



Council of the
European Union

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**DEVGEN 73
SUSTDEV 40
ACP 26
COHAFA 34
RELEX 320
FIN 294
WTO 108
ONU 40
OCDE 7**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	23 April 2021
To:	Delegations

No. prev. doc.:	7756/21
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Subject:	2020 Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's instruments for financing external actions in 2019 - Council conclusions (23 April 2021)
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Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the 2020 Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's instruments for financing external actions in 2019, approved by written procedure on 23 April 2021.

**2020 Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's instruments
for financing external actions in 2019**

Council conclusions

1. The Council welcomes the Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's instruments for financing external actions in 2019. The report is an important means of communication to inform citizens and stakeholders, as well as to enhance the transparency and accountability on the implementation and results of EU external action and its contribution to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), along with the Paris Agreement.
2. The Council appreciates that the report covers key aspects of all EU external action instruments, including international cooperation and development, European Neighbourhood Policy, humanitarian aid and civil protection, EU enlargement, security and defence, crisis response and preparedness, human rights and democracy, gender equality and EU foreign policy needs. It welcomes the report's effort to show progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.
3. The Council calls for reinforced 'Shared Vision', 'Common Action' and 'working better together' as advocated in the Global Strategy for the European Union's Common Foreign and Security Policy and the new European Consensus on Development, including the advancement towards a more joined-up, responsive, inclusive, efficient and stronger Union's external action.
4. The Council highlights the importance of building strong international partnerships in line with EU values and interests, while pursuing effective multilateralism with the United Nations at its core, and strengthening rules-based international cooperation. The Council recalls that a multilateral order grounded in international law, including the principles of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is the only guarantee for peace and security at home and abroad.
5. The Council appreciates the improved reporting by Commission services and the EEAS on concrete results of EU projects and programmes, including by providing broader data coverage and comprehensive information.

6. With regards to future reports, the Council stresses the importance of focusing on the specific results of the EU external action and its policy priorities, and encourages the Commission to better integrate result reporting in the thematic chapters.
7. The Council calls upon the Commission services and the EEAS to reflect upon the report's format, so as to further improve its quality, result-orientation and user-friendliness, while ensuring its delivery in a more timely manner.
8. The Council calls upon the Commission services and the EEAS to report explicitly on the EU's global response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including on the achievements of the Team Europe approach, which began in 2020 and will be pursued in our joint efforts to support our partner countries in recovering and building back better and greener. The Council also proposes to put particular emphasis on explaining how reoriented and new financial resources are used to target the people most affected by this crisis.
9. The Council also highlights the relevance of well-structured and detailed geographic and thematic reporting on implementation under the envisaged Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), including progress towards meeting the aims and targets of the NDICI. Against this background, the Council encourages the Commission services and the EEAS to show better how the EU's external action and geopolitical role contributes to EU policy priorities in every geographical region in which it operates.
10. The Council welcomes the reporting on the financial and non-financial modalities of joint action by the EU and the Member States (including e.g. on the European Fund for Sustainable Development), as well as by type of implementation partners and by type of instruments (including detailed information on budget support, blending mechanisms, loans and guarantees). The Council encourages the Commission services and the EEAS to continue to apply and, where relevant, further improve differentiated reporting in different aid modalities, including on budget support in the financial annexes.

11. The Council calls upon the Commission services and the EEAS to continue improving the strategic communication and outreach of the European Union on its external action.

The Council also supports the scaling-up of successful communication measures aiming at all relevant target groups through campaigns and thematic events to increase impact and visibility of the EU external action and tackle disinformation.
