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ACP 124	ELARG 98
RELEX 1114	COLAC 99
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SUSTDEV 190	COAFR 354
FIN 996	MOG 76
COHAFA 96	COASI 174
CLIMA 465	CFSP/PESC 1259
NDICI 2	CSDP/PSDC 666
MIGR 280	EDUC 424
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COVER NOTE

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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

2021 Annual Report

**On the implementation of the European Union's External Action Instruments
in 2020**

{SWD(2021) 388 final}

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GLOBAL COMMITMENTS

Introduction

The year 2020 was marked by COVID-19. The pandemic made an impact on everyone, everywhere around the world. The EU responded through its external action instruments, demonstrating adaptability, flexibility and the power of its international partnerships.

This report outlines key aspects of the EU's financial support in 2020 for international cooperation and development, humanitarian aid, foreign policy and enlargement¹. Prior to the pandemic, the EU already championed a long-term agenda aligned on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), guided by a vision of sustainability and partnership. COVID-19 did not deflect the EU from this objective; indeed, it showed the agenda to be prescient and more urgent than ever, bringing into focus issues such as growing global inequalities and the digital divide.

In 2020, the EU and its Member States came together through a 'Team Europe approach'², mobilising more than EUR 40 billion to fight COVID-19 and its impact in our partner countries around the world³, on top of efforts to protect people and economies in the EU itself.

The immediate priority during 2020 was to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 in the most vulnerable countries, but the EU did not lose sight of the need to lay the basis for a green and digital transition through a just, inclusive and resilient global recovery. At the UN Financing for Development High-Level Event in September 2020, President von der Leyen called for a Global Recovery Initiative that links investment and debt relief to the SDGs.

In 2020, the EU advanced two major frameworks for its external action: internally, negotiations were completed on the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)⁴ – Global Europe for 2021-27; externally, chief negotiators from the EU and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States reached a political deal on the post-Cotonou framework, that will upgrade and modernise the EU's relations with the 79 African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

The EU took a historic step by deciding to open accession negotiations with North Macedonia and Albania. In parallel, an ambitious economic and investment plan for the Western Balkans looked to spur long-term recovery and facilitate the path to EU membership.

Throughout 2020, the EU continued to respond to geopolitical developments in its bordering countries and regions. It led initiatives to boost Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, strengthen the stabilisation and peace process in Libya under the Berlin process, and support civil society in Syria.

The EU's efforts to promote peace and stability in the Sahel region (Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger), the Central African Republic and the Horn of Africa (Somalia) included

¹ See the SWD accompanying this annual report Part I, Introduction, for details.

² The Team Europe approach combines resources, ways of working, expertise and tools of the EU, Member States, their implementing agencies and European Development Finance Institutions, while respecting EU competences and the decision-making procedures established by the EU Treaties.

³ This takes into account pre-financing from 2019, with a pro-rata temporis methodology, which was adjusted to tackle the pandemic in 2020.

⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/find-funding/eu-funding-programmes/global-europe-neighbourhood-development-and-international-cooperation-instrument_en

diplomacy, civilian and military missions and operations under the common security and defence policy (CSDP) and humanitarian, stabilisation and development aid in an integrated partnership approach.

At the end of 2020, the Communication 'A new EU-US agenda for global change'⁵ looked to strengthen the transatlantic partnership on several strategic agendas, including climate change, health, and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

The promotion and protection of human rights is a cornerstone of EU external action, reaffirmed through its Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020-2024⁶. In a digital age plagued by disinformation, this Action Plan also promotes enhancement of democracy and transparency through media literacy. The adoption of the EU Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime⁷ on 7 December and subsequent listings in March 2021 are tangible examples of the EU's determination to defend human rights globally.

Team Europe approach: responding to the COVID-19 global crisis

The Team Europe approach is a major practical innovation in how the EU and Member States work together in areas of parallel competence. It emerged in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

It brings together the EU institutions, Member States, their implementing agencies and European Development Finance Institutions. By combining resources, ways of working, expertise and tools, while respecting the EU competences and decision-making procedures set out in the Treaties, it builds a strategic culture of coordination around transformative action.

The EU was an early supporter of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator. The Coronavirus Global Response pledging conference of 4 May 2020, co-convened by the Commission, raised EUR 15.9 billion to ensure the collaborative development and universal deployment of vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics against COVID-19. More than 70% of these pledges came from the EU and its Member States.

Of the more than EUR 40 billion mobilised by the EU and its Member States in 2020 to tackle COVID-19, some 65% was disbursed during the year.

In a unique repatriation effort, the EU helped bring home more than 625 000 EU citizens who found themselves stranded abroad. The EU Civil Protection Mechanism also facilitated the delivery⁸ of over 18 million items of critical personal protective and medical equipment, including over 3 million items from rescEU⁹ stockpiles established in 2020.

EU: a strong global actor

The EU remains one of the few actors with a global presence and a comprehensive policy toolbox able to respond and support our partners around the world.

The EU and its Member States are committed to taking account of development cooperation objectives in the external and internal policies that affect developing countries. The 2017 European Consensus on Development has reaffirmed the importance of policy coherence for development.

⁵ JOIN(2020) 22 final of 2 December 2020.

⁶ JOIN(2020) 5 final of 25 March 2020.

⁷ OJ L 410I 7.12.2020, p. 1.

⁸ Through the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC).

⁹ Reserve capacity known as rescEU reserve of additional capacities.

In 2020, the EU and its 27 Member States remained the leading provider of official development assistance (ODA), increasing its collective contribution to EUR 66.8 billion, according to preliminary figures¹⁰. This represents 46% of total global ODA from the EU and other Development Assistance Committee (DAC) donors and is equivalent to 0.50% of the EU's gross national income (GNI).

In 2020, the EU continued to actively engage in development-related UN processes. The Commission presented the Staff Working Document 'Delivering on the UN's Sustainable Development Goals – A comprehensive approach'¹¹, reflecting the EU's commitment to the 2030 Agenda. With the EU's support, integrated national financing frameworks (INFFs) were established to develop country-led financing strategies for making progress towards the SDGs.

Africa remained a key priority for the EU in 2020. In March, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy launched their vision for strengthening the EU's partnership with Africa in a Joint Communication 'Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa'.¹² They proposed to deepen cooperation in five key areas: green transition; digital transformation; sustainable growth and jobs; peace and governance; migration and mobility.

The EU, together with its Member States, remains the world's leading donors of humanitarian assistance. The EU's humanitarian aid budget for 2020 amounted EUR 2 138 million.

In 2020, the EU funded humanitarian organisations in more than 80 countries and regions including Afghanistan, Haiti, the Sahel region, South Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, Venezuela and Yemen.

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism was activated 102 times in 2020 – including 57 times outside Europe – for a variety of natural and human-induced disasters.

In 2020, the EU continued to implement its European Neighbourhood policy (ENP), advancing reforms and building resilience and prosperity with partners in its neighbourhood. In March 2020, the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy adopted the Joint Communication 'Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020: Reinforcing Resilience – an Eastern Partnership that delivers for all'¹³, setting out five long-term policy objectives, with resilience as a crosscutting goal.

In November 2020, the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Declaration was an opportunity to reflect on the priorities of the EU partnership with the Southern Neighbourhood region. The Joint Communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on a renewed partnership with the Southern Mediterranean region¹⁴ focused on human development, sustainable and inclusive economic recovery, and youth empowerment.

For the Western Balkans, the Commission adopted proposals to enhance the accession process, and in March 2020, the European Council endorsed the General Affairs Council's decision to open accession negotiations with the Republic of Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia. At the EU-Western Balkans Summit on 6 May 2020, the EU leaders reaffirmed the Union's determination to intensify further its engagement with the region and welcomed the pledge of the Western Balkan partners to implement necessary reforms.

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_21_1701

¹¹ SWD(2020) 400 final of 18 November 2020.

¹² JOIN(2020) 4 final of 9 March 2020.

¹³ JOIN(2020) 7 final of 18 March 2020.

¹⁴ JOIN (2021), 2 final of 9 February 2021.

In 2020, political agreements were reached on the European Defence Fund and the European Peace Facility. Under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), civilian missions and military missions and operations (e.g. Central African Republic, Georgia, Iraq, Kosovo*, Libya, Mali, Niger, Palestinian territories, Somalia, South Mediterranean, Ukraine, Western Indian Ocean) continued to support our partners and address crises around the world.

A new CSDP military operation, EUNAVFOR MED Operation IRINI, was launched on 31 March 2020, with a core mandate to enforce the UN arms embargo on Libya. Following a holistic strategic review of CSDP engagement in the Horn of Africa, the mandates of the military operation EUNAVFOR Operation Atalanta, the military mission EUTM Somalia, and the civilian mission EUCAP Somalia were extended to 31 December 2022. The EU proposed a new tool, the Coordinated Maritime Presences, to increase the EU's capacity to act as a maritime security provider. In September, an implementation plan for a pilot case in the Gulf of Guinea was agreed.

The EU's Service for Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI) deployed 17 electoral missions and remote desk reviews and supported 14 electoral processes during 2020.

Under the External Investment Plan (EIP), the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) was established to support investment in Africa and the EU Neighbourhood. By the end of 2020, the Commission had signed guarantee agreements with partner financial institutions for a total value of EUR 1.55 billion.

The EU Blending Framework comprises seven active regional blending facilities¹⁵. In 2020, these facilities invested over EUR 900 million in projects around the globe.

Budget support remains an important tool to support EU external action. The EU disbursed a total of EUR 3 billion as budget support in 2020.

Joint programming promotes a common European strategy as a basis for our relationship with partner countries. By the end of 2020, there were 22 joint programming documents¹⁶, including one new document for Ecuador. The extension of institution-building tools (TAIEX and Twinning) in 2020 helped to leverage European expertise globally.

* 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.

¹⁵ Africa Investment Platform (AIP), Asia Investment Facility (AIF), Caribbean Investment Facility (CIF), Investment Facility for Central Asia (IFCA), Investment Facility for the Pacific (IFP), Latin American Investment Facility (LAIF), and Neighbourhood Investment Platform (NIP). It covers all regions of EU external cooperation (with the EU-Africa Infrastructure Trust Fund having allocated all its remaining resources in 2019).

¹⁶ See the SWD accompanying this annual report, Section 2.4, for details.

GLOBAL PRIORITIES

In 2020, the EU pursued its sustainable development vision through pragmatic partnerships. Below are a few examples highlighting the EU's continued commitment to sustainability.

Human development

COVID-19 led to school and university closures affecting more than 1.5 billion students across the planet. EU-funded education support programmes, such as the Global Partnership for Education, Education Cannot Wait, and Education in Emergencies, were reoriented to provide emergency funding and ensure learning continuity for more than 355 million children in 66 countries. Flexibility arrangements were introduced to Erasmus+ to continue the support to universities, students and staff from partner countries.

In 2020, the EU significantly increased its support for water access, sanitation and hygiene – the first line of defence against COVID-19 – in countries including the Philippines, Pakistan, South Africa, Ivory Coast, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal and Cameroon.

The EU-UN Spotlight Initiative, an unprecedented global partnership to eliminate violence against women and girls, had reached 26 countries and six regions by the end of 2020, with a total of EUR 497 million committed.

In 2020, about 60% of the Commission's COVID-19 related funding supported gender equality and women's empowerment.¹⁷

The EU exceeded its EUR 3.5 billion global pledge for nutrition by EUR 800 million in 2020. Between 2014 and 2020, the EU committed EUR 4.3 billion to addressing child and maternal malnutrition. The EU also supported health services during the pandemic by renewing commitments to routine immunisation in partner countries through a EUR 300 million pledge to GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance, and to sexual and reproductive health and rights through a EUR 26.5 million grant to the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents.

Green Deal

In 2020, 27.3 % of EU-funded international cooperation and development assistance contributed to climate change adaptation and mitigation.

In 2020, the EU continued to support actions to increase sustainable energy access and decarbonise the global energy sector.

By the end of 2020, EU-supported sustainable energy activities in partner countries had helped create 18 gigawatts (GW) of new renewable energy capacity. This enabled more than 22 million people to gain access to sustainable energy and energy services.

Under the EIP, the first guarantee programmes targeting sustainable cities were signed in 2020.

Direct support was provided to 12 partner countries to upgrade their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Through the Global Climate Change Alliance+ (GCCA+), the EU has contributed to more than 80 national climate change strategies in over 60 countries.

¹⁷ This refers to contributions from DG INTPA, NEAR and FPI, excluding guarantees.

In the field of sustainable agriculture, 19 DeSIRA (Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture initiative) projects were signed in 2020.

In 2020, several partners joined the EU in the launch of an ambitious ‘Landscapes for Our Future’ initiative aimed at promoting integrated landscape management, spanning more than 20 countries and three sub-regions.

Sustainable growth and jobs

In 2020, the EU provided EUR 183 million to the IMF’s Catastrophe Containment and Relief Trust, helping governments in the poorest and most vulnerable countries to cope with the economic effects of COVID-19 and to preserve jobs.

A EUR 10 million EU contribution to the Women’s Financial Inclusion Facility leveraged significant public and private investment, raising a total of EUR 75 million in 2020 to support economic empowerment and financial inclusion for over 6 million women throughout the world.

The EU Partnership for Responsible Minerals helped set up 22 miners’ organisations around the world, enabling them to access formal markets. In 2020, seven new projects were launched in Africa and Latin America.

In the Western Balkans and Turkey, over 25 EU programmes contributed directly to labour market inclusion and decent work.

Science, technology, innovation and digitalisation

In 2020, the EU boosted its engagement around science, technology, innovation and digital transformation, setting up new initiatives with Africa and expanding work on its Copernicus Earth Observation satellite system.

December 2020 saw the launch of the Digital4Development (D4D) Hub as a strategic platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue and Member State coordination to boost investment and partnerships in digital transformation.

The increased importance of science, technology and innovation for inclusive and sustainable growth in the ACP regions was recognised with the launch of a new EUR 60 million programme to strengthen innovation ecosystems and capabilities.

Collaboration with the EU framework programmes for research and innovation (Horizon 2020 for the year 2020) and its partnerships (e.g. EDCTP¹⁸) has been crucial to ensure synergies among different funding instruments.

Migration and assistance to refugees and displaced persons

With over 82.4 million people forcibly displaced worldwide, the EU continued to provide humanitarian assistance to vulnerable displaced populations around the globe. Assistance was provided in key refugee-hosting countries (e.g. Bangladesh, Colombia, Ethiopia, Iran, Kenya, Lebanon, Peru, Turkey, Uganda), as well as in countries affected by internal displacement (e.g. Colombia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan, Syria). Life-saving assistance and protection also reached vulnerable migrants along major migratory routes in Central America, Libya and Yemen.

¹⁸ www.edctp.org

The EU Pact on Migration and Asylum¹⁹ was adopted by the Commission in September 2020. Tailor-made migration partnerships were initiated or strengthened with several countries in Africa and Asia.

During 2020, new programmes worth EUR 561 million were approved under the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF Africa) for the Horn of Africa, Lake Chad, Northern Africa and the Sahel, helping to ensure safe, secure, legal and orderly migration from, to and within the regions.

Both the EUTF Africa and the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian crisis (EUTF Syria) were extended for a year in response to COVID-19 and to the Beirut port blast. The entire EUR 6 billion budget of the Facility for Refugees in Turkey (FRIT) had been contracted by the end of 2020.

During 2020, new initiatives addressed protracted displacement and supported Venezuelan and Rohingya refugees, relieving financial and social stress on hosting communities while supporting local integration and protection of refugees, migrants and other displaced people.

In addition, with a view to addressing the challenges of irregular migration, development funds were directed to support partner countries in developing effective migration governance and management systems, including border management capacities and the fight against criminal migrant smuggling networks, as well as improving return, readmission and reintegration processes.

Governance, peace and security

In 2020, EU CSDP civilian and military missions contributed to peace and security, carrying out tasks ranging from advising relevant ministries at strategic level on security or defence reforms to supporting border management or training local police.

Two projects were launched to associate enlargement and neighbourhood partners with the work of relevant EU justice and home affairs agencies (EUROMED Police V and CT-INFLOW).

On rule of law and equal access to justice, the EU Transitional Justice Facility supported flexible, short-term actions and the provision of expert advice in Burkina Faso, Liberia, Mali and Yemen. The EUTF Africa and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) also continued to support stabilisation, reconciliation and peace processes in countries and regions including Central African Republic, Libya, Mozambique, the Sahel, Syria and Yemen.

In 2020, the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach²⁰ was implemented in six pilot partner countries (Chad, Iraq, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan, Uganda).

¹⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/promoting-our-european-way-life/new-pact-migration-and-asylum_en

²⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/resilience_en

GLOBAL REACH

In 2020, EU external action partnerships and initiatives supported lives, livelihoods and local ecosystems in every corner of our planet.

Sub-Saharan Africa

The Joint Communication 'Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa', together with the Post-Cotonou Agreement, will shape EU relations with Africa over the coming years.

In February 2020, the 10th African Union Commission-European Commission meeting was held in Addis Ababa. Discussions focused on four main areas: sustainable growth, trade, investment and digitalisation; climate change and resilient infrastructure; peace, security and governance; and migration and mobility.

In April, the EU-G5 Sahel Summit further deepened relations between the G5 Sahel and the EU, supporting the Coalition for the Sahel and the Partnership for Security and Stability in the Sahel (P3S), whose secretariat was established in November 2020.

In July 2020, the first EU/AU Research and Innovation Ministerial took place. All Ministers agreed on a new focus of joint research and innovation activities in the areas of health, green transition, innovation and technology, and capacities for science. Ministers also welcomed the prospects of developing a joint EU/AU Innovation Agenda.

In 2020, construction of the DEFISSOL solar power plant in Benin began. It will supply 35 GWh of power a year to 180 000 beneficiaries.

Latin America and the Caribbean

The EU and its Member States convened two important meetings with Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) region representatives in 2020: an informal ministerial videoconference in July, and an informal ministerial meeting in December. EU and LAC governments committed to jointly 'build back better', notably through a robust green partnership and a digital alliance.

In June 2020, the political and cooperation pillar of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement was concluded.

With the deteriorating political and humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, migration flows reached more than 5.4 million by the end of 2020. At the Venezuela International Donors' Conference in May, the EU mobilised more than EUR 144 million in humanitarian assistance and development cooperation to support displaced persons and their host communities.

The EU Trust Fund for Colombia continued to support the implementation of the Peace Agreement via sustainable rural development and the reincorporation of former combatants. The Business and Biodiversity project helped restore and protect marine and coastal biodiversity in the Caribbean through sustainable tourism in the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Honduras.

Asia, Central Asia, Middle East/Gulf and Pacific

In 2020, the EU maintained strong connections with key strategic partners through summits with China, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea, two additional leaders' meetings with China, and a first-ever leaders' meeting with Australia.

The negotiation of an EU-China Comprehensive Agreement on Investment (CAI) concluded in December with the ratification process to be seen in the wider context of EU-China relations. The EU-India Summit endorsed the 2025 EU-India roadmap as a guide for future cooperation. In December, the EU and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) agreed to launch a strategic partnership.

In August 2020, the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement entered into force. This is the most comprehensive trade agreement the EU has concluded with a developing partner country to date.

Dialogue and cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council resumed in June 2020.

In Papua New Guinea, the EU's new support to rural entrepreneurship, investment and trade (STREIT) programme delivered training to some 120 cocoa farmers and 432 vanilla farmers; more than 10 000 farmers received over 60 000 cocoa seedlings with enhanced pest resistance.

Enlargement

In 2020, major developments took place on the EU enlargement agenda. In February 2020, the Commission adopted proposals to enhance the accession process, and in March the European Council endorsed the General Affairs Council's decision to open accession negotiations with the Republic of Albania and with the Republic of North Macedonia. At the EU-Western Balkans Summit in May, the EU reaffirmed its determination to further intensify its engagement with the region.

The annual enlargement package²¹ was adopted in October, alongside the economic and investment plan for the Western Balkans²², which included guidelines for the implementation of the Green Agenda. The plan aims to spur long-term post-pandemic recovery, boost economic growth – including digital and green transitions – and support reforms required for accession, including bringing the Western Balkans partners closer to the EU single market.

In the second half of 2020, the European Commission launched informal technical talks with the Western Balkans on their association to Horizon Europe.

The Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) II helps beneficiaries introduce reforms to align with EU rules and values on the road to potential membership. In 2020, 14 new IPA country programmes were adopted. The total operational commitments for IPA II in 2020 amounted to EUR 1.23 billion.

Institution-building tools (TAIEX and Twinning) actively support the IPA countries in their reform processes. In 2020, TAIEX organised 143 events, while 53 twinning projects were ongoing.

In 2020, the 6th Connectivity Agenda package was endorsed, completing the EUR 1 billion pledge made in 2015 for transport and energy interconnection investments in the Western Balkans. The EU pledge will leverage overall investments of more than EUR 3.7 billion.

European Neighbourhood

Progress was made in 2020 on the implementation of the Association Agreements and Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas with Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, and the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership with Armenia. Negotiations on a new comprehensive EU-

²¹ [COM\(2020\) 660 final of 6 October 2020.](#)

²² [COM\(2020\) 641 final of 6 October 2020.](#)

Azerbaijan agreement continued. In Belarus, the aftermath of the 2020 presidential elections halted negotiations on new partnership priorities.

In Ukraine, 2020 saw progress in areas such as decentralisation, infrastructure development and digital transformation. Following the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, as a first response, the EU mobilised nearly EUR 4 million in humanitarian aid and expressed its readiness to support recovery and shape a durable and comprehensive settlement.

The European Commission has, under Horizon 2020, used a series of instruments to support the strengthening of research and innovation capacity in Armenia, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. It also launched informal technical talks with Armenia, Georgia, Israel, Moldova, Tunisia and Ukraine on their association to Horizon Europe.

Together with the World Health Organisation, the Commission provided medical supplies across the Eastern Neighbourhood in response to COVID-19, delivering over 11 million items of personal protective equipment; 12 000 laboratory kits; over 1 500 ventilators, oxygen concentrators and pulse oximeters; and over 20 000 PCR test kits. In the Southern Neighbourhood, the Commission financed the delivery of medical equipment and support to the COVAX facility, which enabled the delivery of around 6.7 million doses of vaccine.

In 2020, the EU continued to provide assistance across Syria and in neighbouring refugee-hosting countries, seeking to support a return to peace and a resumption of the transition to democracy in Libya, and to help Lebanon address its political and socio-economic crises.

New cooperation initiatives, in particular with Morocco (on a green partnership and security cooperation), were also developed.

Overseas countries and territories (OCTs)

In 2020, the EU maintained its strong partnership with the OCTs, as reflected in the high-level political EU-OCT Forum of December 2020.

The all-OCT Thematic Programme and the Caribbean, Indian Ocean and Pacific regional programmes, worth EUR 97.8 million, helped promote the sustainable use of natural resources, protect biodiversity and support climate action and resilience.

The EU helped finance the connection of Wallis and Futuna to the Tui-Samoa digital cable. Broadband provision has enabled over 300 remote medical consultations every year.

OCT participation in the Erasmus+ programme has more than doubled since 2018, growing to 177 projects and 95 beneficiaries in 2020.