achieved through mobility, exchanges and capacity building to nurture human development, employability, active civic participation, and through promoting EU values, principles and interests around common priorities such as climate change and digitisation. People-to-people connections are at the centre, and the engagement of young people is a key element in the process of building societies that are more resilient and that are based on mutual trust and intercultural understanding. In the framework of Erasmus+ and as part of the international dimension of the Global Gateway Strategy, the EU funded 32 840 student and staff mobilities to Europe and 17 091 mobilities to partner countries in 2022. The details of the geographical spread of these mobilities are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Erasmus+ mobilities in 2022

	Asia and the Pacific[67]	Caribbean	Latin America	Neigh-bourhood east	Russia	South Medi-terranean	Sub-Saharan Africa	USA and Canada	Western Balkans
Mobilities to Europe	3 716	156	1 164	7 516	1 761	5 336	6 489	770	5 933
Mobilities to	2 174	76	648	3 016	1 230	2 576	3 131	716	3 524

[65] Global Education Monitoring Report 2021/22 - Österreichische UNESCO-Kommission
[66] https://www.educationcannotwait.org/
[67] Includes East Asia and South Asia, Central Asia, Middle East, and the Pacific.

partner countries									

There were also new actions launched in 2022 under the new multiannual financial framework, e.g., Capacity Building in Vocational Education and Training, with a high demand from the EU neighbourhood regions and Sub-Saharan Africa. Virtual exchanges, launched in 2021, continued to be implemented and allow more young people to benefit from the programme, also in hard-to-reach areas. 65 countries world-wide have appointed Erasmus+ National Focal Points to ensure a closer cooperation and an effective promotion of the Erasmus+ programme locally. In the next years, Erasmus+ National Focal Points will receive support from the Erasmus+ programme for networking activities, as well as training and material to perform their role in close cooperation with the respective EU Delegations.

The Development Education and Awareness Raising (DEAR) programme aims to build support of EU citizens, particularly youth, for sustainable development and cooperation with partner countries. A new call for proposals for EUR 93.5 million was launched in 2022 to support actions by civil society organisations and local authorities to achieve a more inclusive society with a developed sense of co-responsibility for local and global sustainable development and global challenges.

Through this programme, the European Commission supported the Global Education Network Europe that adopted the European Declaration on Global Education to 2050[68]. Ministries and Agencies signing the declaration affirmed their commitment to further advancing Global Education as a means to achieve a world of greater social and climate justice, peace, and solidarity.

Three DEAR Hubs were held in 2022 to promote capacity-building, networking and exchange. They focused on the role of young people as policy influencers, on youth and peer learning, and on the migration and climate change nexus. Various takeaways and reports were published in 2022[69].

To promote gender equality in and through education, the EU is translating the increased funding into EU action at global, regional and country level. The majority of the adopted country multiannual indicative programmes for 2021-2027 have education components, including eliminating gender disparities in education and training when aiming at improving access, learning, environment and gender norms. Planned EU interventions so far include supporting acquisition of digital and green skills, policies for inclusive access to education, remedial education, scholarships, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), literacy, curricula and teachers' reforms, addressing school gender-based violence and providing comprehensive sexuality education. In the area of education in emergency contexts, the EU promotes projects that target 50 % girls' participation.

[68] Dublin Declaration - Global Education in Europe to 2050 (squarespace.com)
[69] https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/library/first-person-dear-hubs_en
https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/library/eu-dear-programme-exchange-hub-migrations-climate-change-and-youth-engagement-report_en

SDG #5 Gender Equality

In 2022, the implementation of the Gender Action Plan III (GAP III) 2021-2025[70] continued at full speed with ambitious political and operational engagements at country, regional and international levels. The process of designing Country Level Implementation Plans (CLIPs) for GAP III in each partner country by the EU Delegation, in cooperation with EU Member States, fostered a more strategic 'Team Europe' approach, based on meaningful consultation with partners in country, including civil society and women's rights organisations, and leading to political and operational roadmaps for the GAP III roll out.

The results are promising, with 131 GAP III CLIPs and progress towards the target of 85 % of new external actions with gender equality as a principal or significant objective by 2025. In 2022, 72 % of external actions had gender equality as a principal or significant objective and the share of funding to those actions as compared to 2021 increased by 40 %[71]. Those figures bring the average for 2021 and 2022 at 71 % of external actions that had gender equality as a principal or significant objective. 18 new committed actions since GAP III adoption specifically target gender equality: 14 at country level and four at regional or global level. Examples of such actions adopted in 2022 are the EUR 10 million commitment for the program 'EU for women's empowerment in Egypt – EU TAMKEEN' and the EUR 16.62 million commitment for the programme 'Gender for Development in Uganda'. Furthermore, importantly, funding to women's rights organisations and movements also kept its ascendant curb, with a 30 % increase from 2021 to 2022[72].

Efforts continued on gender mainstreaming in investments with 70 % of all reported operations in 2022 under the EFSD+ gender mainstreamed.

The implementation of the EU–UN Spotlight Initiative on the Elimination of Gender Based Violence led by the European Commission has showed encouraging results across 26 countries. Since its start in 2017, national budgets to address violence against women and girls increased eightfold, over 1.6 million women and girls have been provided with gender-based violence services, and 2.5 million young people joined in- and out-of-school programmes promoting gender-equitable norms and values. Nearly 130 million people were reached through behavioural change campaigns in at least 29 languages.

Gender objectives in humanitarian policies were met in both policy, funding and advocacy. Among other things, the EU has in place a dedicated humanitarian gender policy as well as its own humanitarian gender-age marker which ensures gender mainstreaming. The latest results, covering 2021, show that 96 % of all eligible EU-funded humanitarian projects integrate gender consideration to some or a high extent, an increase from the results covering 2019 which were at 92 %. As regards targeted actions, in 2022 alone, the EU allocated approximately EUR 41.3 million to address gender-based violence in crisis settings. In addition, in the same period, EUR 23.4 million were allocated to sexual and reproductive health in emergencies. The EU furthermore continued to engage as an active member of the new Call to Action on

[70] JOIN(2020)17 Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council "EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An Ambitious Agenda for Gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action, and its accompanying SWD(2020)284 Joint Staff Working Document.

[71] The data presented are preliminary data extracted from the EU Statistical Dashboard (extraction of 01/04/2023). They take into account ODA and non-ODA actions from the following regulations: NDICI-GE, CFSP and IPA III.

[72] This result is based on committed actions under the OECD-DAC purpose code 15170 channeled through all excluding public institutions.

Gender-Based Violence, and it hosted several high-level events on gender-related topics in addition to raising the subject in high-level bilateral and multilateral fora.

As a vocal advocate of gender equality and women's and girls' full enjoyment of all human rights at multilateral fora, in regional partnerships, bilateral political and human rights dialogues, and through its CSDP missions and operation, the EU has further enhanced its leadership and coordination role on gender equality and women, peace and security.

SDG #6 Clean Water and Sanitation

The world is currently off-track to meet the targets of the SDG 6. There were still 2 billion people in the world lacking safely managed drinking water services in 2020, while almost half of the global population lack safe sanitation. The EU continued to support access to water, sanitation and hygiene services as well as sustainable and integrated water management, across its development cooperation and humanitarian assistance and action in 2022.

In the area of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), several country level actions were developed and adopted, such as an action on access to self-sufficient water services in the Gaza strip, a WASH sectoral budget support in Sao Tomé, a water access programme in Niger and a rural drinking water supply and sanitation programme in Tajikistan. In line with the objectives of SDG 6.5, the EU also continued to reinforce its work on water cooperation, integrated water management and the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus, as vital tools to prevent conflicts and ensure effective and sustainable use and management of shared resources. Team Europe initiatives on water and food security and water management in the Southern Neighbourhood, on transboundary water management for Africa, as well as on water, energy and climate in Central Asia, were further developed.

At the global level, the EU adopted a multiannual action plan on 'water security for all'[73] with three objectives: (i) to improve multilateral water governance by developing integrated, evidence based and rule of law-based mechanisms to sustainably manage and use the water resources while ensuring peace and security, adapting to climate change and preserving the resource and its biodiversity; (ii) to promote the human right to access safe drinking water and sanitation for all, notably women and girls, and those living in the most vulnerable situations; and (iii) to support investments and governance in the water sector by improving the capacities, attractiveness and efficiency of water operators and basin organisations with global exchanges of knowledge, know-how and standards (North-South, South-South). The EU also supports addressing the water-security link in the context of its ongoing partnership with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on climate and environmental security, including a focus on transboundary management of water and with the development of specific tools, such as the Global Surface Water Explorer[74].

Finally, 2022 was a year of mobilisation of development finance institutions to reduce the financing gap to reach SDG 6 targets. Five project investment proposals were approved for the use of EFSD+ guarantees in the water sector to further attract private sector and non-sovereign public finance.

[73] Action plans (europa.eu)
[74] https://global-surface-water.appspot.com/

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SDG #10 Reduced Inequalities

To contribute to the achievement of the SDG 10 and to fight inequalities by building inclusive and sustainable societies, the European Commission continued to put inequalities at the heart of the EU's international cooperation and developed specific tools to mainstream inequality-reduction as a cross-cutting objective of all interventions. The European Commission has also been conducting an exercise to mainstream inequalities in the logic of interventions and corporate indicators of pilot sectors of relevance for inequality reduction i.e., in social protection, and education.

The global inequality gap is increasingly aggravated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, increasing inequality both between and within countries. The effects are likely to disproportionately affect poorer countries, notably those dependent on imports of food and oil. In many, inflation is already at the highest level in a decade. A further boost from surging food and energy prices could lead to an inflationary spiral, where the poor are far less equipped to deal with these pressures and will endure most of the effects. In 2022, while inequality-reduction was mainstreamed across all interventions, the EU continued to support specific policy measures targeting people living in the poorest and most vulnerable situations. These interventions focused on sectors considered to have significant impact in reducing inequalities across different dimensions in partner countries and built on the work the EU is carrying forward across all priorities.

In 2022, the European Commission was also developing an innovative Inequality Marker to fully track efforts to fight inequalities, creating a sound reporting and benchmarking system on the contribution of EU development programs and projects to the fight against inequalities. The Inequality Marker will be further used as the tool to promote inclusive and sustainable societies. The reference guidelines have so far contributed to the successful integration of inequalities in country, regional and thematic multiannual indicative programmes for 2021-27.

EU actions to reduce inequalities are often directly associated with the pursuit of a range of SDGs, given the interlinkages between these SDGs. Reducing inequalities depends on progress in a broader range of SDGs, and in turn has a clear impact on many other SDGs.

The human rights-based approach (HRBA) is a working method to reach people in vulnerable situations and to leave no one behind. In June 2021, the European Commission adopted the staff working document *Applying the Human Rights Based Approach to international partnerships: An updated Toolbox for placing rights-holders at the centre of EU's Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation*[75]. The toolbox and its virtual version guide the development of interventions step by step and provides a multitude of tools, resources and examples. These tools continue to being translated into substantive interventions, the result of strong partnerships and synergies with like-minded Member States.

The EU and its Members States are designing Team Europe 'Equality Flagship' initiatives in partner countries where inequality is a significant challenge and a political priority. These initiatives will be transformative actions that can have real inequality-reduction impact in partner countries.

[75] SWD(2021) 179 final of 30 June 2021.

Selected results 2018-2022[76]

In the INTPA and Neighbourhood supported regions[77]

64 439 000 one-year-olds were fully immunised with EU support.

31 009 000 women of reproductive age had access to modern contraception methods with EU support.

45 052 000 students enrolled in primary education with EU support.

8 887 000 students enrolled in secondary education with EU support.

22 339 000 individuals had access to improved drinking water source and/or sanitation facility with EU support.

17 341 000 people benefitting from EU-funded interventions to counter sexual and gender-based violence.

Source: EU Results Framework indicators[78]

- Students from at least 84 countries around the world have been enrolled in primary and secondary education with EU support, reaching 1 210 000 students in Syria. A large share of students receives support via the Global Education Partnership, which is co-funded by the EU.
- The largest number of individuals with access to improved drinking water source and/or sanitation facility was reached in the North-Saharan Africa (6.99 million), followed by South-Saharan Africa (6.70 million) and South & Central Asia (2.33 million). The results are based on the people with access to newly built or rehabilitated water points and to newly constructed, rehabilitated or improved sanitation facilities - in view of eliminating open defecation in communities. In Afghanistan, 680 000 persons from urban and rural areas had access to improved drinking water.
- People in at least 46 countries were reached by interventions to counter sexual and gender-based violence, including 2.37 million persons in South-Saharan Africa.

[76] 2018-2022 stands for the reporting year. The EU-funded interventions that contribute to this figure are ongoing or closed projects managed by DG INTPA and DG NEAR (ENI) that started between January 2014 and 31st of May 2023. The values reported for EU Results Framework indicators are cumulative, including all results reported for these projects since start of implementation.

[77] Collecting results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (ENI) and DG INTPA. Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

[78] Selected results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (ENI) and DG INTPA. Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

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Table 2. EU Results Framework indicators disaggregated by sex

EU Results Framework indicator	Total	women/girls	men/boys	Not identified
Number of one-year-olds fully immunised with EU support	64 439 000	-	-	-
Number of women of reproductive age using modern contraception methods with EU support	31 009 000	31 009 000	-	-
Number of students enrolled in education with EU support: a) primary education	45 052 000	17 733 000	19 048 000	8 271 000
Number of students enrolled in education with EU support: b) secondary education	8 887 000	3 856 000	3 915 000	1 116 000
Number of individuals with access to improved drinking water source and/or sanitation facility with EU support	22 339 000	336 000	331 000	21 672 000
Number of people benefitting from EU-funded interventions to counter sexual and gender-based violence	17 341 000	6 188 000	6 553 000	4 600 000

3.2. Green Deal

Main achievements

The Global Gateway, accompanying the green and digital transitions beyond Europe, is expected to mobilise up to EUR 300 billion in 2021-2027, in climate mitigation and adaptation, and sustainable energy and transport, via a 'Team Europe' approach.

Climate mitigation and adaptation

In 2022, the EU continued to be a global leader in tackling climate change and environmental challenges, standing at the forefront of international efforts to promote sustainable and inclusive development in line with the European Green Deal.

During the 27th conference of the parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC COP27), the EU presented substantive initiatives to support partner countries globally in their run up to the 1.5°C Paris Agreement limit and in their efforts to respond to climate change. The Team Europe initiative on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in Africa worth a total of EUR 1 billion was launched with Denmark, Germany, France, and the Netherlands, offering contributions to the G7 Global Shield and UN Global Early Warnings for All Initiative. Following the EU's pledge at the UNFCCC COP26, the contribution to the International Methane Emission Observatory (IMEO) was also operationalised through a new agreement with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). By the end of 2022, the EU via the European Commission contributed to provide technical support to 29 partner countries in their efforts to design, update and implement their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs), via dedicated technical facilities. Through its climate and energy dialogues, the EU engaged with USA, India, China and other major emitters, on energy

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transition policies, best practices and green technologies to accelerate the development of renewable energy and promote energy efficiency.

The EU and its Member States continue their efforts to scale up international climate financing. On top of the 30 % climate spending target laid down in the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation, the Commission committed in 2021 an additional EUR 4 billion for climate finance until 2027. In 2022, under the NDICI-Global Europe, all decided actions contributed to the climate spending target for a total of EUR 3.392 billion (corresponding to 24.5 % out of the total committed amount). Cumulative figures 2021-2022 resulted in contributions to the Climate spending target of EUR 5.340 billion[79]. Year 2022 has shown a positive trend towards reaching the target by 2027.

Green and smart cities

Actions in and by cities will be central to the effective achievements of the Global Gateway ambitions, both in regard to green transitions and as core elements of enhancing connectivity. The EU supports this urban agenda through regional and national allocations and the EFSD+. Also, in the area of green and smart cities, the European Commission has sought to strengthen linkages between EU cities and cities in partner countries, including through initiatives such as the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy.

Sustainable agriculture

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine aggravated the global food crisis disrupting global supply chains and triggering rising food and energy prices. It also massively disrupted the global energy system, triggering increased price volatility and energy and food security risks across the globe. In June 2022, the EU and its Member States agreed to take resolute action to respond to the food crisis, as part of the 'Team Europe' response to global food insecurity. More than EUR 3.8 billion is being provided by the European Commission for the period 2021-2024 for medium-term investments in food security and sustainable food systems in partner countries. The European Commission also continued to support partner countries in developing sustainable value chains and resilient food systems, with a special focus on Africa. The EU supported partner countries to boost local food production as part of the transition to resilient and sustainable food systems, while decreasing dependence on expensive and unsustainable agricultural inputs, e.g., chemical fertilisers. The EU also took measures to keep markets functioning, e.g., by fighting unjustified trade restrictions. In addition, it contributed to lower global food prices by helping to get Ukrainian grains and other food products to the global markets and to countries most in need, while working with partners to promote coordinated multilateral solutions and a comprehensive and timely UN-led response.

Biodiversity and forests

The Biodiversity COP 15 adopted in December 2022 the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF) with ambitious goals and targets, robust monitoring, reporting and review arrangements, as well as a robust resource mobilisation package. The EU reconfirmed its commitment to double its external funding to biodiversity in 2021-2027 (equivalent to EUR 7 billion), in particular for the most vulnerable, compared to 2014-2020 in support of biodiversity. To deliver on this target, the EU has developed interventions with its partners tackling biodiversity loss and will need to better align its policies and actions

[79] Data subjected to regular quality checks.

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with the objectives of the GBF. The implementation of the NaturAfrica initiative continued with new actions in six regional landscapes and in several African countries with the aim of improving biodiversity conservation while improving livelihoods. In parallel, the European Parliament and the Council reached a political agreement on the EU Deforestation Regulation[80] and the European Commission signed five Memorandums of Understanding for Forest Partnerships at the Climate COP27. Projects were developed to support green and productive landscapes in the Sahel and Horn of Africa, in line with the pledge made by the European Commission's President to allocate EUR 700 million per year to the Great Green Wall. All in all, this has resulted in an increase of the biodiversity funding under NDICI-Global Europe from EUR 530 million in 2021 (final value) to EUR 852 million in 2022[81].

In 2022, under the NDICI-Global Europe instrument, figures show a contribution to the biodiversity target of EUR 0.85 billion (corresponding to 6 % out of the total committed amount). Cumulative figures 2021-2022 resulted in contributions to the biodiversity policy of EUR 1.383 billion[82]. Here also the trend is fairly positive, but further efforts are necessary to achieve the biodiversity spending objectives.

Water and oceans

The EU continued to support access to water and sanitation through its country programmes and adopted in 2022 the 'water security for all' multiannual action plan to improve multilateral water governance, promote the human right to access safe drinking water and sanitation, and support investments and governance in the water sector. The EU also continued to reinforce its work on water cooperation, integrated water management and the water-energy-food-ecosystems nexus, as vital tools to prevent conflicts and ensure effective and sustainable use and management of shared resources. Team Europe initiatives were further developed on water and food security and on water management in the Southern Neighbourhood, on transboundary water management for Africa, as well as on water, energy and climate in Central Asia. In 2022, the European Commission adopted a new EU Agenda for international ocean governance[83]. It reflects the priorities set under the European Green Deal and focuses on key threats, such as climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.

Pollution

Under the EU action plan *Towards Zero Pollution for Air, Water and Soil* adopted in 2021, the zero-pollution legislative package was tabled in October 2022 including a revision of EU ambient air quality legislation, the lists of surface and groundwater pollutants under EU water legislation, and the directive on urban wastewater treatment. The proposal for Euro 7 standards was put forward on 10 November 2022 to ensure that all new cars and vans on the European market have zero tailpipe CO_2 emissions.

Circular economy

The EU has stepped up its engagement with third countries, at global, regional and country level, to support Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP), notably the circular economy transition. With the on-going implementation of SWITCH to Green[84] (the EU's flagship initiative on SCP and the circular

[80] COM/2021/706 final of 17 November 2021.
[81] Preliminary value, still subject to review.
[82] Data subjected to regular quality checks.
[83] JOIN/2022/28 final of 24 June 2022.
[84] https://www.switchtogreen.eu/home/

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economy, which includes the SWITCH to Circular Economy Value Chains project and the regional SWITCH programmes in Asia[85], Africa[86] and the Mediterranean[87]) in 2022 the EU committed to support the circular economy transition through bilateral actions in 20 partner countries, as well as through one regional action in Africa and four global actions including the Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE)[88]. In 2022, the EU further delivered on its ambition to lead by example a circular economy transition globally, by showcasing relevant EU policies, regulatory measures and international actions at the World Circular Economy Forum that was held in Rwanda. Finally, the EU supported the adoption of a resolution by the United Nations General Assembly that, for the first time, mentions the role of circular economy for sustainable development[89].

Sustainable energy

Sustainable energy plays a key role in the external dimension of the Green Deal. In line with the objectives of the Global Gateway and the Paris Agreement, the European Commission continued to support actions at multilateral fora (UN, G7, G20 and sectoral agencies and organisations) and in partner countries to increase sustainable energy access and decarbonise the energy sector by spurring renewable energy generation and integration, energy efficiency solutions, and promoting the phase out of fossil fuels.

Throughout 2022, the EU was also actively engaged in multilateral fora, such as the G7 and G20, International Energy Agency, the International Renewable Energy Agency, the Clean Energy Ministerial, the International Solar Alliance, etc. to push for the global energy transition aligned with the Paris Agreement objectives. In particular, the EU used its influence to contribute to the development of a global hydrogen market, in particular through electrolysers powered by renewable energy.

The European Commission launched in 2022 the Africa-Europe Green Energy Initiative to increase renewable energy generation capacity by 300 gigawatts and secure access to affordable, reliable and sustainable energy. During 2022, The European Commission continued work with the African Union Development Agency on the Continental Power System Master Plan, crucial to establishing an integrated continental electricity market, which is scheduled to be finalised in 2023.

Nuclear safety

In 2022, with the unprovoked Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the European Commission reacted by mobilising the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC) to urgently address the destruction and looting by Russian troops, in particular in the Chernobyl exclusion zone. EU support included EUR 5 million for assistance to restore the analytical and monitoring capabilities looted by the Russians in the Chernobyl exclusion zone and a EUR 5 million contribution to the International Chernobyl Cooperation Account (ICCA) set-up by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) for the reconstruction of nuclear safety related infrastructure in Ukraine. This

[85] C(2016)7768 final of 24 November 2016 & C(2018)8635 final of 10 December 2018.
[86] C(2016)8242 final of 2 December 2016.
[87] C(2018)7631 final of 14 November 2018.
[88] Launched by the EU, UNEP and UNIDO at the online meeting of United Nations Environment Assembly in February 2021.
[89] Promoting sustainable consumption and production patterns for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, building on Agenda 21 (A/RES/77/162).

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financial effort makes the EU the biggest donor to the fund. An additional EUR 3.4 million was allocated for support to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), including the financing of IAEA on-site presence at nuclear sites.

After the successful completion of remediation works at two uranium mining sites in Kyrgyzstan, works on the third and final contaminated site in Kyrgyzstan and on two other priority sites in Uzbekistan were launched. In a difficult and tense international situation, the EU succeeded in delivering its commitment under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action with the Islamic Republic of Iran[90], in particular the procurement of the first batch of equipment for the Iranian Nuclear Safety Centre in Tehran, establishing emergency preparedness and response capabilities in case of a nuclear accident in Iran.

SDG #7 Affordable and Clean Energy

In 2022, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine massively disrupted the global energy system and increased price volatility and energy security risks in the EU, its neighbours and across the globe. The resulting rise in energy prices has had a direct impact on European citizens and businesses and on countries throughout the world. The goal of the EU's external energy policy requires diversifying the EU's energy supply, especially through renewables, increasing energy savings and efficiency, and, primarily, accelerating the ongoing global energy transition to achieve climate neutrality. This led the European Commission to adopt the REPowerEU plan with the accompanying Strategy for an EU external energy engagement[91], which aims at rapidly reducing dependence on Russian fossil fuels and speeding up the green and just energy transition globally while supporting partner countries suffering from the impact of the war in Ukraine.

Throughout 2022, the EU engaged with third countries on diversification of gas sources. Memorandum of Understanding were signed between the EU and Azerbaijan, Egypt and Israel and reinforced its energy dialogue with some of the major pipeline gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) supplier countries.

In line with the Global Gateway's objectives, the European Commission continued to support actions in partner countries to increase sustainable energy access and decarbonise the energy sector, by contributing to renewable energy generation and energy efficiency solutions and promoting the phasing out of fossil fuels. In February 2022, the Africa-EU Green Energy initiative (AEGEI) was launched at the sixth EU-Africa Union Summit. This Team Europe initiative aims at increasing renewable energy and access to energy in Africa and promoting energy efficiency. It brings together the EU, its Member States, European financial and development institutions and private sector.

The European Commission continued engaging with international partners and in multilateral fora, such as the G7 and G20, International Energy Agency, the International Renewable Energy Agency, the Clean Energy Ministerial, the International Solar Alliance, etc. to push for the global energy transition aligned with the Paris Agreement objectives. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed with Power Africa, to align the work in energy sector in Sub-Saharan Africa with the United States in the areas of small-scale and off-grid power generation, energy storage and energy efficiency, as well as coordinate on policy dialogue and key regulatory reforms. The European Commission also started working with the

[90] Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action | EEAS Website (europa.eu)
[91] JOIN(2022) 23 final of 18 May 2022.

International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)[92] and continued working with the African Union Development Agency on the Continental Power System Master Plan[93].

Through its climate and energy dialogues, the EU engaged with USA, India, China and other major emitters, on energy transition policies, best practices and green technologies to accelerate the development of renewable energy and promote energy efficiency.

The EU has been actively involved in the Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETP) discussions with Senegal, South Africa, Vietnam, and Indonesia, to support the ambitious sustainable energy transition of these countries. The JETP with Indonesia was launched in November 2022 at the G20 Summit, with pledges from international partners and the EU for an initial USD 20 billion in public and private financing over a three-to-five-year period. The JETP with Vietnam was announced in December 2022. International partners pledged USD 15.5 billion, half from the private sector. In addition, to support the transition away from coal, the European Commission with the German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action (BMWK) signed a contract with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to set up a Just Energy Transition Inter-Regional Platform for coal regions, in order to strengthen their capacities and share experience and knowledge on just economic transition.

Besides efforts to deploy renewable energy and promote energy efficiency, emphasis was also put on exploring the potential of green hydrogen in partner countries. In particular, the EU used its influence in international fora to contributing to the development of a global hydrogen market, in particular through electrolysers powered by renewable energy. Several bilateral non-binding agreements have been signed in 2022 with countries well placed to develop the demand for renewable hydrogen or contribute to renewable energy and hydrogen production (Ukraine, Egypt, Japan, Namibia, Kazakhstan).

In Chile, the implementation of the Team Europe initiative on hydrogen started with the launch of a EUR 4 million technical cooperation programme (Euroclima LAC programme - Chile Window[94]), financed for an equivalent amount by Germany. The programme aims at strengthening the enabling environment for the green hydrogen economy, supporting technological development and human capital, as well as market and project development.

Key activities with other countries included support to identifying strategic approaches, strengthening the policy and regulatory framework and promoting investments. Moreover, the European Commission supported actions to strengthen the entrepreneurial ecosystem for the clean cooking sector through the RVO SEE-CC programme and to stimulate investments in clean and efficient cooking energy solutions through the Spark+ Africa Impact fund.

The European Commission continued implementing the ElectriFI Global Facility, whose objective is to de-risk and unlock early-stage private sector investments to increase access to clean energy in developing countries. ElectriFI supported more than 40 projects, investing more than EUR 75 million and leveraging some EUR 300 million in total investments in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America. Moreover, the European Commission continued to implement the GET.Pro programme with GIZ. From January 2021 to

[92]Annual action plan 2021 for the Thematic Programme "Global Challenges" – Planet (https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/climate-environment-and-energy/biodiversity-and-ecosystems_en)
[93] The Continental Power Systems Master Plan: Accelerating the deployment of renewables in Africa | AUDA-NEPAD
[94] https://www.euroclima.org/chile

September 2022, 40 clean energy projects and companies were supported by GET.pro for financing, with an anticipated investment volume of EUR 421 million, while 75 new projects and businesses were accepted for support.

In 2022, the European Commission allocated financial resources to ensure the future stability, safety and functioning of the Kariba Dam in Zambia, an essential and complex project to improve the safety of the Kariba Dam. Financed by the EU, World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and the Zambezi River Authority (ZRA), its estimated appraisal cost was USD 294 million, and EUR 83.5 million (European Development Fund) was earmarked for the plunge pool works where the EU is the only donor for those works.

SDG #11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

Urbanisation and the role of cities in the economy are increasingly shaping development challenges and opportunities in our partner countries. With cities globally contributing 80 % of gross domestic product (GDP), 70 % of global energy consumption and 70 % of global carbon emissions and nearly one billion people living in slums, actions in and by cities will be central for realising the ambitions of key strategic initiatives such as the Global Gateway and the external dimension of the European Green Deal.

2022 saw the mobilisation of programmes in support of sustainable urbanisation along three main lines: Country programmes identified in the related national strategies, e.g., Tanzania, Cameroun, Kenya, Rwanda and Guinea Bissau; within the EFSD+ and the investment window targeting sustainable cities, a number of proposed investment programmes (PIPs) were selected seeking to advance the mobilisation of financing for urban development, e.g. through bonds issues subnational lending and urban investment funds; and an urban development technical assistance facility to strengthen the support to EU Delegations and their engagement with counterparts.

Local authorities will be key for achieving SDG 11 and most of the other SDGs. The European Commission is seeking to strengthen links between EU cities and cities in partner countries. The city-to-city partnership for sustainable urban development has so far contributed to the establishment of 57 partnerships active in the different dimensions of sustainable urban development.

The European Commission is the co-founder of the Global Covenant of Mayors initiative, whose signatory cities commit to the implementation of sustainable energy policies as well as local climate change mitigation and adaptation activities. The initiative is the world's largest movement supporting cities in their work on energy and climate change and has regional chapters that receive EU support in every area of the world with the largest numbers of signatory cities in the regions of the Eastern Partnership, Southern Neighbourhood, Sub-Saharan African, and Latin America. To date, the Global Covenant brings together more than 12 600 cities in 144 countries[95].

Rapid and often unplanned urbanisation is a key factor in exacerbating disaster risk and the impact of disasters. The European Commission is strengthening disaster preparedness in urban contexts with its

[95] The external dimension of the Global Covenant of Mayors initiative concerns 1 600 cities of which over 300 are in Sub-Saharan Africa, over 500 in Latin America, and over 600 in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.

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humanitarian partners, as outlined in the *Disaster Preparedness Guidance Note*[96] published in 2021. Urban preparedness is one of the 2021-2024 funding priorities for the Disaster Preparedness Budget Line.

SDG #12 Responsible Consumption and Production

The EU is committed to pursuing its international cooperation on sustainable consumption and production (SCP), including the circular economy, as an essential contribution to SDG 12. EU international cooperation in these areas focuses mainly on developing awareness and knowledge to build the case for the green/circular economy transition, supporting policy and institutional frameworks including via country, regional and multilateral policy dialogues, promoting green business development in key value chains and mobilising finance for the global circular economy transition.

At global level, the objective is to engage at multilateral level to promote policies towards the use of standards, a level-playing field for the private sector and the provision of financial and technical assistance. The EU has stepped up its engagement with third countries, at global, regional and country level, to support SCP, notably the circular economy transition. Along with the on-going implementation of SWITCH to Green (the EU's flagship initiative on SCP and the circular economy that includes the SWITCH to Circular Economy Value Chains project and the regional SWITCH programmes in Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean) in 2022 the EU committed to support the circular economy transition through bilateral actions in 20 partner countries, as well as through one regional (in Africa) and three global actions (continuing EU support to the Partnership for Action on the Green Economy and the Green Economy Coalition and the 10 Year Framework Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP), and providing support to the Green Growth Knowledge Partnership).

In 2022, the EU formally joined the African Circular Economy Alliance and the Circular Economy Coalition of Latin America and the Caribbean, as a strategic partner. The EU further delivered on its ambition to lead by example the global circular economy transition, by showcasing relevant EU policies, regulatory measures and international actions at the World Circular Economy Forum that was held in Rwanda.

Lastly, the EU also supported the elaboration and finalisation of the Global Strategy 2022-2030[97] of the 10-Year Framework of Programmes on Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns (10YFP), which advocates for a global and inclusive transition towards sustainable consumption and production, including through circular economy, resource efficiency and other approaches. The Strategy, in line with EU's priorities, also advocates for the establishment of a multilateral and multi-stakeholder dialogue on sustainable consumption and production to facilitate the exchange of information on best practices for the sustainable management of natural resources, resource efficiency, circular economy and innovative business models.

SDG #13 Climate Action

Climate change is a key priority of the EU's external action and a central theme of the European Green Deal now reinforced by the Global Gateway, together with the European Consensus, the 2030 Agenda

[96] European Commission, Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, *DG ECHO Guidance Note: Disaster Preparedness*, 2021, https://civil-protection-humanitarian-aid.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2022-02/dg_echo_guidance_note_-_disaster_preparedness_en.pdf

[97] https://www.oneplanetnetwork.org/globalstrategy

and the Paris Agreement. The EU remains committed to achieving SDG 13 on climate action within the EU and is supporting partner countries with their implementation goals through development cooperation.

To reflect this, the EU and its Member States continue their efforts to scale up international climate financing to partner countries. On top of the 30 % climate finance spending target laid down in the NDICI – Global Europe Regulation, the Commission committed in 2021 an additional EUR 4 billion for climate finance until 2027. In 2022, under the NDICI-Global Europe instrument, all decided actions contributed to the climate spending target for a total of EUR 3.392 billion (corresponding to 24.5 % out of the total committed amount). Cumulative figures 2021-2022 resulted in contributions to the Climate spending target of EUR 5.340 billion[98].

Climate change and the environment are being integrated by the EU into all its policies and interventions, in line with decisions taken at COP26 in 2021 and COP27 in 2022. Continuous support is provided to the upgrading and implementation of Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and National Adaptation Plans globally, via dedicated technical facilities (such as the EU Global Support Facility for Nationally Determined Contributions/NDCs Facility, or via NDC Partnership) including the EU providing direct support to 29 countries in 2022 for the design and implementation of their NDCs, as well as continuing commitment to the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) 2015-2030.

Several Team Europe initiatives (TEIs) addressed climate change as a priority in 2022. The TEI on Climate Change Adaptation and Resilience in Africa was launched at COP27. The initiative, worth more than EUR 1 billion, and co-funded with Denmark, Germany, France, and the Netherlands, is geared to both minimise and address loss and damage as part of the EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package. The initiative aims to offer a sizeable EU contribution to the Global Shield against Climate Risks and to the UN initiative Early Warnings for All amongst others. It responds to disaster risks by focusing on a comprehensive four-pillar framework. The TEI will support African partners by improving the understanding of risks, strengthening policy and governance, and leveraging public and private resources to that end. But even with the best planning, disasters may not always be avoidable. So, the TEI will also promote Climate and Disaster Risk Finance and Insurance (CDRFI) mechanisms to protect vulnerable populations against residual risks.

Similarly, the Green-Blue Alliance in the Pacific is another Team Europe initiative whose implementation started in 2022. It will support Global Gateway investment priorities at regional level, addressing the multiple specific needs of Pacific Island Countries (PICs), that are particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and resulting natural disasters. It complements the ongoing Intra-ACP Climate Services and related applications (ClimSA – EUR 85 million) program, which supports the strengthening of the climate services value chain with technical assistance, financial assistance, infrastructure, and capacity building to improve and extend access in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

The Great Green Wall (GGW) and its Accelerator Strategy is a flagship African-led initiative to regreen the Sahel from Senegal to Somalia, grouping together a mosaic of sustainable development projects aiming to restore 100 million hectares of degraded land; create 10 million jobs; sequester 250 million tons of carbon; improve food security for 20 million people; and provide access for 10 million smallholder farmers to agricultural technologies that are resilient to climate change. Following the EU-African Union Summit

[98] Data subjected to regular quality checks.

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in February 2022, multiple GGW-relevant national and regional initiatives have been approved and are under development.

Following the EU's pledge[99] at the UNFCCC COP26, the contribution to the International Methane Emission Observatory (IMEO) was also operationalised in 2022, through a new agreement with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). The EU funding supports the Observatory's tasks to collect and verify methane emissions data and to provide the international community with an improved understanding of global emissions and where abatement action should be focused. 150 countries have joined the pledge so far, and more than 50 countries have developed national methane action plans or are in the process of doing so. Engagement with oil and gas producing countries was also reinforced to reduce methane emission along the value chain.

The European Commission continues to factor climate and environmental risk considerations into humanitarian operations in line with its commitments in the 2021 Communication on the EU's Humanitarian Action: new challenges, same principles[100]. One of the priorities of the dedicated budget line for preparedness in the EU humanitarian aid budget focuses on climate and environmental resilience for the period 2021-2024. In 2022, the European Commission dedicated EUR 76.5 million to disaster preparedness activities, including to support communities to prepare for the impacts of climate change, and aimed to mainstream disaster preparedness across EU funded humanitarian actions. The European Commission underlines the importance of investing through all available funding sources in the resilience of the communities most at risk to climate change, to reduce the impact of future climate shocks, thereby reducing suffering and reducing future calls on the humanitarian budget.

Aligning financial flows with the Paris Agreement

Pursuing ambition under the Paris Agreement requires an economic and financial strategy, bringing about a fundamental transformation of all economies and a major shift in the structure of the domestic and global economy, financial markets, and investments. This is clearly set by the Paris Agreement that call Parties to make financial flows consistent with a pathway towards low greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and climate-resilient development as set out in Article 2.1(c). Yet, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), public and private finance flows towards the fossil economy are estimated to be greater than those for global climate adaptation and mitigation action.

The implementation of this goal starts with domestic policies, which every Party should elaborate and implement. It concerns all actions, strategies, incentives, and regulations regarding orienting finance flows towards climate objectives. It tackles the financing of the economy as a whole, meaning the allocation of public and private, domestic and international finance in any country. The EU tries to address these issues with a combination of tools such as the EU Sustainable Finance Strategy and the International Platform on Sustainable Finance. Through the Platform, the EU is exchanging and disseminating information to promote best practices, compare different initiatives and identify barriers and opportunities for sustainable finance.

In recent years, the EU and its Member States have also launched policy initiatives relevant to the Paris Agreement's goal of making finance flows consistent with low GHG emissions and climate resilient

[99] https://www.globalmethanepledge.org
[100] COM(2021) 110 final of 10 March 2021.

development. For example, by making existing climate markets and projects more investor-friendly, creating investment opportunity with reliable returns and providing political and financial risk assurance to encourage private actors to invest in climate projects and disinvest from carbon intensive sectors.

SDG #14 Life below Water

Global progress has been slow in addressing major threats, including pollution, eutrophication, overfishing, habitat destruction, and impacts of climate change. Most SDG 14 targets will not be reached by the deadline.

Sustainable management of the ocean is an increasingly important aspect of EU diplomatic action, partnerships and cooperation in the context of the EU commitment to double external funding for biodiversity over 2021-2027. In 2022, the European Commission and the High Representative adopted a new Communication on international ocean governance[101], focusing on key threats, such as climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution. The EU supported the protection of at least 30 % of the global ocean by 2030, a target also set for its own waters. With regard to deep-sea mining, the Communication confirmed the position of the European Commission that exploitation of marine minerals in areas beyond national jurisdiction should not start before sufficient scientific knowledge of deep-sea ecosystems and the potential effects of mining on ecosystems and their services is available, adequate provisions for the effective protection of the marine environment from harmful effects of mining activities are in place, in line with the precautionary principle and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)[102], and it can be demonstrated that no harmful effects arise from mining technologies and operational practices. The Communication also put forwards external actions to promote sustainability of the blue economy at global level, including decarbonisation of maritime transport and combating illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing.

Throughout 2022, the EU was also actively engaged in the negotiations of an ambitious, fair, and equitable agreement on conservation and sustainable use of Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ). It will establish global rules to regulate human activities and designate marine protected areas in the high seas, and better share the benefits of marine genetic research.

The WTO Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies[103], in June 2022, also marked a major step forward by prohibiting harmful fisheries subsidies, a key factor in the depletion of the world's fish stocks. In 2022, the EU committed EUR 1 million to support developing countries through technical assistance and capacity building for the implementation of the disciplines under this agreement. EUR 3 million was committed to a global toolkit to integrate marine tenure rights and community surveillance into the approaches of small-scale fisheries.

On pollution, a key objective is to conclude a legally binding global agreement on plastics by 2024, as agreed in March 2022 at UN level.

Cooperation takes place through a dense network of projects and programmes with an integrated approach to effectively address the drivers of ocean degradation, while linking food security, coastal

[101] JOIN(/2022)/ 28 final of 24 June 2022.
[102] UNCLOS: United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
[103] WTO | Agreement on Fisheries Subsidies

resilience and livelihoods with natural resources preservation. For example, in line with the UN's Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development, scientific and technological support has been allocated in the context of the Regional Centres of Excellence programme, to contribute to addressing critical knowledge gaps in marine science.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, the EU allocated support for country and regional ocean programmes, addressing international ocean governance, sustainable blue economy and the conservation/restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems, but also illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing. Around EUR 130 million has been allocated to protect biodiversity and contribute to a climate resilient blue economy in Benin and Tanzania.

In the Pacific, the EU allocated EUR 10 million to make island ecosystems, economies and communities more resilient to climate change and to increase scientific capacity for a more integrated ocean management.

In Asia, EUR 5 million was committed to enhance effective policy action in ASEAN countries on plastic production, waste avoidance and waste management to prevent pollution in line with circular economy principles. The EU also invested EUR 10 million in the Philippines to facilitate access to Copernicus data and products, supporting the development of services responding to issues like marine plastic waste and marine spatial planning. This action is planned to be scaled up to the whole ASEAN level in the future.

In the Southern Neighbourhood, sustainable fisheries, reduction of pollution and biodiversity protection received increasing attention in the context of the Union for the Mediterranean and a strategy for the Western Mediterranean fostering a sustainable blue economy through cooperation. Regional programmes contributed to the Barcelona Convention objectives by acting either on the causes of biodiversity loss or on the preservation of endangered ecosystems. For example, the IMAP-MPA project has strengthened and further developed the Marine Protected Areas network. The WES project provided technical assistance and training on depollution of the Mediterranean.

Sustainably managing and protecting marine resources is also part of the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans. With EU support, the region is exploring avenues to strengthen cooperation, for instance, to reduce marine litter, reduce emissions and protect biodiversity. Similarly, the EU works closely with Black Sea countries on the marine and coastal environment and aims to join the Bucharest Convention.

SDG #15 Life on Land

SDG 15 received particular attention in 2022 with the adoption of a Global Biodiversity Framework at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference, but also with the political agreement reached between the Council and the European Parliament on the European Commission proposal for an EU Regulation on deforestation-free supply chains[104].

Important international summits took place in 2022, highlighting the importance of natural resources, ecosystems and biodiversity for combatting poverty and strengthening livelihoods including COP27 of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and COP15 of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). At CBD COP15, an ambitious Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework was adopted, together with a monitoring framework, mechanisms for review of implementation, a solid

[104] COM(/2021)/ 706 final of 17 November 2021.

package on resource mobilisation and a strong decision on further developing a mechanism for sharing the benefits of the use of Digital Sequence Information (DSI). The EU will support its partners to implement this agreement and tackle biodiversity loss and has committed to double its external funding to biodiversity (equivalent to EUR 7 billion for the period 2021-2027).

At the UNFCCC COP27, the European Commission signed five Memorandums of Understanding to establish Forest Partnerships with Mongolia, Guyana, Zambia, Uganda and the Republic of Congo. The Forest Partnerships will address global challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss while meeting socio-economic development objectives through the promotion of forest-related value chains and sustainable trade in wood products. The European Commission also further pursued its work on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT), notably via voluntary partnership agreements (VPAs), which have helped improve governance and regulatory frameworks leading to greater transparency and accountability, as well as sustainable forest management. Moreover, once the EU Deforestation Regulation, agreed on by the EU co-legislators in December 2022, is adopted and applied, the new law will ensure that a set of key goods placed on the EU market will no longer contribute to deforestation and forest degradation in the EU and elsewhere in the world.

To implement its ambitions, the European Commission has mainstreamed biodiversity across all its interventions and has developed specific actions such as the NaturAfrica initiative designed to protect biodiversity while creating economic opportunities and better livelihoods for local populations[105]. The development of the NaturAfrica initiative continued in 2022 in six regional landscapes (Congo Basin, Transhumance landscapes in Central Africa, West Africa Forests, Sudano-Sahelian savannahs, Eastern Rift savannahs and watersheds, and cross-frontier conservation areas of Southern Africa). Through the 'Landscape Approach', NaturAfrica aims to improve the livelihood of 65 million people, stabilise 3 million km² of land and ensure water security.

In the Sahel and Horn of Africa, continuous EU actions support the African-led Great Green Wall initiative. In total, more than 188 000 hectares of land were restored in 2022 under the Regreening Africa programme, notably through agroforestry. In the Pacific Islands region, the multi-donor Kiwa Initiative supports the use of nature-based solutions for climate resilience by preserving biodiversity. In Southern neighbourhood, the IMPA-MPA project was extended in 2022. Its objective is to strengthen and further develop the Marine Protected Areas (MPA) network and to support the achievement of the Good Environmental Status of the Mediterranean Sea. In the Western Balkans, the EU4Green project, which aims at implementing the Green Agenda including its biodiversity pillar, started in 2022. Beyond alignment with the 2030 Biodiversity strategy, the project is fostering nature-based solutions and eco-systems services in the region.

As shown in the figure here below, SDG 15 is both an important cross-cutting issue in projects targeting other SDGs, as well as a main objective of many EU external actions.

[105] This work linking biodiversity and livelihoods has continued through the ongoing implementation of the Biodiversity and Protected Areas Management Programme (BIOPAMA), including the development of tools by the Joint Research Centre for tracking conservation targets and addressing the quality and effectiveness of conservation interventions.

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Figure 2. ODA to SDG 15 and interlinkages with other goals[106]

EU data for 2022 shows that a total of 60 projects targeted SDG 15 as the main SDG, whereas SDG 15 was also reported as significant in 276 projects where other SDGs were marked as main.

Selected results 2018-2022

In the INTPA and Neighbourhood supported regions[107]

29 057 000 food-insecure people received EU assistance.

22 337 000 women of reproductive age, adolescent girls and children under five were reached by nutrition-related interventions supported by the EU.

21 402 000 smallholders were reached with EU-supported interventions aimed at increasing their sustainable production, access to markets and/or security of land.

3 124 000 ha of agricultural and pastoral ecosystems were managed by sustainable land management practices with EU support.

Source: EU Results Framework indicators

[106] Source: SWD/2023/701 final of 15 May 2023. Drawn up by JRC using EU Dashboard data on ODA (2022, commitments). The figure shows interlinkages among SDGs measured by number of projects reported, in the terms described in Figure 1 under SDG 1 above.

[107] Collecting results from EU-funded interventions managed by NEAR (ENI) and INTPA. Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

- Food insecure people from at least 54 countries have received EU assistance. Assistance includes, for example, support to improve subsistence farming practices, provision of social transfers (in cash or in kind) to poor or vulnerable individuals aimed at reducing their deficits in food consumption or interventions that aim at improving nutritional adequacy of food intake.

Table 3. EU Results Framework indicators disaggregated by sex

EU Results Framework indicators	Total	women/girls	men/boys	Not identified
Number of food-insecure people receiving EU assistance	29 057 000	6 520 000	5 947 000	16 590 000
Number of women of reproductive age, adolescent girls and children under five reached by nutrition-related interventions supported by the EU	22 337 000	2 411 000	1 352 000	18 574 000
Number of smallholders reached with EU-supported interventions aimed to increase their sustainable production, access to markets and/or security of land	21 402 000	2 502 000	2 478 000	16 422 000

In the INTPA and Neighbourhood supported regions[108]

38 065 000 individuals accessing electricity with EU support through new or improved access.

34 000 megawatts of renewable energy generation capacity installed with EU support.

294 countries and cities developed climate change and/or disaster risk reduction strategies with EU support.

126 countries and cities implemented climate change and/or disaster risk reduction strategies with EU support.

29 000 MSMEs applied sustainable consumption practices with EU support.

115 557 000 of CO2e greenhouse gas emissions avoided with EU support.

Source: EU Results Framework indicators

- The value for renewable energy generation capacity installed with EU support increased by 10 % since last year (from 31 000 megawatts for reporting year 2018-2021 to 34 000 megawatts for reporting year 2018-2022). The value for CO2 greenhouse gas emissions avoided with EU support increased by 20.5 % since last year (from 95 871 000 tonnes CO2 eq for reporting year 2018-2021 to 115 557 000 tonnes CO2 eq for reporting year 2018-2022).

[108] Collecting results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (ENI) and DG INTPA. Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

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- Of the 294 countries and cities that developed climate change and/or disaster risk strategies, 69 were countries (including Moldova and Ukraine in Europe) and 225 were cities.

In the enlargement region[109]

1 293 megawatts of renewable energy generation capacity installed with EU support.

37 disaster risk reduction public policies: a) developed, and/or b) under implementation with EU support.

1 201 340 of CO2e greenhouse gas emissions avoided with EU support.

Source: IPA Performance Framework indicators

- The value for renewable energy generation capacity installed with EU support increased by 13 % since last year (from 1 143 megawatts for reporting year 2018-2021 to 1 293 megawatts for reporting year 2018-2022). The value for CO2 greenhouse gas emissions avoided with EU support increased by 17 % since last year (from 1 028 248 tonnes CO2 eq for reporting year 2018-2021 to 1 201 340 tonnes CO2 eq for reporting year 2018-2022).

In the INTPA and Neighbourhood supported regions[110]

966 000 km2 marine areas were under protection with EU support.

77 599 000 ha of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems were under protection with EU support.

70 637 000 ha of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems were under sustainable management with EU support.

Source: EU Results Framework indicators

- In the South-Saharan Africa, more than 40 million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems were under protection, and 7 million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems were managed to ensure biological diversity and to preserve natural heritage with EU support.
- Whereas in South and Central America, more than 36 million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems were under protection, and 13.5 million hectares of terrestrial and freshwater ecosystems were managed to ensure biological diversity and to preserve natural heritage with EU support.

[109] Selected results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA)). Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.
[110] Collecting results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (ENI) and DG INTPA. Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

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3.3. Digitalisation, Science, Technology and Innovation

Main achievements

Global Gateway digital connectivity

Throughout 2022 significant progress has been made, moving towards the identification, formulation and the implementation of digital programmes and projects.

Examples of Global Gateway digital priority areas for Sub-Saharan Africa, as announced at the EU-African Union Summit of February 2022 and outlined in the Africa-Europe Global Gateway Investment Package, are the Data Flagship, the EurAfrica Gateway Cable (covering investments in international submarine cables), Regional Fibre Optic Backbones in Africa (covering investments in regional/cross-border terrestrial links) as well as last mile connectivity that is key to reaching end-users and complementing investments in digital infrastructure at regional level. Under the angle of science, technology and information, another major flagship area is space-based Earth Observation. Initiatives in other regions include the extension of the BELLA project (LAC region), including the launch of Copernicus data centres in Panama and Chile, as well as the Team Europe initiative on Digital Connectivity in Central Asia.

Concerning the digital connectivity flagships, 2022 marked the transition from ideas to pipeline development. Extensive studies were carried out that identified and prioritised project opportunities.

Regarding the regional digital connectivity infrastructure investments under the digital priority of the regional cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa, throughout 2022 two studies on mapping missing links and identifying investment opportunities were conducted targeting West Africa and Eastern and Southern Africa. Through wide-ranging stakeholder consultations, the first set of projects has been identified. Based on these studies, the objective is ultimately to build a pipeline of digital infrastructure projects and kick-start the blending procedure.

Moreover, a first draft for the global masterplan on digital connectivity was developed through extensive consultations with EU Member States, development finance institutions (DFIs) and the private sector as well as supporting studies.

The European Commission is also designing the Africa Europe Digital Innovation Bridge (AEDIB) 2.0 project to strengthen the digital innovation ecosystem in Africa and establish links with the European ecosystem, building on the achievements of the ongoing AEDIB Net pilot project. A positive trend is progress on the consolidation of the digital economy packages.

Operationalisation of the Digital for Development Hub

The Digital for Development Hub (D4D Hub) is a platform that was launched at high-level by European Commission President von der Leyen in December 2020 to strengthen the EU global role in support of a human centric model of digital transformation via increased coordination, dialogue and joint action between the EU, its Member States, agencies and European DFIs. Specific regional branches covering several thematic areas of digitalisation (via dedicated thematic working groups) have been operationalised, such as the D4D Hub Africa Branch, which is developing the Sub-Saharan Africa Digital Economy and Society Regional Team Europe initiative, and the Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Branch, launched in December 2021, in the framework of which D4D Hub members are actively engaged in developing the different pillars of the Global Gateway EU-LAC Digital Alliance flagships. The regional

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branch for the Asia-Pacific region was launched at the Indo-Pacific Forum in February 2022. The group will exchange information on different levels between the members of the Hub and private sector actors in Europe and partner countries to identify common interests and joint projects.

Responsible digitalisation: policy and regulatory frameworks, eGovernance and multilateralism

At country level, digital policy action moved from programming into project formulation and implementation. At Sub-Saharan Africa regional level, programmes focussing on data, eGovernment and support to telecom regulatory authorities were designed. Policy and regulation were also set as an important action for the regional cooperation with Latin America.

The Data Governance Action is a programme developed in a 'Team Europe' approach to strengthen the African data economy and society, by supporting the setup of a viable data policy and regulatory frameworks, develop data innovation use cases, and boost data infrastructure investments across Africa.

At the multilateral level, as regards internet governance and the EU's open internet policy, important steps have been taken and numerous projects will be signed in 2023. Relations with ITU, UNDP, UNESCO and OHCHR were strengthened on the digital domain and a regular dialogue on digital topics was instigated between the EU and the UN in Brussels, e.g., on human rights, gender and artificial intelligence. Furthermore, the multi-stakeholder approach was supported through EU participation in various events, including the World Telecommunication Development Conference (WTDC) in Rwanda, and the Internet Governance Forum 2022 in Addis Ababa. The EU continued with exploratory discussions with Smart Africa in 2022.

Promotion of the Open Internet in Africa project was facilitated by outreach events organised on the topic in 11 African countries. The project was also promoted at the European Development Days with a thematic panel discussion in June 2022[111].

Council Conclusions on EU digital diplomacy were adopted on 18 July 2022[112], spelling out in detail the principles underlying EU digital diplomacy, its objectives and a series of steps required to make it a core component and an integral part of the EU foreign and security policy. The EU's contribution to the UN Global Digital Compact (GDC) was prepared by the European Commission and the High Representative and the draft was presented to EU Member States via the CONUN working group on 13 December 2022. Diplomatic outreach on the Declaration for the Future of the Internet[113] was conducted in 2022 in two phases, bringing the number of partners around the world who have signed it to 70.

In discussion with some interested EU Member States, the EU worked on the identification of a regional eGovernance programme in Sub-Saharan Africa, while seeking complementarity with existing programmes. This programme can contribute to setting the basis for future actions in this field.

The topic of digital public infrastructure /digital public goods was approached in a systematic way through an action designed to work with the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and UNPD. The topic

[111] Programme | EDD22 (eudevdays.eu)
[112] EU digital diplomacy: Council agrees a more concerted European approach to the challenges posed by new digital technologies - Consilium (europa.eu)
[113] Declaration for the Future of Internet | Shaping Europe's digital future (europa.eu)

was also integrated into the UN Joint SDG Fund[114] and was integrated as a potential approach for the regional eGovernance programme.

Technical assistance facilities (TAFs) and set up of the Knowledge Hub Digital

In 2022, EU Delegations and Headquarters were supported through studies, assessments and training under various TAFs on digital, space-based Earth Observation, and science, technology and innovation (STI), some of which came to an end in December 2022. 28 studies or assessments were launched in 2022 of which the majority were completed by the end of the year. The Knowledge Hub Digital was setup in 2022 (start date planned for January 2023). It constitutes an important tool for supporting the European Commissions' digital ambitions and will provide extra capacity and knowledge. Cooperation was also started with a thinktank, providing strategic and geopolitical insight on the digital domain.

Digital skills and entrepreneurship

In 2022, a mapping exercise was conducted of digital skills and education in country multiannual indicative programmes (MIPs) and identify further support required for implementation. To further support implementation, a joint Digital education and skills guidance note was produced, which outlines key priorities and intervention strategies for inclusive and quality digital education and skills development, and highlights EU best practices to leverage Commission initiatives. Furthermore, support continued through the PRIDA programme to the AU Digital Education Strategy, which was formally adopted by the end of 2022. The Regional Teacher initiative, which was approved and will be launched in 2023, will also contribute to the implementation of this strategy. Finally, a working group on digital skills and education was launched under the D4D Hub platform to deliver through a 'Team Europe' approach on this critical priority in the Global Gateway.

In 2022, a study was commissioned on digital entrepreneurship and innovation in five selected countries in Sub-Saharan Africa: Nigeria, Ghana, DRC, Uganda and Mozambique. This resulted in five reports highlighting the state of play of digital entrepreneurship and innovation, which have been shared with EU Delegations. In addition, Ghana and Uganda Action Documents related to digital entrepreneurship and skills were produced, and a conference on start-ups was organised in DRC by the Netherlands and the EU Delegation. Commission departments led the design process of the Africa-Europe Digital Innovation Bridge 2.0 (AEDIB 2.0), which should materialise in a regional programme contributing to the regional TEI on Digital Economy and Society.

Regarding EFSD+, continued work on proposed investment programmes (PIPs) on digital transformation and contributions to evaluations, and dialogues with IFIs had an instrumental role in bringing two new IFI partners to work with the European Commission: Finnfund, the Finish Development Bank, and BGK, the Polish Development Bank.

Digital and green

Interlinkages between digital and green transitions have been strengthened in 2022 through the work of the D4D Hub thematic working group on digital and green, and progress has been made in the design of a joint initiative (co-led by Germany and Sweden) on the twin green digital transitions, developed in the

[114] Homepage | Joint SDG Fund

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framework of the working group, to which the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships aims to contribute in 2023.

Cyber security

Likewise, over the reporting period, the European Commission has supported cyber capacity building, at country and regional level, especially in African, Latin American and Caribbean countries, enabling a more efficient response to cyber threats. In particular, the planning and implementation of a support package for Cabo Verde in the field of cybersecurity was initiated, as well as multiple TAIEX initiatives for enhancing cyber resilience and crisis response in the Latin American and Caribbean region. Within the framework of the multilateralism and digitalisation programme (M&D), activities are planned to contribute to a free, open, safe and secure cyberspace. Finally, the creation and implementation of the Cyber thematic working group, within the Africa branch of the D4D Hub, has allowed the European Commission and EU Member States including Germany, France and Luxembourg to prepare a study assessing the cyber ecosystem, as well as a needs-assessment of various partner countries, which will serve as support for the establishment for future projects and frameworks.

To ensure the cybersecurity of digital programmes, work has started on a cyber mainstreaming toolbox, which will look at the security by design of digital and infrastructure projects, while also considering the maturity of the cyber ecosystem of the countries in which the projects are taking place.

Space and Earth Observation

The EU Space programme gained more attention throughout 2022 and was adopted as a crucial tool for the green and digital transition across Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean. To further support European Commission services and EU Delegations in enhancing EU space technology with partner countries, the Knowledge Hub Digital has been set up. At the same time, the European Commission continued relying on the activities of TAFs focused on space and Earth Observation.

In line with the agreements between the AU and the EU to deepen their partnership in Earth Observation and space exploration, further activities focus heavily on Africa. In 2022, the flagship programme on space-based cooperation was being designed, and discussions with partner nations, the AUC, and EU Delegations were ongoing.

The second phase of the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security and Africa (GMES&Africa), the most significant initiative for Earth Observation collaboration between Africa and the EU, was successfully initiated.

The BELLA initiative promotes enhanced connection and data sharing between the EU and LAC. Following the cable link between the EU and Brazil, operationalised in 2021, the EU started to look into a second phase of this programme.

In 2022, the signature of the Administrative Arrangement for the Copernicus mirror site in the Philippines took place. Such a centre will serve on disaster risk reduction and marine spatial planning, as well as climate change mitigation and adaptation and help reporting on forests.

In the Pacific region, the assignment concluded in 2022 and identified potential cooperation avenues on space and Earth Observation data with the leading Pacific regional organisations.

Science, Technology and Innovation

The Global Approach to research and innovation continues to prove its effectiveness as the appropriate strategic framework for international research and innovation (R&I) cooperation, including in Horizon Europe, by preserving openness and promoting values and principles while safeguarding the EU's strategic assets, interests, autonomy and security.

2022 saw the start of the development of three science, technology and innovation (STI) flagships: the AU-EU Innovation Agenda, Regional Centres of Excellence in Sub-Saharan Africa in the area of the green transition, and Earth Observation and space technologies. These flagships are part of the Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package announced at the EU-AU Summit. STI flagships support building resilience and provide powerful tools for socio-economic development and autonomy, by strengthening local capacities and better responding to global challenges while bringing innovation to many sectors[115].

The ACP-EU programme financed by the 11th European Development Fund to strengthen research and innovation capacity in African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries (EUR 60 million) aims to reinforce national and regional R&I eco-systems through three interlinked components: the R&I Policy Support Facility; the ACP Innovation Fund; and the ACP R&I Hub. In 2022, local third parties, such as academic and research institutions, tech and innovation hubs, and non-governmental organisations, started their activities with the support of the ACP Innovation Fund in different countries in East, West and Central Africa. These activities included digital innovations in agriculture, valorisation of research results, and intellectual property management. The ACP Policy Support Facility provided high level policy recommendations for new STI policies or strategies at the request of Lesotho, Mauritania, the Gambia and Timor-Leste. The ACP R&I Hub launched the InnovationXChange platform to bring together researchers, innovators, policy makers and civil society to share knowledge and good practices on current and emerging R&I topics.

A pilot action, the STI for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Roadmaps in Africa, initiated with the Joint Research Centre, provided a mapping of STI ecosystems in 14 African countries with an in-depth STI for SDGs analysis as part of the first phase of the project. For the next phase, it has identified six pilot countries (The Gambia, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Rwanda and the Seychelles) to work on designing STI for SDGs roadmaps. Those will provide support to the development of effective innovation ecosystems towards the SDGs in Africa and help to identify a policy mix to inform European Commission programming and action documents both on national and regional levels.

Additional policy dialogue was launched with Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) on the topic of Open Science, holding a conference dedicated to the Open Access policies and practices in the EU and LAC. Building on the long-established expertise in both regions on these topics and on an independent study commissioned by the EU in 2022, policy makers and experts from both sides are now aiming to align more closely their activity in this area. This pilot policy dialogue will be developed into a more permanent exchange on the subject of Open Science, as one of the fundamental blocks of the EU R&I policy and an important priority for both the EU and LAC science communities.

In line with the principles set at the second EU-U.S. Trade and Technology Council Ministerial meeting, and following the commitments at the third Ministerial meeting, the EU is operationalising its support for

[115] E.g., the Africa Knowledge Platform

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inclusive ICTS projects in Jamaica and Kenya, including by mobilizing EU and U.S. financial instruments, as available and appropriate.

SDG #9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

SDG 9 aims at building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and fostering innovation.

To progress in this direction, in 2022 the European Commission continued to foster the connectivity agenda globally to advance EU policy priorities (Green Deal, Digitalisation and Sustainable Growth). After the adoption of the Global Gateway Joint Communication[116] in late 2021, providing the policy framework for EU connectivity actions around the world, key investments are being prepared and approved in line with the 2030 Agenda and the G20 Principles for Quality Infrastructure Investment. They cover five dimensions: digitalisation; climate and energy; transport; health; and education and research. Physical sustainable infrastructure, but also soft skills and regulatory environments, are being supported. The first meeting of the Global Gateway Board took place on the 11 December 2022.

In Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and the Pacific, over EUR 9 billion in grants from the EU budget have been committed for projects in all identified sectors. For Sub-Saharan Africa, LAC and Asia Pacific regions, the European Commission submitted in December 2022 40 project pipelines from European Financial Institutions for the approval of the Operational Board under the European Fund for Sustainable Development plus (EFSD+). These are expected to generate over EUR 50 billion in investments in key sectors for Global Gateway.

In the Western Balkans and the Southern and Eastern Neighbourhood, the EU, with the European financial institutions, have mobilised to date EUR 14 billion from the EUR 77 billion in total investments expected to be leveraged up to 2027 under the three Economic and Investment Plans contributing to deliver in these regions on the Global Gateway.

Under the EFSD+ guarantee agreement signed in May 2022 with the European Investment Bank (EIB), a EUR 26.7 billion guarantee to cover EIB sovereign lending in sectors like clean energy, green infrastructure and health was established. 34 projects worth EUR 7.4 billion in investments have already been approved[117].

Furthermore, under the Action 'Knowledge Hub – Global Gateway Support Mechanism' adopted in December 2021, a service contact was signed in 2022 to operationalise the Facility. It will contribute to the development of the connectivity agenda and the application of good practices on quality infrastructure throughout the infrastructure life cycle, in particular in the transport sector. The contribution to the United Nation Road Safety Fund (UNRSF) was also signed in late 2022. It aims at leveraging funding for high-impact projects based on internationally recognised best practices increasing road safety and minimising and eventually eliminating road crash trauma for all road users.

The EU also continued its cooperation with the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO), and a High-Level Dialogue meeting was held on 10 December with the participation of the

[116] JOIN(2021) 30 final of 1 December 2021.
[117] https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7656

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UNIDO Director General, Gerd Müller, and the EU Commissioner for International Partnerships, Jutta Urpilainen.

In the frame of its cooperation with the World Bank, in 2022 the European Commission also launched the final evaluation of the Competitive Industries and Innovation Programme (CIIP), the 10-year Trust Fund programme aiming to develop industrial capabilities in developing countries and emerging economies.

Selected results 2018-2022

In the INTPA and Neighbourhood supported regions[118]

80 000 km of road were supported by the EU through construction, rehabilitation and maintenance.

Source: EU Results Framework indicators

- The countries that have most benefitted from EU support to construct, rehabilitate and maintain road networks are Ethiopia (40 178 km), Mali (29 917 km), Uganda (2 562 km), and Burkina Fasso (1 575 km).

3.4. Sustainable Growth and Jobs

Main achievements

The EU supported partner countries' sustainable and inclusive growth and creation of decent jobs by facilitating the mobilisation of public and private financing.

Sustainable Finance

The EU scaled up work in the field of sustainable finance to facilitate the mobilisation of additional private international and domestic investment towards developing countries**.** In view of a future EU Sustainable Finance Strategy for low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), the European Commission set up a High-Level Expert Group (HLEG) and organised its first three meetings after a thorough selection process to ensure world-class expertise from all backgrounds and regions.

The European Commission continued exploring, together with development finance institutions (DFIs) and under a 'Team Europe' approach, the scaling up and further development of green bond markets in partner countries by addressing challenges to green bond issuance from both the investor and issuer sides. It also published the *Investing in Sustainable Development Report*[119] on implementation of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

[118] Collecting results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (ENI) and INTPA. Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

[119] European Commission, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, *Investing in sustainable development: progress report 2018-2020*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2841/156351

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Supporting, de-risking and scaling up investments in partner countries

The European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) and its successor EFSD+ are powerful de-risking tools supporting private sector financing for development and Global Gateway investments.

Over 50 % of EFSD guarantees contracted since 2017 had been deployed by the end of 2022, supporting projects such as the COVAX initiative, which as of 9 November 2022 had delivered 4.8 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccines to Advance Market Commitment (AMC) countries.

For EFSD+, the European Commission set up a robust credit risk management function to assess and manage credit risk associated with guarantee operations. The first Open Access Guarantees call was oversubscribed four times, by a broad range of partners, showing great alignment with EU priorities and Team Europe initiatives (TEIs).

The EFSD+ Operational Board gave a positive opinion for over EUR 6 billion of guarantees, expected to generate EUR 50 billion in investments. Five guarantee agreements were signed (EUR 295 million) as well as a specific guarantee agreement with the European Investment Bank (EIB) for EUR 26.7 billion of lending.

EFSD+ blending operations continued to progress, with EUR 571 million of EU grants approved covering all eligible regions and key Global Gateway sectors, leveraging EUR 4.7 billion of additional financing from financial institutions and EUR 9.6 billion of total investments.

Creation of decent jobs, vocational education and training (VET) and support to positive impacts of investment on employment

In several regions across the world, economies are struggling to create enough decent jobs to match the number of young people entering the labour market.

The EU supported work to better understand the ‘employment impact’ of investments and EU actions. The European Commission financed the International Labour Organisation to develop a macro-economic model that can produce assessments and includes capacity building. For example, Namibia received capacity-building to strengthen its understanding of investment impacts on employment, with a view to maximising positive impacts from the limited investment budget available.

Implementation of the VET Toolbox 2 in 11 African countries started with pilot projects facilitating public-private dialogue, supporting VET institutions to deliver training in line with investment needs, and stimulating VET reform through exchanging lessons learnt to expand the local benefits of European investments, in line with Global Gateway priority sectors. In 2022, the preparation started for a Team Europe initiative (TEI) of opportunity driven VET in Africa, including through a regional seminar in Malawi.

The EU expert facility on employment, labour, and social protection (SOCIEUX+), that provides a demand-driven facility which proposes short-term, peer-to-peer technical assistance, extended its operations to Western Balkans countries with an envelope of EUR 10 million. The action enhances EU partner countries’ capacities to develop employment, labour and social protection strategies, systems and policies that are more inclusive, effective, responsive, resilient, and sustainable.

The EU continued its support to improving working conditions in the garment sector through its partnership with the Better Work programme led by International Labour Organisation and the International Finance Corporation. Thanks to EU support, the Gender Equality and Returns (GEAR) training

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programme, which contributes to women's economic empowerment and reduction of inequalities, was implemented in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, benefitting around 350 trainees. It helps women acquire the necessary skills to get promoted to supervisory positions in garment factories. Preliminary impact data from Bangladesh shows that more than 68 % of trainees have been offered such promotions.

Investment climate, business environment, trade facilitation and support to private sector

The EU worked at improving the business environment and investment climate; increasing financial inclusion and access to financial services; and promoting trade, trade facilitation and connectivity for sustainable development. The EU's network of 42 preferential trade agreements with 74 partners worldwide promoted EU values and international commitments on trade and sustainable development. For instance, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries have a strong development dimension and provide incentives for reform that development cooperation can further build on. Particular attention was given to the development of inclusive value chains. Regional economic integration was supported, not least in Africa and in support of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA). Improving the business environment also benefits EU companies wishing to internationalise.

EU programmes supporting the improvement of investment climate and business environment through the Trade, Private Sector Development and Engagement (TPSDE) Facility, Investment Climate Reform Facility, Rapid Response Window and Business Friendly programme continued. EU Delegations were actively supported on issues related to private sector development, investment climate, business environment reform, trade and employment. The EU also used budget support and technical assistance on public finance management, domestic revenue mobilisation and accountability to upgrade economic governance, to promote regulatory reforms and to contribute to macro-economic stability, thereby contributing to an improved investment climate in partner countries.

Engagement of EU and partner country private sectors is crucial for Global Gateway. A range of EU tools were mobilised including grants, guarantees, de-risked loans, blending programmes, equity investments by the EIB and European development finance institutions (DFIs), TVET, public-private dialogue, business climate improvements and multi-stakeholder partnerships. For example, via the TEI 'Investing in young businesses in Africa', the smallest businesses (especially start-ups and youth- and women-led) benefit from de-risked investments through EFSD+ guarantees and increased support for capacity building, access to finance and the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

EU business fora in partner countries and Regional economic integration

EU Business Fora are unique events to promote active dialogues between local and European public and private stakeholders, such as business organisations, chamber of commerce, etc. Over ten EU business fora took place in 2022 in countries including Angola, El Salvador, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Uganda and Iraq.

At regional level, the Seventh EU-Africa Business Forum (EABF) was held in February and the EU-ASEAN Business Summit took place in December.

Scaling up cooperation around raw materials

The cooperation between European Commission departments and services and the EU Delegations was strengthened in view of setting up bilateral strategic partnerships on raw materials value chains. A Global

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Gateway flagship was developed, identifying priority countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (e.g., Namibia, South Africa, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), and Uganda), Latin America, Central Asia, amongst others, to explore such partnerships. In 2022, strategic partnerships on raw materials value chains were signed with Kazakhstan and Namibia. A strategic partnership typically consists of a political framework in the form of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and a roadmap that identifies specific actions and projects.

The EU also continued supporting good governance in the raw materials sector by contributing to the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative (EITI), responsible practices in the mineral sector, through the European Partnership for Responsible Minerals (EPRM), and the improvement of social and environmental conditions of artisanal miners, through the ACP development minerals programme.

SDG #8 Decent Work and Economic Growth

During 2022 the European Commission continued supporting the private sector by improving the investment climate and business enabling environment; upgrading of value chains in a sustainable manner, including the role of small companies; engaging with businesses, increasing policy relevance and leveraging sustainable investments; and promoting a 'Team Europe' spirit, thus contributing to the SDGs in alignment with the Global Gateway strategy.

The Team Europe initiative (TEI) on Investing in young businesses in Africa, the TEI on opportunity driven vocational and educational training in Africa, and the TEI on accompanying measures for Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence were supported. A flagship on sustainable raw materials value chains with Sub-Saharan Africa partner countries was also developed. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed with Namibia and work in Africa progressed with South Africa, DRC, Rwanda, Uganda and Senegal, while in other regions, MoUs were signed with Kazakhstan and Greenland, and MoUs with Chile and Argentina were prepared.

The Seventh EU-Africa Business Forum (EABF) took place in February 2022, back-to-back with the EU-African Summit. It brought together the European Commission, the African Union Commission and business organisations from both continents in 30 high-level events and over 200 online workshops and showcases. More than 20 signatures and announcements for a total commitment of EUR 590 million were made. Over 18 000 people registered to watch more than 200 hours of meetings on the online platform.

The European Commission continued promoting trade facilitation and Aid for Trade (AfT). The 2022 report[120] focused on EU Aid for Trade activities fostering a green recovery, a main driver of change in Aid for trade priorities for donors, and sustainable and resilient food systems. It also included an analysis of the COVID-19 response on AfT, confirming that the EU AfT helped increasing partner countries' trading capacity, helping them tackle the COVID-19 pandemic and confirmed that the EU and its Member States remain the main donors of AfT.

[120] European Commission, Directorate-General for International Partnerships, *EU aid for trade : progress report 2022*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2023, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2841/005862

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The European Commission continued to promote regular public private dialogue (PPD) in partner countries, such as Angola[121], ASEAN[122], Peru[123], notably for micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

The European Commission, through the trade, private sector development and engagement (TPSDE) facility, continued supporting EU Delegations and headquarters on issues related to trade, private sector and investment climate.

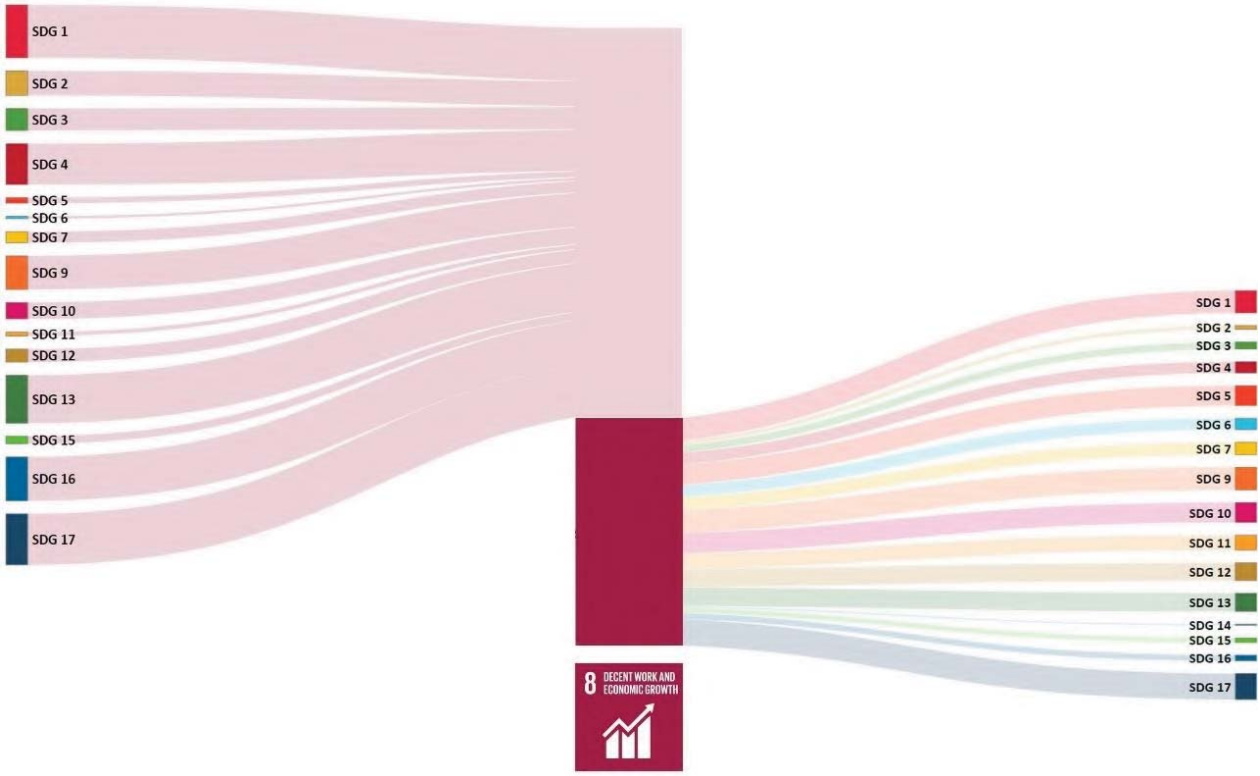
2022 saw the operational launch of the Team Europe initiative 'Investing in young businesses in Africa' (TEI IYBA) that seeks to help early-stage businesses and young entrepreneurs in Africa to launch and grow sustainable businesses and create decent jobs. The governance model was established and the high-level policy steering group and three working groups met. An in-depth diagnosis of the challenges in developing a pipeline of early-stage businesses was developed. In December 2022, the EUR 22.9 million IYBA Supporting entrepreneurship Ecosystem Development contract (of which EUR 19.65 million comes from NDICI-Global Europe) was signed with EU Member State agencies and the initiative launched in Senegal and Nigeria.

Within the Prosperity priority area of the Global Challenges multiannual indicative programme, an action was adopted to support increasing capacity-building to the relevant public and private actors in partner countries to implement the upcoming Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive through accompanying measures.

As shown in the figure below, these projects have important interlinkages with other SDGs and highlight that decent work and sustainable growth cannot be achieved in isolation.

[121] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/delegations/angola/eu-angola-business-forum_en
[122] 10th ASEAN-EU Business Summit – EU-ASEAN Business Council
[123] https://www.euroamerica.org/conferencia/iv-foro-peru-union-europea-inversiones-sostenibles-para-un-desarrollo-inclusivo

Figure 3. ODA to SDG 8 and interlinkages with other goals[124]



EU data for 2022 shows that a total of 377 actions targeted SDG 8 as the main SDG, contributing to a number of other interlinked SDGs. On the other hand, SDG 8 was also reported as significant in 754 actions where other SDGs were marked as main.

[124] Source: SWD/2023/701 final of 15 May 2023. Drawn up by JRC using EU Dashboard data on ODA (2022, commitments). The figure shows interlinkages among SDGs measured by number of projects reported, in the terms described in Figure 1 under SDG 1 above.

Selected results 2018-2022[125]

In the INTPA and Neighbourhood supported regions[126]

798 000 jobs were supported or sustained by the EU.

124 countries were supported by the EU to strengthen investment climate.

828 000 firms had access to financial services with EU support.

2 723 000 individuals had access to financial services with EU support.

34 000 quality schemes were adopted by economic operators with EU support.

2 115 000 people have benefited from institution- or workplace-based VET/skills development interventions supported by the EU – including 223 000 supported through EU Trust Fund for Africa projects.

160 countries were supported by the EU to strengthen revenue mobilisation, public financial management and/or budget transparency.

Source: EU Results Framework indicators

- Nineteen percent (19 %) of the jobs directly created or sustained with the support of the EU were located in the South-Saharan Africa (i.e., South Africa, Ethiopia, Somalia, etc.), and 13 % were located in South & Central Asia.
- The EU supported financial inclusion in at least 60 countries, assisting micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and individuals to access financial products (i.e., credit, insurance, leasing, etc.), with blending operations being the most common instrument used in access for firms.
- Central America and the Caribbean registers the largest results figure in skills development through vocational education and training (VET) programmes (63 % of the global figure in skills development), followed by South & Central Asia (18 % of the global figure in skills development). In the North-Saharan Africa, 187 436 individuals were supported in in skills development (9 % of the global figure in skills development).

[125] 2018-2022 stands for the reporting year. The EU-funded interventions that contribute to this figure are ongoing or closed projects managed by DG INTPA and DG NEAR (ENI) that started between January 2014 and 31st of May 2023. The values reported for EU Results Framework indicators are cumulative, including all results reported for these projects since start of implementation.

[126] Collecting results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (ENI) and INTPA. Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

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Table 4. EU Results Framework indicators disaggregated by sex

EU Results Framework indicator	Total	women/girls	men/boys	Not identified
Number of beneficiaries with access to financial services with EU support: b) individuals	2 723 000	307 000	660 000	1 756 000
Number of people who have benefited from institution- or workplace-based VET/skills development interventions supported by the EU	2 115 000	883 000	751 000	481 000

Selected results 2018-2022[127]

In the enlargement region[128]

2 079 429 jobs were supported or sustained by the EU.

30 public policies to strengthen investment climate were supported by the EU.

1 120 205 firms had access to financial services with EU support.

29 public policies to strengthen revenue mobilisation, public financial management and/or budget transparency were supported by the EU.

Source: IPA Performance Framework indicators

- The number of jobs directly supported by the EU increased by 13 % (from 1 835 072 direct jobs for reporting year 2018-2021, to 2 079 429 direct jobs for reporting year 2018-2022). Most of these jobs were supported in the West Balkans region. Public policies to promote, enforce and/or monitor the matching between labour supply and demand were supported by the EU in Bosnia and Herzegovina (6 policies) and in Kosovo (4 policies).

3.5. Migration

Main achievements

2022 was marked by increased migration on most routes towards the EU, notably the Central and Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkan routes. At the same time, forcibly displaced people globally reached the staggering number of 100 million for the first time. Russia's unprovoked war of aggression

[127] 2018-2022 stands for the reporting year. The EU-funded interventions that contribute to this figure are ongoing or closed projects managed by DG NEAR (IPA) that started between January 2014 and 31st of May 2023. The values reported for IPA Performance Framework indicators are cumulative, including all results reported for these projects since start of implementation.

[128] Selected results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA)). Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

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against Ukraine and the global food crisis it exacerbated resulted in further displacements. Between February and December 2022, over 14.2 million entries were recorded from Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova to the EU, while as of 24 January 2023, there were more than 10 million exits by Ukrainian nationals from the EU to Ukraine and Moldova. In December 2022 the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) estimated the number of internally displaced people in Ukraine to be 5.9 million.

Considering these trends, the EU increased its engagement with partner countries in support of comprehensive Migration Partnerships, in line with the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum[129]. Migration dialogues were strengthened and accompanied by significant EU funding support, taking partner countries' needs and priorities into account.

Joint engagement with EU Member States in a 'Team Europe' approach was strengthened. Two regional flagship Team Europe initiatives (TEIs) were launched in December 2022, addressing all aspects of migration management following a whole-of-the-route approach, notably along the Central and Western Mediterranean and Atlantic migration routes. A regional TEI addressing the situation of Afghan refugees in neighbouring countries, was under finalisation.

In 2022, all decided actions contributed to the migration and forced displacement spending target for a total of EUR 1.812 billion (corresponding to 13 % out of the total committed amount). Cumulative figures 2021-2022 resulted in contributions to the migration and forced displacement spending target of EUR 3.364 billion[130].

In North Africa, migration increased in 2022, particularly along the Central Mediterranean route. An EU Action Plan for the Central Mediterranean Route was adopted in November 2022 addressing the immediate operational challenges[131]. A multiannual indicative programme (2021-2027) was adopted in November 2022 including actions worth EUR 412 million that were adopted in 2021-2022 for the Southern Neighbourhood. Actions notably targeted Libya, Egypt, and Tunisia, addressing irregular migration through strengthened border management, while ensuring protection of migrants and refugees. A budget support programme was adopted for Morocco, focusing on migration and border management, while regional actions addressing return and reintegration, legal migration and police and cross-border cooperation were adopted.

A strategic support package of EUR 5.7 billion was adopted in 2021 for refugees and host communities in Türkiye, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Syria, with EUR 3 billion mobilised in support for refugees and host communities in Türkiye for 2021-2023. Out of this, EUR 250 million concerns IPA III projects in support of refugees and host communities and border management. Furthermore, in 2022, a EUR 310 million package was adopted to support the Syrian population inside Syria (EUR 46 million); and to support refugees from Syria and vulnerable host communities in Iraq (overall EUR 30 million), Jordan (EUR 80 million) and Lebanon (EUR 154 million). The EU and its Member States, in a 'Team Europe' approach, remained the largest donor in response to the crisis, mobilising more than EUR 27.4 billion since 2011.

[129] New Pact on Migration and Asylum (europa.eu)
[130] Data subjected to regular quality checks.
[131] EU action plan for the Central Mediterranean (2022): https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/eu-action-plan-central-mediterranean_en.

Co-chaired by the EU and the UN, the Brussels VI Conference on 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region' mobilised pledges totalling EUR 6.4 billion for 2022 and beyond.

In the Western Balkans, actions adopted under IPA III in 2022 focused on strengthening capacities on migration management, implementing protection-sensitive migration management systems, and enhancing border management. These included actions targeting Albania, North Macedonia, and Montenegro, and a EUR 30 million regional action to improve investigation and prosecution of organised crime groups involved in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in human beings. A EUR 39.2 million action to increase border management capacities was adopted covering Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Kosovo*, and Montenegro.

In the context of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, examples of the EU's unequivocal support to Ukraine included a EUR 152 million allocation to provide housing for Internally Displaced Persons, EUR 68 million for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of damaged critical infrastructure, and EUR 146 million for winterised emergency shelter solutions. The EU supported the Republic of Moldova by expanding the mandate of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM), including EUR 15 million in financial assistance, and mobilised EUR 13.4 million to support Integrated border management. Support was also provided for the transit, repatriation, and reintegration of affected people in the Republic of Moldova (EUR 15 million). Moreover, regional funds were repurposed to support emergency needs in Ukraine (EUR 29 million) and the Republic of Moldova (EUR 7 million), including support for Ukrainian refugees.

In 2022 in Sub-Saharan Africa the regional multiannual indicative programme (MIP) financed actions worth EUR 506 million on migration and forced displacement. EUR 200 million was mobilised to establish a flexible mechanism, which already resulted in the adoption of four actions in Niger, Mauritania, Kenya and Uganda. A regional action to provide durable solutions for the Burundian refugee crisis in the Great Lakes Region was adopted covering Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Congo. The regional envelope also supported new phases of successful programmes including the Better migration management programme, the Migration and Mobility Dialogue programme, and the 'Free Movement of Persons and Migration in West Africa'. Finally, a further EUR 170 million was mobilised for the 'Migrant Protection, Return and Reintegration Programme for Sub-Saharan Africa' focusing on countries of origin, transit and destination along the Atlantic/Western and Central Mediterranean routes.

Several other actions were adopted in 2022 contributing to address mixed migration flows, for example in Senegal and The Gambia. The 2022 drought in the Horn of Africa region, coupled with issues in grain imports created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, exacerbated food insecurity across the region and contributed to new influxes of external and internal displacement. Actions adopted in 2022 focused on supporting displaced populations and host communities to face this challenge (Kenya and Somalia). The security crisis in Eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo created a new influx of refugees in the region, and a new action supporting Uganda's engagement on forced displacement and migration, financed through the flexible mechanism, was approved.

Within Asia, in 2022 the implementation of the regional MIP for Asia-Pacific continued, complementing actions at country level. Bangladesh, Iraq, and Pakistan were supported to improve capacities on

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 (1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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migration governance, with a focus on sectors that provide a balanced approach, targeting poverty and inclusive growth, thereby addressing root causes of fragility and irregular migration. Examples are job creation through private sector development, income generation, community development projects and technical and VET programmes. Actions adopted in 2022 also focused on enhancing migration management in the Central and South Asia region, including sustainable (re)integration of returnees and displaced populations, the fight against trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants. This included actions addressing migration management and protection of migrants in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Central Asia (EUR 9 million), Evidence for migration and forced displacement analysis in Central Asia, Afghanistan and Bangladesh (EUR 9 million), and the Efficient use of remittances in Central Asia (EUR 6 million). Social and Economic Reintegration and Migration Governance programmes were adopted in Bangladesh (EUR 20 million) and Iraq (EUR 16 million) under the flexible and incentivising approach. Actions addressing the Afghan and Myanmar regional displacement situations adopted in 2021 continued implementation in the affected countries.

In Latin America, in 2022 the EU continued its response to the Venezuelan crisis, which has resulted in one of the largest displacements in the world, with a major impact on neighbouring countries. The programme 'Inclusive Cities, Communities of Solidarity' supported local authorities in neighbouring countries to find durable solutions for migrants, refugees and host communities. The ongoing project supported innovative actions for the protection of refugees and migrants from Venezuela, their medium and long-term socio-economic integration, migration governance and sustainable urban development in six countries (Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Panama, Dominican Republic and Trinidad and Tobago).

In Central America, in 2022 the EU continued its support to forcibly displaced persons through the MIRPS platform (Marco Integral Regional para la Protección y Soluciones) and participated in the 'International Solidarity Event to Strengthen the Protection and Promote Solutions for Forcibly Displaced Persons and Host Communities in Central America and Mexico' in September 2022. Subsequently, the EU announced EUR 153 million in humanitarian aid for Latin America and the Caribbean for 2022.

Addressing the challenges of forced displacement remained a key priority for the EU's humanitarian assistance in 2022. The majority of the EU's humanitarian budget for 2022 focused on the needs of forcibly displaced persons and their host communities in various situations of displacement across the world, including Syrian refugees in Türkiye, Lebanon, and Jordan, Afghan refugees in Iran and Pakistan, Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, and Ukrainians displaced by Russia's war of aggression. In addition to meeting the most urgent needs of the forcibly displaced, such as shelter, protection, food and safe water, the EU's humanitarian assistance helped affected populations in accessing education, health care, housing, land, livelihood support, and other basic services.

SDG #10.7 Reduced Inequalities

Tackling the various forms of social and economic inequalities is essential to fight poverty and improve social cohesion. Delivering on SDG 10 requires addressing inequalities within and between countries, and to address migration and social inclusion. Addressing the root causes of irregular and unsafe migration, combatting migrant smuggling and the trafficking in human beings, supporting refugees and other displaced people, as well as their host communities in partner countries and facilitating well-managed and legal migration are all critical to achieve the SDGs in relation to inequality. Migration management remained a priority for the EU, in line with SDG 10.7 which looks to facilitate orderly, safe, regular, and responsible migration and mobility of people.

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Unfortunately, the number of refugees globally was at a record high by the end of 2022 following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, with over 33 million registered refugees. According to the UN SDG 2022 report[132], the world is currently enduring the highest number of conflicts since 1947 with approximately 25 % of the world population living in conflict-affected countries. Forced displacement is continuing to grow, exacerbated by disasters and the impact of climate change, persecution, conflict, or generalised violence. There were over 100 million forcibly displaced people by mid-2022; this is an increase of 17.6 million people compared to the end of 2020. At the same time, the number of migrants worldwide continued to grow, from an estimated 272 million in 2019 to an estimated 281 million in 2020 and has increased more in Europe and Asia than in other regions.

In this context, the EU in 2022 further strengthened its engagement with partner countries in the context of comprehensive Migration Partnerships, as set out in the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum[133], notably with countries in the Neighbourhood region, the Sub-Saharan African region, in Asia and in the Americas.

The EU continued to support all aspects of migration and forced displacement governance and management, strengthening partner countries' capacities in all thematic areas including root causes of migration, overall migration and border management, returns and reintegration, legal migration and assistance to forcibly displaced persons and their host communities.

Complementing EU support under geographic programmes, global actions continued to be implemented in a range of different areas. For instance, in line with its commitment to promote cheaper, faster, and more secure remittances and to enhance the development impact of remittances, the EU has continued to promote a decrease in remittances costs and an increased availability of digital solutions and of distribution networks. The EU average price for sending remittances to developing countries had decreased to 5.8 % on average by the end of 2022, from 7.2 % in 2015. The reduction is particularly significant for remittances sent from the EU to Sub-Saharan Africa.

In addition, in 2022 a new EUR 10 million global action was adopted to support EU efforts to address climate change, environmental degradation and displacement, as outlined in the new Commission Staff Working Document adopted in July 2022[134]. The global action will contribute to global data collection and analysis and will also provide direct support and capacity building to selected partner countries. It will contribute to implementing the UN Action Agenda on Internally Displaced People and accompany the EU chairing of the Platform on Disaster Displacement.

[132] The Sustainable Development Goals Report 2022 (un.org)
[133] New Pact on Migration and Asylum (europa.eu)
[134] SWD(2022) 201 final of 22 July 2022.

Selected results 2018-2021[135]

In the INTPA and Neighbourhood supported regions[136]

29 007 000 migrants, forcibly displaced people or individuals from host communities were protected or assisted with EU support – including 560 000 supported through EU Trust Fund for Africa projects.

235 migration management or forced displacement strategies or policies were developed with EU support and **202** migration management or forced displacement strategies were implemented with EU.

Source: EU Results Framework indicators

- The number of migrants, forcibly displaced people or individuals from host communities supported by the EU increased by 42 % since the last reporting period (from 20 430 000 persons for reporting year 2018-2021, to 29 007 000 persons for reporting year 2018-2022). Examples of protection measures or assistance for migrants, forcibly displaced people, or individuals from host communities include support in the areas of medical services and psycho-social assistance, access to basic services, skills development, and legal assistance.
- Projects providing protection or assistance reached people in at least 70 countries in all regions. The EU Trust Fund for Africa supported 7 239 696 migrants, forcibly displaced people, or individuals from host communities.

Table 5. EU Results Framework indicator disaggregated by sex

EU Results Framework indicator	Total	women/girls	men/boys	Not identified
Number of migrants, forcibly displaced people or individuals from host communities protected or assisted with EU support	29 007 000	4 702 000	5 240 000	19 065 000

[135] 2018-2022 stands for the reporting year. The EU-funded interventions that contribute to this figure are ongoing or closed projects managed by DG INTPA and DG NEAR (ENI) that started between January 2014 and 31st of May 2023. The values reported for EU Results Framework indicators are cumulative, including all results reported for these projects since start of implementation.

[136] Collecting results from EU-funded interventions managed by NEAR (ENI) and INTPA. Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

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Selected results 2018-2022[137]

In the enlargement region[138]

12 public policies of migration management and/or forced displacement were supported by the EU (in the Western Balkans, Turkey, Serbia, and Kosovo).

4 EU funded interventions supported by the EU report improvement of compliance of Border and Security Systems with EU / Schengen Acquis (in Albania and North Macedonia).

Source: IPA Performance Framework indicators

3.6. Governance, Peace and Security

Main achievements

Priority actions and activities contributed to a stronger Europe in the world by promoting an integrated approach to conflicts and crises, including support to peace and resilience building, Security Sector Reform (SSR), Capacity Building in support of Development and Security for Development (CBDSD), as well as providing expertise and support to capacity building and the strengthening of the entire criminal justice chain and rule of law in partner countries.

The coherence of actions related to resilience, peace and conflict sensitivity was ensured through shared analysis of the root causes and drivers of fragility and crisis. Conflict analysis screenings and conflict sensitivity assessments continued to be applied in fragile, crisis and conflict-affected contexts.

The prevention and peaceful resolution of conflicts as well as support to vulnerable populations affected by conflicts figured prominently on the EU-African Union agenda and will continue in 2023 priorities. In Ethiopia, the EU contributed to this objective in fragile situations and in conflict or post-conflict environments with its country, regional and multilateral actions in close coordination with the European Commission, the High Representative and Member States.

In South and South-East Asia, the EU continued to contribute to peacebuilding, education for youth and sustainable livelihoods to support civil society and the most vulnerable people and communities. In Afghanistan, following the Taliban takeover in August 2021, the European Commission focussed its efforts in 2022 on preventing the collapse of the country and on addressing its social, economic repercussions inside and outside Afghanistan's borders, with particular attention to gender equality and women and girls' rights.

[137] 2018-2022 stands for the reporting year. The EU-funded interventions that contribute to this figure are ongoing or closed projects managed by DG NEAR (IPA) that started between January 2014 and 31st of May 2023. The values reported for IPA Performance Framework indicators are cumulative, including all results reported for these projects since start of implementation.

[138] Selected results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA)). Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

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In October 2022, the Youth Action Plan (YAP) in EU external action (2022-2027)[139] was adopted as the first-ever policy framework for a strategic partnership to engage, empower and connect young people around the world to build a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable future. The YAP is the result of extensive consultations with over 220 stakeholders across the world, in particular children's rights and youth organisations, and is one of the flagships of the European Year of Youth.

Throughout 2022, more EU Delegations established youth advisory structures at country level to further strengthen the voice and perspective of young people in their policies and programmes. Currently there are 11 (Zimbabwe, Madagascar, Mauritius, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Senegal, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Brazil, Nepal, Palestine*, and Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs)) of such structures established, and more in process of creation.

In addition, youth engagement in high-level political meetings was strengthened by bringing together young people and conveying their perspectives and recommendations during the EU-African Union Summit in February and the EU-ASEAN Summit in December.

A Global Team Europe initiative on Democracy (TED) was launched with the aim of strengthening coordination and complementarity of programmes and projects implemented through a 'Team Europe' approach to support democracy worldwide. The initiative comprises an information exchange network with EU Member States at its core, while supporting global and local projects with research and expertise in three focal areas: accountability and rule of law; political and civic participation; and media and digital.

In 2022, the need for accountability for serious violations of international human rights law was exacerbated by the various conflicts in countries like Ukraine, Ethiopia, Myanmar and Yemen or by crackdowns on civilian populations in countries like Afghanistan or Iran. The thematic programme on human rights and democracy was mobilised to support actors such as the International Criminal Court and the UN Human Rights Office (OHCHR). In 2022, the European Commission also gathered more than 230 human rights defenders from over 70 countries to discuss how to stop impunity and build the road to accountability and justice as part of the 24th EU-NGO Human Rights Forum and launched dedicated calls for proposals for civil society actors to promote human rights and fundamental freedoms. The European Commission also renewed and substantially increased the budget to support human rights defenders through a new phase of the ProtectDefenders.eu programme.

Dialogue with civil society organisations (CSOs) within the Policy Forum for Development, the European Commission's main platform for consultations with global and regional CSOs networks as well as associations of local authorities, continued in 2022 covering key policies and programmes. Nine consultations and meetings were held during the year, gathering almost 650 participants representing 310 organisations. Dialogue with civil society also took place outside the context of the Forum, notably in preparation to meetings related to the EU's enlargement policy and human rights dialogues.

The EU continued its efforts to promote and monitor EU engagement with civil society in partner countries, with emphasis on women and youth organisations. The European Commission put forward an

[139] JOIN(2022) 53 final of 4 October 2022. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

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updated set of *Guidelines for EU Support to Civil Society in the Enlargement Region 2021-2027*[140] to both guide the EU's work and to assist partners in developing and monitoring strategies and support for civil society development. The guidelines lay out relevant standards and expectations - notably in terms of the enabling environment for civil society and the involvement of civil society in public-policy making.

In 2022 a major global call for proposals was launched aimed at the development of an EU System for an Enabling Environment for Civil Society (EU SEE, EUR 50 million), which will seek to identify and coordinate responses to threats and opportunities in partner countries as they evolve. A second major global call for proposals was published for the next generation of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPAs) between the EU and global CSO networks, targeting women and youth organisations as well as networks and organisations active in areas falling under European Commission priorities.

In addition, framework agreements were renewed with the International Organisation for Employers (IOE); with CONCORD, the European Confederation of non-governmental organisations working on sustainable development, and with WINGS, a global 'network of networks' of 195 Philanthropy Support Organisations (PSOs) in 58 countries.

Milestones relating to local authorities included: (i) Renewal of Framework Partnership Agreements with five global and regional associations (UCLG, UCLGA, PLATFORMA, CLGF, AIMF) aimed at enhancing participation of local and regional governments in policies to improve local governance and the quality of life of local communities in EU partner countries; (ii) Conclusion of grants with the same associations in support to the long-term strategic partnerships with the European Commission; (iii) The organisation of three successful regional workshops on territorial approaches to local development in Latin America and Africa bringing together EU staff and representatives of local authorities; and (iv) The establishment of a structure for the coordination and monitoring of the 'Local Authorities – Partnerships for Sustainable Cities' programme, including 57 city-to-city partnerships and offering a space for the development of locally driven initiatives involving municipalities from Europe and the Global South.

Preliminary figures available on the year 2022 under the NDICI-Global Europe instrument show a contribution to human rights, democracy and good governance under the geographic programmes of EUR 2.24 billion (corresponding to 19.7 % of funding under the geographic programmes). Cumulative figures 2021-2022 resulted in contributions to the related spending target of EUR 3.98 billion[141].

SDG #16 Peace, justice and strong institutions

Joint analytical tools and methodologies are being implemented more systematically notably through conflict analysis screenings (CAS) and conflict sensitivity assessments as key inputs in support of the NDICI-Global Europe programming, also as a tool to ensure the mainstreaming of conflict sensitivity. The implementation of EU Structural Country Assessments (SCA) is continuing in a complementary fashion, with a focus on conflict prevention. The NDICI-Global Europe holistically included several requirements and provisions on conflict sensitivity and resilience, including a mandatory requirement for conflict analysis for all fragile and conflict-affected countries, to ensure conflict sensitive programming and a do-no-harm approach.

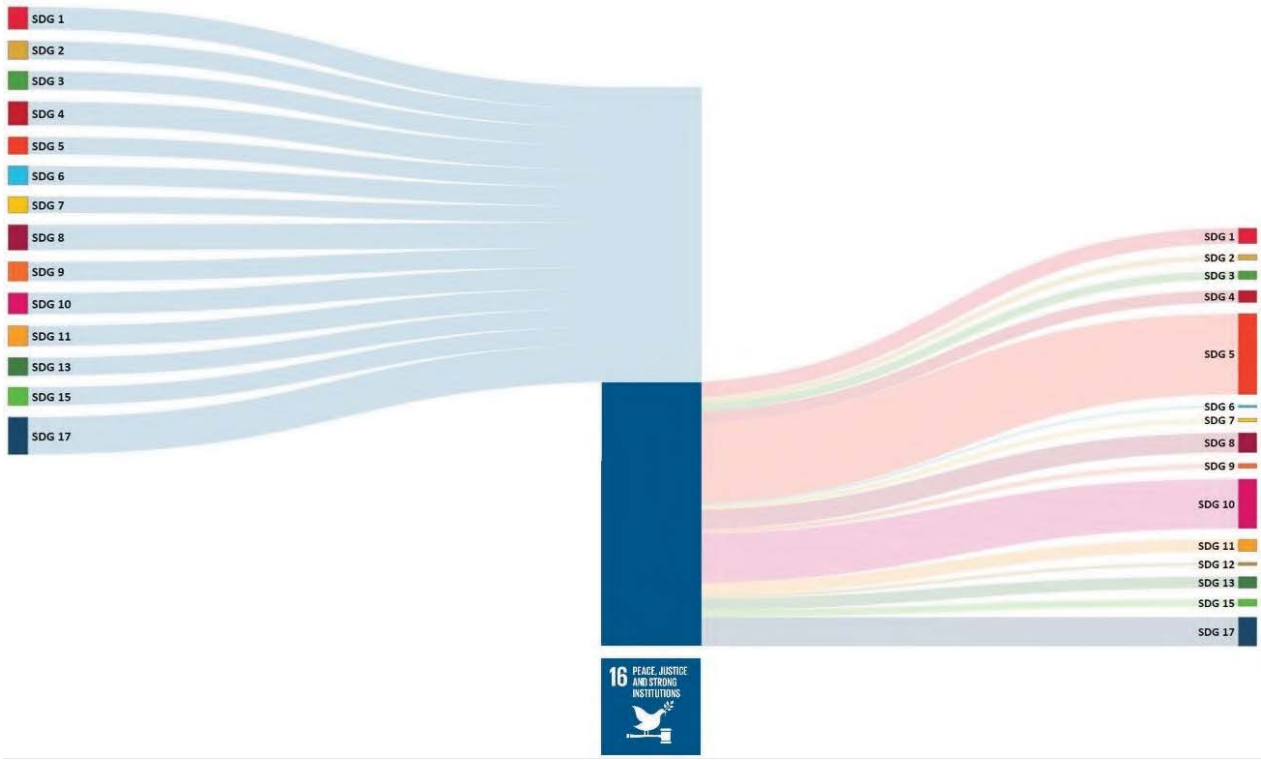
[140] EU-Guidelines-for-Support-to-Civil-Society-in-the-Enlargement-region-2021-2027.pdf (europa.eu)
[141] Data subjected to regular quality checks.

In 2022, 16 CAS reports were completed and validated by the Steering Group. Work on seven additional reports was launched in the same period. In addition, the European Commission organised five virtual conflict sensitivity trainings in English, French and Spanish, two conflict sensitivity trainings for EU Delegations (Mozambique and Venezuela), two humanitarian-development-peace (HDP) nexus workshops, one virtual training on Gender, Conflict and Peacebuilding, and one lessons learnt workshop on CAS for EU Delegations.

With regards to peace and security, a total of 42 EU Delegations included security/Security Sector Reform (SSR) as a priority in their country multiannual indicative programmes (MIPs), and 29 countries included peace/peacebuilding. Moreover, under the new Team Europe initiatives (TEI), there were at the end of 2021 more than 20 initiatives focused on security aspects proposed for co-funding.

As shown in the figure below, SDG 16 is highly multidimensional.

Figure 4. ODA to SDG 16 and interlinkages with other goals[142]



EU data for 2022 shows that a total of 529 projects targeted SDG 16 as the main SDG, contributing to various other SDGs. SDG 16 was also reported as significant in 415 projects where other SDGs were marked as main.

[142] Source: SWD/2023/701 final of 15 May 2023. Drawn up by JRC using EU Dashboard data on ODA (2022, commitments). The figure shows interlinkages among SDGs measured by number of projects reported, in the terms described in Figure 1 under SDG 1 above.

Selected results 2018-2022[143]

In the INTPA and Neighbourhood supported regions[144]

56 countries were supported by the EU to conduct elections and/or improve their electoral process.

2 000 government policies were developed or revised with CSO participation through EU support.

166 000 victims of human rights violations directly benefited from assistance funded by the EU.

6 649 000 people directly benefited from legal aid interventions supported by the EU.

1 041 000 individuals directly benefited from EU-supported interventions that specifically aim to support civilian post-conflict peacebuilding and/or conflict prevention.

14 000 state institutions and non-state actors were supported on security, border management, countering violent extremism, conflict prevention, protection of civilian population and human rights.

Source: EU Results Framework indicators[145]

- Nearly 166 000 victims of human rights violations directly benefited from assistance funded by the EU, including 100 234 in Africa, 16 090 in Asia, 11 567 in the Americas, 8 435 in Europe and 1 409 in Oceania. Further 29 632 victims of human rights violation were supported by the EU in multiple countries. Examples of support provided include medical and psychosocial support, legal support, material support, temporary relocation, protection against intimidation or risk of retaliation.
- The number of persons benefitting from legal aid interventions supported by the EU increased by 14 % since last reporting period (from 5 831 359 persons for reporting year 2018-2021, to 6 649 373 persons for reporting year 2018-2022), mainly in South-Saharan Africa (5 065 468 persons) and Far East Asia (1 151 866 persons).

Table 6. EU Results Framework indicators disaggregated by sex

EU Results Framework indicator	Total	women/girls	men/boys	Not identified
Number of victims of human rights violations directly benefiting from assistance funded by the EU	166 000	15 000	21 000	93 000

[143] 2018-2022 stands for the reporting year. The EU-funded interventions that contribute to this figure are ongoing or closed projects managed by DG INTPA and DG NEAR (ENI) that started between January 2014 and 31st of May 2023. The values reported for EU Results Framework indicators are cumulative, including all results reported for these projects since start of implementation.
[144] Collecting results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (ENI) and DG INTPA. Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.
[145] Collecting results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (ENI) and DG INTPA. Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

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Number of people directly benefiting from legal aid interventions supported by the EU	6 649 000	2 049 000	2 091 000	1 691 000
Number of individuals directly benefiting from EU-supported interventions that specifically aim to support civilian post-conflict peacebuilding and/or conflict prevention	1 041 000	169 000	153 000	646 000

Selected results 2018-2022[146]

In the enlargement region[147]

1 128 electoral recommendations (of the International Election Observation missions (EOM) done by the OSCE/ODIHR or the EU EOM (case of Kosovo)) were followed up and/or implemented with EU support.

2 196 judges, prosecutors, lawyers and court staff strengthened their capacities on European standards and EU acquis with EU support.

7 countries adopted and/or implemented the legal framework for the protection, promotion and/or enforcement of human/fundamental rights (including freedom of expression and Media, freedom of assembly and freedom of association and non-discrimination and rights of minorities) with EU support.

80 public policies were developed and/or revised with internal and external consultations with EU support.

Source: IPA Performance Framework indicators

- The number of electoral recommendations followed up or implemented with EU support saw a seven-fold increase compared to the previous reporting period (from 153 recommendations for reporting year 2018-2021, to 1 128 recommendations for reporting year 2018-2022), all in the Western Balkans.
- The number of judges, prosecutors, lawyers and court staff strengthened in their capacities on EU standards and acquis more than quadrupled from last year, including 1 277 judges and 265 lawyers in Serbia.

[146] 2018-2020 stands for the reporting year. The EU-funded interventions that contribute to this figure are ongoing or closed projects managed by DG NEAR (IPA) that started between January 2014 and 31st of May 2023. The values reported for IPA PF indicators are cumulative, including all results reported for these projects since start of implementation.

[147] Selected results from EU-funded interventions managed by DG NEAR (Instrument for Pre-accession (IPA)). Further information on scope and methodology in chapter 6.

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4. Geographic Overview

4.1. Sub-Saharan Africa

4.1.1. Introduction (policy developments)

The **sixth EU-African Union summit** was held in Brussels on 17 and 18 February 2022. The innovative format, where EU and African Union (AU) leaders participated in a series of thematic roundtables, allowed for dynamic and frank exchanges on current challenges but also possible solutions and joint actions. The Heads of State and Government agreed on a joint vision for a renewed partnership. The aims of the partnership are solidarity, security, peace and sustainable and sustained economic development and prosperity. The leaders also announced an **Africa-Europe Investment Package** worth at least EUR 150 billion, as the first deliverable of Global Gateway, supporting a common ambition for 2030 and the AU Agenda 2063.

The **11th Commission-to-Commission (C2C)** meeting between the European Union and the African Union, took place on 28 November. C2C discussions were held in a plenary session dedicated to 'A renewed EU-AU partnership in action: geopolitical, food, energy, economic, climate and biodiversity crises and how their impact can be jointly reduced' and in four ensuing parallel working sessions covering the whole spectrum of EU-AU cooperation: achieving Global Gateway connectivity through economic integration; boosting human development; building resilience for people through sustainable food systems, tackling climate and environmental crises, and humanitarian action; and peace, security and governance.

Efforts towards signing the **'post-Cotonou' agreement**[148] between the EU and the members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) continued in 2022. As the application of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement had been extended until 30 June 2023, the ACP-EU Joint Council of Ministers held a successful meeting on 30 November 2022, discussing current global affairs, including food and energy security, where the EU side put forward strong messages as regards the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. Other important topics included Global Gateway strategy and EU-OACPS cooperation in international fora, especially the United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP27) and the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15). The number of OACPS States remained at 79 with South Africa leaving the organisation and the Maldives joining.

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has had direct impact in Africa, especially on rising prices of food, fertilisers, and energy, also with macro-economic effects in terms of inflation and public debt. In 2022, the EU engaged with African partners to reaffirm that, despite the war, Africa remains a priority and that the EU should remain a partner of choice for Africa. The EU conducted several *démarches* in Africa to raise awareness on Ukraine, especially in light of the votes in the UN Security Council, in an increasingly hostile environment with Russian disinformation getting traction in several African countries.

Throughout 2022, the EU remained strongly committed in **West Africa**, in an increasingly complex and sometimes hostile context including the crisis of democratic representation, rise of extremes, extension of terrorist threats, and geopolitical tensions. In the **Sahel**, the crisis of governance and the security situation has been worsening with negative impacts on the populations. Remaining a priority for the EU, the Sahel faces several worrying dynamics including political instability in Mali and Burkina Faso,

[148] ACP-EU partnership (europa.eu)

increasing hostile views towards the West, and weakening of the G5 Sahel regional coordination bodies, leading the EU to adapt its approach. This involved caution and prudence on the one hand (particularly in Mali and Burkina Faso) and rebalancing our support toward specific countries away from the regional level on the other.

To the south of the Sahel, the risk of terrorist contagion became a reality. With the current geopolitical context, where EU's strategic competitors are exploiting the situation, supporting the **coastal states** has become a new priority for the EU (especially in Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Togo, and Benin). The EU has expressed political support towards the Accra Initiative and is now working on its operational support in line with the 'integrated approach' and based on a clear expression of needs and on its political interests.

The EU closely monitored developments in the **Central Africa region** and deployed a variety of instruments, in the pursuit of its foreign policy objectives, including the use of regular political dialogues and exchanges with the countries of the region. The EU continued to support the difficult transition process in Chad and contributed to maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. It deployed an EU election observation mission to São Tomé and Príncipe to help their democratic consolidation and consistently encouraged a peaceful resolution of the crisis in the anglophone regions of Cameroon. The EU reviewed and adapted its autonomous restrictive measure regimes against human rights violators and conflict drivers in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi and calibrated its global human rights sanctions regime to individuals / entities operating in the Central African Republic (CAR). The EU took further precautions to ensure its assistance to the CAR authorities is not misused by Wagner-affiliated forces. Following progress on human rights, rule of law and good governance, the EU lifted its measures against Burundi under Article 96 of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement.

The EU pursued its cooperation with the **Southern Africa and Indian Ocean region** in the fields of green transition and renewable energy. A strategic partnership on critical raw material and green hydrogen was concluded with Namibia to ensure the development of a secure and sustainable supply of raw materials and of renewable hydrogen. Another positive development was the abolition of the death penalty and the repeal of the law on defamation against the President in Zambia. The EU increased its efforts in terms of maritime security with the adoption of the Coordinated Maritime Presence initiative in the North-western Indian Ocean.

The security situation in northern Mozambique continued to be of concern, where the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and Rwanda deployed military forces against the insurgency in Cabo Delgado stabilising the situation. The EU increased its support to the province in line with its 'integrated approach' policy, encompassing humanitarian, peacebuilding, security and development actions. The political and security situation in Eswatini remained highly volatile. The EU continued to call for an inclusive national political dialogue and to support SADC in its efforts. The EU confirmed its ambition to engage in a more constructive relationship with Zimbabwe at all levels.

Important political developments also occurred **in the Horn of Africa and East Africa.** In Ethiopia, in November 2022, the signing of a permanent cessation of hostilities agreement (CoHA) between the Ethiopian Federal Government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) sparked hopes for lasting peace after two years of an appalling conflict. The EU is gradually strengthening its engagement, bearing in mind the crucial issue of accountability for human rights violations during the conflict and pledging for it, notably at the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva. In Sudan, following the military takeover of October 2021, the key stakeholders signed the Political Framework Agreement on 5 December 2022 (this progress

has since been reversed by the onset of fighting on the 15th of April 2023). In Somalia, the conclusion of an electoral process delayed by 18 months ushered in a new dispensation more aligned with the EU's strategic objectives and intent on delivering on the comprehensive reform processes that Somalia signed up to five years ago. The ongoing security operations, initiated by clan militias and supported by the Somali Nation Alliance (SNA), have cleared large territories. In Kenya, the EU-Kenya Strategic Dialogue was launched with the aim of lifting our relations with Kenya to a new, strategic level. The EU also sent one of its largest-ever election observation missions to observe the Kenya General elections in August 2022, in support of a peaceful and democratic electoral process. In South Sudan, the Government decided to extend the transitional period for another two years to February 2024 with national elections in December 2024.

4.1.2. Working together towards the SDGs

In 2022, the EU continued its effort to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Africa, while socio-economic recovery continued to be hampered by the long-term consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, exacerbated by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, and the ever-increasing effects of the climate crisis.

In line with the Green Deal strategy of the European Commission, boosting the green transition in our partner countries remained a common priority across the continent contributing to SDGs 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13. This support also contributes to reaching the NDICI-Global Europe spending target on climate and a significant contribution to the multiannual financial framework (MFF) spending target on biodiversity.

Engagement with youth (increasingly important political drivers), women (bearing in mind the low level of political representation of women and high gender-based violence in some countries), and civil society (important for advocacy and as a vehicle for implementation in the few countries where assistance is not provided via governmental structures) continue to be key in the implementation of EU cooperation. Regular consultations with civil society contribute to enhance EU support to SDGs 5 and 16 in Africa.

In East and Central Africa, SDGs 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13 were in the forefront with programmes geared towards fostering green and digital transitions, notably in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Gabon, Republic of Congo, CAR, Cameroon and Somalia.

In the region of Southern Africa and Indian Ocean, commitments were mainly made in the sectors of economic diversification, job creation and sustainable growth, as well as the Green Deal, contributing to the SDGs 1, 7, 8, 9 and 13. As good governance, democracy and rule of law keep being at the centre of the EU’s work in the region, SDGs 10 and 16 remain a high priority as well.

In West Africa, SDGs 1, 2, 4, 7, 8, 9, 13 and 16 were particularly focussed upon. In line with SDGs 1, 2, 7, 8, 9 and 13, important commitments were made in Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Togo and Sierra Leone in support of the green transition specifically with the view to contribute to energy and food strategic autonomy of partner countries as well as the creation of decent jobs. SDG 4 was promoted through basic education programmes in Chad and Nigeria as well as actions dedicated to technical and vocational education and training in Ghana, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal. Governance challenges falling under SDG 16 remained high on the agenda with programmes in support of the transitions in Guinea-Conakry and The Gambia, to security sector reforms and stability in The Gambia and Senegal, to the Rule of Law in Ghana and Sierra Leone, to migration governance in Ghana and Mauritania

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and to civil society in Côte d'Ivoire. Two budget supports were also committed for Benin and Togo. Besides this focus on the above-mentioned SDGs, SDG 5 is the overall objective of two programmes in support of female entrepreneurship in Guinea and Togo and SDG 11 is at the centre of two actions on sustainable cities in Ghana and Guinea-Bissau.

Looking at SDGs 3 and 4, the EU continued investing significantly in human development, with emphasis on education in Sudan, Ethiopia, Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi, and health in Ethiopia.

Throughout the region, SDG 16 remained at the centre of the effort, as the EU continued to implement and adopt projects in the areas of good governance, democracy and institutional strengthening in Somalia, Sao Tome and Principe, Gabon, DRC, Djibouti and Central African Republic. A good example of this was the release of a tranche of EUR 13.5 million in budget support to Somalia in July 2022, confirming the EU's commitment to support the new administration and its reform process.

4.1.3. Implementation

Continental and Regional

2022 was the year of inauguration of the **Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package** worth at least EUR 150 billion. The Global Gateway is also of increasing relevance in view of the consequences of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on Africa. Supporting regional supply chains and narrowing the global investment gap, the Global Gateway is an important vehicle to mobilise EU support for the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the most ambitious and potentially transformative African Union priority for the coming years.

At regional level, several Team Europe initiatives (TEIs) were launched in 2022. These include the operational launch of the TEI on 'Investing in young businesses in Africa' (IYBA), the TEI on adaptation and resilience in Africa launched at COP27, the TEI on sexual and reproductive health and rights in Sub-Saharan Africa, and two TEI's on the Central and Western Mediterranean migration routes. The EU has also prepared the TEI on illicit financial flows and transnational organised crime which will be launched in 2023.

The total commitment for regional programmes in 2022 reached EUR 1.8572 million and programmes were developed in accordance with key priority areas of support and the Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package.

The Global Gateway makes a significant contribution to human development by supporting education and skills development. In 2022, progress was made on several regional initiatives fostering youth mobility, recognition of qualifications, vocational education and training (VET), and improving the teaching profession. Under the Youth Mobility for Africa flagship, 46 Erasmus+ capacity building projects were selected for Higher Education in 2022 involving 35 African countries[149]. The extension of the initiative on harmonisation of African higher education, quality assurance and accreditation and the programme to support the implementation of the African Continental qualification framework were approved in 2022 and will be launched in 2023. The second phase of the HAQAA Initiative (Harmonisation of African Higher Education, Quality Assurance and Accreditation) was closed in December 2022. It aimed at supporting the

[149] These figures relate to Africa as a whole. In Sub-Saharan Africa, 36 Erasmus+ capacity building projects were selected for Higher Education in 2022 involving 31 Sub-Saharan countries.

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development of a harmonised quality assurance and accreditation system at institutional, national, regional and Pan-African continental level. A third phase will be launched in 2023.[150]

A new initiative on teachers, with a EUR 100 million budget, was approved in December 2022. Finally, preparatory work was done on a new TEI, which will focus on opportunity-driven VET and Skills for Africa.

CASE STUDIES

The Seventh EU-Africa Business Forum (EABF) was accompanied by an unprecedented **Global Gateway Africa-Europe Investment Package**, the first 'deliverable' of the Global Gateway. This will boost public and private investment for Africa's socio-economic, green, and digital transformation. TEIs and flagships will mobilise at least EUR 150 billion in investments by 2027, including EUR 28 billion in grants and support from EFSD+. This is an example of comprehensive support to boost employment creation through trade and investment in specific sectors and value chains. It acknowledges the role of vocational education and skills programmes to respond to the job opportunities created, helping investment initiatives reach their potential, while bettering chances for employment.

Investing in Young Businesses in Africa (IYBA) Team Europe initiative

This Team Europe initiative seeks to invest in young businesses in Africa to contribute to sustainable growth and decent jobs. It expects to support more than 180 programmes which will help young African businesses and young entrepreneurs, especially women, to flourish. The programmes are expected to deliver access to finance for start-ups at seed and early stages, support for financial intermediaries and digital financing, and an overall improvement in the investment climate and entrepreneurial ecosystem. The initiative is implemented across Africa, with a first roll out of activities in countries such as Senegal, Nigeria, Togo, Benin, Kenya, Cameroon and South Africa. This TEI falls within the EU ambition to increase the private sector's contribution to Africa's growth and economic transformation by 2030.

Western Africa

The West Africa region faced many challenges in 2022, suffering notably from political instability with unconstitutional changes of Government and attempted coups in the region as well as the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel, with the spill over of terrorism and violent extremism to West African coastal States. The COVID-19 pandemic and the implications of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine had lasting socio-economic effects on the region, causing commodity price hikes and supply chain disruptions and a food security crisis. The region also suffered from macro-economic and debt sustainability challenges.

In 2022, the EU applied an integrated approach to its engagement towards partner countries in West Africa, particularly in the Sahel and the coastal countries, applying a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach, promoting stability as well as long-term socio-economic development to offer opportunities and hope to the youth, and to address root causes of conflict and prevent the spill over of the terrorist threat.

[150] Home - HAQAA2 (obsglob.org)

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Since 2015, EU budget support has been supporting the development of the water and sanitation sector in São Tomé and Príncipe. The population with access to improved drinking water supply sources has increased to nearly 98 % in 2021, while domestic water supply is now available to more than 80 % of the population.

Annual/multiannual action plans were adopted for 13 countries: Benin, Chad, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, and Togo for a total amount of over EUR 500 million with new actions ranging from support to improved governance and political transitions to education programmes through migration management projects and productive agriculture, entrepreneurship or energy production and distribution. Many of the actions adopted are key contributions to the implementation of the Global Gateway. This includes programmes in support to the production of renewable energy and modernisation and digitalisation of the electricity networks in Ghana, Niger, Mauritania and Sierra Leone. With respect to transport, this includes the support to the implementation of the Port of Cotonou master plan in Benin and to the development of public transport in Dakar, Senegal. It also concerns sustainable growth and jobs with dedicated actions in support of the private sector and to entrepreneurship notably in Guinea-Conakry and Côte d'Ivoire with a specific focus for the latter on supporting start-ups in the digital sector in partnership with Orange. Sustainable jobs and growth are likewise at the heart of technical and vocational education and training programmes in Ghana, Senegal and Guinea-Bissau while basic education is the subject of two key actions in Chad and Nigeria.

As a consequence of the Russian invasion of Ukraine, food production and nutrition has been another key priority in 2022. Complementarily to key programmes adopted as part of the annual action plans for Benin, Nigeria and Togo, top-ups have been committed for Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal and Togo. Finally, governance, security and migration have been sectors of specific attention in Côte d'Ivoire, Benin, Ghana, Guinea-Conakry, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Togo, as well as in Niger. Team Europe initiatives were developed and implemented throughout the region, with a number of flagship initiatives being designed and/or implemented in the framework of the EU-African Union Global Gateway Investment package in Western Africa. In Senegal for instance, the 'Green economy' Team Europe initiative has helped to better coordinate EU and Member States interventions[151] in the field of agriculture and food production – with the start of the construction of a multimodal regional logistics

[151] Member States and financial institutions involved in this TEI are Belgium (BE), Germany (DE), Spain (ES), France (FR), Italy (IT), Luxembourg (LU), the Netherlands (NL), Portugal (PT), and the Development Bank of Austria (OeEB), the European Investment Bank (EIB), The Agence Française de Développement (AFD), FMO, CDP, Bio, and Proparco.

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platform for transformation and marketing of agricultural products, as well as urban transport with the launch of works to put in place the new Dakar Bus Rapid transit system.

Partnerships were further strengthened with European financial institutions notably to promote the Global Gateway strategy in the region. In 2022, the European Commission approved projects presented by financial institutions aiming at leveraging additional funding notably for operations in urban transport in Senegal, for improved access to electricity in Ghana and Niger, for digital connectivity in Nigeria, support to the pharmaceuticals sector and vaccine manufacturing in Senegal and Nigeria, as well as for loans to financial intermediaries in Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, Nigeria and Senegal to support small and medium-sized enterprises with a focus on agriculture, youth employment and gender equality.

The EU and African partners launched two Team Europe initiatives focused on the Atlantic/Western Mediterranean and the Central Mediterranean migratory routes in December 2022 to ensure joint efforts and coordination by Member States and the EU through a whole-of-route approach when addressing the migration challenges. Regional programming allowed for new cooperation projects related to migration to be funded under the Flexible Mechanism (following its incentives-based approach), with actions in Niger and Mauritania among the first ones to be approved.

Eastern and Central Africa

Programmes approved in 2022 were essentially geared towards fostering green and digital transitions – notably in Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Gabon and Somalia. Nature conservation and biodiversity in particular had a great boost thanks to the adoption of the forest partnerships in Uganda and in the Republic of the Congo, as well as projects in the Central African Republic and Cameroon.

The implementation of Team Europe initiatives (TEIs) is progressing well in different countries, with several TEIs contributing to the implementation of the Africa-European Global Gateway Investment Package. Several have made good progress, such as '*Septentrion Vert et Resilient*' in Cameroon with France and Germany or '*Alliance verte: un partenariat pour les hommes, la nature et une économie verte en RDC*' with Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands and Sweden. Two new TEIs were adopted for Burundi on Health and Energy.

2022 was dedicated to the implementation of ongoing actions (funded under the European Development Fund and EU Trust Funds, but also from the NDICI-Global Europe country Annual Action Plans of 2021), and the approval of new funding under the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027. AAPs and individual measures adopted in 2022 in 16 countries (CAR, DRC, Republic of the Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Somalia, Tanzania, South Sudan, Sudan, Uganda, Cameroon and Burundi) amounted to a total of EUR 1.19 billion.

In the field of growth and jobs, support included the initiative 'Support to economic governance and business environment in Rwanda' and the business environment and export enhancement programme (BEEEP) in Kenya. Support has also targeted sustainable growth and green jobs in Gabon, sustainable business in Uganda, the blue economy for job creation in Tanzania, as well as sustainable growth in rural areas in Burundi. In the digital sector, the 'Digital4Tanzania' programme in the field of eGovernance support, as well as the '*Projet de blending pour la transformation numérique'* in the Republic of the Congo (AAP 2021) are worth mentioning. Digital land governance and human-centred digitalisation in Kenya were also supported.

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Concerning food security and nutrition, the 'transformational climate-smart and inclusive agriculture' project in Rwanda, as well as a programme in DRC on agriculture and nutrition should be noted. In Ethiopia, EU response focused on the food crisis. Several countries such as Burundi, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Sudan, Cameroon, DRC, Regional Horn of Africa (including Kenya and Djibouti), and Somalia have benefitted from the reallocation of de-committed European Development Fund funds on food security.

Both the Horn of Africa Window of the EU Trust Fund Africa and the Trust Fund Bêkou were in full implementation mode in 2022 with projects covering around two-thirds of the Trust Funds' total committed amounts. In the Horn of Africa region, the Africa Trust Fund continued support in the areas of migration, resilience, basic services, food security and economic and employment opportunities. In 2022, the Trust Fund Bêkou remained the main EU instrument providing support to the population of the Central African Republic population through interventions focused on health, water and sanitation, gender, socio-economic recovery, rural development and reconciliation applying a humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach.

Southern Africa and Indian Ocean

Rising food, fertilisers and energy prices, as a consequence of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, impacted on the countries in the region with macro-economic effects in terms of inflation and public debt. The security situation in northern Mozambique continued to be of concern, where the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) and Rwanda deployed military forces against the insurgency in Cabo Delgado. This allowed the situation to stabilise. The EU increased its support to the province in line with its 'integrated approach' policy, encompassing political/diplomatic, humanitarian, development peacebuilding and security actions. The political and security situation in Eswatini remained highly volatile. The EU continued to call for an inclusive national political dialogue and to support SADC in its efforts. The EU confirmed its ambition to engage in a more constructive relationship with Zimbabwe at all levels. In this spirit, it decided to lift its restrictive measures against three individuals. The EU continued to support the people of Zimbabwe focusing on priority areas aligned with Zimbabwe's National Development Strategy.

Annual action plans were adopted for 12 countries (Angola, Botswana, Comoros, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe) for a total amount of EUR 812.9 million.

Efforts to promote the Global Gateway strategy continued during 2022. The 'Team Europe' approach has been embraced by most countries in the region and there are now 18 Team Europe initiatives (TEIs) in the region, either currently being planned or already adopted contributing to the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy. Out of these, six have successfully been launched in 2022, namely in Malawi on green growth and good governance, in Mozambique through the 'Green Deal for Mozambique' and one TEI on e-youth, and two TEIs in Zimbabwe: 'Climate smart agriculture-based resilience building' and 'Gender equality through women empowerment'. In line with the Memorandum of Understanding on sustainable raw materials and green hydrogen, entered into during the COP27, a focus has also been put on the development of the TEI 'Inclusive green growth' in Namibia on the energy, raw materials and water sectors, together with the Member States Belgium, Germany, France, the Netherlands, and Finland.

On 18 November 2022, the European Commission concluded negotiations with the Republic of Angola on a Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement (SIFA) – the first EU agreement of this kind. It will make it easier to attract and expand investments while integrating environment and labour rights commitments in the EU-Angola relationship. Pursuing SIFAs with Africa and the Southern Neighbourhood is part of the broader EU strategy to step up engagement with African countries through the 'partnership of equals' approach and to promote sustainable investment in the EU's engagement with African partners. The goal is to unlock economic potential, foster economic diversification, and promote inclusive and sustainable growth. Such agreements are designed to further enhance sustainable trade and investment links between both continents and within Africa itself, in line with the Global Gateway.

EU support continued including economic diplomacy engagement in support of market access, business and investment climate. More specifically, in sustainable growth and jobs this involved the broadening and deepening of the economic partnership agreements (EPAs). This is relevant for the Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) EPA, with five Eastern and the Southern African partners (ESA5: Comoros, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles and Zimbabwe) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) EPA comprising Botswana, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Eswatini (with Angola expected to start the negotiations to join soon). Regarding food security and nutrition, additional support to existing programmes was provided in Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

The strategic partnership with South Africa has continued to further develop during 2022, with political dialogue being strengthened during the visit of the President of the European Council Charles Michel, in July 2022, and the Political and Security Dialogue Forum as well as the Human Rights Dialogue organised in Brussels in early September. Also, a Joint Cooperation Council took place in Pretoria in December in preparation for the Ministerial dialogue scheduled for January 2023. A South Africa – EU Summit is currently planned to take place in 2023. The EU-South Africa partnership has seen positive developments including the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) in support of South Africa's decarbonisation efforts, as well as progress on local vaccine manufacturing, as part of the regional TEI 'Manufacturing and access to vaccines, medicines and health technologies in Africa' (MAV+).

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EU budget support contributed to increasing the daily COVID-19 testing capacity in Mauritius to 1 500 (up from 800 tests per day before) and the capacity of intensive care units from 67 to 84 beds. More than 1 300 health professionals were trained in the management of pandemics and infection prevention control.

4.1.4. Humanitarian aid and civil protection – responding to the emergency needs of people affected by conflicts and disasters

Eastern Africa

Ethiopia has seen an exponential increase in humanitarian needs due to the conflict in northern Ethiopia and in other parts of the country, and a major, unprecedented drought in the southern and south-eastern regions of the country. Major parts of the country are confronted with widespread and severe levels of acute food insecurity. More than 20 million people are estimated to have needed humanitarian assistance in 2022 – a figure that may be higher given the lack of access to accurate information for hard-to-reach areas. In 2022, the European Commission focused on addressing the most urgent and acute needs of people in areas mostly affected by conflicts or violence and natural shocks, with an emphasis on protection, as well as supporting the enablers of the humanitarian response, the main emergency pipelines and supplies, quality service delivery and a multi-sectoral response. Throughout 2022, the EU (notably the European Commission, the High Representative and EU Special Representative for Human rights) continued with their high-level advocacy on unhindered humanitarian access in northern Ethiopia, international humanitarian law obligations, the protection of internally displaced people (IDPs), while also drawing attention to the drought- and conflict-affected areas.

The overall humanitarian situation in the **Horn of Africa** region has seriously deteriorated over the course of 2022 with at least 32.3 million people estimated to need humanitarian assistance in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia. Conflict remains one of the main drivers of humanitarian needs across the region, triggering internal displacement and cross-border flows. At the same time, the region is facing the worst drought in 40 years, leaving people in some areas in famine-like conditions. Humanitarian needs continued to increase. Multi-sectoral humanitarian action has prevented outcomes from being even worse in the affected areas. In order to mobilise the international community into action in face of the drought's devastating impact, in April 2022, the European Commission together with the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Martin Griffiths co-hosted a flagship event on the hunger crisis in the Horn region, where pledges of nearly EUR 1.3 billion were made to combat the drought, out of which EUR 633 million was pledged by the EU - EUR 348 million from the Commission and EUR 285 million from EU Member States in a 'Team Europe' approach.

In February 2020, **South Sudan** formed a transitional Government of national unity after six years of civil war. Yet progress in the implementation of the peace agreement has been slow and the security situation remained extremely fragile, compounded by persisting local conflicts, sometimes with an ethnic undertone, increasing youth mobilisation, widespread violence and serious human rights abuses against civilians. It is in this context that, in August 2022, the Government announced a two-year extension of the transitional period ending in February 2025 with national elections in December 2024.

The humanitarian situation in 2022 was catastrophic and South Sudanese people faced the highest level of food insecurity since independence. 8.7 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance, of which 8.4 million people, or 75 % of the total population, experienced severe food insecurity, almost a 10 % increase compared to the already historically high figures of 2021. The country is also affected by severe climate shocks and recurrent floods, which affected over a million people in 2022. The EU mobilised EUR 85.3 million for humanitarian actions covering the response to food insecurity, violence and floods across South Sudan. EU-funded projects provided humanitarian protection assistance to displaced people and

those affected by trauma and widespread violence, in particular to children, women and girls given the extreme levels of violence and the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war. The EU also continued to strongly support principled humanitarian assistance and advocate for the protection of humanitarian workers and their safe and sustained access to all parts of the country and the full respect of International Humanitarian Law.

The humanitarian needs in **Sudan** were at their highest for a decade, due to the combined effects of the political and economic crisis, skyrocketing inflation, the consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, dry spells and poor harvests, as well as floods. 14.3 million people, or 30 % of the population, needed humanitarian assistance in 2022. In 2022, the EU mobilised EUR 88 million in humanitarian assistance to support the response to the various humanitarian crises in Sudan. Specific budget was mobilised to address the deteriorating food insecurity as well as to respond to growing humanitarian needs caused by increased conflict and violence in Darfur, Blue Nile and Kordofan. The overall humanitarian response in Sudan continued to address the most critical needs in terms of food, shelter, emergency healthcare, access to clean water, education and protection assistance.

Uganda hosts the largest refugee population in Africa and the third largest in the world, mainly from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The EU's support is crucial to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance to both refugees and host communities. Uganda is also vulnerable to natural hazards and epidemics and the EU is supporting the country's efforts to better anticipate and respond to these events. In 2022, the country faced three important events: the arrival of tens of thousands of new refugees fleeing violence in Eastern DRC; a deterioration of the food insecurity situation in Karamoja; and an Ebola outbreak that was declared in the country in September. The EU allocated an initial EUR 30 million in humanitarian aid to Uganda, focusing on most immediate needs, including protection of new arrivals, water, sanitation, hygiene and shelter, education in emergencies, and disaster preparedness. Additional resources were allocated to address both the needs of newly arrived refugees, food insecurity in Karamoja and the Ebola outbreak, to reach a total of EUR 40.1 million in humanitarian aid in 2022.

Uganda being one of the six pilot countries for the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, humanitarian interventions seek to build long-term developmental linkages in all targeted areas with the support of EU counterparts and to support the country's roll out of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework[152].

Humanitarian needs remained high in **Burundi** mainly linked to structural problems, high poverty rates and lack of access to basic social services. 1.8 million people – out of a population of 13 million – needed humanitarian assistance. Over 75 000 Burundians were internally displaced at the end of 2022, mainly due to natural disasters such as flooding and landslides. Around 260 000 Burundian refugees remain in neighbouring countries, while more than 205 000 refugees have returned since 2017. However, interest in repatriation dropped steadily in 2022 while secondary movement of returnees went up. The overall socio-economic challenge in the country makes a sustainable integration of returning refugees very difficult. In 2022, the European Commission provided over EUR 11 million in humanitarian funding, including support to disaster preparedness and education in emergency projects.

[152] UNHCR - Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

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Western Central and Southern Africa

The **Sahel countries** (Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali, Chad and Niger) are among the poorest and the most fragile in the world facing recurrent emergencies, in terms of food, nutrition and epidemics and climate change, and are affected by increasing levels of security and governance issues, violence and conflict. In 2022 the EU responded to emergency humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable populations in these countries, mobilising EUR 208.2 million to support multisectoral humanitarian interventions to the benefit of about 7.3 million vulnerable people across the region – with priority to forcibly displaced people, their host communities as well as populations caught in conflict areas. The emergency response in conflict areas included support to rapid reaction mechanisms (a three-month multi sectorial emergency aid package), and to existing national structures to maintain access to basic services (health) and education in emergency situations. Moreover, EU aid supported humanitarian access to hard-to-reach areas through humanitarian air services, humanitarian civil-military coordination, information and security management, and logistics costs linked to access.

In addition, as a response to the food and nutrition crisis induced by climatic conditions, poverty and insecurity that was compounded by the socio-economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EU provided food during the lean season and nutrition treatment for children suffering from severe acute malnutrition and in need of life-saving treatment. While addressing immediate humanitarian needs, the EU actively worked on implementing the humanitarian-development-peace nexus to build the resilience of the affected population, reduce humanitarian needs and to address the root causes of food insecurity and acute undernutrition.

In north-east **Nigeria**, the situation remained particularly complex, with an estimate of 8.4 million people in need, including more than 2 million forcibly displaced and considerable food security risks for people unable to access assistance (estimated at 1 million individuals). Access to those in need has become even more challenging throughout 2022, with the completion of IDP camp closures by the local authorities in the Maiduguri Metropolitan area with a persistent risk that this policy will be extended to other IDP camps in Borno State. In addition, March and April 2022 saw returns from the Diffa region in Niger to areas in north-east Nigeria still considered unsafe. Opposite movements took place from these areas in north-east Nigeria in November 2022, showing that this return policy was still premature and not guaranteeing the safety of the civilians involved. Overall, in Nigeria, food insecurity (IPC 3+) increased by over 50 % in 2022 compared to 2021, with 19.45 million people affected across the country.

The security/humanitarian situation also deteriorated in north-west Nigeria, due to the combination of criminal gang activity and intercommunity violence. This area of Nigeria, which has the worst public health indicators in the country, also registered a spike in cases of severe and acute malnutrition in the five states of Kebbi, Soko, Zamfara, Kano and Katsina in 2022. This happened in a context of limited humanitarian presence. A total of 1 222 977 individuals were displaced as a result of this crisis and 135 102 individuals sought refuge in Niger.

In 2022, the European Commission provided over EUR 60 million in humanitarian funding to address the needs in Northeast and Northwest Nigeria, including support to disaster preparedness and education in emergency projects. Out of the EUR 60 million, EUR 2.34 million are funds coming from the Emergency Toolbox to respond to floods and epidemics outbreak.

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The **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** continued to face acute and complex humanitarian crisis in a context marked especially by intensified armed conflict in the east. Structural problems remained, including limited access to basic services, insufficient public development, as well as chronic poverty and deep gender inequalities. Violence and armed conflict, recurrent epidemics, such as cholera, measles, and monkey pox, as well as natural disasters, such as recurrent floods, continued to cause large-scale displacement (5.8 million internally displaced people in total, with over 600 000 newly displaced because of M23 military operations alone) and serious protection concerns in the east. Humanitarian access to the conflict zones was increasingly difficult. The country also continued to host over half a million refugees and asylum seekers from neighbouring countries. Around 26.4 million people were acutely food insecure, which is a result of a combination of factors including persistent conflict, chronic under-development, and low agricultural production, but also increased food and fuel prices, directly related to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. The EU humanitarian funding for the DRC reached almost EUR 82 million in 2022 to provide life-saving assistance to the most vulnerable people. The funding also supported disaster preparedness action to strengthen the resilience of local populations and local authorities against natural disasters.

The **Central Africa Republic (CAR)** is suffering one of the world's most protracted crises. In 2022, 63 % of the population (some 3.1 million people out of 6.1 million) needed humanitarian assistance, with 1.25 million being displaced within the country or to neighbouring countries. Clashes among armed groups and national forces led to renewed violence, triggering further waves of displacement. Rampant criminality has increased the vulnerability of civilians, while also making the delivery of humanitarian assistance more challenging. The global impact of the Russian aggression in Ukraine, through imported inflation on commodity prices and fuel shortages in a landlocked country, aggravated food insecurity which was already affected by a high prevalence of acute malnutrition. Primary healthcare, water and sanitation, essential household items, and shelter were among the most urgent needs, along with access to education, in a country where some 1 000 schools could not operate due to insecurity.

In 2022, the EU provided humanitarian aid to crisis-affected populations in Central African Republic (CAR) for a total amount of EUR 25 million, focusing on the needs of the most affected populations, notably providing food assistance and livelihood support, health, shelter, water, sanitation, education in emergencies, and reinforcing humanitarian coordination, security and logistics. In addition, the European Commission financed actions to protect civilians, including prevention of sexual violence, support to victims, and actions offering a protective and educational environment for children at risk of forced recruitment, abuse and violence. EU-funded projects also helped to enhance the capacity of local responders to prepare for the onset of new man-made or natural disasters.

Nine out of ten regions of **Cameroon** continue to be impacted by three complex humanitarian crises: the Lake Chad basin conflict, the North-West and South-West (NWSW) crisis, and the CAR refugee crisis. In 2022, 3.9 million people needed emergency assistance. There were over 2 million internally displaced persons, returnees, and refugees and asylum seekers. The EU mobilised a total of EUR 29.95 million for the humanitarian response in Cameroon. Insecurity remains high in the Far North and NWSW regions and will continue to cause population displacements. In both regions, insecurity and various bureaucratic impediments render access to the field for the delivery of humanitarian assistance very challenging.

The **Southern Africa and Indian Ocean** region is prone to more frequent and intense natural disasters due to climate change and man-made hazards caused by conflict and violence, resulting in loss of lives and

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destruction of livelihood assets, leading to population displacement and millions of people in need of humanitarian assistance. In 2022, the EU allocated nearly EUR 70 million to the region, focusing on emergency relief response such as food/nutrition assistance, protection, access to healthcare, education in emergencies, water and sanitation and disaster preparedness. This funding helped address the acute levels of food insecurity in the region, specifically in Angola, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mozambique, and Zimbabwe. In some countries this included additional support to mitigate the impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. It also included support provided in response to the consequences of the 2021-2022 cyclonic season. Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, and South Africa have been the hardest hit countries in the region requiring additional assistance to support their national responses. Continued support was also provided to the roll out of the COVID-19 vaccination campaign.

The armed conflict in Cabo Delgado Province, **Northern Mozambique** further escalated in 2022 and, as a result of the violence, over 1 million people were internally displaced and around 2 million people were in need of emergency assistance and protection in Cabo Delgado and neighbouring provinces of Niassa and Nampula. The EU provided assistance to conflict-affected populations, including internally displaced people and their host communities, providing shelter, protection assistance, food assistance, basic items to ease daily life, functional water and sanitation systems, and education in emergencies. The EU also supported disaster preparedness actions in schools through safe learning facilities, training of teachers in early warning and teaching children how to stay safe. Building on lessons learned from past natural hazards, continued support was provided on strategic emergency stock prepositioning to facilitate and speed up the response to natural hazards. In 2022, the EU allocated over EUR 28 million to Mozambique to respond to the Cabo Delgado crisis. Throughout 2022, international humanitarian law, including humanitarian access to the affected population and Civil-Military coordination issues were systematically promoted through political dialogues and high-level engagement.

In **Madagascar**, more than 1.3 million people faced acute levels of food insecurity and about 28 000 were at risk of famine. The EU support helped assist the most vulnerable families with adequate food assistance and nutrition services to children below the age of five. In addition, the EU continued its engagement in the sector of education in emergencies and disaster preparedness. The EU allocated over EUR 19 million to respond mainly to the food insecurity and nutrition emergency needs due to the impact of the cyclone season.

During the cyclone season, Madagascar was hit by five tropical storms and cyclones of medium to strong intensity in less than three months. The EU provided a comprehensive response to Tropical cyclone Batsirai including the deployment of civil protection and humanitarian aid experts to the country and several humanitarian air bridges for passengers and cargo. Through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM), Member States provided shelters, water purification modules, drones carrying aerial assessments and one emergency medical team. A civil protection team of experts in logistics, operations, security and WASH was also deployed.

In **Zimbabwe**, nearly a third of the urban (1.63 million) and rural (3.52 million) population is currently food insecure. The EU also provided support to returning migrants from South Africa, in need of protection and safe environment of which the majority are children and women. In 2022, the EU allocated over EUR 6 million in humanitarian assistance to mainly address the food shortages in urban areas, to support education in emergencies, disaster preparedness and identify the underlying, complex and interrelated causes of displacement.

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4.1.5. Crisis response and preparedness

With 11 new crisis response actions related to **Sub-Saharan Africa** launched in 2022 under the Rapid Response Pillar of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument-Global Europe (NDICI- Global Europe), the EU responded to the numerous crises in the region.

During the year, the conflict in the **Sahel** continued. A crisis response action focus on the increased risk of further local conflict as food security deteriorated and food exports were disrupted because of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. Similarly, a crisis response action responded to the risk of spill over of the conflict in the Sahel into neighbouring **West African coastal countries**. In **Nigeria** a new crisis response action addresses efforts to promote peace and stability by mitigating conflicts over natural resources.

The **European Union Capacity Building Mission – EUCAP Sahel Mali,** launched in 2014 and extended to January 2023, continued, in close cooperation with the Malian authorities. It aims to restore and maintain constitutional and democratic order and the conditions for lasting peace, and to restore and maintain State authority and legitimacy throughout the territory of Mali. The **Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell (RACC)**, embedded within EUCAP SAHEL Mali, continued to improve coordination between the G5 Sahel structures and countries to enhance regional cooperation and operational capabilities in the field of defence and security.

The **EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Sahel**'s mandate, extended until 31 August 2022, contributed actively to regional and international efforts to achieve lasting peace, security, stability and sustainable development in the region. Furthermore, the EUSR aimed to enhance the quality, impact, and visibility of the EU's multi-faceted engagement in the Sahel in an integrated way.

The **European Union Advisory Mission to Central African Republic – EUAM RCA** aims to support the establishment of rule-based governance, increase the capacities within the Ministry for Interior and Public Security, and foster a sustainable transformation of the Central African Republic's Internal Security Forces and their operational effective functioning and deployment.

In the Horn of Africa, the EU continued to support relief and recovery efforts in communities in **Ethiopia** affected by the Tigray conflict. In neighbouring **Somalia**, support to ensure the peaceful holding of the planned presidential elections in Somaliland was provided as was support to rapid local stabilisation efforts in areas newly recovered from the Al-Shabaab terrorist organisation.

The **EUSR for the Horn of Africa** actively contributed to regional and international efforts to achieve peaceful coexistence and lasting peace, security, and development within and among the countries in the region. The EUSR also engaged with the countries of the Red Sea and Nile Basin as well as with relevant regional or international entities as appropriate. The mandate of the EUSR was extended until 31 August 2024.

In 2022, the **EUCAP Somalia** continued its work to enhance Somali maritime civilian law enforcement. In particular, it works to reinforce the Somali capacity to carry out fisheries' inspections and enforcement, ensure maritime search and rescue, counter smuggling, fight piracy and police the coastal zone on land and at sea. It pursues these objectives by supporting national authorities in developing the necessary legislation and setting up judicial authorities beyond providing the necessary mentoring, advice, training, and equipment to Somali maritime civilian law enforcement entities.

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Furthermore, NDICI-Global Europe crisis response actions have been mobilised to contribute to stability and peace initiatives in the provinces of Cabo Delgado, Niassa and Nampula **in Mozambique,** while in **Uganda** the EU is supporting efforts to prevent violent extremism.

The EU increased support to biosecurity in the region through the EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Centres of Excellence initiative, with actions focused on enhanced early detection of and preparedness for emerging viral diseases, strengthened epidemiology response and enhanced capacity of public health laboratories to produce reliable test results and establish quality management systems. For example, in December 2021, an EU CBRN Regional Centre of Excellence was inaugurated in Nairobi.

4.2. Asia and the Pacific

4.2.1. East Asia and South Asia

4.2.1.1. Introduction (policy developments)

The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission Josep Borrell Fontelles took part in the first physical meeting in three years of the **ASEAN** Regional Forum in Phnom Penh in August. Following the upgrade of relations to a strategic partnership, the EU hosted an **EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit** in Brussels in December 2022, the first ever summit between the EU Member States leaders and ASEAN Member States, marking 45 years of diplomatic relations. The consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine were a key issue addressed, including its impact on the global economy and on food security, as reflected in the joint leaders' statement. The summit saw the launch of the **EU-ASEAN Plan of Action 2023-27** and welcomed Team Europe's expected contribution of around EUR 10 billion for the implementation of the Global Gateway in the ASEAN region. The Summit also saw the launch of the EU-ASEAN energy dialogue. In the context of the Global Gateway, the EU announced the **Team Europe Initiative on Sustainable Connectivity**, which will be complemented by projects at both regional and national levels across South-East Asia, enhancing the overall EU-ASEAN cooperation. Leaders also welcomed the signing of the **EU-ASEAN Comprehensive Air Transport Agreement**, the first-ever region-to-region aviation agreement. In the margins of the summit, Partnership and Cooperation Agreements were signed with both **Malaysia** and **Thailand**, while agreement was reached on a joint political declaration on establishing the Just Energy Transition Partnership with **Vietnam**, as well as on a joint statement to announce the substantial conclusion of a new Digital Partnership between the EU and **Singapore**.

The EU and G7 partners engaged with **Indonesia** throughout its inaugural G20 Presidency on the global consequences of Russia's aggression against Ukraine. Within ASEAN there was widespread support for United Nations General Assembly (UNGA)'s resolutions in response to Russia's war on Ukraine. The EU welcomed the adoption of autonomous sanctions against Russia by **Singapore**. Following the 2021 military coup in **Myanmar/Burma**, the Council continued to extend its targeted sanctions on those responsible for the coup and for the suppression of democracy, as well as against entities which provided financial and other support to the military regime. The temporary and partial withdrawal of Everything But Arms (EBA) trade preferences from **Cambodia** due to serious human rights concerns continued.

The 28th **EU-Japan Summit** produced a strong statement on cooperation to uphold the rules-based international order and opposing Russia's illegal war of aggression on Ukraine. It also announced agreement of the EU's first Digital Partnership, to foster economic growth through a human-centric digital transformation. The importance of cooperation in climate change mitigation and adaptation was reaffirmed through a continued will to implement the EU-Japan Green Alliance.

EU cooperation with **Bangladesh** continued to expand, with the first Political Dialogue held in Dhaka in November 2022. Bangladesh also remained the biggest beneficiary globally of the EU's EBA preferential trade scheme. 2022 also saw the launch of negotiations for a Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.

The EU extended support to **Sri Lanka** at a time of unprecedented crisis, also helping the Country to advance on the reconciliation agenda, in full respect of democratic values. The EU cooperation programmes have been reoriented to support the vulnerable population including the delivery of

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medicines through the EU's Joint Civil Protection Mechanism (in this framework, humanitarian support worth EUR 1.7 million was provided).

During the visit of European Commission President von der Leyen to New Delhi in April, EU and **India** agreed to launch a Trade and Technology Council to tackle key trade and technology challenges and further cooperation in these areas. The EU and India also agreed to resume negotiations for an EU-India Free Trade Agreement and start talks on an Investment Protection Agreement as well as an Agreement on Geographical Indications. The EU-India Clean Energy and Climate partnership contributed to the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency in India and organised the first EU-India Green Hydrogen Forum in September 2022.

The EU together with its Member States were among the first to react in providing substantial support to **Pakistan** immediately after it was hit in June 2022 by a devastating natural disaster with loss of lives and destruction of livelihoods of millions of people. In a 'Team Europe' approach, the EU and its Member States secured the basic needs of people affected by the floods through humanitarian aid and adaptation of ongoing development programmes, but also supported Pakistan in drafting its post disaster needs assessment and subsequent recovery framework.

The EU re-established its presence in **Afghanistan**, which ensures better understanding of political, economic and social developments in the country, and facilitates the delivery of assistance and operational coordination. The presence is also important for contacts with the de facto authorities, for outreach to various sectors of the Afghan civil society, including the private sector, journalists and human rights defenders, and for engagement with other stakeholders in the country.

South Asia's response to Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has been mixed. However, **Bhutan, Nepal** and the **Maldives** consistently voted in support of all UNGA resolutions in response to the war and aggression against Ukraine.

The partnership with **Mongolia** was further strengthened in 2022, inter alia through the organisation of the first post-pandemic meeting of the EU-Mongolia Joint Committee in Ulaanbaatar and the EU-Mongolia Political Dialogue in Brussels.

4.2.1.2. Working together towards the SDGs

South-East Asia

In December 2022, the EU and United Kingdom together with the International Partners Group launched the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) for **Vietnam**, which aims at contributing to SDG 7 along with the ongoing budget support operation 'EU-Vietnam sustainable energy transition programme'. By the end of 2022, the European Commission also adopted the annual action plan for 2023, which includes four actions. These are 'Women-led green partnerships' (SDG 13 on Climate actions and SDG 5 on Gender equality), 'Decent work agenda' (SDG 8 Decent work and economic growth), 'EU JULE Phase II' (SDG 16, SDG 5, and SDG 8), and 'Strategic communications'.

In November 2022, the EU also announced its support for, and a contribution with participating Member States of over EUR 2 billion to, the Just Energy Transition Partnership for **Indonesia**. The EU-Indonesia Cooperation facility, contracted in November 2022, will help steer the EU-Indonesia partnership, through the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) focused on trade, investment and connectivity as well as human rights, gender and youth empowerment, and the Indonesia Green TEI on energy and sustainable

value chains. The SDGs targeted will include SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Climate action), SDG 14 (Life below water) and SDG 15 (Life on land).

In **Myanmar,** the European Commission continued following the 'back to basics' approach adopted in the aftermath of the 2021 coup d'état, focused on supporting the people, civil society and the most vulnerable communities. Within this framework, a Special Measure was adopted in 2022 aimed at strengthening the 'EU Nexus Response Mechanism', contributing to SDG 16 (Just, peaceful and inclusive societies) with a focus on peace building. The measure also included a programme on 'Quality basic education pathways for children', contributing to SDG 4 (Quality education) with a focus on ensuring access to quality and inclusive basic education for the most vulnerable children and youth. Finally, the measure also aimed at 'Securing energy needs and transition of rural areas in Myanmar', providing support to green rural economic development, and contributing to SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and SDG 13 (Climate action).

The 'Green economy' action, adopted by the European Commission within the framework of the annual action plan 2022 for the **Philippines**, constitutes a building block of the Team Europe initiative (TEI) on Green Economy. The initiative contributes to SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production), SDG 13 (Climate action) and SDG 14 (Life below water).

The annual action plan adopted by the European Commission for **Laos** in 2022 encompassed three actions. The first one is a budget support programme fostering 'Partnership in education and skills for inclusive and green growth (PESIG)' which will mainly target SDG 4 (Quality education), while touching upon SDG 1 (No poverty), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities). The second action concerns the second phase of the 'Citizen engagement for good governance, accountability and Rule of Law' (or CEGGA II). It will mainly target SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), while touching upon SDG 5 (Gender equality) and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities). The third action will foster 'Partnership to support public financial management reform in Lao People's Democratic Republic (PPFM)', mainly targeting SDG 16 (Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies) while including SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities).

The ASEAN Sustainable Connectivity TEI, launched during the December 2022 EU-ASEAN Commemorative Summit, is a Global Gateway project supporting South-East Asian countries in working towards a range of SDGs, including notably SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth).

South Asia

Following the termination of development aid due the overthrow of the constitutional government of the Islamic Republic of **Afghanistan** by the Taliban in August 2021, the EU started in 2022 providing support addressing the population's basic needs and livelihoods. In compliance with the benchmarks agreed in the Foreign Affairs Council Conclusions of 21 September 2021[153], basic needs support was channelled exclusively through international organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs), without any benefit to or involvement of the de facto authorities. Most of the support throughout 2022 was geared towards health, education, food security and nutrition, WASH, livelihoods, and support to human rights

[153] Council Conclusions 11713/2/21 of 21 September 2021.

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and civil society organisations (CSOs). During the reporting period, the EU provided direct emergency cash support for around 194 000 teachers during the winter months of January and February, when schools across Afghanistan were closed and salaries had not been paid for months, to incentivise teachers to stay in their profession and thereby to help sustain children's learning in public schools. Moreover, up to 450 000 persons received food or cash when taking part in work programmes to boost food production in 2022.

The dynamic context of Afghanistan's crisis required the EU to adapt its approach in favour of the people of Afghanistan to the changing circumstances. Within this framework, basic needs assistance, notably in the field of education, had to be adjusted following the Taliban authorities' central decree from March 2022 to keep secondary schools for girls closed. A 'differentiated' approach in basic needs assistance delivery was introduced to further support those girls who were still able to attend secondary schools thanks to local exceptions to the central decree, in turn stimulating other local leaders to also apply exceptions. However, following the deplorable decisions by the Taliban authorities at the end of 2022 to ban women from higher education and from working in aid delivery, most of international aid, including EU basic needs assistance, had to be temporarily paused.

Through the budget support operations in education and social protection implemented in **Bangladesh**, the EU helped bring 750 000 children back to primary school and assisted 1.2 million vulnerable women through monthly cash grants to ensure proper nutrition for their young children, thus contributing to SDG 4 (Quality education) and SDGs 1 and 2 (No poverty and End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition) respectively. In 2022, the European Commission also adopted the action 'Partnership for green energy transition', aimed at addressing policy and regulatory framework implementation gaps by promoting and facilitating relevant reforms, technology and knowledge sharing, and facilitating investments to expand the generation of power through renewable energy. The action is expected to contribute to SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy).

Two actions were adopted by the European Commission within the annual action plan 2022 for **Nepal**. The education budget support programme 'Quality education for all' will contribute to SDGs 4 (Quality education), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities) and SDG 16 (Strong institutions). The programme 'Local adaptation to climate change' will improve the sustainability and conservation of the Nepalese natural resources to notably increase climate resilience. It will contribute to SDG 13 (Climate action), SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation), SDG 7 (Clean energy), SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities), and SDG 15 (Life on land).

Three new actions were adopted under the annual action plan 2022 for **Pakistan**: 'KP-RET rural economic transformation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa' will foster sustainable agricultural value chains to improve rural income and employment, and is designed to contribute to SDGs 1 (No poverty), 8 (Decent work and economic growth) and 13 (Climate action); 'Energy Plus: energy for climate resilience in Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa' promotes clean energy generation and efficiency and supports SDGs 7 (Affordable and clean energy) and 13 (Climate action); and 'TVET IV - EU support for sustainable economic development through demand-driven technical and vocational education and training (TVET)' supports SDGs 4 (Quality education) and reflects the enabling role of education in achieving other SDGs, as it promotes an increased supply of skills in the agribusiness, water and energy sub-sectors.

In 2022, the European Commission adopted the action 'Strengthening the Rule of Law and anti-corruption in the Maldives' which contributes to SDG 16 (Strong institutions). The action aims at supporting the

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Maldives in developing an effective, accountable and inclusive justice system as well as strengthening anti-corruption efforts through better legal framework, institutional capacity and public perception.

Two contracts were successfully signed in 2022 within the framework of the annual action plan 2021 for **India**. The EUR 2 million 'Clean energy and climate partnership phase II' programme (SDG 7 and 13), aims to strengthen the EU-India partnership in sectors of mutual interest, including green hydrogen, solar, off-shore wind, smart grids, and energy efficiency, among others. The EUR 2.8 million programme for 'Trade and innovation support to India' aims to support the ongoing EU-India Free Trade Agreement negotiations, the Investment Protection Agreement, and an Agreement on geographical indications. It also aims at supporting the EU-India digital and innovation partnership through an innovation platform.

The annual action plan adopted in October 2022 for **Bhutan**, includes the budget support programme 'Supporting good governance and digitalisation', which will contribute to SDG 16 (Strong institutions). This programme will focus on support to local governments and decentralisation, gender mainstreaming and digitalisation in education and skills. The year 2022 also saw the achievement in Bhutan of important Public Finance Management (PFM) reforms, supported under the EU-Austria Bhutan PFM Multi-Donor Trust Fund, and implemented by the World Bank. Finally, support was provided to CSOs' work on service delivery for the population and advocacy towards the parliament (SDG 16 and others).

The EU adopted a 'Team Europe' approach to tackle the economic crisis in **Sri Lanka** and its multidimensional effects, including food insecurity and threatened livelihoods. The EU is providing comprehensive support targeting the agriculture sector, nutrition, water, health, economic development, social inclusion, justice, protection and public finance management. Within this framework, the European Commission adopted in 2022 the action 'Promoting circular economy in the food sector' contributing to SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production). The action aims to support initiatives that increase food availability for vulnerable people through more efficient distribution mechanisms thereby avoiding food waste or converting it into agricultural inputs.

North-East Asia

All projects in the **Democratic People's Republic of Korea** remained suspended throughout 2022 due to the continued closure of the country's borders. The situation was nevertheless monitored as closely as possible and direct contacts with NGOs and implementing partners were maintained.

Common interests and synergies between EU and the **Republic of Korea** concerning development cooperation have been explored to engage in discussions on further alignment of initiatives. Furthermore, the EU strengthened its strategic partnership with South Korea by adopting a digital partnership in November 2022 and by agreeing on a green partnership at the EU-Korea Summit on 22 May.

In line with the EU's multifaceted approach and in line with its core values and principles, the EU worked with **China** to address global challenges, notably aiming to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts and advancing the external dimension of the European Green Deal with new actions on water, energy and circular economy. Several High-Level Dialogues took place, notably the High-Level Dialogue on Environment and Climate (co-chaired by Executive Vice President Timmermans) and the High-Level Energy Dialogue on 31 March 2022 (co-chaired by Commissioner Simson).

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CASE STUDY

SDG 4 - Post-pandemic: Bringing children back to school in Bangladesh

©European Commission

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, with the budget support from the EU, 750 000 children between the ages of 8 and 14 have enrolled in learning centres supported by the Government of Bangladesh.

In 2022, 750 000 of out of school children, who had either dropped out or had never enrolled in any Government-led primary school, had the opportunity to access education through 25 309 learning centres in Bangladesh set up by the non-government agencies actively working in the field. This initiative is a part of the 'National primary education sector' programme, to which the EU contributes as the largest grant provider, as well as an example of a Government-NGO collaboration in the field of education. The EU has also been supporting the Government at policy level to ensure progress towards achieving the global objectives of ensuring access to quality education and leaving no one behind.

The EU has been supporting the access to education in Bangladesh for almost three decades, Budget Support being one of its key programmes.

4.2.1.3. Implementation

North-East Asia

The **Global Gateway strategy** is being implemented in **Mongolia** through the Team Europe initiative (TEI) **Green economic growth** with agriculture, forest and renewable energy sectors being at the forefront. As main Global Gateway deliverables in 2022, the EU approved a contribution of EUR 8.4 million for the Choir-Sainshand energy transmission line (total investment of EUR 76.66 million) that is expected to increase the share of renewables in the overall energy mix in Mongolia. At COP27 in November 2022, the European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and the President of Mongolia Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh signed the Memorandum of understanding for the **forest partnership between the EU and Mongolia,** reaffirming a long-term political commitment and the intention to closely cooperate on sustainable forests management (SDG 8, 13, 15, and 17).

South-East Asia

The implementation of the Global Gateway strategy in the **Philippines** focuses on delivering the green and digital transition. The European Commission adopted in 2022 the 'Green Economy' action, which focuses on supporting the transition towards circular economy, targeting the plastic crisis and clean energy transition. The action, which constitutes a key building block of the future TEI Green Economy, follows a three-level approach involving central and local government units as well as the private sector.

In 2022, the European Space Agency signed a Contribution Agreement with the European Commission becoming its implementing partner within the Copernicus programme, using Earth Observation as a tool

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to ensure better planning for disaster risk management, such as for the upcoming Copernicus mirror site in the Philippines.

The Global Gateway strategy will guide sustainable EU investments in **Indonesia** in support of connectivity, including towards the achievement of national and international commitments to accelerate the decarbonisation of the energy sector, through the achievement of a Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP) for the country. The JETP was launched during the Partnership for Global Infrastructure and Investment (PGII) event at the G20 Summit on 15-16 November 2022 in Bali with President of Indonesia Joko Widodo, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen on behalf of the EU, and leaders of the International Partners Group (IPG). The EU will contribute to the JETP for Indonesia with the IPG led by US and Japan and including Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, and the European Investment Bank (EIB). The IPG will mobilise a total amount of USD 10 billion, of which EUR 2.4 billion is expected from the EU together with participating EU Member States and the EIB.

The JETP for **Vietnam**, together with the ongoing budget support operation 'EU-Vietnam sustainable energy transition programme' (worth EUR 121 million) provide the framework for the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy in this country. At the EU-ASEAN Summit in December 2022, leaders from Vietnam and IPG, including the EU, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Japan and Norway and launched the JETP. The EU is co-leading with the UK on this partnership to which the EU is contributing EUR 176.5 million to a total of around USD 15.5 billion of public and private finance mobilised over the next three to five years to support Vietnam's green transition.

The European Commission adopted in 2022 a decision to implement the 'EU-Cambodia Partnership for Public Financial Management Reform (Stage IV)' contributing to SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions). This budget support programme supports the implementation of the national Public Finance Management Reform Programme (PFMRP) in **Cambodia** and will enable the implementation of TEIs and EU-funded actions. The PFM programme is complemented by actions aimed at strengthening the civil society and their role to promote due diligence, decent work and labour rights.

South Asia

The EU's longstanding partnership in **South Asia** takes into account the challenges and opportunities that South Asian countries share, such as their vulnerability to climate change, as well as the need to promote integration including trade and connectivity, while ensuring sustainable management of natural resources on land and in the ocean. Both regionally and in country, the EU seeks to foster the Global Gateway strategy, promoting enhanced connectivity in the region, supporting renewable energy in **Bangladesh**, **Nepal** and **India**, promoting green recovery in **Sri Lanka** and **Maldives**, and engaging with the private sector in **Pakistan**. In addition, India remains, in the region, an important partner in achieving the Global Gateway strategy, in particular because of its importance for the multilateral and green agenda and combatting climate change.

In **Bangladesh**, the European Commission adopted a programme in 2022 aiming at advancing Bangladesh's green ambitions through solar and wind energy infrastructure investments in the context of the green energy transition TEI, including the strengthening of policy and regulatory frameworks to improve the renewable energy investment climate. This will be done through a package including blended investment grants and technical assistance.

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The multiannual action plan for the Asia-Pacific region for 2022-2023, adopted in 2022, included a Global Gateway action for **India**. The action aims to support India's sustainable modernisation ambitions contained within the EU-India Strategic Partnership, and forms part of the implementation of the EU-India Roadmap 2025 and EU-India Connectivity Partnership, as well as the implementation of several sectoral partnerships. The specific objective of the action is to support sustainable modernisation, specifically regarding resilient infrastructure, just energy transition, sustainable urbanisation, resource efficiency and circular economy, water, migration and mobility as well as digitalisation, by December 2027. In addition, a key achievement at the end of 2022 was the signature of the project agreement between the Municipal Corporation of Chandigarh (MCC) and the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) marking the launch of the first new Global Gateway project in India, a blending project aiming to ensure 24/7 water supply in Chandigarh.

The EU-Bhutan Trade Support Project ended in September 2022. The project has supported export diversification in **Bhutan** by improving the national trade and investment regulatory framework and contributed to increasing exports of horticulture products and textile handicrafts. The project has been instrumental in strengthening the small and medium-sized enterprise sector with a focus on empowering women entrepreneurs and promoting environmental sustainability.

The three new actions adopted in 2022 for **Pakistan** are part of the EU recovery response to the devastating floods that hit Pakistan during the summer and early autumn of 2022. Two actions in particular contribute to implementing the Global Gateway strategy. 'Energy Plus' has been designed with the aim to promote green, clean and secure energy infrastructures and catalyse private sector investment while ensuring good governance, transparency and equal partnerships. 'TVET IV' aims to help Pakistan advance in the areas of green and digital, growth and decent jobs, and human capital.

In **Nepal**, the programme 'Quality education for all' contributes to the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy by investing in quality education, paying particular attention to the inclusion of girls and other vulnerable groups and also in their social, ethnic and linguistic diversity.

The action adopted in 2022 for **Sri Lanka** on Circular Economy in the food sector will help the country to tackle in the short-term the multidimensional crisis and in the longer-term, it will contribute to the enhancement of effectiveness of the sustainable production, distribution and consumption models related to food waste and single use plastic food packaging.

In the **Maldives**, the action adopted in 2022 will include work on judicial reforms and access to justice as well as activities to reduce corruption practices and enhance public accountability. It will lead to strengthened laws and public institutions, including through a more digitalised and decentralised access to justice in the atolls.

4.2.1.4. Humanitarian aid and civil protection – responding to the emergency needs of people affected by conflicts and disasters

South Asia

Following the takeover of **Afghanistan** by the Taliban in August 2021, the political and institutional context in the country has completely changed, along with the challenges and objectives for the years to come. Afghanistan is facing a humanitarian crisis that affects the human right to life, as basic needs are no longer met. After a dramatic 35 % increase on the year before, Afghanistan had the highest number of people in

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emergency food insecurity in the world by the end of 2021. At the end of 2022, 24 million people were acutely food insecure (60 % of the population). The situation of women and girls has become particularly dire as their rights and opportunities were increasingly restricted by the interim Taliban leadership. Continuous and systematic efforts from the de facto authorities to regulate women's behaviour paired with family and community pressure and fear of punishment contributed to significantly increase the large-scale institutionalisation of gender-based discrimination and to further exclude women from the social, economic and political spheres. The discriminatory measures culminated in the edict of 24 December 2022, banning women from working for non-governmental organisations. The lack of access to basic services exacerbated by COVID-19 posed significant challenges for the Afghan population. Households had increasingly exhausted their means for survival and had resorted to taking on unmanageable debt and relying on negative coping mechanisms such as selling their children for food.

The EU's priorities from the Taliban takeover have been established under the guidance of the five benchmarks for EU engagement with the de facto authorities established by the Council and focus on alleviating the impact of the grave humanitarian crisis through our basic needs aid package and to engage with the de facto authorities on inclusion, human rights, and the provision of an enabling civic space for civil society and the media to operate fairly and freely in the country.

In 2022, the EU provided EUR 174 million for humanitarian assistance programmes covering the needs of displaced populations, in particular on food security, nutrition, health, WASH, demining to protect humanitarian workers, protection and education with a specific focus on the needs of women and girls. Of the total funding, 31 % is allocated to food security and livelihoods, 27 % to health and nutrition, 11 % for education and about 13 % for protection and mine clearance action. As of December 2022, 840 tons of mainly life-saving medication, COVID-19 and nutritional items have been delivered to Kabul through the EU Humanitarian Air Bridge, in close co-operation with humanitarian partners.

In 2022, heavy monsoon rainfall and floods affected **Pakistan**, killing more than 1 700 people. Through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, nine EU Member States and one UCPM Participating State have offered assistance including shelters, medicines and medical equipment, generators, water purification modules, a medical team and a bailey bridge.

South-East Asia

In 2022, the **Rohingya crisis** entered its fifth year with over 1 100 000 refugees in **Bangladesh** and no prospect for a rapid end to the crisis, especially after the military takeover in Myanmar. To alleviate the suffering of Rohingya refugees from Myanmar, and their host communities in Bangladesh in 2022, the EU contributed with over EUR 46 million to the humanitarian response. The EU assistance reached Rohingya refugees in the sprawling and overcrowded refugee camps of Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh, as well as hundreds of thousands of Bangladeshi people in vulnerable situations covered by the Joint Humanitarian Plan. About 30 000 refugees on the island of Bashan Char also benefitted from the EU humanitarian assistance. The key needs addressed included food assistance, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, protection, shelter and education.

The coup d'état in **Myanmar** on 1 February 2021 saw a severe deterioration of the humanitarian situation with 17.6 million people in need and about 1.5 million people across the country becoming displaced due to conflict and food insecurity growing to unprecedented levels. To respond to the country-wide humanitarian needs, in 2022 the EU contributed EUR 28 million to the humanitarian response. The EU

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assistance reached IDPs and vulnerable people throughout the country including in new conflict areas and also responded to the needs of refugees in Thailand and India. The key needs addressed included multi-sectoral emergency response, protection, food assistance, health, nutrition, water and sanitation, shelter and education.

In 2022 the EU provided around EUR 13 million in humanitarian assistance to the **Philippines** to address the needs arising from the Mindanao conflict and natural disasters. Most of this funding was mobilised to respond to the needs generated by super-typhoon Rai Main where sectors of intervention were food security, WASH, shelter, education in emergencies, health, protection, disaster risk reduction and disaster preparedness. With its support, the EU contributed to alleviate the needs of approximately 100 000 internally displaced persons due to conflict and several hundred thousand people affected by natural catastrophes. In addition, the EU supported national authorities to be better prepared in case of disasters.

4.2.1.5. Crisis response and preparedness

EU crisis response actions were mobilised to respond to the dramatic events in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. In **Pakistan**, the devastating flooding led to a crisis response action focusing on providing support to affected communities with an emphasis on conflict prevention and human security. In **Sri Lanka**, the EU responded to the increasing risk of violence in relation to the political unrest with conflict prevention support.

In **Afghanistan**, the EU continued to support efforts to promote inclusive dialogue as well as a resilient media sector in the country that can help ensure access to reliable information for the Afghan population. The EU has supported the **evacuation** of certain particularly vulnerable persons from **Afghanistan**, following the overthrow of the constitutionally based government in August 2021. The EU continued to provide support at the regional level to displaced Afghans, notably via UN agencies.

In **Bangladesh** support was provided to the efforts of the UN and authorities to reduce the risk of conflict by supporting the improved conditions for Rohingya refugees in the country.

4.2.2. Central Asia

4.2.2.1. Introduction (policy developments)

In Central Asia, the EU continued to work on the implementation of the EU Strategy of 2019, while addressing the post-COVID-19 recovery and supporting regional cooperation. The repercussions of the situation in Afghanistan and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine informed the EU's policy towards the region.

At the 18th EU-Central Asia Ministerial meeting, in November 2022, participants confirmed their commitment to work together for peace, security, and sustainable development in full respect for international law. They welcomed the comprehensive EU approach to the region, which includes multilateral financial assistance, support by individual EU Member States, Team Europe initiatives and the active engagement of European financial institutions. The participants emphasised the continued relevance in an increasingly complex geopolitical context of the priorities set out in the EU Strategy on Central Asia of 2019 (promoting resilience, prosperity and regional cooperation) for the future development of the region. The EU emphasised that these priorities guide the implementation of its development cooperation with Central Asia under its multiannual financial framework 2021-2027. They

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stressed the importance of Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreements (EPCAs) for advancing relations between the EU and Central Asian countries and stressed their determination to work together to promote a green and sustainable post-COVID-19 pandemic recovery, leaving no one behind.

The EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference on 18 November in Samarkand was a key opportunity to advance regional connectivity initiatives and the EU and Central Asia's common agenda in this field. Participants recognised that, in the current geopolitical context, there is a sharply increased need to identify sustainable, reliable, and efficient transport connections between Europe and countries of Central Asia. They also acknowledged the important role and potential the region holds on the international energy market and expressed interest to explore further ways to enhance overall energy connectivity and increase/expand energy supplies towards the EU. The EU launched two regional Team Europe initiatives (TEIs) for Central Asia which are also flagships of the Global Gateway: the TEI on Water, Energy and Climate Change, and the TEI on Digital Connectivity.

In 2022, the EU signed a Memorandum of Understanding on raw materials with Kazakhstan and finalised negotiations of a new Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with Uzbekistan, which was initialled in July. Special attention was paid to human rights, which were discussed with all Central Asian countries in the annual human rights dialogues.

4.2.2.2. Working together towards the SDGs

At a Roundtable on Sustainable Energy Development in Central Asia, held on 17 November 2022 in the margins the EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference of Samarkand, the EU launched the project **Sustainable Energy Connectivity in Central Asia (SECCA)**. The project is intended to support the development of a policy, regulatory and institutional framework favouring the transition to a sustainable energy system. It will also aim to increase investment, capacities and awareness on sustainable energy in the Central Asia region. The main SDGs targeted in the project are SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), 13 (Climate action) and 5 (Gender equality).

In **Tajikistan**, in August 2022, the EU adopted a EUR 14 million action on **Rural Drinking Water Supply** to be implemented in the southern part of the country by the World Bank. The primary focus is on SDG 6, promoting the rights to water and sanitation, increasing equal access to safely managed drinking water supply and sanitation and hygiene services. In December 2022, the EU adopted a EUR 20 million action for **Technical and Vocational Education and Training**, that will be implemented through the Budget Support modality. This programme will mainly contribute to SDG 4 (quality education for all), while also targeting SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure), SDG 10 (Reduce Inequalities), SDG 12 (Sustainable Consumption and Production). In 2024 the EU plans to adopt a programme on Inclusive Green and Digital Economy and a gender-focused action thus contributing to SDG 5. Other significant SDGs targeted include SDG 13 (Climate action), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 3 (Good health), 2 (Zero hunger) and 1 (No poverty).

The EU is promoting digitalisation in **Kyrgyzstan** thanks to a EUR 21.8 million **Budget Support programme on Digitalisation Sector Reform**. The targets for 2022 were fully met following achievement of results including improvement of the employability of the workforce with digital skills irrespective of gender, the integration of local government to an automated system, and the increased protection of personal data and improved cybersecurity. The achievements triggered the disbursement of a EUR 3 million variable

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tranche in December 2022. The main SDGs targeted with these interventions include SDG 4 (Inclusive and equitable quality education), 5 (Gender equality), 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (Reducing inequality) and 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions). In **August 2022**, the EU adopted a EUR 3 million contribution to the multi-donor **Green Economy Programme**, co-funded by Germany and Switzerland and implemented by GIZ. The programme contributes to SDG 12 (Responsible consumption and production) by promoting a green and inclusive green economy and builds synergies with SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 13 (Climate action) and 5 (Gender equality).

The EU adopted in December 2022 the EUR 45.2 million annual action plan 2022 for **Uzbekistan,** consisting of three actions covering the corresponding three priority areas of the MIP. In particular: EUR 8 million will contribute to priority area one of the MIP components on **effective governance and digital transformation,** where the main targeted SDGs are: SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions), 5 (Gender equality), 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (Reducing inequality) and 17 (Partnerships).

4.2.2.3. Implementation

Central Asia is a key partner for the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy. The region's strategic importance has increased significantly in the current geopolitical context. The **EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference**, held on 18 November 2022 in Samarkand, was a key milestone in the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy in Central Asia. EU High Representative/Vice-President (HRVP) Josep Borrell Fontelles launched two Global Gateway Flagship Team Europe initiatives contributing to the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy which further the key goals of the EU Strategy for Central Asia: the TEI on Digital Connectivity and the TEI on Water, Energy, and Climate Change.

In 2022, the EU continued progressing in the preparation of the **Team Europe initiative on Digital Connectivity**, which will contribute to the implementation of satellite connectivity in Central Asia. At the EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference on 18 November 2022, HRVP Borrell announced the release of a study by experts contracted through the Digital4Development Hub, and the consultation of numerous Team Europe and Central Asian partners. The initiative aims at creating new opportunities for improving regional connectivity and diversifying partnerships, developing the legal and regulatory environment for satellite communication and enhancing connectivity infrastructure in Central Asian countries, enabling direct secure and reliable connectivity.

The **Team Europe initiative on Water, Energy, and Climate Change** is built on the common ambition of the EU and Central Asian countries to promote a sustainable and just blue and green transition. It aims to increase investments to facilitate this transition in Central Asia and improve the regionally integrated sustainable management of water and energy resources, addressing environmental challenges and tackling climate change. It was launched on 18 November 2022 by HRVP Borrell at the EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference, following a scoping report and consultation of Team Europe and Central Asian partners from November 2021 to September 2022.

The **Study on Sustainable Transport Connections between Europe and Central Asia**, funded by the Commission and implemented by the EBRD, started implementation in 2022, with an eye to finalisation in Q2 2023. The Study has the potential to bring much-needed clarity to transport infrastructure development in Central Asia, through the identification of the most sustainable transport corridors and of key actions for corridor development.

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During summer 2022, the EU launched the **second phase of the Central Asia COVID-19 Crisis Response programme (CACCR 2)**, aimed to strengthen the response package following the COVID-19 pandemic. Through this EUR 10 million programme, implemented by the World Health Organisation, the EU continues to support Central Asia's vaccination campaigns, the establishment of resilient immunisation systems, and the development of Central Asian countries capacities to achieve universal healthcare through smart systems and digitalisation.

At a Youth Event held on 17 November 2022 at the margins of the EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference of Samarkand, the EU launched a regional programme called **'Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia'** (DARYA). This EUR 10 million programme, implemented by the European Training Foundation, supports inclusive skills development and prepares young Central Asian women and men for the labour market. The programme aims at fostering the quality and inclusiveness of education, training and employment systems in Central Asia as well as participatory and inclusive dialogue and cooperation mechanisms at national and regional levels.

4.2.2.4. Humanitarian aid and civil protection – responding to the emergency needs of people affected by conflicts and disasters

The population affected by the border conflict between Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in September 2022 received support via the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (IFRC DREF) for a total amount of EUR 160 000.

4.2.2.5. Crisis response and preparedness

Actions carried out under the NDICI-Global Europe supported work with **Central Asian partners** in the areas of stability, social cohesion and cross-border dialogue, directly implementing the priorities set in the new EU strategy on Central Asia.

In **Central Asia**, a crisis response action supports local capacities to counter disinformation that could lead to conflict, while in **Uzbekistan** support was provided to stabilise the situation in the area closest to the Afghan border through support to both local communities and Afghan refugees.

Through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the EU continued to support efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism across the region in particular under the 'Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism' (STRIVE) programme. Work in this area focused on putting in place legislation in line with international law and standards and work with prison staff in **Kazakhstan** to prevent the radicalisation of inmates.

Funding provided under IcSP enabled the UNDP to work with stakeholders in the **Ferghana Valley** trans-border area to enhance preparedness and resilience to climate change focusing on water resource management. A scoping study on environmental crime was also launched to explore linkages between criminal activity, environmental degradation and biodiversity loss.

The EU Special Representative for Central Asia continued to monitor the situation on the ground including through travelling to the areas where violence had broken out and where appropriate offered dialogue facilitation and good offices. She continued to engage with the respective governments and civil society following the outbreak of violence in Kazakhstan, on the Kyrgyz-Tajik border and in Karakalpakstan, Uzbekistan.

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4.2.3. Middle East/Gulf region

4.2.3.1. Introduction (policy developments)

The partnership between the EU and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries gained momentum in 2022. Building on the mutual commitment to resume high-level engagement, the EU and GCC convened for the first time after five years an EU-GCC Joint Council in February 2022 with the participation of Ministers of Foreign Affairs from both sides. The Joint Council endorsed an ambitious five-year joint action programme covering a vast array of areas of cooperation (Trade and investment, Energy and climate change, People-to-People contacts, Digitalisation, Counterterrorism and Judicial cooperation).

Later in the year, in May 2022 the EU adopted the Joint Communication on *'A strategic Partnership with the Gulf'*[154] providing a comprehensive framework for cooperation with the GCC and its members at the centre, and relevant Council Conclusions in June 2022. The Joint Communication draws on the EU-GCC Joint Action Plan and proposes to expand and extend cooperation on strategic areas of mutual interest, including on regional security.

Against this background, the EU organised on 11 October 2022 for the first time an EU-GCC Political Dialogue in Riyadh to discuss the main regional challenges and exchange views on how the EU could support regional security.

Along with the region-to-region cooperation, the EU continued engaging with GCC countries through the non-binding cooperation arrangements. President of the European Council Charles Michel visited the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar on 6-7 September, as well as Saudi Arabia on 13 September. President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen went to Bahrain on the occasion of the Manama Dialogue on 18-20 November. EU High Representative/Vice-President (HRVP) Josep Borrell Fontelles visited the UAE for the Sir Bani Yas forum on 6-7 November. European Vice-President Margaritis Schinas travelled to Kuwait, UAE and Qatar in November. In Brussels, there was the visit of Saudi State Minister Al Jubeir on 28-29 November. In addition, there was a consolidated engagement with the region including political consultations at the Senior Officials' level, notably with Saudi Arabia in Riyadh on 8 June, with Bahrain on 21 June in Brussels and with Qatar at the end of September in Doha.

Six human rights dialogues were held between the EU and Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and the UAE from September to November 2022.

Parliamentary engagement has also been active with a number of events at the European Parliament, notably the EU-KSA and EU-Oman Inter-parliamentary Committee meetings in June and December 2022, and the visit of the European Parliament's Committee on Foreign Affairs (EP AFET) to Saudi Arabia in December 2022.

Two Omani high-level visits to Brussels took place in October (Head of European Union Department in Sultanate of Oman MFA, Amb. Khalid Ba´Omar), and November 2022 (Chairman of the Majlis Shura, Sheikh Khaled Bin Hilal Al Maawali).

Due to the political deadlock following the October 2021 elections, throughout 2022 Iraq has witnessed recurring cycles of political violence, which also affected the EU engagement with this country. Despite the situation some high-level engagement with meetings in Iraq in May 2022 with the previous main

[154] JOIN(2022) 13 final of 18 May 2022

interlocutor (DFM Al-Khairallah) was achieved. The appointment of Mohammad Al-Sudani as Prime Minister on the 27 October 2022 ended the year-long stalemate and brought more stability to Iraq. Following the government formation, EU-Iraq engagement is resuming. The HRVP met with reinstated Foreign Minister Hussein in the margins of the Sir Bani Yas Forum on 5 November in Abu Dhabi, where both expressed readiness to continue close cooperation. The HRVP has also attended the Baghdad II Conference in Jordan on 20 December, where he also met with Prime Minister Al-Sudani. Preparations are in hand for a third EU-Iraq Cooperation Council scheduled for 19 March 2023.

In parallel, the EU continues to work on various areas, such as governance, human capital, reconstruction, human rights, migration, employment opportunities and socio-economic reforms. In 2022, the EU co-chaired the Iraq Economic Contact Group (IECG) to assist Iraq with international expertise on its economic reform path. The EU also provides humanitarian assistance, and supports dialogue, reconciliation, stabilisation, accountability for Da'esh crimes (UNITAD) and civilian security sector reform, notably through the ongoing EU Advisory Mission (EUAM). The EU supports the efforts of the Global Coalition against Da'esh, to which it is a non-military partner.

Throughout 2022, the EU continued its active diplomatic outreach to relevant actors in Yemen including the Government of Yemen, Houthis, southern movements and regional actors in close coordination with the UN. As part of its efforts to contribute to peace and stability, the EU has in 2022 continued its integrated approach to the peace process to promote coherence and effectiveness of the EU and Member State actions. Although the UN-led truce expired on 2 October 2022, the EU's position remained unchanged, by supporting the UN-led peace efforts to extend and expand the truce, as it has put an end to cross-border attacks and improved the lives of millions of Yemenis. In addition to support to the UN Special Envoy (UNSE), the EU has also continued support to de-escalation and peace-making initiatives, stabilisation, development assistance and humanitarian support. On 12 December 2022, the Council of the European Union adopted Conclusions on Yemen, reaffirming its principled commitment to the unity, sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the country and full support to the UN peace efforts and UNSE mediation efforts. The Conclusions reiterated the EU's full support to President Al Alimi, while underlining the importance of unity of the Presidential Leadership Council (PLC). Moreover, the Conclusions restated the EU's extreme concern about the catastrophic humanitarian situation in Yemen, where over 70 % of the population needs humanitarian assistance and over 50 % of the population is facing acute food insecurity.

4.2.3.2. Working together towards the SDGs

The European Commission's activities in **Iraq** comprise a series of multi-sector and multi-stakeholder measures focusing on sustained improvements in governance, fostering fair and sustainable employment opportunities and building a solid human capital. The EU's integrated approach holistically addresses root causes of fragility and displacement and contributes to promoting progress towards SDGs 1 (No poverty), 2 (Zero hunger), 3 (Good health) 4 (Quality education), 5 (Gender equality), 6 (Clean water and sanitation), 7 (Affordable and clean energy), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 9 (Infrastructure), 10 (Reduced inequalities), 11 (Sustainable cities and communities), 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (Partnerships for the goals).

In **Yemen**, the European Commission continued implementing assistance through ad hoc special measures to respond to the rapidly evolving situation on the ground. Its activities focus on the triple objective of supporting human development through basic service delivery, contributing to economic recovery with a

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strong focus on livelihoods and assisting with peace and security support. These development activities are closely aligned with humanitarian and crisis response actions in the field along a nexus approach, assisting Yemen in getting back on track with SDG attainment. The main SDGs targeted with European Commission interventions include SDG 1 (No poverty), 2 (Zero hunger), 3 (Good health), 4 (Quality education), 5 (Gender equality), 6 (Clean water and sanitation), 7 (Affordable and clean energy), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), 10 (Reduced inequalities), 13 (Climate action) and 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions).

Responding to domestic repression of protests, Iran's military cooperation with Russia and arbitrary detentions of persons with dual citizenship and EU national, the European Commission has stopped several projects financed under its cooperation portfolio in **Iran**. Implementation of activities continued for projects supporting vulnerable Afghans and host communities, as well as projects implemented by NGOs, focusing on cultural heritage and health. A project providing information to EU companies regarding existing sanctions and the projects on Nuclear Safety Cooperation under Annex III of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action also continued their operations. The main SDGs targeted by the European Commission interventions include SDG 3 (Good health), SDG 4 (Quality education), SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), and SDG 10 (Reduced inequalities).

4.2.3.3. Implementation

Until the government formation in October 2022, fragmentation of the political landscape in **Iraq** undermined effective action by the acting Government for the benefit of the country and population. However, European Commission programmes have proven able to respond to the country's needs when it comes to much-needed reforms of national systems for basic service provision and decent job creation. Within the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP), the European Commission adopted its second annual action plan 2022, which will tackle sustainable social and economic re-integration and improved migration governance.

In 2022, through joint policy dialogue and the coordination of the joint programme portfolio of 17 core projects for EUR 158.3 million, the Team Europe initiative for Iraq 'TAEUFIQ' now stands ready to pursue the objective of contributing to increased, diversified, sustainable and inclusive economic growth that leads to improved livelihoods and decent employment in Iraq. This TEI contributes to the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy via strengthening private sector engagement, job creation, enhancing business environment, promoting regional integration, access to sustainable finance and all actions oriented to promote international trade and mobilise foreign investment.

The EU's strong engagement in the framework of the G7 Iraq Economic Contact Group (IECG) continued with the EU-France co-chairing throughout the first half of 2022. This resulted in coordinated outreach based on jointly agreed high-level key messages.

The EU continued its support to the flagship initiative 'Reviving the Spirit of Mosul and Basra' (implemented by UNESCO), contributing to economic recovery as well as social cohesion through creation of decent jobs in the re-construction of historical urban centres, and rehabilitation of houses, as well as support to SMEs active in various sectors and the cultural and creative industries.

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Engagement in **Yemen** throughout 2022 continued to operate in close nexus alignment with humanitarian and crisis response action in the country. Priority sectors of focus continue to be human resilience and development, economic recovery, peace and security.

In September 2022 the Commission services adopted the financing decision for a programme in support of peace and security actions in Yemen worth EUR 14 million, offering a comprehensive package of support to the UN-led peace process, on one hand, and to grass-roots peace initiatives and multitrack diplomacy, on the other. In terms of policy impact, the EU Delegation helped improve overall donor coordination for Yemen through active involvement in existing donor coordination fora and supporting the creation of a new donor coordination framework.

The EU Delegation was particularly proactive in the economic sector, through initial support to the development of a joint donor financing strategy, active engagement in joint donor engagement with key economic institutions and hosting a multi-actor strategic economic dialogue.

Commission services also invested significantly in implementing the EU Roadmap on engagement with civil society in Yemen during 2022, including by using the Cooperation Facility to study the operating environment for civil society in Yemen and sharing this with the broader donor community.

Finally, the EU Delegation continued advancing the EU policy on gender equality and women's empowerment in Yemen, through implementation of the Country-Level Implementation Plan of the GAP III.

4.2.3.4. Humanitarian aid and civil protection – responding to the emergency needs of people affected by conflicts and disasters

After eight years of conflict, **Yemen** remains one of the largest humanitarian crises in the world. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in the country reached 23.4 million in 2022; a 13 % increase compared to 2021. 3.3 million people in need were internally displaced. Critical needs included food, basic healthcare, and protection. 17 million people, over half of the population, suffered from food insecurity; 6.1 million of whom experienced acute levels of food insecurity. Collapsing public services exacerbated by epidemics (including COVID-19, cholera, measles, diphtheria and swine flu) and vaccination rollouts remained insufficient. Restrictions on food, fuel and medicine imports continued, leading to shortages and increases in prices. The humanitarian operating environment continued to deteriorate both in the North and in the South, with access constraints, increasing bureaucratic impediments and insecurity incidents remaining daily challenges for humanitarian actors on the ground.

In 2022, the European Commission allocated EUR 170 million to provide assistance to the population in need, its largest humanitarian allocation in Yemen since the onset of the conflict. The assistance focused on the provision of life-saving relief, targeting populations directly exposed to conflict and displacement and following an integrated multisector approach including health, nutrition, food security, WASH activities, and protection. In parallel, advocacy work led to key diplomatic and political outputs, including Council conclusions and common humanitarian messages in December. The European Commission increased coordination efforts with development actors, and continued to organise donor coordination jointly with Sweden, thereby contributing to a united voice among actors in humanitarian negotiations.

The **Syria** crisis, entering its twelfth year in 2022, left more than 14.6 million people in need of humanitarian assistance inside the country. Some EUR 240 million of assistance was allocated to support

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the most vulnerable impacted by this crisis, including Syrian refugees in Lebanon and Jordan as well as vulnerable host communities. The European Commission continued to deliver life-saving assistance and support to millions of people throughout Syria. This assistance contributed notably to the vital delivery of food, medicine, water, and shelter. In neighbouring Lebanon, EU humanitarian funding has contributed to cash assistance for the most vulnerable, healthcare for life-saving cases, non-formal education and shelter including WASH. In Jordan, the European Commission supported the most vulnerable refugees in sectors such as health, protection and education.

The European Commission was also directly involved in international diplomatic initiatives related to the Syria crisis, such as the Brussels VI Conference on 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region' held in May 2022, the Humanitarian Task Force of the International Syria Support Group in Geneva, and other advocacy efforts to promote the respect of humanitarian principles and International Humanitarian Law.

Following the defeat of Da'esh in 2017, 4.9 million internally displaced people returned to their areas of origin in **Iraq**. However, these returns have stagnated over the past two years and still 1.17 million Iraqis remain in camps, informal displacement sites and host communities, facing dire humanitarian needs. In 2022, approximately one million people were in acute need. In 2022, the European Commission's strategy focused on reinforcing the resilience of affected displaced populations through integrated protection response, legal assistance (civil documentation), and education support, in addition to a lighter multi-sector assistance to the most vulnerable displaced households living in informal settlements.

Regarding **Palestine***, the European Commission responded to the humanitarian needs resulting from the prolonged occupation and blockade imposed on the Gaza Strip, aggravated by the escalation of Israeli-Palestinian hostilities in August 2022, and soaring prices due to the effects of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The West Bank and East Jerusalem have seen an alarming increase in violence, demolitions, evictions and movement restrictions. A rise in settler violence has also been witnessed and is a continued cause for concern.

4.2.3.5. Crisis response and preparedness

In Northeast **Syria**, stabilisation efforts with an emphasis on the resilience of children, of local communities and on human security through mine clearance action continued in parallel to the EU's support for UN-led efforts to find a political solution to the decade-long conflict.

Under the auspices of the EU Centres of Excellence Initiative for Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) risk mitigation, a highly successful live exercise was organised in **Beirut**, bringing together six government entities as part of a coordinated response to a CBRN-related terrorist incident in a very difficult national context.

In **Iraq**, the EU continued its support to local mediation efforts and to international efforts to ensure accountability for crimes committed by Da'esh. The digitisation work undertaken by the United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL (UNITAD) continues to facilitate access to evidentiary material for courts in Iraq and in other countries, including EU Member States in relation to crimes committed by Da'esh. Furthermore, in response to the initiative of the Government of Iraq to repatriate Iraqi nationals from the al-Hol camp in Northeast Syria, the EU is

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

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supporting the reintegration of repatriated Iraqis into local communities after they have gone through the Iraqi authorities' security screening process.

The new **EU Advisory Mission** in support of Security Sector Reform in Iraq (**EUAM Iraq**) provides strategic advice and expertise to the Iraqi authorities on the civilian aspects of security sector reform, including the National Security Strategy.

Meanwhile, in **Yemen**, support continued to track mediation efforts as well as truce monitoring in support of the United Nations-led peace process.

The **EU Stabilisation Action** in support of the United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism (UNVIM) in **Yemen** contributes to the efforts to restore the unimpeded free flow of commercial items to Yemen through the provision of a transparent and effective clearance process for commercial shipments destined to Yemeni ports which are not under the control of the government of Yemen and has been extended until September 2023.

In **Israel and the Palestinian Territories**, the EU finances two civilian Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) Missions: the EU Police Mission for the Palestinian Territories (EUPOL COPPS) based in Ramallah, in the West Bank, and the EU Border Assistance Mission for the Rafah Crossing Point (EUBAM Rafah) based in Ramat Gan, Israel. The **EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process** (EUSR MEPP) contributes to actions and initiatives leading to a final settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

4.2.4. The Pacific

4.2.4.1. Introduction (policy developments)

The **Pacific Island Countries** (PICs) are key partners for the EU in a number of important policy areas, including climate action and green transition, ocean governance and environmental protection. They are also important allies in upholding the international rules-based order with the UN at its core.

The EU is a Dialogue Partner of the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF), the region's main political organisation. The EU is the first and only Permanent Observer of the Pacific Community, the main technical and scientific regional organisation of the Pacific and participated at its 2022 Ministerial forum in Vanuatu.

The EU's strategic priorities for the region are underpinned by the EU Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific, adopted in 2021, which highlights the strategic relevance of the region for Europe's prosperity and security. The Global Gateway, which was launched in December 2021, supports a number of priorities of the Indo-Pacific strategy, providing a viable and attractive offer for partner countries by boosting transparent and value-based investments for a sustainable, resilient and cooperative infrastructure development. The EU's priorities are also closely aligned with the priorities of the 2050 Strategy of the Blue Pacific Continent endorsed by PIF Leaders at their meeting in July 2022, notably in areas such as economic development, climate change, oceans and environment, people, technology and connectivity, and peace and security.

The Pacific Protocol of the Partnership Agreement of the post-Cotonou Agreement will, once signed and in force, provide for a region-to-region engagement.

At multilateral level, the Pacific countries unanimously supported most UN resolutions as regards Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. Pacific countries suffered from supply chain disruptions as well as

higher food and energy prices resulting from the Russian war. The EU launched work for a support programme that will help the Pacific address the food price crisis with a budget of EUR 10 million.

The EU strengthened relations with the Pacific region during 2022 through ministerial, senior official meetings and Political Dialogues. The EU maintained its commitment to support a credible process leading towards a negotiated solution as regards the consultation process in the framework of the Bougainville Peace Process. The EU advanced steadily in the preparation of the Team Europe initiative Green Blue alliance for the Pacific and Timor-Leste that promotes equal societies, fundamental values, human development, and peace and security across 18 partner countries and EU Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs).

4.2.4.2. Working together towards the SDGs

The EU and the French Presidency of the EU Council organised on 22 February 2022 in Paris the **Forum for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific** to launch the implementation of the September 2021 *Strategy for Cooperation in the Indo-Pacific*[155].

The political dialogue between the EU, the OCTs and the three Member States linked to the OCTs (Denmark, France and the Netherlands) takes place in the framework of the annual EU-OCT Forum. In November 2022, following the EU-OCT Forum, the EU took part in the 52nd **Pacific Community's (SPC) meeting** of the Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations (CRGA) in Vanuatu. This was the first time that the EU has attended the meeting with an observer status, taking the opportunity to join hands with the 27 countries and territories in the Pacific which govern the Pacific Community.

At the margins of the CRGA meeting, the European Commission and the SPC signed the regional Pacific programme, which will provide additional funds (EUR 8 million) for the **Pacific Partnership to End Violence Against Women and Girls** implemented by UN Women. The partnership is strongly aligned with the ambitions of both GAPIII and the UN Spotlight Initiative.

The USA launched the '*Partners in the Bleu* Pacific' initiative, which intends to offer a development cooperation dialogue and coordination platform to all its participants (as opposed to a political platform), matching the increased political and diplomatic and strategic activities undertaken by **China** in the Pacific. The EU joined the '*Partners in the Bleu* Pacific' initiative as an observing member. In the meantime, the EU is increasing its level of political and development dialogue with the main traditional regional partners, **Australia** and **New Zealand**.

In **Papua New Guinea**, negotiations started with Expertise France and the Centre for International Forestry Research (CIFOR) on the implementation of the EUR 55 million 'Our Forest, Our Future' programme. The project aims to transform forestry and biodiversity governance in the country. Project activities are foreseen to start in the last quarter of 2023 and are initially foreseen to be carried out for four years. The annual action plan (AAP) adopted for Papua New Guinea in 2022 focused on SDG 13 (Climate action through activities under the Forestry, Climate Change and Biodiversity Nexus), on SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation - through activities aiming to improve gender-responsive water, sanitation

[155] JOIN(2021) 24 final of 16 September 2021

and hygiene (WASH) services and practices) and on supporting SDG 16 through a programme aiming to strengthening Transparent and Accountable Governance.

The **Regional Asia-Pacific** AAP for 2022 targeted several Sustainable Development Goals priorities:

- The Integrated Ocean Management (PSIOM) is aimed at priority area 1 on Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability, specifically focusing on integrated oceans management (SDG 14). The programme intends to increase scientific capacity and create opportunities for ocean science to feed into decision making and bridge the gap between science and policy;
- The Kiwa Initiative proposes a set of nature-based solutions for climate resilience which intend to make Pacific Island Countries' ecosystems, economies and communities more resilient to the impacts of climate change. The action will therefore enhance access to funding for rights-based gender-sensitive and socially inclusive climate change adaptation through nature-based solutions for local and national authorities, and civil society organisations and is fully in line with the objectives of SDG 13; and
- The Support to the Regional Pacific National Determined Contributions Hub intends to support Pacific Island countries to enhance and implement their countries' NDCs to drive sustainable and resilient development and the transition to a low carbon development pathway in the region, thereby contributing to SDG 7.

Through the AAP adopted in 2022 to the benefit of multiple island countries in the Pacific, the European Commission targeted several SDGs:

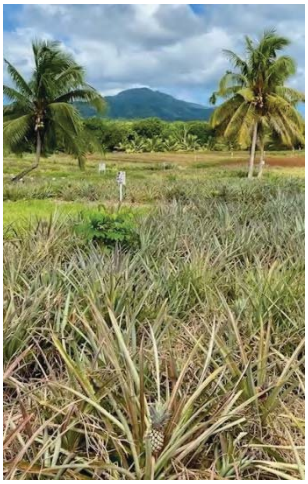
- The objective to eradicate poverty while integrating the economic, social, and environmental dimensions of sustainable development (addressing SDG 1 and SDG 8) constitute the core of the EU-**Kiribati** Partnership for Resilience Building as well as of the Coconut sector revalidation programme in **Tuvalu**; and
- In the **Solomon Islands** two programmes are being implemented to support Climate resilient Financing Mechanism and to contribute to Strengthening the electoral cycle, both contributing to SDG 17 (Partnerships by working with local governments) and SDG 16 (to help promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, and to create accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels).

Two projects, implemented in **Timor Leste** in 2022 aim at SDG 8 and SDG 1: one boosting economic growth, decent work and poverty reduction through support in identifying needs and opportunities for employment in the agroforestry sector; the other project through support of regional integration and trade. A third programme will focus on contributing to achieving SDG 16 through activities aiming to strengthen Public Finance Management.

In **Fiji**, EU budget support running up to 2022 contributed to strengthen the response to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to boost agriculture production and exports, eventually contributing to achieving SDG 2 (Zero hunger).

CASE STUDY

SDG 2 - Fiji – Supporting rural sustainable livelihoods



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EU budget support in Fiji contributed to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and to boost agriculture production and exports, eventually resulting in an increase of agricultural (crop and livestock) production by around 6 % annually.

Due to its high dependence on tourism, Fiji's economy has been severely affected by the pandemic. As part of the measures taken by the Government, efforts have been made to increase the local production of nutrient-rich foods and therefore to enhance access to heathy food while undertaking reforms to develop a sustainable, competitive and resilient agriculture sector.

The EU supported the government's policy and helped ensure that, despite restrictions, 3 447 communities were provided with planting materials and technical support to improve the production of tubers, fruits and vegetables.

4.2.4.3. Implementation

In the Pacific, the regional **Team Europe initiative 'EU – Pacific Green Blue Alliance' contributes to** the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy. The TEI, which was launched during COP26 in 2021, saw the first activities being approved for finance in 2022. Although at this stage only France and Sweden provided financial contributions to the TEI, outreach to other EU Member states continued throughout the year.

Under the climate action and resilience strand of this TEI, two pre-feasibility studies have been under preparation in 2022 for the building of a hydro-electric dam in Qualiwana (**Fiji**) and for the construction of a multi–purpose deep seaport in **Kiribati**.

In 2022, the **Kiwa Initiative** deployed its first activities in the Pacific region. This multi-donor facility aims at attracting climate finance to support the Pacific countries and territories in the protection of their biodiversity through nature-based solutions. A second EUR 6 million top-up to the EU's contribution was adopted in August 2022 bringing the EU's contribution to a total of EUR 20 million.

The implementation of **budget support programmes** continued in **Fiji**, with the disbursement of EUR 5 million in 'Support to Sustainable Rural Livelihoods'; and in **Kiribati**, where a tranche of EUR 2.5 million was paid under the 'EU-Kiribati Partnership for a sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development' programme.

In **the Republic of Marshall Islands,** the EU disbursed EUR 1.9 million as final contribution to the EU 'Support for the reform of the energy sector' programme. The final tranche, worth EUR 700 000, was also disbursed to the 'Sustainable Waste Programme' in **Tuvalu.**

In Timor Leste, the EU disbursed the final contribution to the 'Support Deconcentration and Decentralisation processes', worth EUR 2.4 million, as well as intermediary payments under the

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Partnership to improve service delivery through strengthened Public Finance Management and Oversight (EUR 1.9 million) and the 'Value Chain (VaVaC)' programme in **Vanuatu** (EUR 3.4 million).

In 2022 the EU also signed Financing Agreements concerning **four new budget support programmes** in favour of **Kiribati** and the **Solomon Islands** (State Resilience and Building Contracts), in **Samoa** (water sector resilience and climate change adaptation) and in **Tonga** (support energy sector reforms).

4.2.4.4. Crisis response and preparedness

Peace-building efforts at community level were pursued with a view to contribute to the development of peaceful communities and peaceful communal conflict resolution in Papua New Guinea. In particular, under the project 'Wanbel Wantaim' (Peace Together) in Papua New Guinea's Highlands, 19 Community Peace Committees were set up and agreed on action plans for conflict prevention and peaceful conflict resolution, with engagement supported by small community projects.

With a geographical focus on Papua New Guinea's Autonomous Region of Bougainville and two provinces in neighbouring Solomon Islands, an action is being implemented to support community-level peacebuilding by empowering women and youth to participate in conflict prevention. The action works with schools, associations of youth and women, and other community platforms with a strong focus on children and youth.

In line with the EU's Strategy for Cooperation in Indo-Pacific, the Critical Maritime Routes Indo-Pacific (CRIMARIO II) project established new partnerships with **South and Southeast Asian partners** to boost interconnected maritime coordination to enhance maritime security.

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4.3. Americas and the Caribbean

4.3.1. Americas

4.3.1.1. Introduction (policy developments)

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine created an additional **sense of urgency to revitalise the EU partnership with Latin America and the Caribbean** (LAC). At the UN General Assembly Emergency session on 2 March 2022, 28 out of 33 LAC countries supported the resolution condemning Russia's aggression, confirming the region´s position as a staunch supporter of multilateralism and a key EU ally for the defence of the international rules-based order and democracy.

The LAC region is also a **key partner** for a more sustainable economy, green and digital transitions, fight against transnational crime and in making supply-chains more reliable (mainly food and energy). The EU is the leading investor in LAC and the region´s third largest trade partner. Collectively, LAC is the EU's sixth largest trading partner after the US and China.

In 2022, the **political landscape in Latin America continued to shift to the left** with the victories of Gabriel Boric in Chile, Gustavo Petro in Colombia, and Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva in Brazil. The EU sent an Electoral Observation Mission to Colombia.

The economic **shockwaves of Russia's invasion** of Ukraine have significantly impacted LAC, but the effects varied greatly from country to country. LAC was already the region hardest hit economically by the COVID-19 crisis, emerging from it with more debt, less fiscal space, and higher inflation. Economic growth in 2022 slowed to 1.8 % and 85 million people were facing food insecurity. The EU provided additional funding to address food security needs and to support the resilience of food systems (EUR 27 million for Haiti and the Caribbean region from the European Development Fund's decommitted funds following Council's approval).

On 22 June, European Commission President von der Leyen and Pedro Sánchez, Prime Minister of Spain, launched a new **EU-LAC partnership on local manufacturing of vaccines, medicines and other health technologies, and strengthening health systems resilience.**

To provide a policy framework for the intensified engagement with LAC, the High Representative and the European Commission proposed a forward-looking agenda for bi-regional relations: ***The Road to 2023: A qualitative leap in EU-LAC relations***[156]**,** which received broad support from the EU Member States. This agenda identifies milestones and flagship initiatives under the Global Gateway complemented by a comprehensive political strategy.

On 27 October, the first **Meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the EU** since 2018 took place in Buenos Aires with the theme 'Renewing the bi-regional partnership to strengthen peace and sustainable development'. 53 countries participated, including all 27 EU Member States and 26 CELAC countries. The meeting was a milestone for re-launching of bi-regional high-level political dialogue and preparing the ground for an EU-CELAC Summit in July 2023. The strong EU commitment to work with Latin America was also the focus of the visits of EU High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell Fontelles to the region. At the end of April, he travelled to

[156] https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2023/221025infographicEU_CELAC-roadmap.pdf

Chile for a visit and from there at the beginning of May to Panama where he combined a programme with participation in the Central American Integration System - Caribbean Community (SICA-CARICOM) Foreign Ministers' meeting. He also paid visits to Argentina (combined with the EU-CELAC meeting mentioned above) and Uruguay in October.

On 9 December, the EU and Chile reached the political conclusion of the Advanced Framework Agreement, a **modernisation of the existing EU-Chile Association Agreement**. Work continued towards the signature and conclusion of the EU Association Agreement with Mercosur and on the Modernised EU-Mexico Global Agreement.

4.3.1.2. Working together towards the SDGs

The EU has shown a strong commitment to achieving the SDGs in South America during 2022. The EU has been working closely with governments, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders in the region to address the most pressing development challenges, such as poverty, inequality, peace, and environmental degradation contributing to the SDGs (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 13, 12, and 16). Through its various initiatives, the EU has been promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth, promoting gender equality and social inclusion, supporting environmental protection and climate action via the Euroclima+ programme, and improving access to basic services, such as healthcare and access to water.

The European Commission's activities in Central America and Mexico comprise a series of multi-sector and multi-stakeholder measures. Boosting the green transition in our partner countries remained a common priority across the region, contributing to SDG 1, 3, 7, 8, 9, 12, and 13. Throughout the region, SDG 16 also remained a priority, as EU continued to implement and adopt projects in the areas of good governance, democracy and institutional strengthening. Other SDGs targeted include: 5 (Gender equality), 6 (Clean water and sanitation), 8 (Decent work and economic growth), and 10 (Reduced inequalities).

4.3.1.3. Implementation

The EU has demonstrated its commitment to the development of Latin America by committing approximately EUR 175 million of country funds in the framework of the Global Gateway strategy during 2022. This contribution is set to complement the ongoing portfolio and regional cooperation in Latin America, highlighting the EU's dedication to promoting sustainable development in the region. Despite the relatively limited financial resources, the EU-LAC partnership is becoming an increasingly significant opportunity to strengthen ties on political, economic, and social dimensions. This partnership will enable both regions to work collaboratively towards shared goals, including promoting good governance, sustainable development and social cohesion, protecting biodiversity, and tackling climate change.

The EU has supported the implementation of the peace process in Colombia, and the strengthening of good governance and electoral reforms in Bolivia, Paraguay and Peru, recognising their importance to consolidate democracy and stability in the region. Other actions also directly support the European Green Deal Agenda and focus on forest and biodiversity conservation as well as the fight against climate change in Brazil, Colombia and Paraguay, recognising the importance of forests for global sustainability. In addition, the EU has prioritised supporting Peru's green transition towards a circular and inclusive economy, which will promote greener business models addressing the challenges of climate change and environment preservation.

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During 2022, the partnership between the EU and the Central America and Mexico region continued consolidating, contributing to the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy through the development and financing commitment for over EUR 112 million on initiatives such as support to sustainable conservation of the Five Great Forests of Mesoamerica, addressing green global challenges, decent work and stronger public finance policies in Mexico, digital connectivity and skills in El Salvador, fostering Green Transition in the Petén region of Guatemala, and disaster risk reduction with a focus on disaster prevention and preparedness in Nicaragua.

4.3.1.4. Humanitarian aid and civil protection – responding to the emergency needs of people affected by conflicts and disasters

The situation in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) has been marked in 2022 by several overlapping complex emergencies, including the internal and regional impact of the crisis in Venezuela, the humanitarian consequences of the armed conflict in Colombia as well as the pervasive violence in Haiti, Central America and Mexico. After the heavy toll on the health and education systems left by the COVID-19 pandemic in the region, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has led to unprecedent levels of inflation, making many basic items (e.g., food (especially cereal due to high dependency on imports), fuel and agricultural inputs (especially fertilisers)) unaffordable for the most vulnerable groups such as people on the move and ethnic minorities. In total, the EU allocated EUR 160 million in 2022 in the region.

In 2022, **Venezuela's** socio-economic and political crisis continued unabated, with severe humanitarian consequences inside the country and spill-over effects regionally, with the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbating displacement, as well as humanitarian needs for basic services of health, water, sanitation, hygiene, food, education and protection. Reports by local organisations showed a continued deterioration in the overall living conditions with over 14 million people in need. More than 7 million Venezuelans have left their country since the beginning of the crisis. This exodus is one of Latin America's largest mass population movements in history.

In response to the growing needs triggered by the Venezuela crisis, the EU allocated in 2022 EUR 77.1 million supporting around 3.1 million vulnerable people with multi-sector relief operations. Approximately 55 % of the humanitarian funds were deployed inside Venezuela, but aid was also provided to Venezuelan migrants and refugees as well as to host communities in neighbouring countries. In 2022, the EU remained the second donor in the response to the humanitarian crisis inside Venezuela in terms of the volume of funding and remained a leading actor in terms of humanitarian diplomacy, including through the Humanitarian Assistance working group of the International Contact Group (ICG) for Venezuela.

The humanitarian situation in **Colombia** deteriorated in 2022 because of the persisting internal conflict, compounded by the impact of more than 2 million Venezuelan refugees in the country. Border areas with Venezuela and the Pacific coast have been particularly affected by increasing levels of violence. In Colombia, together with the emergency support provided in response to the Venezuelan migration and refugee crisis, the EU also provided emergency relief to those affected by internal violence, displacement and restrictions of movement, particularly Afro-Colombian and indigenous communities (with EUR 14.7 million allocated in 2022) as well as those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and natural hazards. In 2022, the total number of beneficiaries reached by EU support amounted to 732 000 individuals.

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In 2022, the **Central America** region continued to bear the effects of high exposure to natural hazards and epidemics, endemic poverty as well as complex socio-economic and political situations and social unrest. In 2022, 8.3 million persons in Guatemala, Honduras and El Salvador needed humanitarian assistance, with main drivers being increased internal displacement (1 million people affected), human rights violations and increasing transcontinental and extra-continental population movements. For example, the number of people transiting through the Darien Gap in Panama increasing dramatically during 2022 with more than 250 000 persons reported.

In 2022, the EU's response of EUR 28.46 million reached around 770 000 beneficiaries, focusing on addressing the critical needs of the most vulnerable victims and survivors of organised violence, notably women and children, through protection and relief assistance, provision of food assistance and short to medium-term livelihood recovery and protection, and multi-sectoral approaches incorporating disaster preparedness to improve capacities for rapid response and early action.

4.3.1.5. Crisis response and preparedness

In **Latin America,** the EU launched a new crisis response action in **Bolivia** in collaboration with the UN focusing on strengthening respect for human rights. In **Peru**, support to the country's electoral process was provided as a crisis and conflict prevention measure. At the same time the EU provided an emergency response programme to strengthen stability in **Ecuador** in light of the penitentiary crisis as well as support to addressing the socio-environmental conflicts in the country, especially linked to illegal exploitation of natural resources. Furthermore, the EU renewed its support to confidence building and mediation in the adjacency zone of **Belize** and **Guatemala**.

Through the Organisation of American States (OAS) the EU contributes to countering the illicit proliferation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, and at mitigating their impact in Latin America and the Caribbean. This is done in the framework of the EU Strategy against Illicit Firearms, Small Arms & Light Weapons and their Ammunition: 'Securing Arms, Protecting Citizens'. The EU is also actively contributing to strengthening **biological safety and security** in Latin America in line with the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004).

The EU's **Global Illicit Flows Programme (GIFP)** flagship initiative continued to support partner countries' law enforcement and criminal justice authorities in their efforts to tackle transnational organised crime, be it in relation to narcotics, illicit arms trafficking, wildlife crime or illicit financial flows. A substantive example is the Trigger VI action led by Interpol in cooperation with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in **thirteen South American countries**, which led to the recovery of around 200 000 illicit firearms, ammunition and explosives, the arrest of almost 4 000 individuals and the destruction of 27 cocaine labs.

4.3.2. The Caribbean

4.3.2.1. Introduction (policy developments)

In 2022, the momentum for an EU-Caribbean partnership was strengthened by high-level missions to the region, with EU High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell Fontelles holding a dedicated meeting with CARICOM Foreign Ministers on 3 May 2022 in Panama when he attended the SICA-CARICOM Foreign Ministers' meeting, and the Commission, through EU Commissioner for International Partnerships Jutta Urpilainen, launching the three EU-Caribbean partnerships on 11-12 October 2022 in Barbados.

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The negotiations for the new Agreement with the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) (‘post-Cotonou') continued in 2022 but did not achieve significant progress. This agreement with its dedicated Caribbean protocol, as well as the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation, will redefine the relationship as a more political partnership.

The new regional envelope (Caribbean Window), designed to respond to the policy priorities and the new modalities for cooperation under the ‘post-Cotonou’ regional protocol, will be shaped around three mutually reinforcing Caribbean-EU partnerships on Green Deal, Economic resilience and trade, and Governance, security and human development.

Caribbean countries are being particularly affected by the impact of the Russian aggression against Ukraine on the world economy in sectors like tourism and food security. The EU response has been unequivocal and swift: an additional EUR 36.5 million food package as part of the EUR 600 million pledge by European Commission President von der Leyen in the context of the UNGA has been earmarked for food security in this sub-region.

4.3.2.2. Working together towards the SDGs

In 2022, the EU and the Caribbean strengthened their alliance both in the multilateral fora and in terms of partnerships around shared priorities to move forward together on the green, digital and fair transitions. The region has been recovering slowly from the negative impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social and economic fabric and remains fragile to external shocks, such as the global increase of food and energy prices and the tighter conditions of international financial markets.

Examples of operations contributing to different SDGs are: tackling climate change challenges in Guyana, Jamaica and Suriname, with a focus on the management and preservation of the forest (SDG 7 and 15), promoting renewable energy in member countries of the Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), as well as in Belize and Barbados (SDG 7), creation of decent employment in Saint Lucia (SDG 8), enhancing social protection for the most vulnerable in Barbados (SDG 1), and promoting a greener, more sustainable and inclusive economic model in the Dominican Republic (SDG 1 and 16). Peace, justice and strong Institutions (SDG 16) and disaster risk management (a target in 10 of the 17 SDGs) are tackled through regional actions focusing mainly on public and financial governance and security matters.

Social objectives also received considerable attention in 2022. Results of the higher education mobility and technical vocational trainings were positive, with particular progress in Jamaica where a new programme will focus on the integration of ICT skills in the curricula of teacher training institutions. In parallel, work started to boost regulatory and e-services initiatives for the competitiveness of Caribbean micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs). In Haiti, a first Team Europe initiative (TEI) has focused on education as a lever for social cohesion and sustainable livelihoods, thereby attacking the root drivers for conflict and violence, by focusing on youth and most vulnerable groups.

As during previous years, addressing health coverage has been an important challenge in the region. EU support to the Caribbean Public Health Agency has enabled increased capacity for detection, monitoring, surveillance and response in relation to communicable diseases in the Caribbean, as part of the EU–LAC partnership on health resilience and vaccine production, which was proposed in June 2022 by President Ursula von der Leyen and the Prime Minister of Spain Pedro Sanchez. At country level, progress was made in Belize (countryside clinics), Dominican Republic (health crisis responses) and Jamaica (maternal health),

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and new programmes were adopted in Barbados (digitalisation of services) and Cuba (standards for biotechnology pharma products).

Gender equality issues and gender violence have received particular attention, with significant EU engagement to stimulate policy reforms and actions at regional and local level to raise awareness and enhance victim protection, through, among others, the Spotlight Initiative. In addition, the ongoing budget support operation focused on preventing gender-based violence in the Dominican Republic continued to strengthen local capacities to prevent and respond to gender-based and domestic violence, including through transmission and processing systems.

4.3.2.3. Implementation

The first EU-Caribbean Ministerial Meeting, co-chaired by EU Commissioner Jutta Urpilainen and CARIFORUM chair Chet Greene, took place in October 2022 in Barbados, in which the three Caribbean-EU partnerships were launched: the Green Deal, Economic resilience and trade, and Governance, security and human development. The partnerships shape the cooperation between the two regions under Global Europe and underpin the roll-out of the Global Gateway strategy in the Caribbean. Global Europe in the Caribbean includes seven country multiannual indicative programmes (Belize, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica and Suriname) and a dedicated Caribbean Window under the regional MIP for the Americas and the Caribbean (EUR 208 million).

In 2022 country actions were adopted for Cuba (support to new economic actors; support to public administration; support to the biotechnological industry; and support measures), Dominican Republic (greener and inclusive economy), Guyana (mangroves as a natural coastal defence), Haiti (education), Jamaica (digital transition) and Suriname (support measures) whereas a new Caribbean Resilience Programme was approved for the region. Several Team Europe initiatives were designed at country and regional level and preparatory work was done for the upcoming EU-CELAC Summit of July 2023, with a strong emphasis on advancing a Global Gateway Investment Agenda for the LAC region, which should help unlock investments for the green, digital, and fair transitions.

CASE STUDY

When Hurricane Irma passed over the small Caribbean island of Barbuda in September 2017, it left nearly 90 % of the structures on the island damaged or destroyed. This led to a complete evacuation from the island to Antigua. Roads, electrical, communication and water systems were also damaged. Many of the schools on both islands suspended classes. An estimated 50 % of the population lost their homes and there were more than 1 300 evacuees.

The European Union has led the charge of building back better in Barbuda with almost EUR 5 million mobilised to support rebuilding efforts. Spanning five years, the project has rebuilt 104 homes damaged by Hurricane Irma. The project also supported the Government of Antigua and Barbuda in the procurement of a multi-purpose shredder, which was needed to manage the large quantities of wood and metal left in the aftermath. This shredder will support efforts in recycling disaster debris as well as construction waste. In addition, the support also sought to increase the knowledge of local contractors as well as residents on national building codes, housing standards, climate-resistant construction techniques and the Building Back Better (BBB) approach.

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4.3.2.4. Humanitarian aid and civil protection – responding to the emergency needs of people affected by conflicts and disasters

Haiti

In 2022 half of the population, 4.9 million Haitians, were in a dire humanitarian situation and 1.5 million were directly impacted by gang violence and exposed to extortion, killing, gender-based violence, including rape used as a weapon of conflict, destruction of property and forced recruitment. The number of people facing acute hunger in the country has more than doubled in the last several years from 2.3 million people in 2018 to 4.7 million in 2022, while the cholera outbreak has spread since October 2022 to all 10 departments of the country. The high levels of insecurity and limited access to fuel and populations remain major challenges in the response to the cholera outbreak.

Against this background, the EU has mobilised EUR 18.5 million in 2022 to mitigate the acute food insecurity and malnutrition in the country, to assist and protect victims of violence and to respond to the cholera outbreak. The EU also invested EUR 2 million in disaster preparedness in a country which is particularly exposed to multiple sudden onset natural and climatic disasters.

The wider Caribbean

In the Caribbean, the entire population of 45 million people is highly exposed to natural hazards, including stronger tropical storms, hurricanes, earthquakes, longer lasting droughts, and volcanic eruptions, now aggravated by the effects of climate change. Furthermore, the high dependence on imports of fuel, food and inputs for the agricultural sector, the effects of the post-COVID-19 crisis and the conflict in Ukraine have had a significant impact on both the availability of certain foodstuffs and their prices and affect the levels of hunger and malnutrition. In response, the EU mobilised EUR 3 million to strengthen vulnerable populations' food security and nutrition in the Dominican Republic, the country with the second highest prevalence of insufficient food consumption in the LAC region (21 % of the population).

In 2022, together with nearly EUR 2 million in emergency assistance provided in response to the hurricanes Ian (Cuba) and Fiona (Dominican Republic) as well as the dire humanitarian situation of stateless persons in Dominican Republic and the floods in Saint Lucia, the EU has remained engaged to support resilience and disaster preparedness in the region for a total of EUR 4.5 million. The overall objective has been to support Regional, National and Local Disaster Risk Management organisations as

well as to strengthen vulnerable communities' preparedness and resilience in a region that is highly exposed to multiple sudden onset natural and climatic disasters.

In addition, through the UCPM, the EU supported Cuba in 2022 with in-kind assistance following the destruction caused by tropical cyclone Ian and by a major fire in a fuel storage facility. Several advisory missions were also organised to strengthen national and local capacities for comprehensive disaster multi-risk management.

4.3.2.5. Crisis response and preparedness

In the Caribbean, actions continued the engagement with the local civil society to cultivate leadership for community mediation and peacebuilding in vulnerable communities in **Haiti** under the thematic programme for Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention.

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4.4. European Neighbourhood

4.4.1. European Neighbourhood East

4.4.1.1. Introduction (policy developments)

The year 2022 was marked by unprecedented events in the Eastern Neighbourhood. On the one hand, it was marked by the Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine ongoing since 24 February 2022, on the other by continuous development of relations with the EU's eastern partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova – hereinafter Moldova – and Ukraine) both bilaterally and regionally under the **European Neighbourhood Policy** (ENP) and under the **Eastern Partnership** (EaP) framework. Since the historic decision of the European Council on 23-24 June to grant Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine a European perspective, and to Moldova and Ukraine candidate country status, the EU relations with these countries are also guided by the **EU's enlargement policy**.

The EU has gained an important peace-building role in the region by facilitating dialogue between Armenia and Azerbaijan and, in this framework, deployed a Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) action in Armenia in the second half of 2022, a first for a Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) country.

Considering the continued brutal repression of the Lukashenka regime against its own citizens and its complicity in the Russian aggression against Ukraine (against public opinion in Belarus), the EU has stopped engaging with Belarusian public bodies while cooperation avenues continue in order to support Belarusian civil society and the people of Belarus.

Both the ENP and the EaP are based on common values, mutual interests, and the principles of shared ownership, responsibility, differentiation, inclusivity and mutual accountability.

2022 was marked by a reflection on how to continue the multilateral engagement[157] taking into account the Russian aggression against Ukraine and the new status of three Eastern partners following the historic decision of the European Council in June 2022. Following a period of strategic reflection among EU Member States, Partner countries and stakeholders, in December 2022 the Foreign Ministers of the EU and the Eastern partners (27+5) reaffirmed the relevance of the Eastern Partnership and its 'Recovery, resilience, reform' agenda, while acknowledging the need for a recalibrated implementation of the Eastern Partnership in light of recent geopolitical changes and in an adjusted flexible format.

They agreed that the cooperation under the Eastern Partnership will continue to be based on the agenda endorsed by the EaP Summit in 2021. That is **recovery, resilience and reform**, with the overriding policy objective of strengthening resilience under the two pillars of governance and investment (including a EUR 2.3 billion **Economic and Investment Plan (EIP)**, with a potential to leverage public and private investments of up to EUR 17 billion) remains largely relevant in the new context. The five long-term policy objectives in key priority areas are: economy and connectivity; rule of law and security; environment and climate; digital; and fair and inclusive societies. The EU's support to EaP countries will continue to reflect its conditionality and incentive-based approach and will be conditional upon the implementation of agreed structural reforms. This will influence structural reforms, particularly in the areas of rule of law, justice and anti-corruption.

[157] JOIN(2020) 7 final of 18 March 2020.

The EU continued cooperation with **Armenia** on its ambitious reform agenda and the implementation of the EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement. The EU assistance focused on supporting the socio-economic recovery of the southern region in Armenia, in particular Syunik, as the region most affected by the 2020 conflict. Under the 2022 annual action plan, the EU continues its budget support to justice reform and put in place a budget support programme dedicated to education. Support to boosting climate resilience and sustainable energy solutions was also undertaken. The implementation of the EIP continued, with progress on most flagship projects.

In a context of increasing restrictions to fundamental freedoms, the EU kept the rule of law and respect for human rights at the core of its dialogue with **Azerbaijan**. The EU promoted governance reforms and remained the largest donor to civil society in the country. The EU-Azerbaijan cooperation was enhanced, notably by the signature of the new Memorandum of Understanding in the field of energy signed in July 2022, which set ambitious targets for increased gas deliveries to the EU and for the acceleration of the deployment of renewable energy resources and energy efficiency solutions. The 2022 annual action plan focuses on demining, green transition and gender equality. Several investment projects have been rolled out in line with the EIP. These include the first ever investment project co-financed by the Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environment Partnership Fund (E5P) in Azerbaijan, which will upgrade municipal street lighting infrastructure, creating significant energy savings.

The EU has also played a central role in facilitating the Azerbaijan-Armenia peace talks, demonstrating its commitment to a peaceful and prosperous South Caucasus. In this context, a civilian EU Monitoring Capacity to Armenia was set up for a period of two months to observe the security situation in border areas of Armenia and contribute to confidence-building. This was followed by preparations to launch a new full-fledged civilian EU Mission to Armenia (EUMA) which was eventually mobilised early in 2023. In 2022, the EU has also substantiated its support to the mine clearance action activities in both Armenia and Azerbaijan and continued providing humanitarian support to help conflict-affected populations and improve livelihoods of vulnerable people in both countries.

In **Belarus**, the rampant repression of all segments of Belarusian society continued. The Lukashenka regime’s brutal repression throughout 2022 resulted in more than 1 400 political prisoners, 50 000 arbitrarily detained citizens, and over 1 000 civil society organisations closed down. The majority of the democratic opposition, activists and independent journalists remain in exile. Lukashenko has made Belarus an accomplice of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine by putting its territory and infrastructure at the disposal of the Russian troops from day one of the war. The EU has replied with a united and strong condemnation, further restriction of contacts with Belarusian public bodies and follow up sanctions including sectoral measures. At the same time, the EU continued to provide sustained support to civil society, victims of the repression, independent media and defenders of human rights and democracy. A new Special Measure 2022 was adopted in December to support civil society and youth in Belarus bringing the total support to the people of Belarus to over EUR 100 million since August 2020.

The European Council granted **Georgia** the European perspective in June 2022, based on the European Commission recommendations, and expressed readiness to grant candidate status once the reform priorities specified in the Commission’s opinion on Georgia’s membership applications have been addressed. The so-called 12 priorities, which largely reflect the Association Agenda but also the latest developments in the country, have become the guiding framework for Georgia’s path towards the EU during the second half of 2022. The first half of 2022 was marked by continued political polarisation,

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exacerbated by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine that had a significant impact on the Georgian society. The EU continued to support Georgia's resilience. The country benefitted from EUR 20 million under the European Peace Facility (EPF) to modernise its defence sector (adding to the previous EUR 12.75 million assistance measure in 2021). Georgia's economic growth was impressive despite the context, with an increase in GDP of 10.1 % in 2022. Following some delays in the adoption of the multiannual indicative programme and the Association Agenda 2021-2027, both guiding documents were adopted in 2022, this unlocked the adoption of the individual measure for 2021 and the annual action plan for 2022.

In **Moldova**, the positive drive for structural reforms in line with the EU-Moldova Association Agreement, including the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area was reinforced by the status of candidate country granted by the European Council. The Commission's Opinion on Moldova's EU membership application set out nine steps (justice reform, Venice Commission and ODIHR recommendations, fight against corruption and organised crime, de-oligarchisation, public administration reform (PAR) and public financial management (PFM), involvement of civil society and reinforced protection of human rights). The Government immediately made these priority areas and drew up an action plan with the objective to make progress on all steps by June 2023. It has made considerable efforts to pursue reforms while tackling an energy crisis, the high number of refugees (highest per capita among Ukraine's neighbours), the threats to its economy from the loss of key markets and soaring inflation and increasing hybrid threats from Russia. Cooperation on security and defence matters has exponentially increased. Moldova has benefitted from significant assistance measures under the EPF over the past two years to modernise their defence sector (EUR 40 million for 2022, adding to the previous EUR 7 million from 2021), effectively doubling the country's national defence budget. Since October 2021, when Moldova's only gas provider, Russian Gazprom, significantly increased prices, the EU has committed to provide over EUR 1 billion in support to Moldova in a wide range of sectors such as energy, connectivity, humanitarian support, and preparation for accession, including through the Economic and Investment Plan and its flagships.

Since the start of the Russian military aggression, the European Commission provided major support to the **Ukraine** central and local government and the Ukrainian people. In particular, the Commission rolled out two macro-financial assistance (MFA) programmes to help Ukraine address its immediate financial needs. Several State budget support operations complemented the MFA instrument, offering much needed budgetary resources for ensuring institutional resilience, early relief and rehabilitation. At the end of the year, co-legislators agreed on the basis of Commission proposal to set up a MFA+ instrument for Ukraine of up to EUR 18 billion worth of loans to help Ukraine to cover its immediate funding needs, with a view to maintaining the macro-financial stability of the country. The funds will be disbursed in 2023. The European Commission also provided unprecedented humanitarian and civil protection assistance aimed at alleviating the suffering of the population and restoration of basic livelihood conditions in war-affected regions. It also repurposed its ongoing bilateral assistance programme and launched new programmes tailored to war-related challenges to address the emergency needs of the Ukrainian state and local authorities and the Ukrainian people, thus substantially complementing its humanitarian and civil protection instruments. These programmes were inter alia directed to housing support, infrastructure repairs, as well as uninterrupted provision of critical public services and institutional resilience building.

4.4.1.2. Support to Ukraine

Following Russia's unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine ongoing since 24 February 2022, the EU stood by Ukraine, condemning in the strongest possible terms Russia's illegal and

unjustified war of aggression and expressed its unwavering support for Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders, for as long as it takes. Notwithstanding the challenges caused by the war, Ukraine impressively continued its reform path efforts in different policy areas, especially to show its commitment to EU integration. EU-funded technical assistance projects played an important role in supporting this process. Most of these projects were able to adapt quickly to the changing conditions and thus experienced only short interruptions because of the war.

These efforts were further reinforced following the decision of 23 June 2022 to grant Ukraine an EU candidate status. The candidate status was granted on the understanding that Ukraine will undertake seven pre-accession reform steps outlined in the Commission's opinion on Ukraine's membership application. In the second half of 2022, Ukraine launched work on these steps. For example, the Head of the Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office was appointed. The competition for the selection of the new Director of the National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine with the involvement of independent experts was launched. The new State Anti-Corruption strategy was adopted. After several months of suspension due to the start of the war, the entities in charge of the ambitious reform of the judicial governance bodies resumed their operation. In particular, the Ethics Council completed the integrity vetting of the sitting members of the High Council of Justice (HCJ) and proceeded with the vetting of HCJ candidates, while the Selection Commission of the High Qualification Commission of Judges (HQCJ) started the assessment of more than 300 candidates to the HQCJ. Some implementing measures were also taken in relation to the pre-accession reform steps on anti-money laundering, media and national minorities. The European Commission held intensive consultations with the Ukrainian Government for the purpose of swift and complete implementation of the seven steps.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine has brought massive destruction to the country and has resulted in the death of many Ukrainians. This, in combination with the granting of EU candidate status, resulted in a major change in our cooperation. Consequently, in 2022, the Commission mobilised more than EUR 1 billion in bilateral assistance to support the urgent needs of the country.

To provide quick assistance to enhance the resilience of the Ukrainian state and its citizens, a decision was taken to repurpose part of the ongoing assistance to specific activities that could support Ukraine in maintaining its independence, alleviate some of the direct negative impact of the war, and make the country stronger to respond to the military aggression. This allowed EU assistance to reach the beneficiaries before humanitarian partners could mobilise their aid programmes. Close to EUR 200 million of ongoing projects were repurposed, which turned out to be a tremendous success and was praised by project counterparts and government officials. It also allowed the EU to increase its visibility in a difficult environment. On top of that, unallocated funds were mobilised quickly to sign new contracts to respond to urgent needs, especially at the grass root level.

In order to support the government of Ukraine with liquidity for the implementation of some important war-related support, two State Building contracts with one additional top-up were signed and disbursed in 2022. A first contract of EUR 120 million focusing on improvements to conflict preparedness and response capabilities was disbursed in spring 2022. A second contract of EUR 500 million aimed at supporting internally displaced people (IDP) housing projects and small farmers with a dedicated grant scheme was disbursed in the autumn. Finally, a last tranche of EUR 66 million top-up funding was aimed

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at rebuilding schools that had been destroyed by the Russian armed forces and was disbursed in December 2022.

A EUR 330 million emergency programme was adopted to address some of the urgent consequences of the war. This has allowed the EU to provide housing solutions to IDPs and returnees, to support their re-integration and assist the host communities with their challenges, to repair critical infrastructure, to support the Solidarity Lanes initiative, to procure the most urgent equipment and materials for the restoration of the Ukrenergo system (Ukrainian electricity transmission system operator), amongst others. This decision was also tapped into when European Commission President von der Leyen made a pledge in December 2022 for providing 30 million LED light bulbs to Ukraine.

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The European Commission has redirected funding to strengthen the civil society working in Ukraine and to finance projects on human rights through its thematic programmes. Since the start of the Russian invasion, Ukrainian civil society organisations can benefit from a more direct and faster procedure for accessing EU funds.

The EU consistently maintained an active dialogue with Ukraine at the highest political level. This included numerous high-level visits of the EU and Member States' leaders to Ukraine.

4.4.1.3. Working together towards the SDGs

The Eastern Partnership aims to strengthen political and economic relations, helps partners in achieving the twin ecological and digital transformations, and is based on common values, mutual interests and shared ownership and responsibility. Through the new agenda presented in July 2021 via the Joint Staff Working Document *Recovery, resilience and reform: post 2020 Eastern Partnership priorities*[158], endorsed at the Summit in December 2021, and reaffirmed at the December 2022 Eastern Partnership Foreign Affairs Ministerial, the Eastern Partnership continues to support the delivery of the UN 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In the Eastern Neighbourhood, the external actions implemented, in cooperation and coordination with partner countries and other stakeholders, aim to assist recovery, strengthen resilience and support reform. These actions underpin the political priorities of the European Commission in achieving the SDGs as part of the 2030 Agenda.

On the regional level the EUR 9.7 million 'EU4Gender Equality' programme 2020-2023 continues to aim to strengthen equal rights and opportunities for women and men in the Eastern Neighbourhood by

[158] SWD(2021) 186 final of 2 July 2021.

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challenging gender stereotypes, work on violence prevention and championing men's participation in care work. The programme also includes a Reform Helpdesk that supports governments' reform work towards equal opportunities for women and men and contributes to SDG 5. In parallel, programmes such as the Partnership for Good Governance with the Council of Europe focused on areas such as improving women's access to justice and contributes to SDG 16.

In 2022, the implementation of the EU4Environment – Water and Data programme (EUR 12.75 million) was launched, and its first results were achieved. The programme was successful in initiating COVID-19 monitoring in urban wastewater in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Moldova thus contributing to SDGs 3 and 6. This system serves as a simple, low-cost detection instrument on top of more complex public testing. The process of National Policy Dialogues on water restarted in Armenia and Georgia. Also, the programme launched the development of new river basin management plans in Armenia and Georgia and continued working on the Dnipro River basin management plan in Ukraine.

The EU is contributing to develop energy resilience in the Eastern Neighbourhood, through focusing in parallel on energy and climate policies. Reducing energy dependency, in particular in Moldova and Ukraine, through green finance, diversification of energy sources and routes, post-synchronisation of electricity markets and securing supply by promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy deployment. Investments in infrastructure for energy and transport interconnectivity between EaP countries and the EU also address infrastructure vulnerability to the impact of climate change, environmental challenges and hybrid threats contributing to SDG 7.

In the Eastern Neighbourhood, the EU funded 108 projects under the EU4Business umbrella initiative to support small and medium-sized enterprises to access finance, business development services and business enabling environments. By joining forces with international financial institutions (IFIs) and other European and local partners, the EU promoted diversification of trade, support to the green and digital transitions and creation of quality jobs, thus contributing to SDG 8.[159]

The EU quickly repurposed key components of its assistance to support Ukraine's digital sector following the start of Russia's war of aggression. This included targeted support in the field of cybersecurity as well as facilitation of Joint Statements between the EU and Ukrainian telecom operators to allow refugees to call back to Ukraine and use mobile internet for free or at affordable rate. The EU also extended the EU4Digital initiative for three more years (2022-2025; EUR 11 million), with the aim of facilitating the integration of the Eastern Partnership countries into the Digital Single Market. The programme builds on a very successful first phase (2019-2022) and contributes to SDG 9.

Via the EU4Digital initiative, the EU launched the Eastern Partnership start-up ecosystem platform, which brings 2 500 EaP digital start-ups just one click away from the EU start-up ecosystem. The EU4Digital initiative also completed key projects in the fields of e-commerce, e-customs and e-signature.

The number of Covenant of Mayors (CoM) East signatories has reached more than 480 municipalities. As a result, the network covers more than 40 % of the population of the region. Under an administrative agreement, the Joint Research Centre (JRC) has been providing technical support to the implementation of the CoM East initiative in continuity with the previous phases, including targeted training, assessment

[159] Information regarding EU's support for businesses dates back to 2021. 2022 data are currently being collected and report should be made available during the third quarter of 2023.

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of sustainable energy and climate action plans (SECAPs), and updated guidelines for implementation and monitoring of the SECAPs on tackling climate mitigation, adaptation and energy poverty. In 2022, the full-fledged implementation of the third phase of the CoM East programme has started with the focus on assisting local authorities in the EaP countries to access finance in order to implement their SECAPs. The programme has encouraged more local authorities to join the new ambitious commitment to cut emissions by 35 % by 2030 through delivering targeted support to the signatories.

The Phase II (2018-2022) of the Sustainable Urban Development Projects (SUDeP) with technical assistance for 14 selected demonstration projects came to an end in 2022. The programme aimed at supporting the local authorities in the EaP countries in implementing demonstration projects as part of the cities' SECAPs under the CoM East and has produced replicable results. Overall, 229 residential buildings and 44 public buildings (including kindergartens and schools) were refurbished, 97 renewable electricity systems were installed resulting into considerable energy savings of 31 024 MWh per year and a reduction of CO_2 emissions of 19 878 tons per year.

The EU supports partner countries to transform the region towards modern, resource-efficient, clean, circular, and competitive economies, while increasing their environmental and climate resilience, including through more sustainable use of natural resources and contributes to SDG 13. The EU4Environment – Green Economy programme (EUR 20 million) was extended by another year. Pilot projects on industrial waste mapping and eco-innovation were implemented. The programme also continued to help small and mid-sized enterprises with resource efficiency and cleaner production.

In 2022, the results of environmental compliance and enforcement reviews in Armenia and Moldova were published, and the draft review for Georgia was completed. Regional events on environmental liability and environmental inspection were organised in cooperation with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as the EU IMPEL network of environmental regulators and inspectors. The 'Better environmental inspections for stronger environmental resilience' event, held on 5-6 December 2022 in Brussels, brought together officials from EaP countries and six EU Member States, as well as the United Kingdom. Reports on Green Growth Indicators (GGIs) were issued in Moldova and Ukraine, and a national database with GGIs was set up in Moldova. The capacity for greening capital markets has been under review.

The EU programme for Improving Environmental Monitoring in the Black Sea (EU4EMBLAS) organised several education and information campaigns to help preserve the Black Sea's biodiversity. Georgia's equipment needs for monitoring marine environment were assessed.

Regarding SDG 4 (Quality education), through the Erasmus+ programme the EU supports higher education cooperation and mobility opportunities in the Eastern Partnership.

CASE STUDIES

Religious leaders promoting gender equality in Armenia (SDG 5)

The three-year programme EU4Gender Equality 'Together against gender stereotypes and gender-based violence', funded by the EU and implemented jointly by UN Women and UNFPA, seeks to strengthen equal rights and opportunities for women and men by shifting social perceptions around gender roles, tackling gender stereotypes, increasing men's participation in childcare and other domestic responsibilities. During 2022, more than 3 000 people across six countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova

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and Ukraine) increased their understanding of gender equality and gender stereotypes and 385 women and men become local advocates for gender equality.

To recognise and fight domestic violence in local communities across Armenia, as well as to engage men in prenatal and postnatal care and responsible fatherhood, a series of training sessions have sought to educate and empower priests and social workers in the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church.

'Often, men become more aggressive and resort to violence due to social problems. Through the knowledge we gained via the training, we can address these problems more delicately and deliver the proper approach when counselling families by focusing on men's engagement in the family and childcare,' says Fr. Mambre Voskanyan, a priest from the Lori region of Armenia.

He is one of the 27 priests and 10 social workers from Armenia's Shirak, Lori and Tavush regions who improved their knowledge and skills in promoting gender equality, responsible fatherhood and preventing gender-based violence through a training entitled 'The Church combating domestic violence and promoting men's engagement'.

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Facilitating access to key market information to businesses in the EaP countries (SDG 8)

The multitude of standards and regulations of different markets of the region makes trade complicated. Having access to business-critical data in just a few clicks to identify opportunities and contacts in neighbouring markers is a considerable asset for SMEs in the region.

Objectives

The Eastern Partnership Trade Helpdesk is an EU-funded project under the EU4Business initiative, designed and implemented by the International Trade Centre (ITC) to boost trade competitiveness for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Eastern Partnership countries within the region and the European Union.

Impact

The Trade Helpdesk portal is a core element of the project, providing an online trade intelligence gateway for companies and business support organisations (BSOs) in EaP countries. The web platform consists of three complementary modules: opportunity identification, market information, and a help centre. The project also assists in data collection and capacity building. The online platform is accessible in English and all local languages.

4.4.1.4. Implementation

Human Development

Fostering resilient, gender-equal, fair, and inclusive societies is one of the key priorities of the renewed Eastern Partnership agenda. The EU, its Member States and the Eastern Partner countries expressed strong political commitment by endorsing the post-2020 priorities at the Eastern Partnership Summit in December 2021. Reflecting this key political guidance, supporting civil society, independent media, youth participation in democracy, people-to-people contacts, gender equality and health resilience are core goals of the EU's regional and bilateral financial assistance.

In 2022, the implementation of the EUR 7.85 million regional project EU4Culture continued in all six EaP countries. The EU supports culture's role as an engine for growth and social development across the region. The EU4Culture project takes an interregional approach to promote intercultural dialogue and knowledge exchange and contributes to improving local governance in the culture sector through support for regulatory processes and participative policy dialogue.

Seven non-capital cities from the EaP countries won the EU4Culture grant competition and received up to EUR 300 000 from the EU to implement Cultural Development strategies. The chosen cities are Ijevan in Armenia, Lankaran in Azerbaijan, Zugdidi in Georgia, Cahul in Moldova, and Poltava, Rivne and Vinnytsia in Ukraine. The project assists cities in the EaP region to develop and implement a Cultural Development strategy, following the approach of the European Capitals of Culture. Considering the current situation in Ukraine, the project has retained all three shortlisted cities, Poltava, Rivne and Vinnytsia, and will distribute the final grant of EUR 300 000 equally between them. In addition, EU4Culture offered mobility grants to support artists and cultural professionals from the EaP countries.

Phase III of the regional EU4Youth programme started its implementation phase in 2022 (after an inception phase and the signature in 2021 of a EUR 14.4 million agreement with the Central Project Management Agency of Lithuania) and was focused on youth employment and entrepreneurship, including a grant scheme for projects on digital and green aspects, and a component to continue capacity building of Public Employment Services and other key stakeholders around the EU Youth Guarantee experience. Scholarships for students to study at the College of Europe in Natolin are also included in the programme.

Adopted in 2022 and to be launched in 2023, EU4Youth phase IV (EUR 7.5 million) aims to build capacities of national youth councils and other representatives youth structures as well as of Youth Ministries, youth departments and agencies in partner countries to jointly implement more structured youth dialogue. This next phase of the EU4Youth programme also foresees a small-scale grants scheme to engage youth organisations and young people from remote areas and connect them with peers in partner countries as well as within EU Member States.

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The EUR 6.4 million contribution agreement for phase II of the EaP European School in Georgia started its implementation in January 2021 and is currently ongoing.

Building on the EU's rapid response to the COVID-19 pandemic in the EaP in 2021, the EU launched in 2022 a EUR 35 million vaccine sharing mechanism managed by the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish development bank (BGK) allowing vaccines purchased by EU Member States to be shared with partner countries using a 'Team Europe' approach. It has fostered one major vaccine donation of over 400 000 doses of Pfizer vaccines from Portugal to Armenia. Under the arrangement, the EU motivates EU Member States to donate vaccines to the Eastern Neighbourhood countries by reimbursing the price of the vaccines on a not-for-profit basis.

A significant part of this programme was reallocated to Ukraine ('repurposing') with EUR 26.1 million of the total EUR 35 million being diverted so far towards providing Ukraine with vital supplies they need to overcome the crisis (school buses, psychological support, winterisation, food, nappies, generators, ambulances, and firefighting equipment, etc.).

In **Armenia**, the EU continued to support the implementation of reforms aiming to improve labour market efficiency and employability with particular emphasis on agricultural employment, and improving the quality of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education. In 2022 the EU supported Armenian civil society organisations with 23 ongoing projects aiming to improve their resilience, sustainability and capacity for innovation, enabling them to play a pivotal role in deepening democracy and support vulnerable populations.

In **Azerbaijan**, the EU continued assistance to the modernisation of and reforms to the education system with the aim to meet the needs of the labour market and align with competency-based education standards. Reforms in the education system, including vocational education and training (VET), remained one of the most EU-supported sectors in the country.

In **Belarus**, in light of the regime's involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022[160], the EU has stopped engaging with Belarusian authorities on EU assistance and stepped up its support to the people of Belarus. The EU further supported activities aimed at providing possibilities to study abroad for Belarusian students, both through support to an advanced training and learning programme and by supporting the European Humanities University. In **Georgia**, implementation of the skills development and matching for labour market needs (Skills4Jobs) programme continued with the disbursement of the fourth tranche of EUR 7 million supporting job intermediations and training of VET teachers. In **Moldova** implementation of the National Education Strategy is ongoing in the framework of the Economic and Investment Plan's flagship on investing in Moldova's human capital and preventing the 'brain drain', complementing Moldova's membership of Horizon Europe and Erasmus+.

In 2022, EU expertise mobilised through the TAIEX instrument assisted Armenian authorities in improving job vacancy statistics and recommendations for job seekers. To support Ukraine's Ministry of Education and Science, Portuguese and Swedish officials shared best practice on VET.

Furthermore, a TAIEX Multi-Country Workshop on 'Building Bridges for Youth Participation' took place in several NEAR countries, facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges and promoting mutual learning of the public

[160] Council Conclusions EUCO 18/22 of 24 February 2022.

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authorities in the field of youth participation at various levels. The workshop clarified the role and place of youth policy at EU, national and local level, as well as in the NEAR regions, and in region-specific policy frameworks. It also recognised the key role and valuable experience of local public authorities in developing and implementing national youth policies and youth dialogue.

Green Deal

The implementation of the European Green Deal is a priority and the EU, its Member States and the Eastern Partner countries expressed strong political commitment to work together towards the green transition as one of the key goals for the EaP's post-2020 agenda and its EIP. The Regional multiannual indicative programme (MIP) for the post-2020 period allocates 20 % of the overall budget for regional programmes to the priority on environmental and climate resilience. The importance of this priority is also echoed in the EIP with around half of the planned investments being green investments.

Several **regional programmes** are providing support for environmental and climate action, including **EU4Environment**, **EU4Climate**, and **EU4Energy**. Some of their results were presented in Section 4.4.1.3. These programmes are instrumental for facilitating policy reform and institution building in the partner countries. Also, the green transition of private actors is being supported. For example, the **Finance and Technology Transfer Centre for Climate Change (FINTECC)** programme has been helping SMEs and mid-cap companies to reduce their impact on the environment, as well as their energy and water costs, by adapting innovative and green technologies. FINTECC has offered investment incentives for such technologies, as well as partially free technical assistance, and climate innovation vouchers (CIVs) in the EaP countries, including Ukraine. A new action '**Supporting Decarbonisation and Climate Resilience in the Eastern Partnership**' (EUR 21.7 million) was adopted in October 2022. The action will contribute to the elaboration and implementation of policies and tools necessary to achieve the goals and targets related to national and international climate action such as long-term low emission strategies, green financing frameworks, adaptation planning and pilot projects, carbon pricing and robust emissions monitoring, reporting and verification frameworks.

In 2022 Ukraine and Moldova were connected to ENTSO-E, the continental European electricity system. In **Ukraine**, a EUR 53.4 million project (EU contribution EUR 9 million) will develop good governance in the Ukrainian energy sector, support the restructuring of the utility provider Ukrenergo, and rehabilitate nine sub-stations in Ukraine's South-Western Power Grid. In **Moldova**, a EUR 270.8 million project (EU contribution EUR 40.8 million) will finance an electricity substation and transmission line, as well as upgrading existing infrastructure, to strengthen the connection with Romania. This will contribute to the stability and efficiency of the Ukrainian and Moldovan electricity grids, contributing to diversification of supply and increased energy security.

Following the energy crisis in October 2021, Moldova has taken decisive steps to cut its dependence on Russian gas including its first purchases of gas from EU and other non-Russian sources, the delivery of gas in reverse-flow, and the purchase of gas for storage in order to increase energy security. The National Energy Crisis action plan, supported by budget support, provided assistance to vulnerable groups with rising energy bills. On the demand side of the energy equation work on energy efficiency in public buildings, ongoing for several years, was complemented by the establishment of a Residential Energy Efficiency Fund. The Energy Community Secretariat established an office in Chisinau with the assistance of EU4Energy and an Energy Support Fund was established by the Energy Community for donors to

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channel their support to Moldova. In March, the Council included Moldova in the EU Energy Platform and the REPowerEU plan.

In **Azerbaijan**, throughout the reporting period, the EU continued supporting the Ministry of Energy and other relevant stakeholders in improving and enforcing secondary legislative acts, capacity building and increasing public awareness on energy efficiency. Technical assistance was provided to the Port of Baku to implement the Green Port Concept and strengthen its operational capacity. In September 2022, the first ever E5P-backed investment project in Azerbaijan was signed. The project will help to upgrade more than 80 % of municipal street lighting infrastructure in the city of Ganja and to generate significant energy savings. In December 2022, the EU adopted a programme to assist Azerbaijan, among other areas, in the climate adaption planning at the local level.

TAIEX advanced the European Green Deal through a flagship workshop on biodiversity policy targeting all partner countries. Tailor-made events also shared best EU practice in the fields of energy efficiency, sustainable transport, waste management, carbon pricing and water management.

Through Twinning, Czech Republic and Finland continue to support Armenia in enhancing biodiversity protection. In September 2022, a new project launched in Azerbaijan to strengthen hydrometeorological and climate services with Finnish, French and Lithuanian institutions working together in a consortium.

Green Deal Success Story

In 2022, the Covenant of Mayors in the EaP region celebrated its 10th Anniversary and hosted over 150 representatives from local and national authorities to mark the achievements of this initiative with over 480 signatories to date. In light of the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, since the first days of the war the project team has worked on identifying and assisting with addressing immediate local authorities' and population needs in Ukraine, including electricity generators and other necessary assistance related to the war situation. The project also works on strengthening resilience and building capacities of the municipalities to respond to the impact of the war and prepare for the repair and green reconstruction. The first City2City exchanges in these fields for Ukrainian mayors and deputy mayors have been planned and will be organised in 2023.

Sustainable Growth and Jobs

In 2021, the EU adopted an ambitious EIP for the Eastern Neighbourhood, which has the potential of mobilising up to EUR 17 billion of public and private investments to support socio-economic recovery and pursue the green and digital transitions. Within this framework, the EU focused its financial and technical support on further improving SMEs' access to finance and on providing advisory services to help them adapt to the new reality of running a business in a context of sanitary restrictions and accelerate their digital transformation. The EU's overall objective remained that of helping its Eastern partners move towards even more diversified and integrated economies, attracting investments and creating jobs.

The EU's support contributed to improving the investment and business environment and unlock SMEs growth potential. In 2021, over 78 000 SMEs have been supported through the 108 projects of the EU4Business initiative. This represents an increase of 8.62 % compared with 2020. Overall, access to finance is the largest area of EU intervention supporting SMEs in the EaP, with a total of EUR 430.44 million allocated in 2021. In addition, the Structural Reform Facility supports the development of action plans to develop non-banking alternatives for SME financing and credit registries in partner countries. In 2021,

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EUR 2.026 billion extra income was generated, along with 66 678 new jobs. Exports among EU-supported SMEs increased by 11 %. In addition, among the 78 045 SMEs supported, 31.3 % were women-owned in 2021.[161]

During 2022, the EU continued its support for **shared and inclusive economic growth in Armenia through SMEs development under the framework of the EU4Business initiative and in line with the country specific EIP flagships**. The EU-Armenia SME Fund completed its fundraising activities in 2022, raising USD 60 million, and invested in the solar power generation and food packaging sectors. GIZ's EU4Business Innovative Tourism and Technology Development project has supported business development for tourism enterprises, marketing, access to finance schemes, and developing the technology start-up ecosystem. The EU-TUMO Convergence Centre's educational components, '42 Yerevan' programming school and 'TUMO Labs', witnessed success with corporate sponsors and Armenian universities collaborating on joint solutions-oriented projects and university-level courses on coding. The EU4IMPACT project launched two rounds of a business incubation resulting in 59 new businesses being created. The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)'s 'Advice for Small Business' project continued to provide consultancy and advice services to Armenian SMEs, resulting in over 1 100 jobs created so far. The EBRD's capacity building project for the State Commission for the Protection of Economic Competition and the UNIDO's quality Infrastructure development project was launched to improve competition policy and standardisation services in Armenia. The EU's support is expected to contribute to resilient economic growth and job creation in various sectors in Armenia. Under the scheme of EFSD+ guarantees, the European Investment Bank (EIB) launched a EUR 70 million lending facility though the Central Bank of Armenia (CBA). The objective of the facility is to support the economic recovery and resilience of Armenia by enhancing access to financing for MSMEs and mid-capitalisation companies, which are the backbone of the Armenian economy.

Supporting sustainable economic diversification of **Azerbaijan** remained an underlying objective of the EU's assistance in this sector. In 2022, the EU continued successfully supporting development, economic growth, competitiveness and the employment generation in the rural regions of Azerbaijan, notably in the region of Lankaran. Support to innovative regional development will be further scaled up, with a particular focus on inclusive and sustainable growth and improving the community infrastructure of rural areas to promote employment generation and social inclusion of youth, women and other vulnerable populations. A new bilateral programme focusing on, among others, the implementation of the Economic and Investment Plan as well as support to enhancing capacity, greening and financial sustainability of local businesses was adopted. In an effort to promote business climate and economic diversification, the EU organised the annual EU-Azerbaijan Business Forum which brought together over 500 participants, including representatives of the EU Member States, international organisations, business leaders and the government stakeholders.

Following the October 2020 EU Council Conclusions, the EU programmes supporting private sector and real economy in **Belarus** have been re-focused on SMEs support. The EBRD 'Advice for Small Business in Belarus' (Phase II) has been signed in 2021, however EBRD has halted all activities in Belarus after the 24th of February; following EBRD decision to suspend all programmes. The programme has been fully re-scoped to support Belarusians companies relocated abroad, namely in Lithuania and Poland. Currently, the EU funded programme implemented by EBRD, is providing advisory services uniquely to those

[161] 2022 data are currently being collected and aren't available yet.

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companies of Belarusian origins but legally registered and operating only abroad. The programme will continue until 2025.

Supporting SMEs to reap the full benefits of the DCFTA in **Georgia** has been a top priority for EU cooperation and is one of the six flagships. Through the OECD implemented project 'From Policies to Actions', the EU has supported the development and implementation of the new SME Development strategy 2021-2025. The strategy is in line with EU priorities and includes important aspects such as women entrepreneurship, digitalisation and green growth. The last tranche of the Economic and Business Development budget support programme was disbursed in 2022 for a total of EUR 5.666 million.

The 'Development of rural areas – Leader approach for rural prosperity' project ended in February 2022.

A Twinning project delivered by Estonia, Spain and Slovakia concluded with a draft new legal framework to improve employment conditions as well as health and safety at work in Georgia.

Digitalisation, Science, Technology and Innovation

In 2022, the EU quickly repurposed key components of its assistance to support Ukraine following the start of Russia's war of aggression, such as in the field of cybersecurity. The EU also mobilised the full potential of its Digital Single Market to support Ukraine. As an illustration, the EU facilitated the signature of Joint Statements between EU and Ukrainian telecom operators, allowing around 4 million people fleeing the war to call back home to Ukraine and use mobile internet for free or at an affordable rate. In line with the European Commission President von der Leyen's 2022 State of the Union Address, the European Commission also started negotiations on a long-term arrangement for bringing Ukraine into the European free roaming area.

The European Commission has been exploring possibilities towards future roaming arrangements with Moldova and Georgia and started technical discussions with both countries to progress towards the reduction of roaming charges in full respect of the EU's commitments under international law. In parallel, the Commission also continued to support the Eastern Partnership countries in the preparation of a Regional Roaming Agreement, which will help reduce roaming prices in the region by almost 90 % in the next years, also facilitating any future potential roaming arrangement with the EU.

The EU contributed to the post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities by supporting key milestones for the resilient digital transformation of the region. The EU4Digital initiative was extended until June 2025 with the aim of extending the benefits of the EU Digital Single market to Eastern Partnership countries and promoting the development of resilient digital economies and societies in line with EU standards.

In the fields of digital infrastructure and telecommunications, the EU supported major investments leading to the roll-out of broadband connectivity in rural areas in Azerbaijan and in Georgia, while the EaP Connect programme (2020-2025; EUR 10 million) provided high-speed, secure and affordable connection for 360 Eastern Partnership Research and Education Institutions, bringing them closer to their EU counterparts and facilitating their participation on Horizon Europe projects.

Finally, common cybersecurity guidelines were developed for the entire Eastern Partnership region through the Cyber-East programme, which supported capacity-building activities to strengthen national cybersecurity governance and legal frameworks in line with the Directive on security of network and information systems (NIS Directive).

In **Armenia**, to contribute to the Digital Transformation adopted in 2021 and its action plan, the EU assistance helped establish a 'Single Window' and common Governmental Interoperability Platform (GIP) for all governmental services and the mapping and redesign of 35 priority services for digitalisation. Furthermore, the EU supported the introduction of e-justice solutions in Armenia, with the aim of developing a unified e-Justice platform, allowing to connect and send/receive information from a single access point.

Azerbaijan continued benefiting from activities under the regional EU4Digital programme which included promoting and developing digital skills, competence frameworks and skills assessments across different sectors. In addition, complementary bilateral support to the implementation of the Digital Economy Strategy and regulatory mechanisms was launched in February 2022. As part of the EIP for the Eastern Partnership, the EU and EBRD have joined forces to provide a loan of up to USD 50 million to finance the rollout of state-of-the-art broadband infrastructure to more than 280 000 households in rural areas. The loan was provided to Aztelekom under the Ministry of Digital Development and Transport.

In line with the Council Conclusions of 12 October 2020 and in light of **Belarus**'s involvement in the Russian military aggression against Ukraine, recognised in the European Council Conclusions of February 2022, the EU has stopped engaging with Belarusian authorities. The EU focuses on intensifying cooperation with non-state stakeholders and the EU4Digital facility has been exploring possibilities of cooperation with non-state digital innovation networks.

In **Moldova**, the EU4Digital Initiative supported the digital reform agenda with a range of actions to promote key areas of the digital economy and society. Some pilot projects were implemented including the e-Customs pilot which allowed automatic exchange of non-confidential information between the Customs authorities of Moldova and Romania, relating to empty trucks at one border-crossing point. Support was provided to the Customs Service to create the application needed for exchange of information about authorised economic operations (AEO) in the EU and Moldova, which allowed the Agreement on mutual recognition of AEOs that entered into force on 1 November 2022. The implementation of the bilateral project 'EU4Moldova: Start up City Cahul' continued with activities implemented to boost STEM education and coding. The project Moldova Cyber Security Rapid Assistance (under the service for Foreign Policy Instruments) supported the drafting of the first Cyber Security law in line with the NIS-1 and NIS-2 Directives. The project organised several capacity-building events, including a study tour to Estonia, Latvia and Finland. Recommendations for improvement of the 'Republic of Moldova Digital Transformation Strategy 2023-2030' were provided. Phase two of the regional 'EU4Digital Facility' project was launched in June.

In **Ukraine**, as response to large-scale cyber-attacks against the country before and during the Russian aggression, the EU has stepped up the support to Ukraine in cyber security and the resilient digital transformation. The EU provided **EUR 10.7 million** emergency cyber support including software licences, IT equipment and data back-ups and business continuity in the EU. The latter has been particularly important bearing mind how much data Ukrainian government has collected from its citizens. In addition, we have topped up our EU4DigitalUA programme by providing **EUR 19 million** for further promotion of resilient digital transformation. This will include further improvement of cybersecurity of key registries, data centres and their back-ups and additional digital services for Ukrainian citizens. Support also focuses on the protection of the digital registry of evidence of war crimes maintained at General Prosecutor's office.

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Governance, peace and security

Promoting reforms in good governance and security, in line with EU values, strengthening the rule of law and fighting corruption and organised crime are part of the governance pillar of the post-2020 Eastern Partnership agenda. Addressing these issues is a necessary precondition for boosting economic and social development in the region. This contributes to improving the business environment and boosting investors' confidence. This comprehensive agenda based on the respect for democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms, and equality also plays an important role in building resilience in partner countries and is supported through all of the EU's tools.

The EU continues to be the largest donor of financial assistance to the justice sector in **Armenia**, playing an important role in donor coordination and policy dialogues. Anti-corruption efforts are also supported by the EU-Council of Europe regional initiative Partnership for Good Governance to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. In 2022, the EU continued to provide budget support to further strengthen judicial and legal reforms, as well as anti-corruption policies, in line with CEPA and EU best practices. In addition, under the programme Accountable Institutions and Human Rights Protection in Armenia (2021-2023), the EU supported the advancement of the Constitutional reform, the police reform, as well as the establishment of the Ministry of Interior. The EU also provides complementary technical assistance in the justice sector for legal approximation to EU norms in line with CEPA commitments.

In **Azerbaijan**, the EU, through several ongoing regional and bilateral projects, continued providing assistance to improve, among others, efficiency of the judiciary, develop alternative dispute resolution, economic empowerment of ex-convicts, capacity building in asset recovery and increase of efficiency in anti-money-laundry measures. Since 2020, with the help of the EU, around 4 500 vulnerable persons received free legal aid across the country. The new Laws on Anti Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism and Targeted Financial Sanctions as well as related amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code, which had been revised with the EU assistance in previous years, have been adopted in 2022. In addition, the EU advocated for developing a new structure for the Criminal Asset Recovery and Management Department (CARMD) and transformation of the Department of Confiscations into a National Asset Recovery Office and Asset Management Office in Azerbaijan.

In **Georgia** the Security, Accountability and Fight Against Crime (SAFE) programme continues supporting civilian oversight of the security sector and improved border management. The EU is also contributing to the advancement of good government in areas such as anticorruption, human rights and public finance management. The EU monitoring mission (EUMM) remains on the ground along the administrative boundary lines with the break-away territories. In **Moldova** support continues to be provided in the framework of reforms of the fundamentals outlined in the nine steps, including pre-vetting of candidates for the judiciary and prosecution services. Despite the challenges which the outbreak of war in Ukraine heightened, the EU border assistance mission (EUBAM) continued its support to the Moldovan border service, augmented with FRONTEX and EUROPOL assistance. Confidence-building measures with the Transnistrian region continued.

4.4.1.5. Humanitarian aid and civil protection – responding to the emergency needs of people affected by conflicts and disasters

After eight years of conflict, the security and humanitarian situation in **Ukraine** worsened enormously following the full-scale invasion launched by the Russia on 24 February 2022. The humanitarian impact of

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the Russian war of aggression is extremely heavy for millions of people in the country, particularly for the most vulnerable populations, living in proximity to the front lines and stranded in areas under temporary Russian military control. In 2022, 17.7 million Ukrainians were assessed to be in need of humanitarian assistance. Due to the Russian war of aggression, living standards are lowered, coping mechanisms are being exhausted and basic services and markets are seriously disrupted. Russia's deliberate targeting of civilian infrastructure, notably the energy system has deprived millions of Ukrainians access to electricity, water and heating during winter. Needs are multisectoral in nature, violence has also severely affected the mental health and psychological well-being of the population and is expected to have long-term effect.

The EU, together with its Member States, has provided over EUR 1.6 billion in humanitarian assistance to Ukraine since the start of the war. The European Commission alone has made available EUR 523 million to address the immediate humanitarian needs in 2022. This includes EUR 38 million for **Moldova**, where the response has helped Ukrainian refugees at border crossing points, transit hubs and refugee accommodation centres as well as with cash-based interventions, winter support and protection services. In Ukraine, the EU priorities for funding are in response to the needs on the ground and are in line with the Ukrainian authorities' priorities. The EU humanitarian funding, delivered through UN agencies, non-governmental organisations and the International Committee of the Red Cross, provided people with the means to meet their basic needs and access to safe water, education in emergencies, and protection services. The funding also supported people to prepare for the winter, including rehabilitation of damaged houses, as well as helped people to access food and healthcare. In 2022, EU funded humanitarian assistance helped to reach more than 13.6 million people across Ukraine.

In addition, following the activation of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) by Ukraine in February, more than 80 000 tonnes of in-kind assistance were delivered throughout 2022 for a total estimated value of EUR 502 million. All EU Member States and four UCPM Participating States made offers and the rescEU reserve was mobilised on several occasions. This assistance covered a wide range of sectors, including shelters, energy equipment, medicines and medical equipment, firefighting equipment, vehicles, food, CBRN countermeasures and demining equipment. In parallel, the medical evacuations of 1 700 sick and injured Ukrainian patients to 19 Member States and Norway were coordinated through the UCPM. The response to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine constitutes the largest, longest, and most innovative UCPM operation in history. The UCPM was also activated by Moldova in the context of the influx of people fleeing from Russia's war of aggression and to respond to electricity supply shortages. 19 Member States and Norway provided a significant volume of assistance through the UCPM, consisting notably of shelter capacities, medical equipment, ambulances as well as energy equipment, for a total value of over EUR 13.6 million. COVID-19 assistance also continued to be provided to Moldova in 2022.

In 2020, the six-week long conflict over Nagorno Karabakh between **Armenia and Azerbaijan** caused casualties, damage, and displacement of the local population. The fighting forced several tens of thousands to flee their homes for security and safety reasons. In 2022, the EU continued responding to the impact of the conflict with EUR 3.6 million in humanitarian support to address the needs of the most vulnerable people affected by the conflict. The emergency support helped EU humanitarian partners deliver basic assistance including food, hygiene and household items, multi-purpose cash assistance, shelter, education in emergencies, health and psychosocial support, medical equipment, and other urgent assistance to older persons, women and children.

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4.4.1.6. Crisis response and preparedness

In light of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the need for EU crisis response in the Neighbourhood East region increased significantly. During the year, six crisis response actions were adopted for **Ukraine** with the first action starting implementation on 1 March just five days after the full-scale Russian invasion. The actions focused on support to civilians, locally identified needs, early recovery in liberated areas, and access to education as well as healthcare. It also included a strong focus on accountability, support to international investigations, promotion of international humanitarian law and specialised assistance to victims of sexual violence.

In **Moldova**, the EU swiftly responded to the energy crisis and provided comprehensive support to enhance the country's overall resilience, from humanitarian and refugee-related support, support to border management, as well as security and defence support. Given Russia's increased hybrid actions against Moldova, increased focus was placed on support for cybersecurity and addressing disinformation.

In **Belarus** assistance to civic engagement and resilience continued as did support to the International Accountability Platform for Belarus. In **Bosnia and Herzegovina** multi-level reconciliation initiatives were supported.

The EU continued its support to finding peaceful solutions to conflicts in the **South Caucasus**, including the conflict between **Armenia** and **Azerbaijan**. During 2022 there was a focus on the implementation of confidence building measures focused on mine clearing action as well as support to other peacebuilding initiatives.

In **Georgia**, the European Union Monitoring Mission in **Georgia** (EUMM Georgia) continued to provide civilian monitoring of the Parties' actions and contribute to long-term stability in Georgia and the wider region. The mission also engaged in confidence building measures and reports on conflict-related incidents and developments in Georgia.

In **Ukraine**, work on mine clearing action in liberated parts of the country, continued during the year. Assistance to Ukraine’s efforts in tackling disinformation continued and was further enhanced through support to the establishment of a dedicated government-run Centre for Strategic Communication and Information Security.

The **EU Advisory Mission for Civilian Security Sector Reform** in **Ukraine** (EUAM Ukraine) assists Ukraine in the field of civilian security sector reform, including police and the rule of law. Following Russia’s military aggression against Ukraine, the mandate of the mission has been amended to include close coordination with law enforcement agencies to facilitate the flow of refugees from Ukraine to neighbouring Member States and the entry of humanitarian aid into the country. It also provides strategic advice to Ukrainian authorities on the prosecution and investigation of international war crimes.

The EU supports **Ukraine**’s efforts to combat illicit **trafficking in weapons, ammunition and explosives** in cooperation with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) thus enhancing the operational and supervisory capacities of national authorities, improving the legislative and regulatory framework and raising public awareness.

Following Russia’s war of aggression against **Ukraine**, the EU amended the action in support of the International Atomic Energy Agency (**IAEA**) in the sector of nuclear security to allow the IAEA to provide

assistance to Ukraine in ensuring the maintenance of its nuclear security regime. In parallel, the EU is providing funding to strengthen **biological safety and security** in **Ukraine** by improving its legislative and regulatory basis and its human and animal health systems, as well as by raising the awareness of life scientists.

4.4.2. European Neighbourhood South

4.4.2.1. Introduction (policy developments)

The Joint Communication on a 'Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood, A new Agenda for the Mediterranean'[162] was adopted in February 2021 with related Council Conclusions[163] in April of the same year. Implementation started in mid-2021. The Agenda had been prepared and adopted during a complex and unstable period, marked by the COVID-19 pandemic, and it has started implementation in an even more challenging geopolitical context. Apart from several already existing crises affecting the Southern Neighbourhood region, the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine has wide-ranging geopolitical consequences for the Middle East and North Africa.

Despite the challenging context, the EU has demonstrated through its engagement with implementation its strong commitment to providing its partners in the Southern Neighbourhood all possible support, both politically and economically, in coping with new destabilising factors (in particular food and energy insecurity). In line with the Agenda for the Mediterranean we have continued working to achieve the two main objectives of enhancing our Partnership and working together to realise untapped strategic opportunities in relation to trade, investment and in areas such as climate action/energy transition, digital, and connectivity.

During the Fourth EU-Southern Neighbourhood Ministerial meeting held in Barcelona on 24 November 2022, organised back-to-back with the Seventh Union for the Mediterranean (UfM) Regional Forum, the EU and its Southern Neighbourhood partners confirmed their commitment to reduce the gaps between the shores of the Mediterranean and to address the most pressing economic, social, environmental and security challenges, focusing on the consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, especially on energy and food security.

The work for the preparation of bilateral political frameworks (Partnership Priorities), identifying jointly agreed priorities to guide the relations between the EU and the Southern Neighbourhood partners, continued in 2022. In the past year the EU has been successful in adopting Partnership Priorities with Jordan and Egypt, following their respective Association Councils. For the remaining countries, the previous Partnership Priorities, valid until 2021, were extended (except Morocco), and new ones are being negotiated. Regarding Palestine* and Israel, negotiations could restart, in parallel, soon. The current Action Plans are extended until January 2025. For Syria and Libya, no Joint Documents are under consideration, and EU programming is done under Special Measures.

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[162] JOIN(2021) 2 final of 9 February 2021.

[163] Council Conclusions 7931/21 of 19 April 2021.

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

The preparation of multiannual programming documents under the new financial instrument architecture of NDICI-Global Europe also progressed in 2022, in particular the adoption of multiannual indicative programmes (MIPs) for Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Algeria and the Multi-country MIP on Migration[164].

Tunisia has been going through a delicate political and socio-economic situation in 2022 aggravated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Given such a dire context, a second instalment of EUR 300 million in the framework of the macro-financial assistance (MFA) operation adopted in 2021 was disbursed in May 2022 to address the consequences of the pandemic. Contacts at various levels were maintained during the year, including EU Commissioners' high-level visits.

The EU-**Morocco** dialogue and cooperation continued, with various exchanges and visits throughout the year. In October 2022 the two partners signed the EU-Morocco Green Partnership, which will foster joint engagement on ambitious objectives and actions promoting the green transition. In March 2022 an informal Senior Official Meeting on migration relaunched discussions on a comprehensive migration agenda. Negotiations on the long-term Partnership Priorities continued.

EU relations with **Egypt** have further intensified in 2022 through various EU high-level visits and joint initiatives in the areas of energy and climate, food security, and counterterrorism. A trilateral Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Egypt and Israel was signed providing the framework for the delivery of Israeli gas to the EU through Egypt's liquefaction capacity. On 19 June, the ninth meeting of the EU-Egypt Association Council endorsed the new Partnership Priorities for the period 2021-2027. COP27 saw high-level attendance from the EU at the UN Climate Change Conference in Sharm el-Sheikh. A bilateral MoU **on a strategic partnership on renewable hydrogen was signed.**

The EU confirmed in 2022 its renewed commitment to deepening the EU-**Algeria** partnership to achieve its full potential. Institutional meetings in the framework of the Association Agreement between EU and Algeria continued, with several sectoral EU-Algeria sub-committee meetings. Energy, strengthening security and stability in the region, governance and human rights, economic cooperation and trade, the environment, and migration remain mutual interests. However, despite a tentatively mutually agreed solution, the trade barriers raised by Algeria remain an outstanding issue and are further complicated by the full blockage by Algeria of its trade with Spain (except gas), as of June 2022.

The EU continued engaging with **Jordan** to pursue a constructive policy dialogue and assistance in a broad range of areas. On 2 June, the successful 14th EU-Jordan Association Council adopted the new EU-Jordan Partnership Priorities for the period 2021-2027, announced the EU MIP for Jordan for the period 2021-2027 and launched the EU-Jordan Investment Platform. On 15 June, European Commission President von der Leyen was received by His Majesty King Abdullah II in Amman. On 27 September, President of the European Council Michel held a meeting with His Majesty King Abdullah II in Tokyo. The third tranche of the EU MFA III programme for Jordan (EUR 200 million) remains available until April 2023.

In **Lebanon**, in 2022 the EU deployed an election observation mission to observe the 15 May parliamentary elections. On 26 July, the Council extended for one year a framework for targeted restrictive measures to address the situation in Lebanon, including the possibility of imposing sanctions against persons and entities who are responsible for undermining democracy or the rule of law. On 30 July, the High

[164] C(2022) 8015 of 28 November 2022.

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Representative issued a declaration on behalf of the EU, expressing extreme concern about the severe socio-economic crisis in Lebanon and its impact on all of Lebanon's vulnerable populations. On 28 October, the EU welcomed the signing of the agreement on the delineation of the maritime boundary between Lebanon and Israel, while on 24 November the MIP Lebanon 2021-24 was approved by the European Commission.

The EU remained committed to the resolution of the **Israeli-Palestinian** conflict based on the two-state solution and throughout the year reiterated its clear position that all settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory are against international law and unilateral measures should be avoided. The EU also voiced its position at the EU-Israel Association Council, which was resumed in 2022 after a pause of ten years. The EU has welcomed the normalisation of Israel's relation with some Arab countries, notably through the Abraham Accords and the Negev Forum, and has advocated for the inclusion of the Palestinians. The EU Special Representative for the Middle East Peace Process has intensified his efforts to revive peace efforts through a regional comprehensive peace approach. The EU has also continued supporting, politically and financially, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), in close cooperation with the international donor community. The European Joint Strategy 2021-24 for Palestine was adopted in November 2022.

The EU continued to provide assistance across **Syria** and in neighbouring refugee-hosting countries. The EU and its Member States are the largest donors of humanitarian aid for Syria, having provided over EUR 27 billion since 2011. The EU continues to support efforts to find a lasting solution to the conflict negotiated under the auspices of the UN according to Security Council Resolution 2254, notably through the Constitutional Committee in Geneva, and supports the work of the UN Special Envoy for Syria. The EU continued to be a partner to the Global Coalition to defeat Da'esh and maintained substantial restrictive measures on the Assad regime.

In **Libya**, the EU continued to support efforts to stabilise the country. Following the postponement of national elections in December 2021, the EU has encouraged and advocated for a consensual solution based on an inclusive dialogue among Libyan stakeholders and paving the way for the organisation of elections. The EU welcomed the arrival of the new UN Special Representative and staunchly supported the mediation efforts led by the UN. Moreover, the EU continued its active involvement and participation in the UN-led Berlin Process, notably as a Co-Chair of the Economic Working Group. Throughout 2022, the EU remained engaged also providing financial assistance through different instruments. Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI guaranteed the implementation of the UN arms embargo. The EU Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission (EUBAM) Libya continued to build Libyan authorities' capacities in the areas of border management, law enforcement and criminal justice. Both IRINI and EUBAM underwent a Strategic Review during 2022.

Since its launch in May 2022, the **regional TEI 'Jobs through trade and investment'** has been addressing the important challenges for decent employment in the Southern Neighbourhood both on the demand and supply sides. It has been supporting a holistic approach to job creation in the Southern Neighbourhood, by bringing together initiatives that link trade, investment, and entrepreneurship with job creation and human capital development. Following a 'Team Europe' approach, the European Commission, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Sweden, EBRD and EIB have so far mobilised around EUR 2.9 billion distributed in 102 initiatives to achieve these objectives.

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4.4.2.2. Working together towards the SDGs

The Agenda for the Mediterranean takes into account guidance from the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly for a green, digital and just recovery, contributing to energy, climate, growth and industry, and innovation related SDGs. The roll out of the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) for the Southern Neighbours will help foster sustainable development including human development related SDGs addressed through programmes supporting gender equality, women's empowerment, youth, education, as well as institutional development, good governance and rule of law.

Women continued to face discrimination on many fronts in the Southern Neighbourhood. The gender situation, combined with poverty and exclusion, is even worsening in some countries and makes SDG 5 targets difficult to meet. To respond to these challenges, the EU continued to work, notably with national and local authorities and civil society organisations, to advance on gender equality and women's empowerment. In 2022, different interventions were adopted to promote the participation of women in politics, women entrepreneurship and economic empowerment, to achieve freedom from all forms of gender-based violence and promote sexual and reproductive rights.

In line with the European Commission Gender Action Plan (GAP III)[165], that foresees that at least 85 % of programmes are gender relevant by 2025, gender has not only been mainstreamed in EU interventions in the region, but several gender-specific projects were adopted in 2022. In Lebanon, the 'Women empowerment Hub', a EUR 6 million intervention aims to increase women's participation in political spheres, foster an enabling environment for better engagement in the workforce and key legislative reforms to protect women from all forms of violence. In Egypt in 2022, an Action was adopted via a EUR 10 million programme 'EU for Women Empowerment' (EU TAMKEEN) supporting equal opportunities and human development. At regional level, the Al-Kawa project was adopted to support the economic empowerment of women contributing in particular to the achievement of the SDG 5, indicator 5.a 'undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources', and 5.b 'enhance the use of enabling technology, to promote the empowerment of women'.

Regarding energy (SDG 7), as mentioned in the Agenda for the Mediterranean, 'The Southern Neighbourhood is one of the main hotspots in the world as regards climate change and environmental degradation. At the same time, the Mediterranean region is home to some of the world's best solar and wind resources, presenting unparalleled opportunities for clean energy cooperation, with hydrogen production as a new strategic priority.' This calls for an accelerated clean energy transition at the regional level, which enhances the greening of countries' energy mix and overall energy security. The EU is therefore accompanying its southern partners to promote energy efficiency and enhance deployment of renewables (including clean hydrogen production for domestic use and export), to reinforce interregional interconnections through electricity infrastructure (e.g., the 'ELMED' interconnection between Italy and Tunisia, to which the EU recently announced a substantial financial contribution), as well as through supporting convergence of the regulatory frameworks, institutional capacity building, exchange of expertise and awareness raising. New financing instruments, developed and implemented with European and international financing institutions (blending and guarantees) also strongly contribute to this 'Green Deal oriented' dynamics. For instance, in Morocco, the EU provides funding support for the Noor Ouarzazate project, the biggest solar plant in Africa, investing about EUR 106.5 million and leveraging

[165] JOIN(2020)17 final of 25 November 2020, and its accompanying SWD(2020)284 Joint Staff Working Document.

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investments from other EU financial and development partners including the EIB, AFD and KfW (EUR 1 465.5 million). In total, European funds amount to up to 60 % of the total cost of this project that is expected to reduce carbon emissions by 760 000 tons per year, and 17.5 million tons over 25 years in Morocco.

Contributing to SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth), the regional Team Europe initiative (TEI) on 'Job creation through trade and investment' was launched on the occasion of the Union for the Mediterranean Ministerial on Employment in May 2022 in Marrakesh to strengthen economic development in the region. It is supported by the European Commission, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Sweden, the European Training Foundation as well as the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to achieve a common objective: focus on trade and investment, technical and vocational skills and inclusive entrepreneurship to promote decent job creation. Collectively, this TEI will mobilise up to EUR 2.8 billion over the coming years**.** Complementary current and future regional programmes converge and contribute to the TEI, including on support to social economy, green and circular economy, as well as women's economic empowerment.

Climate issues (SDG 13) were addressed through support programmes launched in 2022 in North of Africa. In Algeria, the 2022 Annual Action programme includes climate action and support to agribusiness start-ups. In Libya, new programmes adopted in 2022 will address climate change. In Tunisia, the 2022 annual programming includes support to solar energy.

Within the larger goal of taking urgent action in one of the regions most affected by the effects of climate change, water scarcity and exposure to extreme heat, the EU, its Member States and international financial institutions have joined efforts to work together with the Southern Neighbourhood countries to protect the ecosystem they share around the Mediterranean Sea. As illustrations, TEIs on water have been developed in Tunisia (SDG 6) and Jordan (SDG 6 and 12). In Morocco, in line with the Green Partnership, a programme promotes eco-agriculture and sustainable management of forests, among other objectives (SDG 15). In Egypt, the support to institutional reform and capacity building in the irrigation sector, fundamental for food security of a large population continues (SDG 2). The EU is also financing innovative projects in Jordan to transform solid waste into energy and wastewater to water for irrigation, thus also contributing to SDG 7 and 12. Finally, under a 2023 programme for Palestine, a Team Europe initiative on Water and Wastewater is being prepared.

Contributing to SDG 16 (Peace, justice and strong institutions) in Jordan, the EU signed a financial agreement in December 2022 for a new budget support programme of EUR 39 million to enhance the performance, quality, accountability and transparency of justice services and criminal proceedings, in compliance with international legal standards and integrating gender responsive and rights-based approaches. The programme will also support the access to justice and legal aid for refugees and vulnerable populations. In Lebanon, the on-going support access to justice and restorative measures programme (EUR 6 million) provides legal aid and support to victims of the Beirut port explosion and to vulnerable groups in conflict with the law, including developing restorative criminal justice responses and preventing violent extremism. In Palestine a further EU contribution to the Sawaysia programme led by UNDP and co-financed by several EU Member States is being prepared to facilitate access to justice for the Palestinian population.

In line with the SDG 17 (Partnerships for the goals) the EU maintained its support to policy coherence and coordination as well as dialogue with regional organisations, notably the Union for the Mediterranean

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(UfM) as the main institutional interlocutor, but also with other actors, such as the Anna Lindh Foundation and the League of Arab States. The UfM organised several events and four Ministerial meetings (on Water, Research and Innovation, Employment, and Gender), thus confirming its convening power. On 24 November 2022, the Seventh Regional Forum of the UfM took place in Barcelona, back-to-back with the EU-Southern Neighbourhood Ministerial Meeting reiterating the crucial importance of the UfM partnership in a volatile geopolitical environment and the unwavering commitment of the EU towards its southern neighbours to create an area of joint prosperity, to promote an international rules based order, and to find shared opportunities to respond to common challenges, in particular on climate change and economic disruptions.

The UfM was further strengthened with the Mediterranean Ministerial on Research and Innovation in June 2022. This has led to a Mediterranean Initiative in the EU R&I programme Horizon Europe, targeting cooperation between European and Mediterranean researchers in the Work Programmes 2023-2024 in the areas of climate change, renewable energy and health for a total investment of EUR 320 million.

4.4.2.3. Implementation

The EU continued to roll out the Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) set out in the framework of the February 2021 Joint Communication 'Renewed partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood – a new Agenda for the Mediterranean'. The EIP is the main policy framework through which the priorities of the Global Gateway are catered for. By end of 2022, EUR 3.3 billion grants have been committed (EUR 1.6 billion for the year 2022). In addition, the Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP) mobilised EUR 5.7 billion of investments thanks to EUR 362 million of blended grants. The NIP blending instrument continues being deployed in synergy with a new approach (under the EFSD+) based on guarantee schemes for European and International Financial institutions. In 2022, screening of proposals led to the selection of 16 guarantee schemes supporting private sector operations for a total of EUR 712 million guarantee coverage for connectivity, micro-, small, medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) financing, sustainable cities, sustainable agriculture, sustainable finance, and human development projects.

Major infrastructure projects were confirmed in 2022. The European Commission-EIB financed Medusa digital interconnector project will lay a high-capacity optical fibre submarine cable connecting EU countries and the North of Africa. The ELMED interconnector represents the first electrical interconnection between Italy and Tunisia through an undersea high-voltage electricity cable. Finally, the Aqaba Amman Water Desalination and Conveyance Project will enhance water security in Jordan and address the impact of climate change in the region.

Human development and inequalities

In 2022, the EU stepped up its cooperation efforts to meet the challenges of poverty and mitigate the economic and social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. Across the Southern Neighbourhood region, the EU continued to promote the enhancement of the role and capacities of civil society, with particular attention to gender policies, gender equality, youth and women's empowerment.

In Egypt, the new EUR 50 million programme EU for Decent Life has been adopted to address the multidimensional aspects of poverty in under privileged rural areas, including support to rural development, food security and climate change resilience. In addition, the EU initiated a 'Support to equal opportunities and human Development' (EUR 10 million) to progress in gender equality and women and

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girls' empowerment in Egypt. In Tunisia, owing to the dire social and economic situation the country faces in the context of the current global food and energy crisis, the EU provided its support with the payment of EUR 253.4 million in direct budgetary support based on the progress achieved in implementing structural reforms.

The EU continued to provide swift and substantial contributions to strengthening health and social protection systems and services for the most vulnerable populations and those at-risk, such as in Libya (a new EUR 16 million programme adopted in 2022) and through the Trust Fund Madad assisting Syrian refugees and hosting communities. Madad has reached out to 9.5 million beneficiaries since its creation in 2016 by implementing large scale resilience programmes on education, livelihoods, social assistance, health, water and sanitation.

High priority was given to education (including the promotion of inclusive, quality education for women, girls, and other vulnerable groups) as well as to employment and empowerment of youth. In Tunisia, the European Commission adopted a new Education Sector Support Programme (PASE - *Programme d'Appui au Secteur de l'Éducation*) of EUR 65 million to improve the governance and quality of the education system, including increased digitalisation and adequacy of education and vocational training curricula to the Tunisian and European labour markets. This new action is complementary to the ongoing school modernisation programme which was beefed up in 2022 to contribute to the construction of 80 more digitally fit and environmentally friendly primary schools in the country. In Jordan, the EU adopted a EUR 10 million programme to support the modernisation announced by King Abdullah II and enhance women and youth's engagement, capacities and opportunities to participate actively in political and civic life. In Morocco, the EU allocated EUR 46 million to support the reform of the higher education sector, scientific research, and innovation to promote the employability and mobility of higher education graduates.

Green Deal

In Tunisia, the European Commission adopted in 2022 a EUR 12 million programme with the EBRD for a total of EUR 386 million investments to support the development of solar energy through the construction of new solar power plants as part of the first large scale renewable private-public projects to be developed under the concession regime for independent power producers. Furthermore, discussions progressed well on the upcoming implementation of the ELMED flagship project for electric interconnection between Italy and Tunisia, which offers a possibility to transport electricity from renewable energy sources in both directions and which was awarded a EUR 307 million grant from the Connecting Europe Facility – Energy in December 2022. In Egypt, a Green and Sustainable Industries project (EU grant EUR 30 million) has been set up by the EU to eliminate industrial pollution, decarbonise the industrial sector and develop sustainable industrial practices through resource efficiency and circular economy interventions. In Morocco, decarbonisation is a priority to foster national energy security and economic competitiveness of industrial production and exports. The EU programme *Énergie Verte* ('Green Energy') of EUR 50 million has been designed to boost the Moroccan energy transition. In October 2022, the EU-Morocco Green Partnership was signed as part of the external dimension of the European Green Deal. The EUR 115 million '*Terre Verte*' programme is a material implementation of the partnership in supporting the ecological, inclusive, and innovative development of the forestry and agriculture sectors.

The EU continued to support Jordan's green transition with the adoption of a new programme to treat wastewater more sustainably, including the reuse of treated wastewater for irrigation. The project will benefit a large area east of Amman, where vulnerable host communities and refugees are prevalent. In

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addition, in March 2022, the EU and Member States pledged around EUR 600 million for the Aqaba-Amman Water Desalination and Conveyor Project to help Jordan address its chronic water shortages. In Libya, the EU also adopted a new EUR 16 million programme to support the national climate change strategy and substantive actions for the protection of environment.

In line with the EU's Green Deal agenda, the regional Switch-MED project supported a faster transition of Southern Mediterranean countries towards sustainable consumption and production. The regional Water and Environment Support project contributed to reducing the pollution reaching the Mediterranean Sea, providing technical assistance and training to enforce the national regulatory frameworks, foster dialogue and promote exchanges of best practices. Furthermore, the EU regional cooperation on energy focused on energy efficiency through regional conferences (meetMED Week in Cairo in March 2022), the 'Renewable Energy Expert's Network' and the Sustainable Energy Investments Forum. The EU also pursued its support to harmonised regulatory frameworks and integrated electricity grids through the Association of Mediterranean Energy Regulators (MEDREG) and the association of Mediterranean Transmission System Operators (MED TSO). EU-funded regional projects provided technical assistance to support local authorities in the development of their sustainable energy and climate action plans (SECAPs) and affiliation to the Global Covenant of Mayors (GCoM) initiative. The 'Climate for Cities' programme supported five local authorities through climate-relevant infrastructures, capacity building and awareness raising.

Sustainable growth and jobs

In the framework of the EIP for the Southern Neighbourhood, the EU continued to support partner countries' resilience through new programmes focusing on improving the investment and business environment and support MSMEs' development. In Egypt, the EU launched two projects for financial inclusion (EUR 12.5 million) and finance in common (EUR 13.5 million) to improve access to finance and advisory services, in particular in the underserved segments of women and youth, fostering sustainable investments for MSMEs, and building capacities in sustainable finance. In Morocco, the EU adopted in December 2022 the first bilateral programme in support of the cultural and creative sector (EUR 10 million) as a vector of job creation for the youth. In Palestine, the EU engaged in policy dialogue and mobilisation of resources for greater access to finance and investments, with the EU-Palestine Investment Platform playing a catalytic role. At the first EU-Palestine Business Forum, several agreements were concluded worth EUR 73 million, including the 'Fostering sustainable economic development' programme (EUR 30.5 million) and the first Guarantee Agreements between FMO Dutch Development Bank and the micro finance institution Vitas Palestine (worth about EUR 10 million). In Jordan, the EU adopted a new project worth EUR 65 million for private sector development, entrepreneurship and job creation.

In Algeria, the EU launched two projects in 2022 on social and solidarity economy (EUR 7 million) and agribusiness (EUR 10 million) to support the sustainable economy and development of SMEs. At regional level, the TEI **'**Jobs through trade and investment' launched in May 2022 with the support of the European Commission, Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Sweden, the European Training Foundation as well as the EIB and EBRD and aims to focus on trade and investment, technical and vocational skills and inclusive entrepreneurship. Collectively, this TEI will mobilise up to EUR 2.8 billion over the coming years. With the 'From Innovation to Creation' project (EUR 8 million) launched in 2022, the EU contributes to improve the effectiveness of the start-up ecosystems in Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Tunisia. The EU's regional programme on mainstreaming employment into trade and investment (EUR 5 million) implemented by

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the International Labour Organisation (ILO) addresses the nexus between trade, investment and job creation through capacity development and knowledge sharing activities.

CASE STUDY

Case Study from Palestine - Team Europe initiative (TEI): Sustainable Growth, Jobs and Resilience

Over the past years, Joint Programming in Palestine has proved to be a positive experience, contributing to the development of a culture of 'working better together', and improving overall coordination and effectiveness of the EU and its Member States' development cooperation. Fundamental building blocks of the process include joint analysis, development of an overall result framework and intervention logic and Theory of Change for each sector, providing participating partners with a clear reference for programming and policy dialogue.

This experience provided the fertile ground to design a comprehensive TEI for 'Sustainable Growth, Jobs and Resilience'. The initiative intends to contribute to Palestinian sustainable and inclusive economic development, based on the opportunities jointly identified by the EU and its Member States, in alignment with the priorities of the Palestinian national development plan. Inclusive and resilient growth is considered as one of the main areas where European development partners can have a substantial impact in Palestine by joining forces through their respective programming and policy dialogue efforts. It combines solid and structured policy dialogue, an increased mobilisation of financial instruments and a policy-first approach with attention to the implementation of the humanitarian/development nexus to enhance the resilience of the economy. It is implemented through seven interconnected components: policy dialogue on business environment providing targeted support to foster reforms; mobilisation of finance and investments through the EU-Palestine Investment Platform; trade; green economy; digital transformation; entrepreneurship; economic resilience and promoting the humanitarian-development nexus.

For instance, in 2022 the EU and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development jointly designed the action 'Greening the Palestinian Economy'. It addresses three main objectives: promoting the adoption of innovative green technologies by the private sector; enhancing access to green and inclusive finance by private investors; and developing a sound enabling framework for environmental and economic policies. Germany will lead European development partners engaged in this component of the TEI.

Digitalisation, science, technology and innovation

In Morocco, the programme for the Public Administration Reform (EUR 50 million) puts a strong emphasis on digitalisation of the administration. In Israel, the twinning project 'Strengthening the regulatory capacity of Israel in the field of telecommunications', with a focus on service provision over networks owned and operated by others, facilitated an amendment to the Israeli Telecommunication Law inspired by the EU regulatory framework. In Palestine the EU developed with EU Member States an EU Digital Strategy for Palestine that acts as a framework of the upcoming EU and EU Member States interventions in favour of digital transition. At regional level, the European Commission approved a EUR 40 million grant to the EIB as a contribution to the Medusa project, deploying a submarine cable connecting EU with the Southern Neighbourhood. This flagship infrastructure project is designed to improve digital connectivity

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capacity of (and between) research and education centres around the Mediterranean (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt for the Southern shore in the first instance).

Migration and forced displacement

After more than a decade of conflict in Syria, the scale, severity and complexity of needs of the Syrian population remain extensive, while large-scale, conflict-related, displacement also persists at significant levels. Over 6.8 million Syrians are internally displaced and a further 5.6 million are refugees, primarily in neighbouring countries. In 2022, the EU adopted a substantial assistance package (EUR 310 million) in response to the Syrian crisis to support the Syrian population inside Syria (EUR 46 million) and to support refugees from Syria and vulnerable host communities in Iraq (overall EUR 30 million), Jordan (overall EUR 80 million) and Lebanon (overall EUR 154 million). Together with its Member States, the EU remains the largest donor in response to the crisis, having mobilised, so far, more than EUR 27.4 billion since 2011. Co-chaired by the EU and the UN, the Brussels VI Conference on 'Supporting the future of Syria and the region' held on 9-10 May 2022 brought together over 80 countries together with international organisations, reaffirming the EU's engagement. It succeeded in mobilising aid through pledges totalling EUR 6.4 billion for 2022 and beyond for Syria and the neighbouring countries hosting Syrian refugee populations.

In North Africa, migration movements increased in 2022, particularly along the Central Mediterranean route. An EU action plan for the Central Mediterranean Route was adopted in November 2022 to address the immediate challenges. Acknowledging the particular needs of the region, a MIP (2021-2027) was adopted in November 2022, proposing a Multi-country Migration programme for the Southern Neighbourhood while actions worth EUR 412 million in total were adopted in 2021-2022. More specifically, most recent actions targeted Libya, Egypt and Tunisia, notably to address the issue of irregular migration through strengthened border management, while ensuring the protection of migrants and refugees. A budget support programme was adopted for Morocco, with a focus on overall migration and border management, and regional actions were adopted to address returns and reintegration, legal migration and police and cross-border cooperation.

Governance, peace and security (and conflict prevention)

In 2022, the EU remained active in promoting democracy, good governance and security, particularly by supporting reforms and promoting the critical role of civil society in the Southern Neighbourhood. The EU supports the reinforcement of public administration and public service delivery capacities in Libya, at central and local levels. The EU launched a series of new programmes including institutional support to the House of Representatives and promoting the participation of women in decision-making as well as access to high quality and efficient justice. In Morocco, on the continuation of the EU's support provided since 2015 to the reform of the justice sector (about EUR 80 million in total), the EU adopted a new programme (EUR 10 million) to enhance the independence and capacity of the judicial institutions and improve citizens' access to justice. The action will contribute to legislative development, digital transformation and capacity building, with a focus on the protection of women. Further actions have been developed in Jordan (EUR 39 million) to improve judicial administration and procedures and access to justice (including for refugees) and strengthen the capacities of independent oversight mechanisms and civil society organisations. The EU has also provided support to Lebanon with the project Building Integrity and National Accountability (EUR 2.8 million) implemented in the Reform, Recovery and Reconstruction Framework, to enhance the role and representation of the civil society to monitor and advocate for transparency and accountability.

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In Palestine, the EU has continued to be in the lead in public finance management and public administration reform. Policy dialogue on key public finance management reforms continued under different fora including PEGASE and resulted in the acknowledgement by the Palestinian Authority of the need to address the key domestic drivers of the fiscal fragility, namely unsustainable payslips, high cost of health referrals and net lending. In 2022, the EU continued to support Palestinian civil society organisations (CSOs) via multiple instruments aiming at promoting and protecting human rights and democratic governance, raising electoral awareness, and supporting the resilience of the Palestinian population in East Jerusalem. In Tunisia, the EU finalised its Justice Support Programme, supporting CSOs in this field, and is preparing new projects in the sectors of security and governance. In Algeria, the EU4s Support Programme for integrated Local Development (EUR 20 million) has been developed to support regional cohesion and participatory democracy and reduce the development gap between the country's wilayas. Further support to promote the role and capacities of CSOs was provided for instance in Libya through technical assistance and training.

In 2022, the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis (the Madad Trust Fund) remained a major EU tool to address the vital needs of Syrian refugees and host communities in neighbouring countries with close to 100 projects under implementation, already reaching more than 9.5 million people. Furthermore, the EU engaged in the promotion of peace, stability and good governance through education, women's empowerment, and culture such as through the programme implementing the Common Agenda to combat violence against women and girls and promote inclusive peace building processes in Syria (EUR 2 million). At regional level, the EU provided support to the Anna Lindh Foundation as a key interlocutor in matters of intercultural dialogue, aiming to promote mutual understanding in the Euro-Mediterranean region, cross-network collaborations and offering policy recommendations, capacity-building and online resources for civil society, media operators and policy makers. Policy recommendations and online resources were provided reaching 24 500 direct and indirect beneficiaries overall; 183 activities were conducted to support project development and partnership-building for 154 organisations, reaching 1 171 000 direct and indirect beneficiaries.

The regional project Sharaka supported partner countries to better detect and intercept organised crime and terrorist individuals or groups through INTERPOL technologies, capacity building and police operations. Thanks to the project, more than 800 officers have been trained; 46 border-crossing points are now connected to INTERPOL databases and can share intelligence in real time; seven National Central Bureaux are equipped with INTERPOL video conferencing systems enabling secured police cooperation.

CASE STUDY

The programme Protecting human rights, rule of law and democracy through shared standards in the Southern Mediterranean (South Programme V) is an EU-Council of Europe joint initiative. Its main objectives has been the progressive establishment of a common legal space between Europe and the Southern Mediterranean based on human rights, rule of law and democratic governance standards. Since its launch in 2012, significant progress has been achieved, for instance:

- The common legal space has been expanded through 19 accessions by countries in the region to key Council of Europe conventions, as well as harmonisation of national legal frameworks with European and international standards.

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- Institutional capacities of partners in the region have been strengthened such as through the European programme for human rights education for legal professionals (HELP), and the University for Democracy for the Southern Mediterranean (UniDem Med) of the Venice Commission.

- The National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Human Trafficking, and the first online reporting platforms to combat cyberviolence against children have been established in the region.

Food security and nutrition

The Southern Neighbourhood region is highly dependent on food imports. The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine significantly aggravated the global food crisis, initially triggered by climate change, conflicts and COVID-19 consequences, by damaging the food supply chain from the Black Sea region. Tensions on food supply put at risk macro-economic and ultimately social stability in the region.

As part of the EU's wide-ranging response to mitigate this fallout, the EU stepped up its efforts in supporting its partners in coping with food insecurity. In 2022, the EU quickly set up the Food and Resilience Facility (FRF) worth EUR 225 million in total for the benefit of Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia. Allocations targeted support to food aid dependent people (Lebanon, Palestine, and Syria), increased local food production, restoring the potential for cereal production and/or grain storage capacity (Tunisia, Egypt), promoting sustainable agricultural and rural development (Morocco, Tunisia), including a more efficient use of water for agricultural purposes (Jordan) and the development of organic agri-food business (Algeria). In Palestine, the FRF contributed with EUR 10 million to the Cash Transfer programme to the most vulnerable families, while EUR 15 million was added to the regular EU annual contribution to UNRWA.

In Syria, 150 Farmer Field Schools/Farmer Business Schools were established for livestock practices and animal feed, with 134 facilitators trained and benefitting 2 672 farmers. During the training period, the total increase in milk yield was around 6 500 kg per day and equivalent to around USD 2 900 per day.

Furthermore, the European Commission and the EIB concluded the negotiation of a new programme with an EU guarantee under EFSD+ for a new EUR 150 million food resilience programme to support the Tunisian Office for Cereals for food security infrastructure and sectoral reforms. A EUR 20 million EU grant will complement this financing for the programme in 2023.

4.4.2.4. Humanitarian aid and civil protection – responding to the emergency needs of people affected by conflicts and disasters

Despite the fragility of the security and political situation, the humanitarian needs in **Libya** continued to show a downward trend in 2022. The holding of the October 2020 ceasefire agreement resulted in a 58 % reduction in the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from 316 000 in October 2020 to 134 000 in August 2022. In 2022, the European Commission provided EUR 4 million in humanitarian assistance to address existing humanitarian needs in the areas of protection, education in emergencies, health, disaster preparedness, coordination and basic needs and to promote international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights with all relevant stakeholders, directly and through its partners.

Egypt is a country of destination and transit for refugees, asylum seekers, and migrants from the Middle East and East Africa. Over 280 000 registered refugees are stranded in the poorest neighbourhoods of its largest cities. Syrians account for 50 % of the refugees, with the remainder mainly from East Africa, Iraq,

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and Yemen. Many refugees and asylum seekers live below the national poverty line and have been adversely affected by the economic difficulties the country is facing as a consequence of the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine, and the post COVID-19 global economic situation. In 2022, the European Commission provided EUR 4.7 million in humanitarian funding for education in emergencies and basic needs to the most vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers in Egypt. The European Commission assisted over 1 700 unaccompanied and separated children to enter, re-enter or stay enrolled in formal education. It provided multi-purpose cash assistance to over 37 000 refugees and asylum seekers, while also providing support to education in emergencies sector coordination. It mainstreamed protection activities and increased nexus coordination.

Still without a resolution for the four-decade long political conflict, tens of thousands of **Sahrawi refugees** remain stranded in a forgotten and protracted humanitarian crisis. Gathered in five camps around Tindouf in the Algerian Sahara Desert, the Sahrawi refugees depend on external humanitarian assistance. The political sensitivities, as well as extreme conditions thwart any short-term perspectives for return, integration or resettlement and deter the interest of development actors. In 2022, the European Commission deployed projects amounting to EUR 11 million to respond to the high vulnerability of Sahrawi refugees in camps. This amount includes exceptional reinforcement of EUR 2 million provided for food assistance as food insecurity increased due to inflationary pressures in global markets. Other assistance included support to improve the quality of primary education, the supply of essential medicines covering up to 75 % of the health needs of the population, and the provision of safe drinking water.

4.4.2.5. Crisis response and preparedness

The EU continued to respond to ongoing crises in its southern neighbourhood.

In **Libya,** the EU launched new actions on stabilisation through continued support to mediation and improved human security, including mine clearing action as well as through support to the implementation of the UN supported ceasefire agreement.

Under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), specific facilities established to support partner countries efforts to counter terrorism and violent extremism were instrumental in mobilising expertise and increasing the preparedness and response capacities of countries such as **Jordan**, **Morocco** and **Tunisia**, supporting the organisation of live exercises to test and improve operational response and inter-agency coordination.

Through financing via the CFSP budget, the EU integrated border management assistance mission in **Libya** (EUBAM Libya) continues to assist the Libyan authorities in developing state security structures, in particular, on border management, law enforcement and criminal justice. Through its revised operational plans, EUBAM Libya has been mandated with the additional strategic task of being ready to provide support to the UN-led efforts for peace within the Berlin Process, within the scope of EUBAM's core areas of engagement.

4.5. Western Balkans and Türkiye

4.5.1. Introduction (policy developments)

Financial Assistance under IPA III is based on the IPA III Programming Framework[166], which is an overarching European Commission strategic document for the use of IPA III funds for the duration of the 2021-2027 multiannual financial framework (MFF), reflecting the specific objectives of the IPA III Regulation[167] and is focused on the priorities of the enlargement process. It is articulated in five thematic Windows which broadly correspond to the specific objectives of the Regulation:

- Window 1: Rule of law, fundamental rights and democracy;
- Window 2: Good governance, EU *acquis* alignment, good neighbourly relations and strategic communication;
- Window 3: Green agenda and sustainable connectivity;
- Window 4: Competitiveness and inclusive growth; and
- Window 5: Territorial and cross border cooperation.

Actions are deployed, to the benefit of the IPA III beneficiaries through annual/multiannual action plans at national/regional level, or horizontal initiatives targeting specific partners (e.g., civil society) or cross-cutting issues. A significant amount of funds is mobilised through financial instruments such as blending grants and loans, and budgetary guarantees, via the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF), a common financing platform where international financing institutions and Member States' agencies combine funds with IPA III to increase leverage and impact of EU support.

The programming of IPA III funds follows a two-stage approach. In the first stage, IPA III beneficiaries prepare strategic responses, outlining how their policies and sectoral strategies align to the recommendations and requirements of the specific policy instruments of the enlargement process. Such actions are screened based on their policy relevance (first stage). Those that are approved are developed into fully fledged programmes, assessed based on technical maturity (second stage). In this way the selected programmes fully comply with the key policy priorities of the enlargement process and are ready for implementation as soon as the financing decision is taken.

The key policy framework for the IPA III funds remains the EUR 9 billion Economic and Investment Plan (EIP) and Green Agenda for the Western Balkans, which aims to spur the socio-economic green and digital recovery of the region and enhance its economic integration and cooperation.

The key instrument for the implementation of the EIP is the WBIF. With the endorsement of new investments in early December 2022 by the WBIF Board, a total of 40 flagship investments were approved, expected to leverage EUR 5.7 billion of investments (out of which EUR 1.8 billion are IPA funds). Some of these investments focus on boosting gas and electricity interconnectors and the construction of renewable energy projects and energy efficiency installations.

An important achievement in 2022 was the preparation and adoption in November, in a record time, of an unprecedented Energy Support Package for the Western Balkans in response to the energy crisis

[166] C(2021) 8914 final of 10 December 2021.
[167] Regulation (EU) 2021/1529 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 September 2021 establishing the Instrument for Pre-Accession assistance (IPA III).

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generated by the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine. The package amounts to EUR 1 billion in EU support and will lead to investments of up to EUR 2.5 billion. Half of the package is budget support, aimed to mitigate the impact of energy prices on vulnerable households and small businesses in the near term. 90 % of the funds are to be disbursed in early 2023, and the rest towards the end of the year, against the successful implementation of national actions plans by the beneficiaries. The other half, channelled through the WBIF, aims to advance energy diversification, renewable generation, gas and electricity interconnections and energy efficiency in the short to medium term.

Beside the Energy Support Package, a second programming process related to the 2022 IPA budget was also finalised by the end of the year for the Western Balkans, providing an additional EUR 534 million to the region via bilateral and multi-country programmes.

For Türkiye, recentralisation and redirection of remaining IPA II funds continued in line with the EU's political priorities. The European Commission adopted the annual action plan 2022[168] with a budget of EUR 142.998 million on 18 October. It focused on climate action and the environment, energy and transport, education, employment, and support to civil society and children's rights. Under the EFSD+, the European Commission adopted a Decision for the establishment of the Turkey Investment Platform[169] to promote public and private investments, notably in the areas of decarbonisation, digitalisation, access to finance, innovation and green investments.

Following the European Council of June 2021, EUR 3 billion was mobilised under both IPA III and NDICI for additional refugee assistance in Türkiye. From IPA III, in 2022, EUR 220 million was allocated for migration management and EUR 381 million to support basic needs of most vulnerable refugees. Under NDICI, a total of EUR 634 million was committed in 2022 through two individual measures providing basic needs and socio-economic support to refugees.

4.5.2. Working together towards the SDGs

The IPA has a strong focus on peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16) since rule of law remains the cornerstone of the accession process. IPA III programmes in this area aim to strengthen the legislative and institutional framework and capacities of IPA III beneficiaries, including criminal justice actors, as well as support actors, including civil society and media, which contribute to a rule-of-law enabling environment.

The EIP and the Green Agenda, through a significant package of public investments, technical assistance and budgetary guarantees, support several SDGs, especially SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy), SDG 13 (Climate action), and SDG 9 (Innovation and industry). The EIP also seeks to boost private sector development and employment, thus contributing to SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth).

Regarding SDG 4 (Quality education), through the Erasmus+ programme the EU encourages cooperation and mobility opportunities in higher education, training, youth and sport in the region. For SDG 5 (Gender equality), the EU has, for example, helped increase local capacities to measure and monitor impact of gender equality policies, as well as, with the support of UN Women, tackle gender-based violence in the Western Balkans and in Türkiye.

[168] C(2022) 7448 final of 18 October 2022.
[169] C(2022) 1895 final of 31 March 2022.

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In 2022, SDG 3 (Good health and well-being) was promoted with post-COVID-19 support to better the resilience of health systems in the region, by strengthening hazard response capacities, health systems financing for universal health coverage and access to vaccines.

Contributions to ensuring decent work for all in sustainable development (SDG 8) was made via enhanced tripartite and bipartite social dialogue in the Economic and Social Councils, which foster collective bargaining and ensure better representation of workers. The establishment of the Western Balkans' Network Tackling Undeclared Work is further helping protect workers against illegal labour relations as well as a level playing field for companies. The region is also upgrading its standards on occupational safety and health, in line with EU standards.

4.5.3. Implementation

Human development and inequalities

The European Commission supports the Western Balkans to implement the European Pillar of Social Rights, and the development of human capital, and helps deliver on the priorities identified in the economic reform programmes in the areas of education and skills, employment, and social protection and inclusion. Young people continued to be an important priority, especially as 2022 was declared the European Year of Youth and Tirana in Albania was named the European Youth Capital. The EU continued to fund several multi-country programmes for youth (including with the Regional Youth Cooperation Office). The EU continued to promote the social inclusion of Roma communities. New phases of regional Roma Education support and the Roma Integration programme (implemented by the Council of Europe) were signed and started implementation. Under a regional project, the European Institute for Gender Equality helped adopt EU standards and monitor the impact of their gender equality policies in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, while further support was provided in the fight against gender-based violence (implemented by UN Women).

In 2022, the Regional Housing Programme, providing sustainable housing to the most-vulnerable refugees and displaced families following the 1991-1995 conflicts, achieved a landmark moment with the delivery of its 10 000th home and the successful inclusion of these families in their receiving communities.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, an EU action helped strengthen systems of social service delivery for vulnerable groups affected by the COVID-19 pandemic and will contribute to economic growth, job security and a system of better social protection and inclusion. In Kosovo*, the EU supported the implementation of Kosovo's Gender Action Plan, focusing on tackling gender-based violence, promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights as well as promoting the economic and social rights of women and girls. In Albania, the EU supported the reconstruction of education facilities in 11 municipalities. A new action promotes the participation of youth in political, economic and social life, and introduces the EU Youth Guarantee to Albania. In North Macedonia, a new EU action promotes equal opportunities, gender equality, social protection and services, and health. In addition, 440 children with disabilities benefitted from an EU-supported scholarship programme, 25 schools improved teaching practices for such children and 15 school buildings have become more accessible for them.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244 (1999) and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

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In Serbia, the EU supports Serbian institutions to strengthen freedom of expression and media in line with EU requirements, helping with the alignment of legislation with EU acquis and best practices. The EU also supported the reform of the healthcare system, enhancing its resilience, inclusiveness and response capacity. In Türkiye, the EU provided additional support to develop more effective programmes targeting young people neither in education nor in employment (NEETs). It aimed to decrease the number of NEETs, especially young women and girls, through continuous education, skills development and empowerment by supporting their active participation in the labour market. Under the Facility for Refugees in Türkiye, the EU supported the access to high-quality education for Syrian children through the Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids into Turkish Education System (PIKTES) action. By June 2022, 740 000 refugee children were enrolled in school through this support.

Assistance to independent media and media pluralism in the Western Balkans and Türkiye continued. International partners and civil society organisations currently implement programmes worth more than EUR 40.5 million. EU assistance concentrated on an enabling environment for media (safety of journalists, public service media, regulators, media literacy and the fight against dis/misinformation, etc.), improving internal governance of media outlets and quality journalism, and enhancing regional media networks.

Green Deal

The EU4Green initiative was launched in 2022 and paves the way towards the implementation of the green agenda objectives and targets in the region and the six economies. The Energy Support Package also underpins the accelerated energy transition to a sustainable climate neutral economy and improved energy security, while reducing the socio-economic impact of the energy crisis, protecting energy users from the increase in prices and supporting recovery.

Bosnia and Herzegovina received assistance to strengthen its flood risk management, prepare a drought risk assessment, and investigate various flood release scenarios with the aim to secure water availability and resilience in the long run. Kosovo receives help to reduce the volume of municipal solid waste disposed to landfills and to increase the share of waste separated, re-used and recycled. In Albania, support for integrated water resources management continued with the development of management plans for important river basins. A new programme will also support Albania to improve the quality of water bodies and align further with the EU acquis. In North Macedonia, new EU activities will decrease water pollution, address climate change and promote the transition to a green economy. This includes improving wastewater processing infrastructure in three municipalities, with advanced techniques for a near-zero carbon footprint. In Serbia, the EU helps improve environmental protection infrastructure and increase national capacities for climate change management and mitigation along Green Agenda principles, including for legislative alignment and performance monitoring, as well as for project preparation.

In Türkiye, actions on environment and climate change cover a wide spectrum of challenges in line with the Green Deal, namely, climate change mitigation and adaptation, marine life protection, waste management, and air and water quality management. The EU also supports Turkish municipalities to pursue sustainable and smart urban mobility services.

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Sustainable growth and jobs

The EIP and the Green Agenda for the Western Balkans also include important measures to support job creation notably through the WBIF and support to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in the region. In 2022 the Western Balkans Guarantee facility, which is part of WBIF, endorsed six guarantees for a total coverage of EUR 310 million in support of the private sector development and is expected to enable significant private investment. Also in 2022, the WBIF supported three flagship investments to spur private sector competitiveness, including EUR 52 million granted by the EU and an estimated investment from financial institutions of EUR 395 million.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, support to employment and social sector reforms continued to help improve the socio-economic recovery in the country. The action builds on earlier EU programmes in the field and seeks to address post-pandemic challenges to economic growth, job security, quality of education and a system of better social protection and inclusion. In Kosovo, EU support has helped train nearly 1 000 students on digital and business skills and boost the competitiveness of the IT sector. In Albania, the EU delivered incentive grants for small loans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in agri-tourism via local financial institutions. In North Macedonia, the EU promotes greening and the transition to a circular climate-neutral economy, stimulating companies to innovate in a sustainable way, grow and create jobs in green business. It also supports the development of the Prespa region, by promoting sustainable tourism. In Serbia, the EU supports community-based care and the de-institutionalisation of the social protection system, as well as labour market reform.

In Türkiye, the EU continued its support to increase competitiveness and productivity in the private sector, with a focus on the green and digital transformation. The EU support reached a total of EUR 264 million by 2022, delivered through 42 projects. A new action started in 2022 to support women's employment in a post-COVID-19 and economic crisis context. Under the Facility for Refugees in Türkiye, socio-economic support was provided to improve refugee employability, via training, job counselling, and simplifying the work permit process to help both Syrian refugees and host communities. By December 2022, approximately 60 000 beneficiaries were registered at the Turkish Employment Agency and over 5 000 were trained. More than 28 000 job seekers gained on-the-job professional experience in the real economy, and more than 19 000 beneficiaries joined the formal labour market.

Digitalisation, science, technology and innovation

The EIP provides direct support for innovation and green growth and contributes to address the policy objectives of the Green Agenda and the Innovation, Research, Education, Culture, Youth and Sport Agenda ('Innovation Agenda') for the Western Balkans. Investing in the competitiveness of the private sector entails ensuring affordable and diversified access to finance for start-ups and MSMEs. It also entails addressing barriers to business climate development at local and regional level.

During 2022, WBIF supported the extension of the StarVenture programme to the Western Balkans, which helps innovative enterprises expand their activities and enter new markets. The programme is coupled with the second Enterprise Development Expansion Fund managed by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), that offers access to finance to innovative enterprises in the region. WBIF also launched in 2022 a call dedicated to the digital transition of the business sector in the region.

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In Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU helps strengthen operational capacities and digitise public financial management and digital public services, as well as the alignment of its statistics with EU standards. In Kosovo, the EU supported the construction of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences at the University of Pristina. In Albania, the EU continues to support the innovation eco-system, for instance by funding 33 Start-ups and seven Innovation Support Organisations. In Montenegro, EU actions support innovative SMEs working on Smart Specialisation Strategy (S3) implementation, administrative capacity and alignment to the EU acquis in the field, and private sector competitiveness, with a focus on SMEs and female and young entrepreneurs. In North Macedonia, the EU provides new budget support to help the country modernise and digitalise its public administration, and upscale the availability of e-services via a single Government portal.

Migration and forced displacement

The European Commission continued supporting the Western Balkans in their capacity to manage mixed migratory flows effectively and humanely in line with international and EU standards. The support focused on equipping the region to take part in EU-level work, as well as on providing direct support to the reception conditions of migrants arriving in the region from the EU. EU Justice and Home Affairs agencies, the EU Border and Coast Guard Agency (EUBCGA/Frontex) and the EU Agency for Asylum (EUAA) were at the forefront of efforts to bring the region ever closer to the EU.

Under IPA III, EUR 231.9 million worth of financial support has been adopted for migration and border management. These initiatives continue to help the Western Balkans implement protection-sensitive migration management systems, with a focus on identification, registration and referral at borders, migration statistics, asylum and reception systems, management of returns, alternatives to detention, detention and EU-aligned contingency planning and crisis response capacities, as well as legal protection to victims of human trafficking. An additional regional programme worth EUR 7 million supports the implementation of Frontex Status Agreements with the region and alignment of Integrated Border Management strategies with EU standards. At the end of 2022 a new EUR 30 million regional programme to fight the smuggling of migrants was adopted.

With EU support, the region has worked closely with the EUAA to identify areas and strategies for efficient and rights-based asylum and reception systems. This is key for effective and humane migration management. Since 2019, the six IPA beneficiaries adopted six Roadmaps to further develop asylum and reception systems in line with EU standards.

The EU continued to help strengthen border management and asylum in Bosnia and Herzegovina while local authorities stepped up efforts to improve migration management. A multipurpose reception and identification centre for migrants was established with EU support in Lipa, near Bihać. In Albania, the capabilities of the border police to fight trafficking in human beings and illegal migration have improved thanks to the deliveries of modern equipment, renewal of maritime fleets and construction of two radar stations. In Montenegro, an action has been set up to assist the authorities in integrated border management and reduce irregular migration and cross-border crime. The action will also support Montenegro in achieving the objectives they have committed to in the country's Schengen Action Plan. In North Macedonia, new EU support will help upgrade national technological and institutional capacities to identify, register, screen and treat the information on migrants and refugees in line with EU and international standards. In Serbia, the EU promoted the enforcement of fundamental rights of vulnerable groups such as internally displaced persons (IDPs).

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Following the European Council of June 2021, the European Commission mobilised EUR 3 billion in additional refugee assistance for 2021-23 to ensure the continuity of support provided to refugees and host communities under the Facility for Refugees in Türkiye. This includes an allocation of EUR 400 million in support of migration management; EUR 250 million implemented under IPA III, and EUR 150 million under other instruments.

Governance, peace and security (and conflict prevention)

A core objective of the European Union's engagement with the Western Balkans is to prepare them to meet all the requirements of EU membership. Fundamental democratic and rule of law reforms in areas such as access to justice, the fight against corruption and serious and organised crime, the respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, and good administration are at the heart of this agenda and the work of the European Commission in support of the region.

In 2022, the third phase of the Horizontal Facility with the Council of Europe started, with an EU contribution of over EUR 35 million. This programme allows IPA beneficiaries to access expert resources in these fields. Other major actions include sector reform support for justice in Serbia (EUR 30 million), Bosnia and Herzegovina (EUR 3.5 million), and Albania (Phase II worth more than EUR 9 million). The latter foresees continued support to the temporary re-evaluation of judges and prosecutors. At regional level, the conditions for justice reforms in all Western Balkans partners and Türkiye will be enhanced by a project with the World Bank (EUR 5.2 million) supporting evidence-based policymaking on justice system performance.

In terms of the fight against serious and organised crime, the EU continues to help tackle cross-border crime across the region. An EU regional security programme in the Western Balkans (EUR 20 million) continues to support cooperation within the region and with the EU including agencies such as Eurojust, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and Frontex to respond to organised crime and terrorism. Cooperation with the Radicalisation Awareness Network continued and expanded. A new action in Albania aims to strengthen the rule of law by increasing capabilities of the Police and Prosecutor offices. EU also supported a regional response to the rise in hate speech and the glorification of war crimes in the Western Balkans. In the wake of serious cyber-attacks, in particular on Albania and Montenegro, a regional project targeting regional resilience and capacity to resist such attacks started in 2022.

Demining activities implemented in Bosnia and Herzegovina and in Kosovo improved the safety of the local population. The National Centralised Criminal Record (NCCR) in Kosovo was assisted to advance the judicial system reform and its digitalisation. With EU help, Albania law enforcement agencies, namely the police and customs, have improved their capacity to prevent, detect and fight organised crime. In North Macedonia, the EU supports the modernisation of public administration, improvement of statistical and financial data, for evidence-based policy making, contributing to better economic governance, and increasing the public trust. In Türkiye, flagship projects continued linking local governments and the business community with EU peers to address common challenges.

Cross-border cooperation

The flagship initiative of the Western Balkans strategy, 'Supporting reconciliation and good neighbourly relations' is the common thread for the nine cross-border cooperation (CBC) programmes among IPA

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beneficiaries, as well as 15 Interreg IPA CBC programmes in the Western Balkans. The IPA CBC grants during 2022 focused on tourism, environment and employment.

Examples include improving risk prevention and management systems in Bosnia and Herzegovina-Montenegro, upgrading the infrastructure for environmental protection in North Macedonia-Albania, as well as supporting joint hazardous chemical substances research around the Skadar lake in Montenegro-Albania. Other CBC operations helped create a sustainable tourism cultural offer throughout the region, supporting local cuisine, wildlife, and natural heritage, while increasing the safety of mountain tourism. CBC grants are also creating a stimulating and innovative environment for youth employment and strengthening the conditions for job creation in the creative industries. In peripheral cross-border areas, IPA-IPA CBC programmes are deeply interweaved with life in local communities. They are highly visible, showcasing EU values among the local population and re-establishing and reinforcing social and economic ties between regions in neighbouring countries.

In total, 4 8170 projects were ongoing in 2022 under IPA-IPA CBC programmes with 48 well established and effective partnerships among Western Balkans organisations. 72 9171 organisations directly benefit from these projects (out of which 113 are local government entities, 20 national government entities, and 117 civil society organisations, etc.) as well as more than 27 000 individuals (13 567 men and 13 604 women, 10 000 youth).

Food security and nutrition

European Union support to COVID-19 recovery and resilience of agriculture and rural development in Bosnia and Herzegovina (EU4Agri-Recovery, 2021-2023) continued. It aims to mitigate the economic effects of the pandemic on agri-food businesses and rural tourism operators.

In Kosovo, EU4Resilience included also direct budget support to agriculture and rural development, to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 crisis, especially for vulnerable groups, farmers and SMEs, using a gender-responsive approach, with a total budget of EUR 5 million. In Albania, EU supported capacities to establish a sustainable food system, helping develop national food safety strategies and align official controls, plant and animal health laws with the EU acquis. In North Macedonia, in addition to the new IPA rural development programme IPARD III 2021-2027, the EU supports the competitiveness of the agricultural sector, the implementation of Common Market Organisation (CMO) measures, the self-organisation of farmers and small-scale irrigation schemes. In Türkiye, in the animal health sector, EU support helped prevent Lumpy skin disease (LSD) and rabies outbreaks.

The IPARD programme has so far provided investment to more than 21 000 projects in Türkiye to farms, food processing companies and rural diversification. It already created around 80 000 jobs in rural areas and continues to create more. IPARD supports a wide array of projects, from milk processing, apiculture, agri-environment and renewable energy to rural tourism. It also targets women and young entrepreneurs, with at least 20 % of the investments made by women entrepreneurs. Moreover, IPARD projects are setting a new, EU-aligned standard for investments in the Turkish agri-food sector. The IPARD programme also works with the civil society and local authorities through the LEADER programme and the National Rural Network.

[170] Projects that are encoded into the monitoring system for the year 2022 are only taken into consideration.
[171] Still two more projects need to submit date for the fourth quarter of 2022.

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CASE STUDY

Delivering the Economic and Investment Plan in the Western Balkans – a 'Team Europe' approach

In 2022, the WBIF continued to support the implementation of the EIP for the region. In June and December, the Operational Board endorsed 15 technical assistance projects for about EUR 30 million and 15 flagship investments for about EUR 405 million in grants. These are investments in sustainable transport, clean energy, environment and climate, digital future, private sector competitiveness and human capital.

The Operational Board for guarantees operations (EFSD+) endorsed EUR 540 million of guarantees in December as part of the EFSD+ Western Balkans Guarantee Facility of WBIF, notably in support of the energy transition and the competitiveness of the private sector in the region.

In 2022, the EU 1 billion Energy Support Package was launched on the occasion of the EU-Western Balkans Summit on 6 December, called by the European Council to address immediate, short-term and medium-term needs in the context of the ongoing energy crisis. As short- and medium-term measures, EUR 500 million was invested through WBIF to advance energy security and transition in the region. The rest of the package consists of budget support to the six IPA beneficiaries, along the priorities of the national plans, adopted by their governments at the end of 2022.

4.5.4. Humanitarian aid and civil protection – responding to the emergency needs of people affected by conflicts and disasters

Türkiye hosts the largest refugee population in the world of nearly four million people. Out of those, 3.7 million are Syrians, who fled the ongoing conflict that has been ravaging Syria for over 11 years, while the rest of the registered refugees are mainly from Afghanistan, Iraq, Iran and Somalia. The vast majority of refugees in Türkiye live outside camps amongst the Turkish population with limited access to basic services. The EU funds humanitarian projects in Türkiye to help vulnerable refugees receive the support they need in close coordination with the Turkish authorities. In 2022, humanitarian assistance continued to be delivered throughout the two main flagship humanitarian programmes, the Emergency Social Safety Net (ESSN) and the Conditional Cash Transfer for Education (CCTE). The ESSN provided support to nearly 1.5 million people through cash assistance, while the CCTE assisted over 800 000 children and their families. In addition to these programmes, EU humanitarian actions in 2022 also focused on protection, health and Education in Emergencies for vulnerable refugees. The CCTE successfully transitioned in October 2022 from humanitarian to development support.

Western Balkans

Since 2018, when a new migratory route leading through Bosnia and Herzegovina towards Croatia and Slovenia emerged, Bosnia and Herzegovina faced a linear increase of arrivals of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants (People of Concern, PoCs) transiting to Northern and Western European countries. In November 2022, there were approximately 3 500 refugees, asylum seekers and migrants stranded in the country, including unaccompanied children. In 2022 the EU allocated EUR 2.5 million in humanitarian aid, addressing the most urgent needs and allowing the beneficiaries to access basic healthcare services, mental health and psychosocial support. The EU humanitarian funding also provided specialised

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protection services for vulnerable individuals and outreach assistance directed towards those sleeping in inadequate conditions.

In 2022, the EU continued to provide COVID-19 assistance to Western Balkans countries through the EU Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM). In addition, support was provided to Albania during the forest fire season.

4.5.5. Crisis response and preparedness

In the **Western Balkans** new initiatives were taken to increase resilience to the intensified hybrid attacks linked to the war in Ukraine.

In Kosovo, the **EU Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo** (EULEX Kosovo) continued to monitor selected cases and trials in Kosovo's criminal and civil justice institutions with a view to supporting the rule of law system in Kosovo, including the Kosovo Correctional Service. The EU also supports the **Kosovo Specialist Chambers** (KSC) and Specialist Prosecutor's Office (SPO) which prosecute and adjudicate criminal charges arising from investigations.

The **EU Special Representative (EUSR) for the Belgrade-Pristina Dialogue** and other Western Balkans regional issues engages with the regional partners to achieve a comprehensive normalisation of relations between Serbia and Kosovo and improve good neighbourly relations and also promote reconciliation.

The **EUSR in Kosovo** plays a key role in promoting a stable, viable, peaceful, democratic, and multi-ethnic Kosovo and strengthen stability in the region, while contributing to regional cooperation and good neighbourly relations in the Western Balkans.

The **EUSR in Bosnia and Herzegovina** (BiH) focusses on fostering progress in the Stabilisation and Association Process, ensuring a stable, viable, peaceful, multi-ethnic and united BiH that cooperates peacefully with its neighbours and ensuring that BiH is irreversibly on track towards EU membership.

The EU shares efforts with the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to combat illicit trafficking of **Small Arms and Light Weapons** (SALW) and Conventional Ammunition in South-eastern Europe. Activities aim at reducing the risks of SALW proliferation and mitigating security and safety risks related to the illegal possession, misuse and trafficking of SALW in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

In the context of the EU Strategy to combat illicit accumulation and trafficking of SALW and their ammunition, the EU is supporting projects in Serbia, Montenegro, BiH, North Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo, Moldova and Ukraine through the **South-eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons** (SEESAC). SEESAC ensures that arms control legislation, policies and practices are in place and are fully harmonised with the EU and international obligations and standards.

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4.6. Overseas countries and territories (OCTs)

4.6.1. Introduction (policy developments)

The OCTs have been associated with the EU since the Treaty of Rome. They maintain special constitutional links with three Member States: Denmark, France and the Netherlands. Cooperation with the OCTs is based on EU values and shared policy priorities.

The Decision on the Overseas Association including Greenland (DOAG)[172] of 2021 frames the EU-OCT political and policy dialogue, trade and financial support from the EU to OCTs, contributes to their economic and social development and helps them in tackling challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

The EU has earmarked financial support of EUR 500 million to the OCTs for 2021-2027. The resources available to the OCTs are: EUR 225 million for bilateral cooperation with Greenland; EUR 164 million for bilateral cooperation with other OCTs; EUR 76 million for regional cooperation and integration (including EUR 15 million for intra-regional cooperation); a non-allocated reserve of EUR 13 million for emerging needs and EUR 22 million for technical assistance.

The annual Forum is the highest political meeting for EU-OCT dialogue. The 19th Forum was hosted by New Caledonia on 22 November 2022 in Noumea. OCTs embrace an increasingly strategic role for the EU. Geopolitical competition notably in the Pacific and Arctic is on the rise. OCTs are important EU ambassadors in their regions and bring with them important assets, such as vast Exclusive Economic Zones (highly relevant for ocean governance), hosting of strategic infrastructure (Galileo), and deposits of many critical raw materials. At the same time, the OCTs benefit from the EU's significant expertise in sustainable development and the green transition as well as privileged access to the EU market.

4.6.2. Working together towards the SDGs

The partnership promotes long-term sustainable economic development and welfare in the OCTs. In the coming years, the Green Deal is emerging as a pivotal priority for the partnership given the specific vulnerabilities and needs of the OCTs as islands. This includes climate action, environment, biodiversity and the sustainable energy transition, as well as digital technologies, circular economy and investments for sustainable growth and jobs. In addition, support to education and youth will continue to contribute to OCT's sustainable development.

EU – OCT actions pursue **SDG 4 (Quality education)**. Access to quality education fosters equality and is an essential pre-condition for achieving sustainable growth and jobs. EUR 202.5 million is earmarked for education cooperation in Greenland for 2021-2027. This will contribute to increase quality, access and efficiency of the territory's education system, which is facing several complex challenges (lack of skilled staff, geography, and social issues). Also, thanks to EU support, the rate of students staying in education as well as the completion rates have recently shown a positive trend and a number of institutional and policy changes are making progress.

[172] Council Decision (EU) 2021/1764 of 5 October 2021 on the association of the Overseas Countries and Territories with the European Union including relations between the European Union on the one hand, and Greenland and the Kingdom of Denmark on the other: EUR-Lex - 32021D1764 - EN - EUR-Lex (europa.eu).

Through Erasmus+, the EU also supports OCTs with higher education mobility of individuals; reinforcing intercultural dialogue and understanding. OCT participation has more than doubled since 2018. From 87 projects with 41 beneficiaries (total EUR 3.2 million) in 2018, participation grew to 177 projects and 95 beneficiaries (EUR 5.5 million) in 2020[173].

Gender equality (SDG 5) is an important cross cutting theme of EU OCT cooperation. New actions include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data whenever possible.

As part of the broader EU support to sustainable development in the OCTs, access to water and sanitation, healthier drinking water, integrated management of water resources, the construction of water collection systems and also of treatment facilities all contribute to delivery on **SDG 6 (Clean water and sanitation)**. This is a particular focus of the 2021-2027 cooperation with French Polynesia (EUR 31.1 million), Bonaire (EUR 4.6 million) and Curacao (EUR 18.6 million).

In pursuit of **SDG 7 (Affordable and clean energy)**, a major focus of EU-OCT cooperation for the period 2021-2027 supports the sustainable energy transition in New Caledonia (EUR 30.9 million), Saba (EUR 4.1 million) and Sint Maarten (EUR 7.7 million) and Greenland (as part of the EUR 22.5 million Green Growth component).

In New Caledonia, the programme will contribute to the decarbonisation of the mining industry, a main driver of the economy and responsible for 77 % of the territory's total energy consumption. Furthermore, New Caledonia aims at energy autonomy for the territory, based on reliable, decarbonised, resilient and affordable energy.

In Saba and Sint Maarten, the EU will help accelerate the transition to a low carbon economy and a substantially improved energy mix with more renewables and increased energy efficiency. In Saba, for instance, the goal is to increase the share of renewable energy to 60 % of the total production in the territory by 2025 and to promote the use of LED technologies and solar water heaters, while in Greenland the target is to increase renewable energy in the public electricity provision to 90 % of the total in the coming years. The EU will also investigate teaming up with Greenland in the domain of raw materials that are critical for the clean energy transition.

Regarding **SDG 8 (Decent work and economic growth)**, full employment and decent work will be advanced through the envisaged work of the EU for 2021-2027 to support sustainable tourism (Saint Pierre et Miquelon, EUR 27 million), green growth (Greenland, EUR 22.5 million), sustainable agriculture (Sint Eustatius, EUR 2.9 million) and e-government (Aruba, EUR 14.2 million)

Building on the potential and multiplier effect for sustainable growth of the tourism sector in Saint-Pierre et Miquelon, the EU aims to help reinforce the attractiveness of the territory, thus bringing decent jobs and new opportunities, including for local youth and women.

Cooperation with Aruba is a good example how the EU fosters innovation and delivers on **SDG 9 (Industry, innovation and infrastructures)**. For the period 2014-2020, the EU together with the University of Leuven joined hands with Aruba to put in place a Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) faculty, including research facilities and laboratories. This action under the 11th European Development

[173] Updated data are currently being collected and should be made available in early 2024.

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Fund (EDF) is contributing to boost innovation skills and partnerships between research and industries in Aruba.

Building on these achievements the EU will team up with Aruba for 2021-2027 through a EUR 14.2 million programme to roll out its ambitious e-government-strategy including the setting up of e-government work processes, an e-ID system, a national cyber security and a digital payments infrastructure. Aruba's digital transformation aims to ease digital access to government services and unlock new economic opportunities for all, including women and youth.

EU cooperation helps OCTs in **reducing inequalities (SDG 10)**, for instance by reaching out to deprived neighbourhoods or by making education opportunities more inclusive. Cooperation on urban infrastructures (mainly street lighting, paved streets as well as sewage infrastructures) in the most deprived neighbourhoods of Curacao under the 10th EDF has resulted in strongly improving the quality of living of poor inhabitants on the island.

A good education for all is the best equaliser in society. It allows all citizens to better their livelihood opportunities and to shape their own future. And the journey to a better future should start at a young age. This is why, in Greenland, the past and present EU cooperation puts a strong emphasis on improved access for all children to pre-school education, which lays the ground for future economic security independent of starting conditions.

The OCTs are especially vulnerable to climate change and environmental degradation, an added reason in efforts to achieve **SDGs 13 (Climate action), 14 (Life below water) and 15 (Life on land)**. The ongoing all-OCT thematic programme 'Green Overseas' and the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific regional programmes (for a total of EUR 97.8 million) from the 11th EDF are all dedicated to ensuring the sustainable use of natural resources, protecting biodiversity and supporting climate actions and resilience, showing the vital importance of these areas to all OCTs. New regional actions for 2021-2027 (EUR 36 million for the Pacific OCTs, EUR 21 million for the Caribbean OCTs and EUR 4 million for the French Southern and Antarctic Lands - TAAF) will build on these achievements, allowing the OCTs to better adapt to the effects of climate change and protecting and restoring terrestrial and marine ecosystems. In the case of Saint-Barthélemy (EUR 2.5 million for 2021-2027) the EU will support disaster risk management.

In addition, the BEST initiative (Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services in Territories of European overseas) for the period 2014-2020 has helped OCTs to promote EU's environmental standards and provided an incentive for local actors to engage in environmental actions. The LIFE programme for 2021-2027 continues to scale up the actions in OCTs on biodiversity and nature conservation.

The European Green Deal provides further impetus to reinforce EU-OCT cooperation on environment and climate change as well as to incentivise solutions to these global challenges.

4.6.3. Implementation

In 2022, out of a total of 16 multiannual indicative programmes (12 Territorial, 3 regional, 1 intra-regional), three MIP were adopted, for Bonaire, Curaçao and the Regional Caribbean, leaving only two remaining MIP to be adopted in 2023 (Wallis and Futuna and Intra-regional).

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Global Gateway

Improving connectivity of the OCTs will foster green growth and increase their potential as gateways towards their neighbouring regions. From the Arctic to the Caribbean and Pacific regions, the EU-OCT cooperation is focusing on key areas of the Global Gateways partnership including climate and clean energy (Greenland, New Caledonia, Saba, Sint Maarten and Saint-Barthélemy); environment – water (French Polynesia, Bonaire and Curaçao); better education opportunities (Greenland); and digitalisation (Aruba).

In a 'Team Europe' spirit, EU actions in the OCTs are well coordinated with the three EU Member States to which the OCTs are linked. EU-OCT cooperation in the Pacific will contribute to the EU-Pacific Green Blue Alliance.

Pacific OCTs are also participating in the KIWA initiative (Global Gateways Flagships) for the time being under a French contribution.

The potential of the Global Gateway for the OCTs is being further explored, for instance, by joining the EU-LAC Digital Alliance (interest of Bonaire), Euroclima (Caribbean region), KIWA (Pacific region) and cooperation on raw materials critical for the clean energy and digital transition (Greenland).

Governance, peace and security

The principle of partnership is deeply embedded in the EU-OCT political and policy dialogue and cooperation on issues of common interest. All EU-funded actions in the OCTs intend to reinforce the capacity, the accountability and inclusiveness of their institutions. This is often best achieved through a mix of budget support, policy dialogue on sector reforms and cooperation on public financial management.

Recently, the partnership has been further reinforced by including dedicated cooperation on youth engagement. A new initiative, the OCT Youth Network, was launched in July 2022 by the EU with the aim to increase the ties between young people living in OCTs and the EU and enhance the knowledge and involvement of young people in the EU-OCT partnership.

Food security and nutrition

OCTs share particular vulnerabilities, resulting in a complex set of food security and nutrition challenges. For 2021-2027, the EU is supporting sustainable agriculture, food security and nutrition in several OCTs.

The regional Pacific multiannual indicative programme (MIP) (EUR 36 million) foresees promotion of sustainable and healthy food consumption and ensuring that citizens are better informed to choose healthier and more sustainable diets. The regional Caribbean MIP (EUR 21 million) and the cooperation with Sint Eustatius (EUR 2.9 million) foresees strengthening of food and nutrition security through the development of sustainable and resilient local food value chains.

Over 60 % of the population in Wallis-et-Futuna suffer from obesity and other related health conditions (i.e., diabetes, gout, etc.). However, the local offer of treatments is limited. People with serious conditions often need to go to New Caledonia, Australia, or even France for consultations and treatments. The EU budget support under the 11th EDF of EUR 19.6 million helped to finance the territory's connection to the TUISAMOA digital cable and to introduce broadband. This 'digital revolution' enabled the local Health

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Agency to develop its telemedicine capabilities aiming to improve prevention, early detection and treatment of many diseases.

In addition to physical well-being, mental health is an increasingly important issue. The support to education in Greenland for 2021-2027 includes as a goal an increased support to students' mental well-being.

CASE STUDIES

The first phase of the new EU-Greenland education partnership (EUR 60 million) focused on tackling a number of institutional points that will prepare the ground for increased efficiency, quality and equality in the sector. For instance, Greenland's education system is implemented by a range of actors, with primary and lower-secondary education provided by the municipalities. In 2022, a multi stakeholder coordination forum was created to facilitate implementation and formulation of new policies. Quality is hampered by lack of trained teachers, particularly in Greenland's extremely remote towns and settlements. The IT strategy will help fill some of those gaps through an increased use of eLearning. This is complemented by action on students' well-being and new innovative curricula, formulated in consultation with the private sector.

In the Caribbean, the 'RESEMBID' Programme (EUR 42.67 million) helps all OCTs in the Caribbean with resilience building, sustainable energy and marine biodiversity. Taking biodiversity as an example, results so far include better protection of marine biodiversity through improved legislative and institutional capacity for ecosystems-based management, the adoption of nature-based solutions and stronger monitoring capabilities These achievements benefit the habitats in six OCTs and approximately 400 000 citizens and residents, directly and indirectly.

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5. Managing Aid

5.1. Monitoring, reporting and evaluation

5.1.1. Reporting

Reporting on NDICI-Global Europe instrument

The NDICI-Global Europe instrument has introduced a set of requirements to monitor and report on progress towards its objectives throughout its implementation. The Global Europe Results Framework (GERF) is the main tool which has been specifically developed to meet these monitoring and reporting requirements. The GERF includes all key performance indicators contained in Annex 6 of the Regulation establishing the instrument. They will be used together with data from other existing results reporting, external monitoring reviews and evaluations to assess the extent to which specific objectives have been achieved.

Reporting requirements cover all regions and modalities established by the NDICI-Global Europe instrument, including the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD+). 2022 is the second year of financial execution of the NDICI-Global Europe. However, the first operational results are only expected to materialise as of 2023. Due to the inevitable time lag between financing an intervention and implementing the action and generating results, no results – in terms of outputs or outcomes of NDICI-Global Europe funded interventions – can be reported so far. This time lag between financing and results is a structural feature that is common to any multiannual financial framework (MFF) cycle. Therefore, results data presented in chapter 3 of this report refers to results achieved from ongoing interventions, financed under the previous MFF.

Reporting on IPA III instrument

The IPA III instrument (Instrument for Pre-Accession) has introduced a set of requirements to monitor and report on progress towards its objectives throughout its implementation.

The IPA III Programming Framework is the overarching strategic document for the implementation of IPA III under the current MFF, replacing the former country-specific strategy papers. It focuses on the priorities of the enlargement process according to five thematic Windows[174], which mirror the clusters of negotiating chapters as per the revised enlargement methodology. It also provides an indicative financial overview per Window and programming year. Each thematic Window, with a number of thematic priorities, incorporate indicators, including baselines, milestones and targets, to monitor implementation and achievement of objectives of the IPA III Programming Framework.

The basis for IPA III programming, monitoring, reporting and evaluation is the IPA III Results Framework[175]. Other existing results reporting, external monitoring reviews and evaluations to assess the extent to which specific objectives have been achieved complete the set of tools.

As 2022 is the second year of implementation of IPA III, the first operational results are only expected to materialise as of 2023, given the programming and implementation cycle. Similar to the NDICI-Global Europe as mentioned above, due to the inevitable time lag between financing an intervention and

[174] See section 4.5.1.
[175] SWD(2022) 445 final of 20 December 2022.

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implementing the intervention and generating results, no results – in terms of outputs or outcomes of IPA III-funded interventions – can be reported so far. Therefore, results data presented in chapter 3 of this report again refers to results achieved from ongoing interventions, financed under the previous MFF.

5.1.2. Monitoring Systems

Over the course of the past years, the European Commission has engaged substantially in designing tools and processes for results-based management of EU contributions in the field of external cooperation. This is to facilitate monitoring and results reporting processes and to respond to the growing need for data to capture the results of the implementation of EU external instruments. It is set in a wider transition, moving from a focus on inputs (mostly financial) to capturing the EU contribution in the field of external cooperation, an area where being able to measure the impact of actions on target populations is essential. As of today, various monitoring arrangements (internal and external) are in place focusing on different aspects of results-oriented monitoring such as implementation progress and achievement of objectives.

In 2022, the European Commission reached significant milestones in the transition towards using the new IT platform OPSYS as a single tool to capture results for corporate reporting and management. OPSYS creates a digital repository of EU-funded operations, and provides a central access to all stakeholders involved, both inside and outside the European Commission. It will assume a pivotal role in ensuring that the European Commission can deliver on the ambitious reporting obligations as set for the implementation of the NDICI-Global Europe and IPA III instruments in the years to come.

Throughout the year, the European Commission services (Headquarters and EU Delegations) and implementing partners have performed monitoring activities via the same tool, including direct reporting by implementing partners and European Commission staff; and data aggregated for reporting at Headquarters, etc.

The European Commission implemented a comprehensive outreach campaign to its staff as well as implementing partners to introduce the new concepts and features of the system, which supports reporting on results.

The European Commission continued to engage in the digitalisation of operational data on results from almost 10 000 EU-funded interventions. This process will last for the whole of 2023 and it will serve the purpose of encoding and storing the data necessary to report on results.

5.1.3. Reporting on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Since 2019, the European Commission has been reporting on official development assistance (ODA) to the SDGs, in accordance with a decision from the Working Party on development finance statistics of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC).

Targeted SDGs are recorded at commitment and payment level as per the ODA reporting taxonomy. Reporting considers the transversal and interlinked nature of SDGs, as one single project is often connected to several SDGs. Therefore, it is mandatory to report one single main SDG and, where applicable, up to nine other SDGs to which a project contributes significantly. With this system, the sum of financial flows related to the main SDG will always equal the total amount of financial flows, yet it is possible to report several SDGs for one project by using the 'significant' SDG field. As a result, a better

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understanding of the interlinkages between SDGs can be obtained. This reporting system has been in place since 2021.

Figure 5. Synthesis of the volume of commitments for each SDG

(as main SDG and significant SDG) in 2022

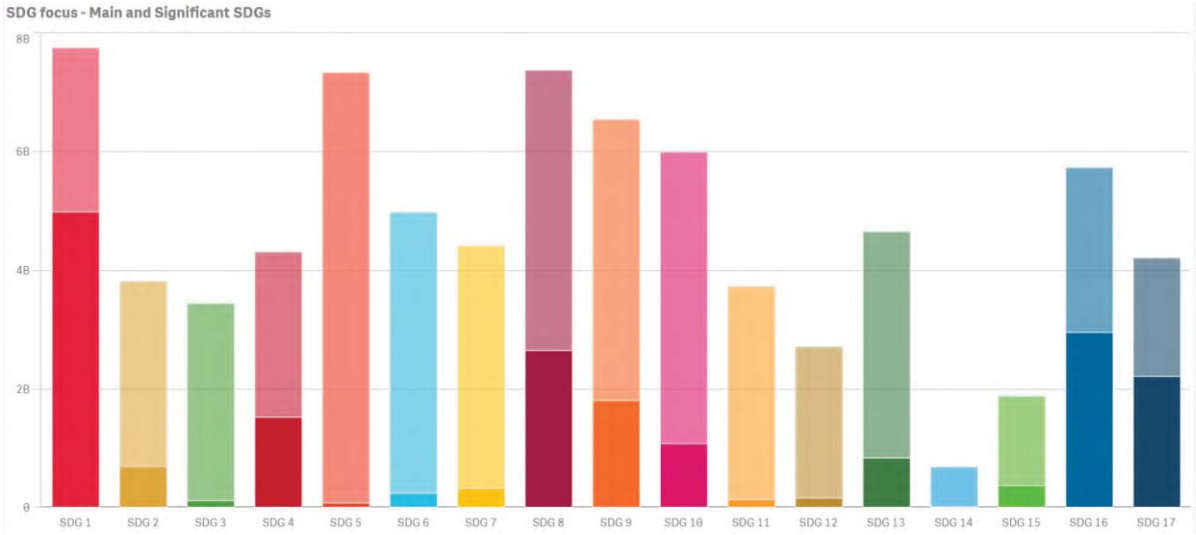


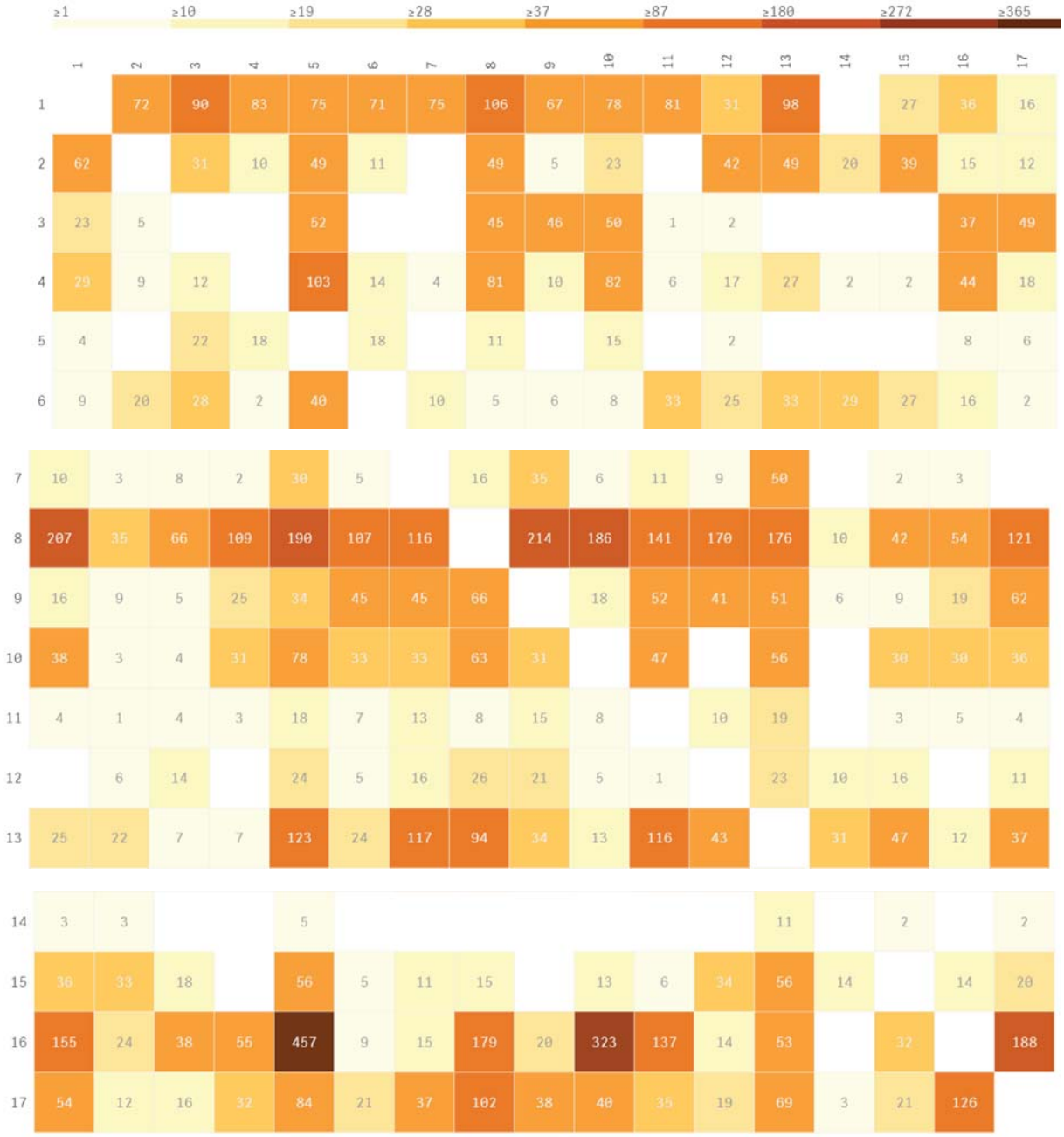
Table 7. Volume of commitments for each SDG in 2022

SDG	SDG Description	Main SDG	Significant SDG	All SDG
		20 141 937 119	**59 440 803 299**	**79 582 740 418**
1	SDG 01: No Poverty	4 986 074 464	2 770 943 540	7 757 018 004
2	SDG 02: Zero Hunger	689 572 553	3 125 551 193	3 815 123 746
3	SDG 03: Good Health and Well-being	114 344 313	3 328 973 596	3 443 317 909
4	SDG 04: Quality Education	1 521 165 037	2 789 938 152	4 311 103 189
5	SDG 05: Gender Equality	74 115 128	7 265 973 407	7 340 088 536
6	SDG 06: Clean Water and Sanitation	241 406 005	4 738 719 842	4 980 125 847
7	SDG 07: Affordable and Clean Energy	319 547 920	4 093 092 955	4 412 640 875
8	SDG 08: Decent Work and Economic Growth	2 648 587 171	4 730 557 643	7 379 144 813
9	SDG 09: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure	1 803 949 071	4 743 512 408	6 547 461 479
10	SDG 10: Reduced Inequality	1 075 770 024	4 920 896 627	5 996 666 650
11	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities	133 009 822	3 594 977 408	3 727 987 229
12	SDG 12: Responsible Consumption and Production	159 050 000	2 551 501 689	2 710 551 689
13	SDG 13: Climate Action	833 948 256	3 819 036 675	4 652 984 931
14	SDG 14: Life Below Water	7 634 551	674 274 241	681 908 792
15	SDG 15: Life on Land	368 278 681	1 512 342 235	1 880 620 916
16	SDG 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions	2 955 971 329	2 779 440 235	5 735 411 564
17	SDG 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal	2 209 512 795	2 001 071 453	4 210 584 248

As can be seen from figure 5 and table 7 above, SDGs 1, 16, 8 and 17 receive the largest financial flows as main SDGs. In 2022, in terms of commitments, the projects that primarily target SDG 1 showed a particularly large increase of 75 % compared to the previous year, whereas SDG 5 and SDG 10 were most often reported as significant SDGs. This underlines the particularly strong transversal nature of these SDGs that primarily seek to reduce social and economic inequality. Following the launch of the Global Gateway Strategy, 2022 also marked an increase in projects focused on SDG 9. Compared to 2021, the value of commitments that contribute significantly to this SDG more than doubled in value, from EUR 2 313 million to EUR 4 744 million.

In order to be able to assess the interlinkages between SDGs, a table showing the relationship between main and significant SDGs is presented in Figure 6 below. The graph confirms the particularly strong cross-cutting nature of SDGs with a focus on gender, employment and growth, as well as climate action.

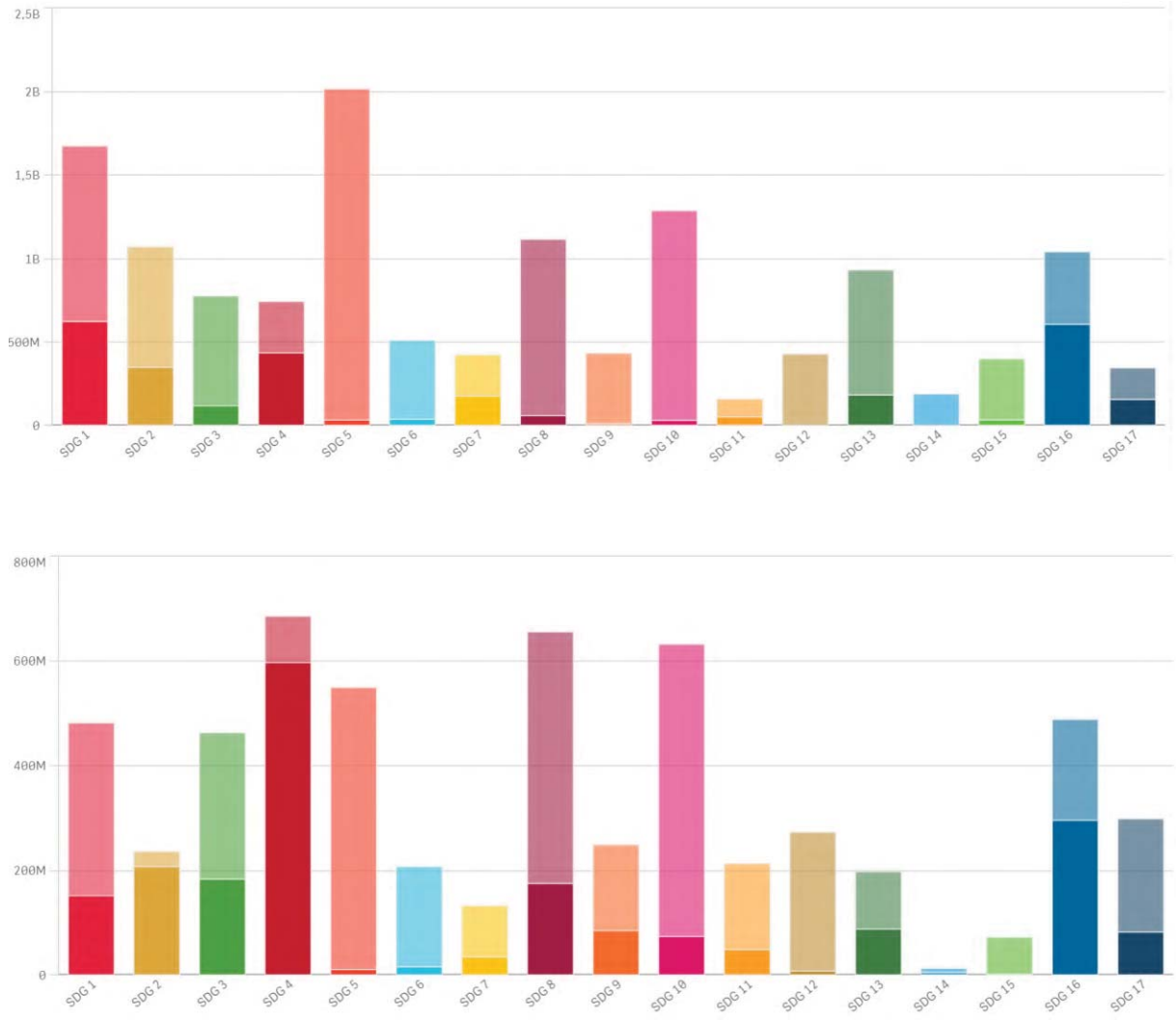
Figure 6. Interlinkages between SDGs (by number of projects) in 2022



It is also possible to analyse targeted SDGs by the income group of countries, showing how EU priorities are implemented depending on countries' income levels.

Figure 7 below shows the SDGs targeted by the European Commission in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Upper Middle-Income Countries (UMICs) in 2022. In the case of LDCs, SDGs 1, 4 and 16 dominate as main SDGs while more transversal SDGs are marked most often as 'significant'. In the case of UMICs, SDGs 4 and 8 dominate as main SDGs.

Figure 7. Commitments by SDG to LDCs and UMICs in 2022 (million EUR)



The efforts made by the European Commission to strengthen its data and tools for SDG reporting, have been highly instrumental in informing, during 2022, the preparation of the EU Voluntary Review on Sustainable Development, which will be presented at the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2023. Yet, further scope for enhancements in SDG reporting exists, in particular by strengthening the coherence in reporting between the EU and Member States. In 2023, the European Commission will actively engage with selected Member States to contribute to a broader application of tracking flows to 'main' and 'significant' SDGs, to allow for fully comprehensive insights into SDG financial flows of both EU and Member States in the future.

5.1.4. Evaluation: review of the work programme

European Commission evaluation services are responsible for steering, coordination, monitoring and reporting of the evaluation function. They produce timely, high-quality evaluation results to ensure evidence for informed decision-making and accountability. They carry out strategic evaluations, which can be geographic, thematic, sectoral or focused on specific financing instruments or budget support. They also monitor and support the evaluations carried out by other European Commission departments that implement EU projects and programmes. In 2022, the European Commission completed 20 strategic evaluations in the field of EU external and humanitarian action, comprising:

1) Thematic or partnership evaluations, including in the humanitarian sector:

- Evaluation of the European Union's support to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems between 2014 and 2020;
- Evaluation of the European Union's support to Rule of Law and Anticorruption in Partner Countries;
- Fast-Track Evaluation of the European Union's Initial Response to COVID-19 crisis in Partner Countries and Regions;
- Evaluation of the European Union's support to climate action and environment in the Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions;
- Evaluation of the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange (TAIEX) instrument;
- Combined evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian interventions in the Horn of Africa (HoA) in the 2016-2020 period, and the European Commission's Directorate-General for Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO)'s partnership with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC);
- Evaluation of the Emergency Social Safety Net programme (ESSN-2), covering the period 2018-2020;
- Combined evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian response to sudden-onset disasters and of DG ECHO's partnership with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent societies (IFRC), 2016-2020;
- Combined evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian interventions in the Sahel and in the food assistance and nutrition sectors, 2016-2020;
- Evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian interventions in disaster preparedness; and
- Combined evaluation of DG ECHO's humanitarian response to epidemics, and of DG ECHO's partnership with the World Health Organization, 2017-2021.

2) Country or regional level evaluations:

- Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Tajikistan;
- Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Guatemala;
- Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Angola;
- Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Kyrgyzstan;

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- Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Tunisia;
- Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Georgia;
- Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with the Republic of Moldova; and
- Evaluation of the European Union's humanitarian interventions in Yemen and in Humanitarian Access, 2015-2020.

3) Budget support evaluation:

- Evaluation of budget support operations in Morocco from 2013 to 2021.

By the end of 2022, other strategic evaluations were in progress for the following areas:

4) Fifteen thematic or partnership evaluations, including three in the humanitarian sector:
   a) Mid-Term Evaluation of the European Union's External Financing Instruments;
   b) Evaluation of the European Union's support to 'Collect More, Spend Better': Public Finance Management (PFM) including domestic resource mobilisation and utilisation, 2015-2020;
   c) Mid-Term Evaluation of the implementation of the EU's Gender Action Plan III;
   d) Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with the United Nations in external action;
   e) Evaluation of the contribution to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), by the European Union's external action in the period 2016-2021;
   f) Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with the World Bank, 2014-2021;
   g) Evaluation of the European Union's Trust Fund Bekou for the period 2014-2023;
   h) Evaluation of the implementation of the European Union's Blending in the EU Neighbourhood and the Western Balkans regions;
   i) Evaluation of the European Union's support to youth in the EU Neighbourhood and the Enlargement regions;
   j) Evaluation of the European Union's support on the waste management and urban wastewater treatment in the Western Balkans region;
   k) Evaluation of the European Union's support to connectivity in the EU Neighbourhood and the Enlargement regions;
   l) Evaluation of the European Union's support to private sector development in the EU Neighbourhood and the Enlargement regions;
   m) Interim Evaluation of the implementation of Decision No 1313/2013/EU on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism, 2017-2022;
   n) Evaluation of humanitarian logistics in the European Commission's civil protection and humanitarian aid operations, 2018-2022, and of the Mobility Package within the Emergency Support Instrument re-activation, 2020-2022; and
   o) Combined evaluation of the European Union's response to the Venezuelan regional crisis, and of DG ECHO's partnership with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 2017-2021.

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5) Six country or regional level evaluations:
   a) Somalia;
   b) Malawi;
   c) Papua New Guinea;
   d) Nepal;
   e) Palestine*; and
   f) North Macedonia.

6) Two budget support evaluations on:
   a) Jamaica; and
   b) Albania.

5.1.5. Lessons learned

Evaluation of the European Union's support to Sustainable Agri-Food Systems (SAFS) between 2014 and 2020

This evaluation looked for lessons learned and good practices to inform the process of strengthening EU support to sustainable agri-food systems (SAFS). More broadly, it aimed to provide the EU and its partners with a framework for considering how to improve their future support to SAFS. A strong partnership with national governments and implementing institutions is needed to achieve agri-food system level effects that can be sustained over time. These partnerships may be built on a narrowly defined SAFS agenda or a wider one, including aspects such as peace, security, trade, and migration. The support to the transformation of SAFS needs to address multiple challenges such as food and nutrition security, unsustainable use of natural resources, political instability, inequalities, and social conflict, as well as natural disasters. Moreover, the use of a mix of instruments and a variety of delivery modalities allows the EU to focus strategically on country priorities as well as local needs with a short-, mid-, and long-term perspective. Finally, implementing partners, national and international, are chosen based on their long-standing relationships and experience of working with national and local stakeholders across multiple themes, which include resilience, nutrition, organisation development, land rights and natural resource management, as well as rural livelihoods, climate adaptation, trade, roads, and digital infrastructure.

Evaluation of the European Union's support to Rule of Law and Anticorruption (RoL&AC) in Partner Countries

There were positive achievements in all thematic areas of RoL&AC where the EU has provided substantial support, in particular legal and judicial reform, the elaboration of sector strategies, institutional capacity development, support to legal aid, access to justice (also at local level), criminal and juvenile justice and prisons or the fight against money-laundering and illicit trafficking. The multi-dimensional EU support to civil society has been particularly valuable in empowering a wide range of organisations to express their voice, working together with state institutions on RoL reforms in conducive environments, ensuring linkages between the RoL and other EU values (e.g., on human rights, gender equality, etc.) or demanding

* This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

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transparency and accountability. Finally, the evaluation has shown that when powerholders are willing to engage in reform, EU support can add real value and over time contribute to meaningful changes.

Fast-Track Assessment of the European Union's Initial Response to COVID-19 crisis in Partner Countries and Regions

The EU made flexible use of its full external action toolkit to support the immediate-, short- and medium-term needs of most vulnerable partner countries and regions in response to the COVID-19 crisis. In this context, budget support (BS) operations were instrumental for creating fiscal space, which was particularly useful to finance the partner governments' socio-economic and fiscal stimulus packages deployed to mitigate the negative socio-economic effects linked to the COVID-19 crisis. The pandemic confirmed the importance of public financial management as part of managing the fiscal response. Blending and guarantees, on the other hand, were not a suitable aid modality for putting together and deploying crisis responses in a short timeframe. Also, the European Commission lacked a fast and flexible way to mobilise funding for rapid, nexus-type interventions in response to newly emerging crises and emergencies that could complement humanitarian operations and link them to new or existing development interventions. The usefulness of the 'Team Europe' approach for improving the geo-political standing of the EU hinges on rallying support for the approach in other thematic areas within development and international relations and maintaining it once the sense of crisis linked to the COVID-19 crisis has subsided.

Evaluation of the European Union's support to climate action and environment in the Neighbourhood and Enlargement regions

The EU has contributed to improvements in the policy and legal framework at national level and has supported successful initiatives at the local level in most countries reviewed. There is evidence of the positive role played by bottom-up approaches to support system change in partner countries and this has been partially recognised in EU support. However, some interventions suffered from approaches insufficiently tailored to the specific beneficiary context and, especially for infrastructure investment projects, from an over-ambitious design and insufficient attention to capacity building needs. Moreover, despite strong EU commitments at the beginning of the programming period and increasing EU policy ambitions since then, the attention given to environment and climate change in bilateral programming and policy dialogue remained limited. The low political will related to environment and climate change in partner countries combined with the largely demand-driven nature of EU programming have been important limiting factors. Competing priorities at EU level (especially after the 2015 'refugee crisis') have also played a role in hampering the full integration of these issues in EU external action. The adoption of the European Green Deal at the end of the period under review marked an important shift in EU support, with visible positive effects on policy dialogue and the adoption of more holistic and long-term approaches towards environment and climate change, especially in the Western Balkans.

Evaluation of the TAIEX instrument

The TAIEX Instrument evaluation highlighted among the different lessons learnt that TAIEX strategic events requested by the European Commission services and the High Representative can be an effective tool for diplomacy, outreach, and policy planning. TAIEX events, and in particular peer-review missions, can be a useful tool for EU policy planning and gap assessment, but their use requires increased awareness among relevant EU staff to initiate requests. Finally, the role that National Contact Points and EU

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Delegations' TAIEX focal points can play to significantly contribute to both the take-up and effectiveness of TAIEX events was also highlighted.

Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Tajikistan

Experiences and lessons learnt during previous EU support clearly and explicitly inspired and informed both the multiannual indicative programme (MIP) 2014-2020 and the MIP 2021-2027 as well as the major interventions in each sector. At the same time, country-level support across the range of interventions in all sectors was strongly in line with the EU's global development priorities and objectives. Planning included wide-ranging deliberations with the Government and its agencies as well as like-minded development partners. While some consultations took place with civil society stakeholders during the design phase, this was not done in a systematic way. Civil society involvement differed substantially across sectors and was appropriate overall in health and rural development, but less pronounced in education. Tajikistan remained largely stable during the evaluated period and, consequently, there was no political need to change the general direction and thrust of the EU support. The COVID-19 pandemic posed the most dramatic shock and thus required a pronounced adjustment, which the EU achieved effectively.

Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Guatemala

The evaluation showed that multi-actor projects including diverse institutions and partners create more sustainability and a broadened impact. Therefore, interventions have a higher probability of success when coordinated between different institutions. Examples of this are the decent employment programme in which the Ministry of the Economy participates in coordination with the Ministries of Labour and Social Welfare, Education, and Social Development. Economic interventions were more effective if designed from the value chain and coordinated with the territories. Recognising the agendas and priorities of different actors for implementing actions from the start helps develop political strategies that are appropriate for the context and territory. Assessing and analysing the agendas and priorities of different actors with a capacity to influence and a capacity to hinder compliance with the expected objectives and results of projects/programmes allows designing a political strategy grounded in the context and needs that make their implementation possible.

Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Angola

The Angola evaluation highlighted that project management based in-country has delivered better results, while complex projects have exhibited management inefficiencies. Even though output to outcome effectiveness has been acceptable, Angola presents a difficult implementing environment. This is best exemplified by changes in political leadership in some ministries which has led to sudden changes in priorities. Sustainability of skills upgrading is therefore generally poor except in national bodies with technical objectives. Given the generally weak capacities, organisational fragilities and heavy transaction costs in implementation, flexibility in design and implementation arrangements with piloting and other slower start-up steps should be used; active monitoring for close risk-management; proactive experience sharing for learning across actors; and a 'strategic reserve' in the budgets to exploit windows of opportunity are needed.

Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Kyrgyzstan

Budget support (BS) and blending combined can effectively contribute to building a partnership based on mutual confidence between the EU and the partner country, although they are substantially very different

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modalities. BS and blending are likely to converge mostly at impact level because of the differences in approach and in the nature of the sectors normally covered by each modality (service provision for BS and infrastructure for blending) as it is certainly the case in the overall intervention logic of EU-Kyrgyz cooperation. BS is a more developed and fine-tuned tool than blending to achieve development impacts and has higher potential than blending to deliver results, but the risk of underperformance is also higher. Most of the time in BS implementation, the EU is a direct player in all three inputs of BS (disbursements, Complementary Support, and policy dialogue) which is important for value-for money and accountability purposes. BS is not the most appropriate implementation modality to support electoral reform processes and is also more dependent on the political situation, and actual results of the supported policy may be sub-optimal.

Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Tunisia

The evaluation showed the contribution of EU-Tunisia cooperation to democratic transition and macro-economic stabilisation during the period under review. Nevertheless, the transition initiated by Tunisia since 2011 remains incomplete and the sustainability of the changes supported is not guaranteed in the areas of support where the reform process remains partial, and the context imposes many uncertainties. The transformation of the results obtained by EU-Tunisia cooperation into wider impacts currently faces multiple obstacles, in particular: the persistent, if not growing, weaknesses of the state partner institutions, the lack of support for the reforms and the protection of vested interests.

Evaluation of the European Union's cooperation with Georgia

Policy and political dialogue at all levels has strengthened the EU cooperation programme, and vice-versa. Dialogue was effective even in the challenging rule of law sector including democracy and human rights, where it served as a safety valve allowing continued EU support and engagement despite some important trends not being consistent with the Association Agreement. Cooperation has added value for the EU by cross-fertilising with political dialogue and engagement (which has resulted into strengthened cooperation). The value added of EU cooperation is especially strong from the Georgian point of view because of the privileged relation with the EU through the Association Agreement and the Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement[176] and their implementation, unique among donor partners.

5.2. Aid delivery modalities

5.2.1. Budget Support

EU budget support is in essence a policy and a performance-based instrument. The results of countries' policies are the core of each budget support operation. The first incentive for results lies in the four criteria, which condition the provision of budget support: a relevant and credible development/sector policy; stability-oriented macro-economic policies; progress in public finance management and revenue mobilisation; and budget transparency and oversight. Results are incentivised by performance tranches whose amounts are disbursed proportionally to the achievement of specific targets drawn from countries' policies. In all programmes, gender equality and environmental/climate change objectives are promoted, notably with dedicated indicators. By working through country systems and thereby strengthening them,

[176] OJ L 261 of 30 August 2014.

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EU budget support fosters countries' capacities to sustain results. Budget support generally comes with a complementary component for technical assistance and capacity development.

Altogether EUR 1.85 billion of EU budget support was disbursed in 2022. It accounted for 15 % of payments under the NDICI-Global Europe instrument, the Instrument for Pre-Accession, the instrument for Overseas Countries and Territories (OCTs) including Greenland (DOAG), or under predecessor instruments for which operations are still on-going.

As much as it played a central part in the EU Global Response to COVID-19 pandemic[177], EU budget support was instrumental in 2022 in helping countries and OCTs face the consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine and implement response policies accordingly.

@European Union, 2022

The EUR 686 million of grant budget support to **Ukraine** assisted the country in ensuring livelihoods of the conflict-affected population and reconstructing critical infrastructure and education facilities. Households accommodating internally displaced people or municipalities making available facilities were supported financially. Over 1.6 million Ukrainians were accommodated within this framework. Subsidies were also provided to 32 000 farmers, contributing to food security and employment.

The EU massively assisted Ukraine with grant budget support (EUR 686 million[178]) as well as countries in the European neighbourhood and in the Western Balkans (for another EUR 720 million). Budget support was provided alongside EU macro-financial assistance[179] concessional loans and other means used to support Ukraine and neighbouring countries. It mitigated the impact of the war on Ukraine's population and addressed the disruptions in neighbouring countries, notably in helping households to withstand price hikes on energy markets.

[177] Fast-Track Assessment of the EU Initial Response to the COVID-19 Crisis in Partner Countries and Regions (2020) (europa.eu)
[178] Excluding an additional EUR 12.075 million support to comprehensive reform of public administration.
[179] Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) (europa.eu)

	In **Jordan**, the EU budget support programme contributed to supporting the just energy transition by lowering the costs of electricity. It helped reduce losses along the grid, connect over 560 MW of renewable energy and install more than 270 000 smart meters.

Budget support payments neared EUR 430 million. in other parts of the world, affected by the consequences of the war as well. In the most vulnerable contexts, it helped countries face the consequences of the war on food prices. Following Council's approval, EUR 600 million decommitted funds of the 10th and 11th European Development Fund (EDF) were recommitted to address global food insecurity in Sub-Saharan African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries[180]. They notably allowed for additional budget support to Niger and Cameroon in order to strengthen their agri-food systems. A further EUR 100 million within this amount was used to contribute to the IMF Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust[181]. This will allow for continuous macro-economic support at concessional terms to low-income ACP countries providing them with extra fiscal space to address the food crisis.

This recourse to budget support in difficult situations confirms that it can be powerful to support countries facing crises in quickly meeting fiscal needs and providing funds to frontline public services. However, the instrument could not be used to its optimal extent, given political blockages in some countries, hindering the cooperation with governments and preventing the EU from providing budget support (e.g., Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali or Myanmar).

 @European Commission	In South Africa, EU budget support contributes to comprehensively addressing gender-based violence and femicide. The EU's support has been instrumental in finalising the related national strategic plan on gender-based violence and femicide. Comprehensive interventions to address gender-based violence include support for victims and socioeconomic empowerment.

The war situation and its global consequences in 2022 led to a surge of State and Resilience Building Contracts, which made up to 50 % of the new operations approved in 2022. This type of budget support

[180] Food security: EU allocates funds to the most vulnerable African, Caribbean and Pacific countries hit by food crisis (europa.eu)

[181] Food Security: EU contributes €100 million to IMF's Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust to support vulnerable African, Caribbean and Pacific countries

is designed for situations of fragility and post-crisis/disasters contexts. It superseded Sector Reform Performance Contracts, accounting for 48 % of the new financial commitments.

However, when considering on-going operations approved before 2022, Sector Reform Performance Contracts continued to top the taxonomy of budget support with 70 % of the portfolio. These are implemented in all sectors targeting one or a few SDGs. A new Sustainable Development Goal Contract was concluded with Benin in 2022 to help implement its national reform agenda around multifaceted priorities touching several SDGs. It accounted for 2 % of the new financial commitments in 2022.

Independently of the type of budget support, the fight against inequalities is at the core of each operation, including on gender, vulnerable groups, minorities or geographic disparities.

@European Commission

In **Paraguay**, EU budget support contributed to the rollout of the social protection policy, notably helping to secure an increase from 52 % to 59 % of the population covered by retirement and pension benefits (aged 65 and above) and an increase of 20 % in monetary transfers to people in a situation of poverty and social vulnerability since 2021.

Besides the response to the Russian war of aggression and to its consequences globally, EU budget support continued being used as an instrument for partnership and policy dialogue with countries around the world. It supported in particular the rollout of the Global Gateway, fostering progress in economic governance, promoting regulatory reforms and unlocking public or private investments. It was equally instrumental to monitor that the additional investments benefitted various population groups and translated into greater access to public services as much as higher quality in their delivery.

In support to the Global Gateway, budget support was increasingly used by the EU in coordination with the EFSD+ to provide a framework for dialogue and result-monitoring on the whole of a policy, while backing loans by the European Investment Bank (EIB) or other development finance institutions (DFIs) to partner countries in need of concessional financing for their investments. In this respect, EU budget support is an asset for the EU and its Member States, acting in a 'Team Europe' approach.

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	EU budget support contributed to energy transition in **Vietnam**, which increased by more than seven times the capacity of grid-connected wind power and installed 700 km of extra-high voltage power transmission lines between 2020 and 2021. In addition, 531 new energy managers and 82 new energy auditors were trained in 2022 with EU support.

The use of budget support in the context of Global Gateway resonates with the Collect More, Spend Better[182] agenda of the European Commission, which aims at improving public finance management and domestic revenue as well as promoting macro-economic stability and debt sustainability in partner countries. The latter is particularly critical as debt vulnerabilities have been exacerbated by the pandemic and macro-economic consequences of the war in Ukraine. Working on economic governance and the investment climate calls for continuous efforts towards public administration reform, on which the EU puts emphasis in the Western Balkans and the European neighbourhood.

 @European Commission	In 2022, the EU budget support to **Albania** resulted in a 6 % increase of the number of children with disabilities attending mainstream education. The budget support also contributed to the provision of improved social services to people with disabilities, in particular at municipal level.

An evaluation of the actions undertaken within this Collect More, Spend Better framework since 2015 highlighted the added value of this agenda, praised EU's effort to promote gender-responsive budgeting and identified areas for improvement. Some relate to critical dimensions for Global Gateway including public procurement, public investment management and debt management.

In line with the Green Deal[183], the EU also stepped up its assistance to 'green' public finance management and taxation systems, helping partner countries to deliver on their national and global commitments for climate change, biodiversity and environmental protection. Through budget support and its direct stake in country systems and policies, the EU financed more sustainable and inclusive development all around the world.

[182] European Commission, Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development, *Collect more – spend better : achieving development in an inclusive and sustainable way : staff working document*, Publications Office, 2016, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2841/37400

[183] A European Green Deal (europa.eu)

5.2.2. Blending

To achieve a greater scale of investments supporting the achievement of the SDGs in an increasingly complex world, development finance needs to rely on a combination of funding sources. To increase the impact of official development assistance (ODA), public and private funds must be leveraged as efficiently as possible. The EU has been expanding its financial instruments and policy tools for investments outside the EU to deliver on its ambitious commitments to sustainable development and on its enlargement and neighbourhood policies.

Through blending, the EU uses limited amounts of public grants to mobilise financing from partner financial institutions such as international development banks and the private sector for projects that will catalyse sustainable growth and development and reduce poverty. The strategic use of a limited grant element can support projects with low financial return but with a high economic and societal return. Blending can further help to make impactful projects economically viable, and it can improve the quality of their implementation.

The EU Blending Framework is comprised of four regional blending facilities[184] that cover all regions of EU external cooperation: the Africa Investment Platform (AIP), Asia Pacific Investment Facility (APIF), Latin America and Caribbean Investment Facility (LACIF), and Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP). These facilities comprise the blending instruments of the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) created under the Global Europe instrument for the period 2021-27. In addition, several blending facilities that were set up prior to the Global Europe are still active and gradually using up their remaining funds[185].

From the creation of the first blending facilities in 2007, more than EUR 9.2 billion of EU grants are estimated to have leveraged over EUR 79 billion of loans by financial institutions and regional development banks for a total investment volume of more than EUR 142 billion.

The amounts approved in 2022 are presented in the Table 8 below.

Table 8. EU Blending contributions approved in 2022

Blending facilities[186]	2022 (million EUR – not including fees)
NIP	234.71
AIP	227.10
APIF	62.53
LACIF	56.26
Total	580.60

[184] The Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF), the regional blending facility in the Western Balkans, is covered in the Chapter on Enlargement. Additional information can also be found in: www.wbif.eu/ In March 2022, the Commission created the Turkey Investment Platform (TIP), which serves so far primarily as a platform steering the use of EFSD+ guarantees, with active involvement of Turkish authorities.

[185] This includes the Asia Investment Facility (AIF), Caribbean Investment Facility (CIF), Investment Facility for Central Asia (IFCA), Investment Facility for the Pacific (IFP), and Latin American Investment Facility (LAIF). The EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund (ITF) had allocated all its remaining resources in 2019.

[186] These totals contain some contributions from the remaining funds of the predecessors of the current investment facilities. For ease of reading, these have been grouped together under the heading of the current regional facilities.

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In 2017 the European Commission developed the External Investment Plan (EIP), an EU initiative offering an innovative way to attract more investment, in particular from businesses and private investors, to countries in Africa and the EU Neighbourhood.

At the core of the EIP, the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) provided EUR 1.75 billion of unfunded guarantees through 16 investment programmes[187] implemented by a range of European and International Financial Institutions. The EFSD has approved guarantees and blending investments in almost 250 projects in Sub-Saharan Africa and the EU Neighbourhood, with an EU contribution exceeding EUR 5.7 billion in the period 2017-2021. This financing is expected to mobilise over EUR 55 billion of investments from partner development finance institutions (DFIs) into financial inclusion and support to micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), as well as in renewable energy, energy efficiency, irrigation, water and wastewater management, agriculture, transport, cities and digital sectors, and the social and education sectors. Since 2020, blending operations continue to be instrumental in supporting the EU global response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the efforts to overcome its economic consequences, while in 2022, a considerable number of blending projects in Ukraine were repurposed to support the Ukrainian State and its citizens to deal with the most urgent needs following the Russian war of aggression.

As mentioned above, the EFSD is now being supplemented by its successor the EFSD+, bringing these implementing modalities to all regions under Global Europe and at a larger scale. It merges several current external financing instruments under the EU budget, unifying grants, blending and guarantees, which will allow the EU to strategically promote public and private investment worldwide in support of sustainable development through EFSD+.

5.2.3. EFSD+, EU budget Guarantees

The European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) and its successor EFSD+ aim to bridge the gap between available Official Development Assistance and the substantial amount of financing required to create jobs, mitigate and adapt to climate change, improve connectivity and invest in social infrastructure in order to meet the UNs' Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. They address the financing gap worldwide through budgetary guarantees and blending operations (including grants, technical assistance, and financial instruments). The EFSD and the EFSD+ are powerful de-risking tools, constituting the most extensive public blending and guarantee programmes in support of private sector investment for development.

Sixteen EFSD investment programmes were contracted between 2017 and 2021 for approximately EUR 1.75 billion[188], with the expectation that they will facilitate investments of upwards of EUR 11 billion. For five programmes carried over from the EFSD, guarantee agreements were signed in 2022 under the EFSD+: EBRD Financial Inclusion (up to EUR 115 million of guarantee cover), EBRD Digital Platform (up to EUR 35 million of guarantee cover), AFD Local Governments Access to Financing Guarantee Programme - CITYRIZ (up to EUR 30 million of guarantee cover), AFD FISEA PLUS (up to EUR 35 million of guarantee cover), and EDFI MSME Platform (up to EUR 80 million of guarantee cover).

[187] This includes the COVAX II guarantee agreement, the only one signed in 2021 and considered to be a top-up of a previous EFSD agreement. The 16 investment programmes mentioned are broken down into 19 distinct contracts.
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Programmes supported by EFSD/EFSD+ guarantees cover a variety of fields including renewable energy, new technologies such as fintech and agri-tech, micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) support and access to finance, municipal infrastructure, transport and logistics, foreign exchange markets, and access to credits for rural/agricultural activities. Under the EFSD, partnerships have been established with more than 10 different financial institutions, ranging from international powerhouses such as the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC from IFC/World Bank Group), to European national development banks and agencies such as AECID (the Spanish development agency), AFD (the French development agency), CDP (the Italian development bank), COFIDES (the Spanish development bank), FMO (the Dutch development bank), KfW (the German development bank), and PROPARCO (the French development bank). Under the EFSD+, the European Commission is now working not only with these development finance institutions (DFIs), but also new partners that have been approved to manage EU funds under blending and/or budgetary guarantees.

Under the EFSD, only the European Neighbourhood and the Sub-Saharan Africa regions were eligible for support under the budgetary guarantee component. Under the EFSD+, budgetary guarantees are now applicable to all the regions covered by the IPA III and NDICI-Global Europe instruments, just like the blending platforms. Under these two instruments, not only the geographic reach is targeted; but also, the final beneficiaries of the loans extended by the partner financial institutions can be specified in the agreements, for example targeting youth, women, migrants, and more.

In 2022, the European Commission amended the EFSD municipal, infrastructure and industrial resilience programme, implemented by the EBRD, allowing the Bank to provide EUR 120 million in loans to address urgent financing needs of public utilities (Ukrenegro and Ukrainian Railways) and a private company (Farmak) affected by Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The European Commission and the EIB also agreed on the repurposing and early disbursement in 2022 of EUR 1.7 billion of previously signed EIB loans for Ukraine, covered by the EU guarantee from the 2014-20 period known as the EIB External Lending Mandate.

The first call for proposed investment programmes (PIPs) under the EFSD+ Open Access Guarantee closed in July 2022. 20 DFIs submitted 71 PIPs for a total of EUR 21.9 billion under the EFSD+ Guarantee capacity, while the capacity initially allocated was EUR 5.95 billion. Ultimately, the EFSD+ Operational Boards gave a positive opinion on 40 PIPs for the non-Neighbourhood from 20 DFIs and made allocations to six PIPs for the Neighbourhood for a total of EUR 6.05 billion in financial guarantees.

In April 2022, the European Commission and the EIB signed a guarantee agreement covering up to EUR 26.7 billion of EIB lending to partner countries worldwide, mainly for public sector infrastructure investments. This agreement, known as EFSD+ Window 1, will play a key role in the implementation of the Global Gateway strategy and in the implementation of the Economic and Investment Plans for the Western Balkans, Southern Neighbourhood and Eastern Neighbourhood.

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Most of the sixteen EFSD guarantee agreements[189] and six EFSD+ guarantee agreements[190] mentioned are accompanied by technical assistance contracts, to facilitate and strengthen the roll-out of the guaranteed operations. To date, technical assistance contracts linked to guarantees add up to EUR 119 million.

5.2.4. Technical Assistance

Technical assistance (TA) refers to the personnel involved in the implementation and the management of technical cooperation services. Technical cooperation (TC) is associated with actions aimed at strengthening individual and organisational capacity by providing expertise (short- and long-term TA personnel, institutional twinning arrangements, and mobilisation of diaspora, etc.), training and related learning opportunities (peer exchange, tertiary education, etc.), and equipment.

In the framework adopted under NDICI-Global Europe, the EU has undertaken significant efforts to use more Member States' public sector expertise to provide technical assistance to partner countries. Public sector expertise has been recognised as a form of international technical cooperation that mobilises expertise from all EU Member States' public institutions. It promotes reform and sustainable and inclusive development policies through peer-to-peer knowledge exchange and institutional partnerships with partner countries to support the implementation of the Agenda 2030 for sustainable development and the Paris Agreement [191].

Support provided by EU Member States creates mutual trust between the EU and partner countries' public servants and institutions, helps promote European values and interests as well as European standards and the policy approaches that are necessary for enhancing strategic partnerships. More importantly, it has proved to be a flexible, efficient and cost-effective way to build capacities. It is also well-suited for the 'Team Europe' approach and initiatives, as all interested Member States (including smaller ones and those without a presence in partner countries) could be involved in the planning and implementation of interventions in EU external action activities.

In addition, several technical assistance facilities (i.e., service contracts) managed directly by the European Commission are providing short-term technical assistance and learning in order to support partners, EU Delegations and European Commission's Headquarters services in designing and implementing external action interventions.

5.2.5. Twinning and TAIEX

The European Commission's institution building instruments TAIEX (technical assistance and information exchange; short-term assistance) and Twinning (medium- to long-term assistance) strategically supported the overall reform process in a diverse range of partner countries. TAIEX and Twinning continue to work in alignment with EU political priorities, notably the European Green Deal, digital transition and the regional economic and investment plans and in support of partner countries to achieve the SDGs and

[189] As mentioned above, the 16 investment programmes of EFSD include COVAX II and are broken down into 19 distinct contracts.

[190] Including the five EFSD+ Open Architecture guarantee agreements carried over from EFSD and signed in 2022, as well as the EIB guarantee known as EFSD+ Window 1.

[191] Council conclusions on European Public Sector Expertise in the EU's External Action (19.11.2021) - https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/11/19/eu-public-sector-expertise-a-key-asset-at-the-service-of-eu-s-partner-countries/

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Agenda 2030. In 2022, TAIEX mobilised over 18 400 participants and engaged 2 800 experts from all 27 Member States in 790 events. Twinning pooled EUR 122 million worth of assistance in public-to-public projects between Member States' administrations and partner countries.

In 2022, Twinning and TAIEX continued to extend their thematic and geographical scope. Neighbourhood and enlargement countries remained the largest TAIEX beneficiary with over 450 tailor-made capacity-building activities in 2022. Over 90 public institutions and 1 062 participants from Ukraine took part in 29 TAIEX events. TAIEX events delivered for Ukraine in 2022 supported the candidate country in aligning its legal system to that of the EU, as well as addressing more immediate needs – such as reintegration of veterans and EU best practice on Drones.

In total, 74 TAIEX Commission services' activities were implemented across the world in policy areas ranging from anti-corruption, fight against gender-based violence and crisis planning to natural disaster management, disinformation and strengthening the labour market. In the non-Neighbourhood countries and region, TAIEX implemented 70 events, supporting over 45 beneficiary countries, including high-income countries.

114 Twinning projects were ongoing in 2022 and 23 Member States were involved in them either as a lead Member State or as a junior partner. The Western Balkans was the region with the most ongoing projects, followed by the Eastern Partnership. For instance, in North Macedonia, Twinning supported the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy to boost the protection of employees in the case of employer insolvency. Four Twinning projects in Ukraine continued with their implementation, thanks to the adoption of special flexibility arrangements, which allowed the Resident Twinning Advisors to work remotely. Currently seven EU Member States[192] are involved in Twining in Ukraine, covering topics such as food safety, financial services and economic and monetary policy. Seven Twinning projects took place beyond the neighbourhood and enlargement regions: a sure but steady increase in the use of this instrument in other regions.

5.3. Improving ways of working

5.3.1. Simplification of procedures

Legislative Framework

The basic acts under the current multiannual financial framework 2021-2027 integrated most external financing instruments that existed as separate basic acts under the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020, including the 11th European Development Fund (EDF), into a single instrument: the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument-Global Europe (NDICI-Global Europe)[193]. It is designed to cover all external actions except those with a distinct legal basis. As a result, alongside NDICI-Global Europe, the Decision on the Overseas Association, including Greenland (DOAG)[194], the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC)[195] and the Instrument for Pre-Accession

[192] LV, PL, CZ, LT, RO, DE, NL.
[193] Regulation 2021/947 of 9 June 2021 (OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1).
[194] Decision 2021/1764 of 5 October 2021 (OJ L 355, 7.10.2021, p. 6).
[195] Regulation 2021/948 of 27 May 2021 (OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 79).

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assistance (IPA III)[196] constitute the basic acts or financing instruments for external action under the multiannual financial framework 2021-2027.

The aim of merging all previously existing external financing instruments into one single instrument is to achieve simplification in an area that was characterised by a multitude of diverging and sometimes conflicting provisions. While DOAG and IPA III remain distinct, also those basic acts build upon cross-references to the NDICI- Global Europe, thereby harmonising the implementation provisions. Moreover, the budgeting of the EDF, by integrating into NDICI- Global Europe the cooperation previously funded by the extra-budgetary EDF, results in one single set of rules applicable to all external actions. In line with this, the new Partnership Agreement with the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS)[197] will no longer include a Financial Protocol, nor technical provisions laying down specific implementation and management procedures for cooperation with OACPS.

Direct Management

Following the Practical Guide (PRAG) 2021[198], which introduced the concept of electronic submission in public procurement procedures (eSubmission), PRAG 2021.1, published in June 2022, provided further guidance for procedures managed via eSubmission, while continuing to align its procurement terminology with that used in internal policies. The PRAG 2021.1 also further reduced the number of documents that need to be submitted by tenderers. For eSubmission procedures it is no more required to request the original paper version of the Declaration on Honour signed in blue ink or with Qualified Electronic Signature (QES) prior to the award of the contract.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, actions continue to be taken for further digitalisation, facilitating remote working conditions. It has been clarified that opening sessions in calls for tenders can be done using videoconference systems in case of electronic opening through PPMT/MyWorkplace[199] and in duly justified cases.

Digitalisation is directly linked with simplification, however further digitalisation is not an objective that the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA) pursues in isolation since it has engaged in the adoption of a wide corporate suite consisting of MyWorkplace, eProcurement and OPSYS[200], as well as the Funding & Tenders portal for external access. It is however

[196] Regulation 2021/1529 of 15 September 2021 (OJ L 330, 20.9.2021, p. 1).

[197] In December 2020, the negotiators reached political agreement on a new broad agreement. In order to provide for the completion of the procedures for entry into force of the new EU-OACPS Partnership Agreement, the application of ACP-EU Partnership Agreement is further extended until 30 June 2023, unless the new Partnership Agreement enters into force or is provisionally applied before that date (Decision No 1/2022 of the ACP-EU Committee of Ambassadors of 21 June 2022 (OJ L 176, 1.7.2022, p. 88)).

[198] PRAG: the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships' Practical Guide for contract procedures for European Union external action: available at https://wikis.ec.europa.eu/display/ExactExternalWiki/ePRAG

[199] PPMT is the public procurement management tool used by all Commission services, and My Workplace is the interface for EC staff members to access electronic contract management tools.

[200] OPSYS: the new RELEX-family (DG INTPA, DG NEAR and FPI) internal online IT-system for the management of external action commitments which gradually replaces the former system CRIS (Common Relex Information System), the latter being phased-out.

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desirable to adapt procedures and models to the specific needs of external action, and this necessary adaptation allows DG INTPA to continue its simplification efforts.

Regarding grant agreements, DG INTPA has been working with Central Services and has set up a RELEX family[201] MGA working group in view of onboarding eGrants and will adopt the Model Grant Agreement (MGA) in use in the rest of the European Commission. Adaptation of these common templates following the arbitrations made with Central Services will be necessary to address external action's specificities, and to trim down unused options in external action, thus contributing to the development of a more straightforward and user-friendly contract template.

As for the further streamlining of pre-award procedures and procurement, the main priority is to progressively complete eProcurement and eGrants developments, which will become the contract management tools enabling paperless contract management. In the long run, they will replace the current legacy system CRIS[202].

Indirect Management

New internal guidance has been introduced in order to explain and formalise the processes related to EFSD+[203] budgetary guarantees, thus facilitating the concerned colleagues' daily workflow. A similar exercise is ongoing in the Directorate-General for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR), alongside the drafting of a portfolio of EFSD+ Guarantee Agreements.

In addition, DG NEAR ensured a complete review of the internal guidance on indirect management, in alignment with the end of the transitional period for the implementation of the 2018 Financial Regulation.

Financial Framework Partnership Agreements (FFPA), which facilitate the negotiation and signature of contribution agreements, including for financial instruments, have been signed in 2022 with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). An amendment to the FFPA concluded with the OECD, in order to integrate the OECD's new cost recovery policy applicable to voluntary contributions is expected to be signed in the 1st quarter of 2023. Negotiations have been finalised with the ADB and the corresponding FFPA should be signed towards end of January 2023.

As regards the Standard Contribution Agreement, several provisions from the General Conditions were substantially simplified or even removed (notably on exclusion from access to funding, publication of information on recipients and data protection) as they must now be subject to an ex-ante pillar-assessment. Following these simplifications, the Contribution Agreement Manual was also updated in December 2022.

[201] RELEX-family: the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), Directorate-General for Neighbourhood & Enlargement Negotiations (DG NEAR) and the Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI).
[202] CRIS: Common Relex Information System, the out-phasing RELEX-family internal online IT-system for the management of external action commitments; CRIS is gradually being replaced by a new IT-system, OPSYS.
[203] EFSD+: the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus, laid down in Chapter IV of NDICI-GE.

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In addition, and due to the exceptional length and complexity of the FFPA signed with EBRD on September 2022, working templates with EBRD have been prepared that already include the supplementary and derogatory clauses of the FFPA for both funded and unfunded Financial Instruments.

Similarly, the provisions for the Contribution Agreement for Financing Instruments (CAFI) and the EIB templates were updated.

In DG NEAR, negotiations have been undertaken throughout 2022 for an update of the General Conditions of the WBIF [204;] and corresponding Side letters which will finalise in the first quarter of 2023.

A new e-learning course for Management Modes and Delegated Cooperation was published in 2022.

5.4. Communication & transparency

5.4.1. Communication

2022 was marked by the serious impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, both in partner countries and in the EU. In response, the European Commission and the High Representative, including EU Delegations and offices, worked closely together in a strategic approach to communication. Two large-scale regional campaigns #StandWithUkraine (including small, focused campaigns such as 'Faces of Ukraine' and 'Art vs War') and 'Youth and Mental Health' were carried out in partnership with 61 leading media and popular bloggers in the Eastern Partnership region. These reached over 27 million people through traditional and online media, and over 14 million through social media.

The deployment of the Global Gateway strategy was given prominence throughout the year. Communication milestones in 2022 included the EU-Africa Summit, the Tallinn Digital Summit, the EU-Central Asia Connectivity Conference, the College-to-College meeting with the African Union, COP27 on climate change, COP15 on biodiversity, the EU-ASEAN Summit and the first Global Gateway Board meeting. Global Gateway was also promoted through the Economic and Investment Plans of the Western Balkans and the EU Neighbourhood. The EU was also highlighted as a global leader in health, education and youth engagement, through communication on the response to the COVID-19 crisis and the EU Global Health Strategy[205], the Transforming Education Summit and the first-ever Youth Action Plan for EU external action[206].

The Global Gateway visual brand identity was launched in 2022, accompanied by a Global Gateway graphic charter. Global Gateway communication campaigns were carried on broadcast and social media, showing the partnership between partner countries and the European Union through the perspective of local beneficiaries and influencers. These reached young adult audiences of over 125 million in Africa and Europe.

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[204] Blending cooperation under the Western Balkans Investment Framework (WBIF) covers six Western Balkan countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) and is financed from the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance and bilateral donor funding.

[205] European Commission, Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety, *EU global health strategy – Better health for all in a changing world*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2022, https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2875/22652

[206] JOIN(2022) 53 final of 4 October 2022. https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/policies/youth/youth-action-plan_en

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The European Commission and the High Representative advanced with the implementation of the new approach to strategic communication and public diplomacy for activities funded under NDICI-Global Europe at country, regional and global level. The *2022 Guidelines on Communicating and Raising EU Visibility*[207] were published, updating the 2018 communication and visibility requirements and EU contractual documents. The new Guidelines provide advice to the European Commission and implementing partners on implementing successful and impactful communication activities. The European Commission and the High Representative worked closely with EU Delegations around the world to support a shift towards more strategic communications at scale. The aim is to increase understanding of and support for the EU's action and priorities, including through a stronger social media presence.

In 2022, major campaigns in partner countries by the European Commission and the High Representative included: 'Women in Science', 'Made Of Us' (rolled out by WeBalkans), the second phase of the #InTheirEyes, 'Our Voices our Future', 'Europe Day Celebrations', 'Orange The World', environmental campaigns such as 'Eyes On Blue' (in partnership with SwitchMed (MedWaves)), 'EU Beach Clean-up', 'Earth Day campaign', 'For Our Planet', and campaigns around the EU-Africa Summit, Berlin Process Summit and the EU-Western Balkans Tirana Summit.

The EU Neighbours East regional communication programme also continued with many different components. These included: thematic communication campaigns; expanding a network of media and non-media partners; a flagship network of 925 Young European Ambassadors; annual opinion polls; improving the EUDIGITOOL for EU projects in the Eastern Partnership; and maintaining a comprehensive database of EU-funded projects with external country websites.

The European Development Days were organised in hybrid format on 21-22 June 2022 and gathered more than 4 000 people in-person and another 3 500 online over the two days. 52 virtual and hybrid conferences and 43 visits were organised in the International Partnerships InfoPoint, which supports the European Commission's information exchange and partnerships with external policymakers, civil society, non-governmental organisations, and young people. Six Kapuscinski Development Lectures were held in hybrid format, bringing together a total of 1 700 participants, and the 30th edition of the Lorenzo Natali Prize for outstanding journalism received more than 500 eligible submissions. On top of the expansion of the Young European Ambassadors network, 2022 also saw the launch of the network of EU Jeel Connectors across the Southern Neighbourhood and the expansion of the network of EU Goodwill Ambassadors. Other events by the European Commission included the EU-Western Balkans Media Conference, the EU Award for most Roma-friendly Mayor in the Western Balkans and Türkiye, the EU4Youth event and the related social media visibility campaign.

In 2022, the EU continued to develop tools to impose political, economic and reputational costs on the perpetrators of harmful information manipulation and interference, including those who undermine elections and open media environments in the EU and its neighbourhood. Action included efforts to expose the extent of the Russian government's information manipulation and disinformation by strengthening EU communication, including the 'EUvsDisinfo' awareness-raising campaign. The EU directly support Ukraine's strategic communication efforts and worked closely with international and like-minded partners, in particular the G7 and NATO, to push back on war propaganda and to build partnerships to improve society's resistance to information manipulation and to strengthen proactive

[207] Communicating and raising EU visibility: Guidance for external actions (europa.eu)

communications. In April 2022, the European Commission organised an online TAIEX peer-to-peer workshop on disinformation in the Western Balkans, with nearly 100 key communicators from Western Balkans governments and experts from Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland.

5.4.2. Transparency

The European Commission has continued to ensure accountability and openness of its development assistance through publishing timely, comprehensive, and forward-looking data in line with the International Aid Transparency Initiative[208] standard, OECD-DAC's Creditor Reporting System[209], the DAC Advance Questionnaire[210], Forward Spending Survey[211] and the joint DAC-XCRED report on untied ODA[212] contract awards as well as Total Official Support for Sustainable Development[213].

The European Commission remains firmly committed to transparency, a key effectiveness principle and a key principle of the Global Gateway strategy. In 2022, the European Commission notably co-hosted the launch of the Aid Transparency Index 2022[214], a global index by the non-governmental organisation Publish What You Fund, in which the European Commission services were ranked as 'good'.

Furthermore, the European Commission continues to invest in publishing higher quality data and information on development cooperation and developing innovative tools in support of informed decision-making. For example, it launched in 2022 the Team Europe Partnerships Portal[215], a matchmaking platform developed with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Estonia to connect partner countries with the 'Team Europe' offer. Beyond that, it released a revamped version of the EU Aid Explorer[216], allowing users to freely explore EU and Member States' spending on official development assistance, and maintained the Team Europe Initiative and Joint Programming tracker[217], sharing information on where it works jointly with Member States to address development challenges in a 'Team Europe' approach. Transparency is also one of the key principles of the Global Gateway strategy.

5.4.3. Learning

Within the Commission, the international partnerships learning development sector organises a wide range of learning events to train European Commission services (Delegations and Headquarters) on political priorities and key thematic development topics. The learning offer is also often open to a wider community, such as to practitioners from Member States or, in the case of the e-learning platform EU International Partnerships Academy[218], to the public.

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[208] IATI
[209] Creditor Reporting System (CRS) (oecd.org)
[210] Data collection and resources for data reporters - OECD
[211] Survey on Donors Forward Spending Plans (oecd.org)
[212] Untied aid - OECD
[213] Total Official Support for Sustainable Development (TOSSD) - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
[214] 2022 Aid Transparency Index: the European Commission reaffirms its commitment to better transparency in EU financial aid (europa.eu)
[215] Team Europe Partnerships Portal (europa.eu)
[216] EU Aid Explorer (europa.eu)
[217] Dashboard | Team Europe Initiative and Joint Programming tracker (europa.eu)
[218] EU International Partnerships Academy (europa.eu)

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In 2022, almost all classroom courses were organised remotely in different online formats such as webinars, virtual classes and e-learning courses.

173 different training events on EU Learn (involving 3 429 participants) were organised. Moreover, The EU International Partnerships Academy, welcomed 3 500 new users in 2022, reaching more than 20 000 currently enrolled users in total from 190 different countries. The platform, since its creation, has delivered more than 4 300 certificates, made available over 360 different open learning resources and reached more than 950 000 visits (270 000 in 2022).

Compared to 2021, the total number of training materials available on the website has increased by 15 %. Among some new courses available are eLearnings on the 'Team Europe' approach, Circular Economy, OPSYS: Online Resource Package For Implementing Partners; a series of new podcasts on Cybersecurity and many webinars in the field of Financial & Contractual Procedures, Nutrition and Health. The average satisfaction rate of courses organised was 80.5 % based on users' feedback upon course completion.

Table of Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Meaning
AAP(s)	Annual Action Plan(s)
AATIF	Agriculture and Trade Investment Fund
ABC Fund	Agri-Business Capital Fund
ACP	Africa, Caribbean, Pacific
ACTA-A	Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator
ADB	Asian Development Bank
AECID	*Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo* (Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation)
AEDIB	the Africa Europe Digital Innovation Bridge
AEGEI	the Africa-EU Green Energy initiative
AEO	Authorised Economic Operator
AfCFTA	the African Continental Free Trade Area
AFD	*Agence Française de Développement* (French development agency)
AfDB	African Development Bank
AfT	Aid for trade
DG AGRI	The Directorate-General for Agriculture and Rural Development
AgriFI	the Agriculture Financing Initiative
AIMF	*L'Association Internationale des Maires Francophones*
AIP	Africa Investment Platform
ALERT	Acute Large Emergency Response Tool
AMC countries	Advance Market Commitment countries
APIF	Asia Pacific Investment Facility
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission

BBNJ	Agreement on Marine Biodiversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction

Abbreviation	Meaning
BEEP	Business Environment and Export Enhancement Programme
BGK	*Bank Gospodarstwa Krajowego*
BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
BMWK	the German Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action
BS	Budget Support
BSOs	Business Support Organisations

CACCR	the Central Asia COVID-19 Crisis Response programme
CAFI	Contribution Agreement for Financing Instruments
CAR	Central African Republic
CARICOM	the Caribbean Community
CAS	Conflict Analysis Screenings
CBA	Central Bank of Armenia
CBC	Cross-Border Cooperation
CBD	UN Convention on Biological Diversity
CBDSD	Capacity Building in support of Development and Security for Development
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear
CCTE	Conditional Cash Transfer for Education programme
CDP	Cassa Depositi e Prestiti (the Italian development bank)
CDRFI	Climate and Disaster Risk Finance and Insurance
CEGGA II	Second phase of the Citizen Engagement for Good Governance, Accountability and the Rule of Law programme
CEPA	
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy Instrument
CIIP	the Competitive Industries and Innovation Programme
CIRAD	*Centre de coopération internationale en recherche*
CIV	EBRD's Climate Innovation Vouchers programme
CLGF	the Commonwealth Local Government Forum

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Abbreviation	Meaning
DG CLIMA	The Directorate-General for Climate Action
CLIP(s)	Country Level Implementation Plan(s)
CMO	Common Market Organisation
CoHA	Cessation of Hostilities Agreement
COFIDES	*Compañía Española de Financiación del Desarrollo* (Spanish development bank)
CoM	Covenant of Mayors
CONCORD	European confederation of non-governmental organizations
CONUN	United Nations Working Party
COP15	15th meeting of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity
COP26	
COP27	27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
COVAX	COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access
COVID-19	Corona Virus Disease of 2019
CRGA	Committee of Representatives of Governments and Administrations
CRIS	Common RELEX Information System
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
CSTO	Collective Security Treaty Organisation
CTs	Country Teams

DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DARYA	Dialogue and Action for Resourceful Youth in Central Asia programme
DCFTA	Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
DDR	disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration
DEAR	Development Education and Awareness Raising programme

Abbreviation	Meaning
DFI(s)	development finance institution(s)
DGs	Directorate-Generals
DOAG	Decision on the Overseas Association, including Greenland
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
DREF	Disaster Response Emergency Fund
DSI	Digital Sequence Information

EABF	EU-Africa Business Forum
EaP	the Eastern Partnership
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
EC	the European Commission
DG ECFIN	The Directorate-General for Economic and Financial Affairs
DG ECHO	The Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection
EDDs	the European Development Days
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	the European External Action Service
EFAD	the European Financial Architecture for Development
EFSD+	European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus
EIB	The European Investment Bank
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EIP	Economic Investment Plan
EITI	the Extractives Industry Transparency Initiative
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
DG EMPL	The Directorate-General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ENTSO-E	European Network of Transmission System Operators for Electricity
DG ENV	The Directorate-General for the Environment
EP	European Parliament

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Abbreviation	Meaning
EPA(s)	Economic Partnership Agreement(s)
EPCA(s)	Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement(s)
EPF	European Peace Facility
EPRM	European Partnership for Responsible Minerals
ERCC	the Emergency Response Coordination Centre
ESA	Eastern and Southern Africa
ESSN	Emergency Social Safety Net programme
EU	European Union
EUAA	EU Agency for Asylum
EUAM	EU Advisory Mission
EUBAM	EU Border Management Assistance Mission
EUCAP	EU Capacity Building Mission
EUGH	EU Global Health Strategy
EULEX	EU Rule of Law Mission
EUMAM	EU Military Assistance Mission
EUMM	EU Monitoring Mission
EUMPM	EU Military Partnership Mission
EUPOL	EU Police Mission
EUR	Euro
EUROPOL	EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
EUSR	EU Special Representative
EUVR	EU Voluntary Review on the implementation of the SDGs
E5P	Eastern Europe Energy Efficiency and Environmental Partnership

FAC	the Foreign Affairs Council
FAO	the Food and Agriculture Organization
FFPA	Financial Framework Partnership Agreements
FINTECC	EBRD's Finance and Technology Transfer Centre for Climate Change programme
FLEGT	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
FMO	*Nederlandse Financierings-Maatschappij voor Ontwikkelingslanden N.V.* (Dutch entrepreneurial development bank)
FPAs	Framework Partnership Agreements

Abbreviation	Meaning
FPI	Service for Foreign Policy Instruments
FRF	Food and Resilience Facility
Frontex	the European Border and Coast Guard Agency
FSS	Food Systems Summit

GACERE	Global Alliance on Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency
GAP III	Gender Action Plan III
GAVI	Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation
GBF	Global Biodiversity Framework
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GDC	UN Global Digital Compact
GDP	gross domestic product
GEAR	Gender Equality and Returns training programme
GERF	the Global Europe Results Framework
GFC	Global Fertiliser Challenge initiative
GGIs	Green Growth Indicators
GGW	the Great Green Wall
GIFP	EU's Global Illicit Flows Programme
GIZ	The German Society for International Cooperation
GNI	
GPE	Global Partnership for Education
GPEDC	Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation
G5 Sahel	Group of Five nations Sahel
G7	Group of Seven - intergovernmental political forum
G20	Group of Twenty - intergovernmental forum for international economic cooperation

HCJ	High Council of Justice
HDP	Humanitarian Development Peace
Heading IV	MFF 2014-2020 Heading - Global Europe
Heading VI	MFF 2021-2027 - Neighbourhood and the World
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus

Abbreviation	Meaning
HLEG	High-Level Expert Group
HQCJ	the High Qualification Commission of Judges
HRBA	Human Rights-Based Approach
HRDN	Human Rights and Democracy Network
HRVP	EU High Representative/Vice-President
HUMA	Humanitarian Aid

IAEA	International Atomic Energy Agency
ICCA	International Chernobyl Cooperation Account
ICG	International Contact Group
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IECG	Iraq Economic Contact Group
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFC	International Finance Corporation
IFIs	International Financial Institutions
IFRC	International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
IHL	International Humanitarian Law
ILO	International Labour Organisation
IMAP-MPA	Integrated Monitoring and Assessment Programme-Marine Protected Areas
IMEO	the International Methane Emission Observatory
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMPEL	Implementation and Enforcement of Environmental Law
INFFs	Integrated National Financing Frameworks
INSC	Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organization

Abbreviation	Meaning
DG INTPA	The Directorate-General for International Partnerships
IOE	International Organisation for Employers
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
IPARD	IPA Rural Development programme
IPG	the International Partners Group
IRENA	International Renewable Energy Agency
ITC	International Trade Centre
ITU	International Telecommunication Union

JETP	Just Energy Transition Partnerships
JRC	the Joint Research Centre

KfW	*Kreditanstalt Für Wiederaufbau* (German Development Bank)

LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LACIF	Latin America and Caribbean Investment Facility
LDC(S)	Least Developed Country(ies)
LEADER	*Liaison Entre Actions de l'Économie Rurale* (programme for Rural Development)
LMIC(S)	Lower Middle-Income Country(ies)
LSD	Lumpy skin disease

MADCT(S)	More Advanced Developing Countries and Territories
MAV+	Team Europe initiative on Manufacturing and Access to Vaccines, Medicines and Health Technologies in Africa
MFA	Macro Financial Assistance
MFA+	Macro-Financial Assistance Plus instrument providing support to Ukraine for 2023
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MGA	Model Grant Agreement
MIP	Multiannual Indicative Programme

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Abbreviation	Meaning
MONDIACULT	UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies and Sustainable Development
MS	Member States
MSME(s)	Micro-, Small and Medium-sized Enterprise(s)

NAP(s)	National Adaptation Plan(s)
NATO	the North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NDC(s)	Nationally Determined Contribution(s)
NDICI-Global Europe	The Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument-Global Europe
NEAR	The Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
NEET	Not in Education, Employment, or Training
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIP	Neighbourhood Investment Platform
N4G Summit	Nutrition for Growth Summit
OACPS	Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States
OAS	Organisation of American States
OCTs	Overseas countries and territories
Non-ODA	Development aid not classified as Official Development Assistance (ODA)
ODA	Official Development Assistance
ODIHR	OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OECD	The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OECS	Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States
OHCHR	United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OLIC/OTHER LIC(S)	Other Low-Income Country(ies)
OPSYS	Operational System (used by the EC for External Actions)
OSCE	Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Abbreviation	Meaning
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PCA	Partnership and Cooperation Agreement
PCD	Policy coherence for development
PFD	Policy for Development
PFM	Public Financial Management
PI	the Partnership Instrument
PICs	Pacific Island Countries
PPMT	Public Procurement Management Tool
PRAG	Practical guide
PRGT	(IMF's) Poverty Reduction and Growth Trust
PROPARCO	*Promotion et Participation pour la Coopération Économique* (French development finance institution)
PSIOM	Pacific Solutions Integrated Ocean Management
PSOs	Philanthropy Support Organisations

RCs	Resident Coordinators
DG REGIO	The Directorate-General for Regional and Urban Policy
RELEX	*Relations Extérieures* (External Relations - Family includes DG INTPA, DG NEAR and FPI)
rescEU	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
RoL&AC	Rule of Law and Anticorruption
RVO	Netherlands Enterprise Agency
R&I	Research and Innovation

SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SAFE	Security, Accountability and Fight Against Crime programme
SAFS	Sustainable Agri-Food Systems
SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
DG SANTE	The Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety
SCA	Structural Country Assessments
SCP	Sustainable Consumption and Production
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SECAP(s)	Sustainable Energy and Climate Action Plan(s)

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Abbreviation	Meaning
SEESAC	Southeastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons
SEE-CC	Strengthening the Entrepreneurial Ecosystem for Clean Cooking
SFDRR	Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction
SICA	Central American Integration System
SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SME	Small to medium-sized enterprise
SNA	Somali Nation Alliance
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics
STI	Science, Technology and Innovation
STRIVE	Strengthening Resilience to Violence and Extremism programme

TA	Technical assistance
TAAF	*Terres Australes et Antarctiques Françaises*
TAFs	Technical Assistance Facilities
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange
DG TAXUD	The Directorate-General for Taxation and Customs Union
TC	Technical cooperation
TED	Team Europe initiative on Democracy
TEI	Team Europe initiative
TPSDE	Trade, Private Sector Development and Engagement
DG TRADE	The Directorate-General for Trade
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UCLG	United Cities and Local Governments

Abbreviation	Meaning
UCLGA	United Cities and Local Governments of Africa
UCPM	EU Civil Protection Mechanism
UfM	Union for the Mediterranean
UHC	Universal Health Coverage
UMIC(S)	Upper Middle-Income Country(ies)
UN	United Nations
UNCLOS	United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea
UNDP	United Nations' lead agency on international development
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNGA	United Nations General Assembly
UNIDO	United Nations Industrial Development Organisation
UNITAD	United Nations Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da'esh/ISIL
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNRSF	United Nation Road Safety Fund
UNRWA	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East
UNSE	United Nation Special Envoy
UNVIM	United Nations Verification and Inspection Mechanism
USD	US Dollar

VET	Vocational education and training
VPA(s)	Voluntary Partnership Agreement(s)

WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene
WBG	the World Bank Group
WBIF	Western Balkans Investment Framework
WES	Water and Environment Support
WHO	the World Health Organisation

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Abbreviation	Meaning
WTDC	World Telecommunication Development Conference
WTO	the World Trade Organization

YAP	Youth Action Plan

Abbreviation	Meaning

ZRA	the Zambezi River Authority

10YFP	10 Year Framework Programme