**Follow up to the European Parliament non-legislative resolution on implementation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument– Global Europe**

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2. **Reference numbers:**  2023/2029 (INI) / A9-0374/2023 / P9\_TA(2023)0458
3. **Date of adoption of the resolution:**  12 December 2023
4. **Competent Parliamentary Committee:** Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET); Committee on Development (DEVE)
5. **Brief analysis/ assessment of the resolution and requests made in it:**

The resolution outlines several general considerations and priorities for the mid-term evaluation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe (NDICI/GE), particularly focusing on additional funding required for external action and development policies. It highlights the need to review the EU's external and development policies in light of the global increasing inequalities and food insecurity, and the impact of geopolitical changes. It further stresses the unwavering support for Ukraine in the face of the ongoing Russia's war of aggression and emphasizes the need for a thorough evaluation of the Instrument's resources to ensure they meet the objectives. The resolution also discusses effective accountability and transparency in the programming process of NDICI/GE.

The European Parliament calls for a comprehensive assessment of the Instrument's capacity to achieve the EU's overall external policy goals. Furthermore, it emphasises the importance of investments in human development, the fight against climate change, and the eradication of poverty. It calls for the EU to secure necessary resources and mobilise investments, including leveraging private-sector financing and ensuring the EU's positive impact and credibility on the global stage. The resolution also highlights the strategic nature of Global Gateway and Team Europe for EU’s role in the world as well as the need for parliamentary scrutiny and involvement. It calls for improvements in providing information and greater involvement of civil society organizations and local partners in the implementation of the Instrument.

1. **Response to the requests and overview of the action taken, or intended to be taken, by the Commission:**

The Commission welcomes the resolution of the European Parliament and notes that currently there are three separate on-going processes: the proposed revision of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), the mid-term evaluation of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation as well as the mid-term review of NDICI-Global Europe programming. The mid-term evaluation of the NDICI-Global Europe Regulation will inform the mid-term review of the programming.

A key issue for the mid-term evaluation is to analyse whether NDICI-Global Europe is on track to effectively **deliver on its general and specific objectives**. It will also assess the relevance of the set general objectives in the context of the evolving geopolitical context and how they match the EU and partner countries’ policy priorities **(paragraphs 2 and 5)**. As such, the mid-term evaluation does not examine whether the allocated **resources** are sufficient to meet the objectives; this is the purpose of the Commission’s proposal on the mid-term revision of the current MFF **(paragraph 3)**. The mid-term evaluation focuses on the **objectives and principles** contained in the NDICI-GE Regulation (e.g., flexibility or complementarity with other instruments) rather than on the **implementation of the policies, programmes and actions** that have been supported with the help of the instrument **(paragraphs 5 and 9)**. As provided in the NDICI-GE Regulation, in the mid-term evaluation the Commission will consider whether a legislative proposal to amend the regulation would be needed **(paragraph 35)**.

The **main goal of the on-going mid-term review of NDICI-GE programming** is to assess the relevance and progress of all adopted geographic and thematic multi-annual indicative programmes, and, if needed, to revise their priority areas and related sectors of intervention (**paragraph 35**).

Looking at the structure of the instrument, the Foreign Policy Needs (FPN) component of the rapid response pillar is specifically mandated to promote the Union foreign policy needs and priorities and plays a crucial role for example by piloting new actions for instance in managing the external impacts of the new regulation on deforestation and forest degradation, or by strengthening EU capacities to counter foreign information manipulation and interference. The ability of FPN to substantially contribute to promoting EU interests in the world has been hampered by the limited financial allocation assigned to it. Despite limited funds, crisis response actions clearly promote a stronger EU in the world by advocating accountability, supporting protection of civilians in armed conflicts and reducing risk of conflict in the wake of natural disasters. Actions under the rapid response pillar are non-programmable but they are adopted timely and in close consultation with the European External Action Service, EU Delegations and relevant Commission services, to respond to emerging policy priorities and/or crises (**paragraph 15**). On the cushion, the Commission notes that against the backdrop of unprecedented geopolitical developments, the Parliament has always been consistently informed before the mobilisation of the cushion, as per recital 71 of the NDICI-GE Regulation **(paragraph 29)**.

To be noted that the spending targets envisaged in the NDICI-GE Regulation are to be reached by the end of the MFF period 2021-2027 and not annually. Considering the cumulative figures for 2021-2022 and the preliminary results attesting positive trends, the Commission is confident that the contributions to various targets are on track. The information related to the contributions on the various targets in a given year is published before 30 November of the following year in the Annual Report on the implementation of the European Union's external action instruments, as provided in the NDICI-GE Regulation **(paragraphs 5 and 13)**.

The Commission confirms that the contribution to the indicative migration spending target is on track. The Commission is committed to regularly sharing information with the European Parliament on the contribution to this target (**paragraph 14**). On the use of the Global Europe Results Framework[[1]](#footnote-2) (GERF) indicators, all Multiannual Indicative Programmes (MIPs) include such indicators and the Commission ensures that these indicators are also included in corresponding Action Documents and contracts, in order to ensure data collection of their results **(paragraph 4)**.

The European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+) Results Measurement Framework (ReMF) was designed in full collaboration and partnership with Member States and Development Finance Institutions to ensure a comprehensive and standardised procedure. It was subsequently presented to the EFSD+ Governance Board **(paragraphs 24 and 34)**.

Evaluations at geographic, sector or modality levels are key methodological tools to assess the impact of the EU external actions. Impact is assessed by (re)constructing the intervention logic and assessing the linkages of inputs to outputs and impact, using in relevant cases a contribution analysis approach **(paragraph 27)**.

The Commission is committed to implement the recommendations of the European Court of Auditors’ special report 14/2023 it has agreed to as per the timeline stated in its official replies to this report **(paragraph 27)**.

The improvement of effectiveness of the EU development cooperation has been part of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC) biannual monitoring rounds. In 2022 the GPEDC decided to introduce a more flexible monitoring process where data will be made available in a dashboard, as soon as reported, and once every four years in a global report. The Commission intends to issue a report as soon as sufficient GPEDC data is available in the dashboard (**paragraph 4**).

Regarding human rights risk assessments, the Commission has established an internal Risk Management Framework for all third countries receiving EU development assistance. The framework pays particular attention to political risks, which encompass human rights and fundamental freedoms, equality, inclusion and non-discrimination, and democracy and rule of law. Furthermore, the Commission adopted on 30 June 2021 an updated toolbox on the ‘human rights-based approach’[[2]](#footnote-3), which is applied at every step of the actions’ lifecycle. These monitoring tools allow for the Commission to put on hold any EU intervention in case of serious concerns over fundamental values, and to suspend or terminate financing agreements in case partner countries fail to observe the principles of international law, the principles of democracy, rule of law, good governance, or respect to human rights and fundamental freedoms (**paragraph 6)**.

The e Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA III) Regulation specifically sets out the partners covered, and Moldova and Georgia are not included. Transition to IPA III for both countries would imply a revision of the IPA III Regulation, which would need to be accompanied by a revision to the NDICI-GE Regulation to remove the two counties as beneficiaries under that regulation.

Support for Moldova and Georgia and to their accession efforts can continue without interruption under NDICI-GE. This cooperation is already based on alignment to EU standards and approximation to the EU. A planned transition to address the transfer of the countries from NDICI-GE to IPA III could be undertaken, but this would be outside of the mid-term evaluation of the NDICI-GE programming. Regarding Ukraine, the Commission’s proposal for establishing the Ukraine Facility replies to Ukraine’s particular situation and needs, aiming at supporting Ukraine's recovery, reconstruction and modernisation aligned with the EU accession process and adapted to the unprecedented challenges of supporting a candidate country at war. As the enlargement policy will be the primary policy framework for these three countries, the coherence of IPA III and the instruments from which they receive pre-accession assistance will need to be continuously ensured, as highlighted by the mid-term evaluation (**paragraph 8**).

The year 2023 marked the start of implementation of the Youth Action Plan in EU’s external relation (2022-2027). Concrete institutional mechanisms for facilitating youth engagement in EU policy making were set at global and local level. That entailed the creation of more than 30 youth sounding boards in EU Delegations, and the development of a platform for structured dialogue with youth organisations, which is a new element of the Policy Forum on Development. Two flagship initiatives of the Youth Action Plan were also launched: the Women and Youth in Democracy Initiative which supports the engagement of women and youth participation in public and political affairs, and the Youth Empowerment Fund, which provides small grants and capacity building to youth-led initiatives in partner countries (**paragraph 10**).

The Commission is working on the development of good practices to measure and monitor EU investments for children through collection of age-disaggregated data, when possible. The creation of a new child marker doesn’t seem necessary. The Commission does collect data on the EU’s actions in the field of children’s rights and about the geographical distribution, type of activities and progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (**paragraph 11**).

The Commission emphasises its commitment to the protection of the rights of LGBTIQ persons around the world. Its engagement is guided by the fourth pillar[[3]](#footnote-4) of the LGBTIQ Equality Strategy and reinforced by the EU Gender Action Plan III and the EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy 2020 - 2024. The rights of LGBTIQ persons are discussed with partner countries in the context of human rights and other political dialogues. At global level, the EU is active in multilateral forums, and promotes the rights of LGBTIQ persons in the United Nations system. The EU also continues to operate a rapid response mechanism to protect individual LGBTIQ rights defenders at risk (**paragraph 12**).

As regards gender equality, as pointed out in the Joint Mid-Term Report on the Implementation of the Gender Action Plan (GAP III)[[4]](#footnote-5), the EU will continue to enhance quality-review processes across all instruments and sectors to improve the quality of gender-mainstreaming in line with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) gender equality policy marker criteria.

The Commission is ensuring that the implementation of the EFSD+ is fully coherent with the objectives of the NDICI-GE Regulation as set out in its Article 31. Within the EFSD+ Strategic Orientations, which set out the areas of investments supported by EFSD+, the Green Deal is an overarching priority. This alignment is ensured during the approval process of individual operations for the e European Investment Bank (EIB) dedicated windows, the approval process of Proposed Investment Programmes for EFSD+ Open Architecture and as part of the assessment of blending operations. Consequently, investment operations supported under EFSD+ contribute to the achievement of the climate spending target (**paragraph 16**).

Private investment mobilisation has been one of the key assessment criteria adopted by the Commission when revising proposals submitted by European Investment Bank (EIB), European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and other implementing partners under the framework of EFSD+ Open Architecture. Following that approach, the Commission has introduced specific clauses into guarantee agreements to safeguard the private investment mobilisation approach (**paragraph 19**).

The Commission recalls that the Team Europe approach brings together the EU and its Member States, including their development agencies and public development banks and development finance institutions, as well as the EIB and the EBRD and the private sector. The Team Europe approach has a voluntary, flexible, and context-driven nature, respecting existing decision-making procedures of the respective participants. It is not prescriptive, but rather encourages to innovate and be pragmatic. This also means that the roles within the Team Europe approach may vary depending on context/specific action. This however does not affect the respective competences and decision-making processes (including programming) of the Team Europe participants. For EU funds, the principles and provisions of the Treaties and other EU legislation (including the EU Financial Regulation) continue to apply also in the context of Team Europe Initiatives. There are tools that ensure transparency including the “Team Europe initiative and Joint Programming Tracker”[[5]](#footnote-6), and the “EU Aid Explorer”[[6]](#footnote-7), among others (**paragraph 20**).

The implementation of the Global Gateway Strategy strongly benefits from the Team Europe approach. It demonstrates the political commitment and the financial firepower of the EU institutions and Member States, the EU financial institutions and private sector. The Global Gateway governance is flexible and of informal nature. The European Council and the Council of the EU are to set Global Gateway policy priorities and ensure their consistency and effectiveness. The Commission and Member States implement the strategy together with European financial institutions and the private sector. Strategic steer and coordination are ensured by the Committee of Permanent Representatives of the Governments of the Member States (COREPER) and its preparatory bodies, while the strategy’s implementation falls under the remit of the Global Gateway Board, Steering Group and Business Advisory Group. Besides its role as an observer in the Global Gateway Board, the European Parliament retains all the scrutiny rights for any EU budget-financed projects under NDICI-GE and can provide its feedback in the high-level geopolitical dialogues, or through its participation in the EFSD+ strategic board **(paragraph 21**).

Global Gateway investment projects combine investments in hard infrastructure and enabling environment, regulatory frameworks, norms and standards, technology transfer, and know-how. When providing support from the EU budget, the Commission includes a number of safeguards/obligations in the agreements with implementing partners, reflecting the applicable requirements of the NDICI-GE Regulation and the EU Financial Regulation including in the field of procurement. This also applies to Global Gateway projects financed from the EU budget.

EU Delegations consult local civil society in a systematic manner during the preparation and the implementation of Multiannual Indicative Programmes under the NDICI-GE. Engagement and consultations with civil society take place throughout the entire cycle encompassing core steps of formulation, implementation, follow-up and steering. The “Global Gateway Civil Society and Local Authorities Dialogue Platform” was launched on 24 October 2023 to facilitate the involvement of civil society and local authorities in Global Gateway at strategic level (**paragraph 22**).

The Commission ensures consistent flow of information with all EU institutions through the established inter-institutional channels. Regarding the implementation of the NDICI-GE, the High-Level Geopolitical Dialogue and the Parliament’s participation in the EFSD+ Strategic Board present additional platforms for exchanges and information/document sharing. The Commission has also ensured dedicated exchanges with the Parliament on Global Gateway and will continue to do so in the future (**paragraph 24**).

The Commission considers that the creation of additional budget lines could undermine one of the most important improvements of the NDICI-GE, which is to overcome the fragmentation of the previous external action instruments and to provide the flexibility needed for implementation of the EU external action. Further breaking down the budget lines would present significant challenges for sound financial management, given the reduction of the amounts covered by each budget line. Creating numerous sub-regions could also result in difficulties to fund actions of continental/regional character, which might concern different configurations of countries, depending on the specific needs/context. The Commission will continue to report in accordance with the NDICI-GE Regulation, the Financial Regulation and the annual budget exercise, in addition to regularly providing updates through the governance structures of the EFSD+ (**paragraph 25**).

The Commission agrees that maximising EU’s impact in fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions through effective, coordinated, and coherent implementation of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus is a key element of a stronger Europe in the world **(paragraph 34)**.

1. SWD (2022) 22 final [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. SWD(2021) 179 final [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Leading the call for LGBTIQ equality around the world. 2020-2025 COM (2020) 698 final [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. JOIN (2023) 36 final [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. <https://capacity4dev.europa.eu/resources/team-europe-tracker_en> [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. <https://euaidexplorer.ec.europa.eu/index_en> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)