



# The EU's new priorities, narratives and approach: an opportunity for civil society?

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15 November 2024, NGO Federatie + Acodev meeting, Brussels

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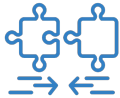
# Outline



Introducing *ecdpm*



**Part 1:** The EU's changing environment & new priorities



**Part 2:** The midterm evaluation and review



**Part 3:** Beyond the midterm exercises, what's next?

# Introducing *ecdpm*

# Introducing *ecdpm*



- Independent ‘think and do tank’, working on EU international cooperation and development, including on EU-Africa relations
- Thematic foci: AU-EU relations; climate, energy and food; economy & trade; geopolitics; governance; migration & mobility; peace & security; digital; EU foreign and development policy



Research and analysis



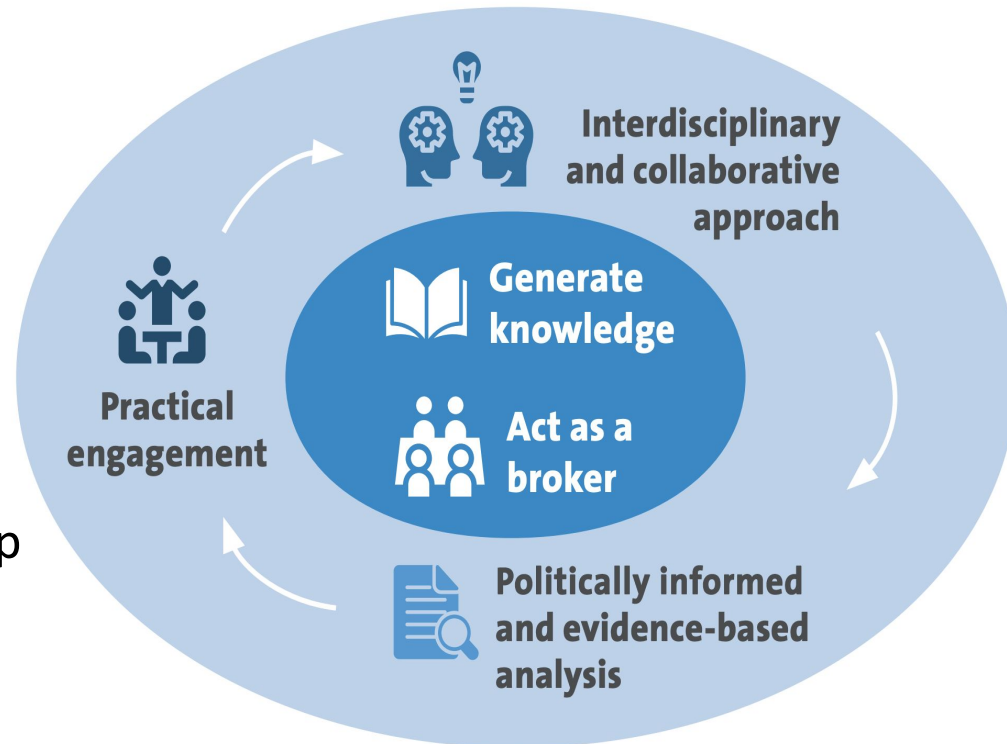
Expert information and advice



Dialogue facilitation



Focus on the policy to practice gap



# Building on ECDPM's recent work

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Topics Work Experts Events About

## Von der Leyen 2.0 and a shifting approach to EU international partnerships

Commentary 19 July 2024 9 minutes reading time



Chloe Teevan explores Ursula von der Leyen's vision for Europe, emphasising strategic international partnerships to address global challenges. For president, who just got confirmed for a second time, and her Commission's alliances and integrating economic and political dialogues is important to EU's goals in the coming years.

## EU development policy shifts in practice: Voices from Africa

Project 08 July 2024



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## The new EU development in practice: Views from Kenya and Cameroon

Paper 27 November 2023 952 views



As the European Commission currently undertakes the mid-term review of the NDICI-Global Europe instrument, Amandine Sabourin, Katja Sergejeff and Alexei Jones analyse some of the implications of the EU's new political framework for international partnerships in partner countries, particularly in Kenya and Cameroon.

This page is also available in [French](#).

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Topics Work Experts Events About

## Global Gateway: Where now and where to next?

Paper 10 June 2024



San Bilal and Chloe Teevan propose steps to give the Global Gateway strategy greater momentum and to reconcile EU interests and development goals. They argue the EU should adopt a whole-of-government/EU approach to foster coherence between development objectives, and to improve the coordination between public and private finance and interests.

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## The mid-term evaluation of NDICI-Global Europe: Is the instrument fit for purpose?

Commentary 21 May 2024



Last week, the European Commission released a [staff working document](#) presenting the EU's assessment of the new set of external financing instruments it adopted in 2021. Included as an annex is the [external evaluation](#) of these instruments, to which ECDPM has contributed. The 2021 overhaul of financing instruments marks a significant change in the EU's external aid architecture. In the past, these went from 11 to 4 to strengthen the EU's external aid architecture. Most of these are now streamlined under the newly created instrument for development, development and international cooperation: NDICI-Global Europe.

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## Series: To the new leaders of Europe

Dossier 17 September 2024 565 views



After much speculation and some drama, president Ursula Von der Leyen has announced the names and portfolios of the new European Commission. The set-up of the team and division of tasks shine a light on what is meant to come in the next five years. But before the new leadership can start, the Commissioner-designates still have to undergo hearings at the European Parliament.

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# **Part 1. The EU's changing environment and new priorities**

# 1.1. the EU's new approach in a nutshell



**Global Gateway strategy:** a branding exercise combining development objectives & instruments with EU self-interested geostrategic considerations & economic diplomacy tools?

→ bringing up the strategic interests of the EU, and implying a systemic change



**Team Europe approach** as a tool to bring Member states and the EU together to join forces and implement the new approach

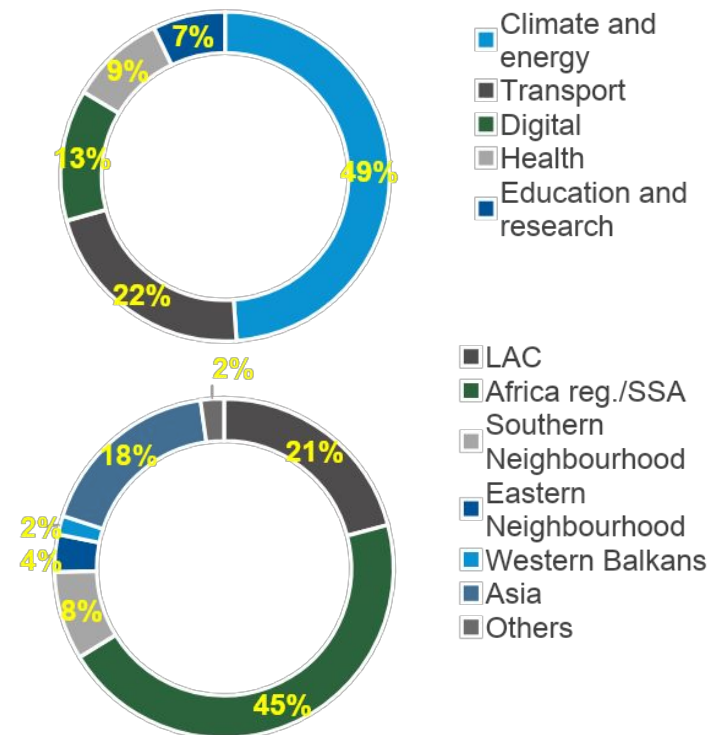
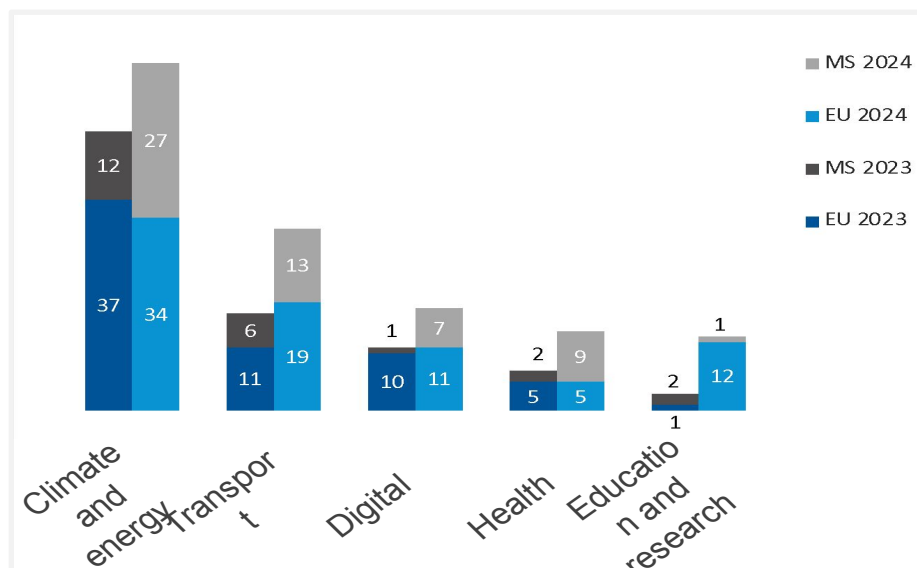


The **NDICI-Global Europe** and its principles (geographisation, financialisation, policy driven, interest driven) as one tool among others



**Implications for partner countries?** Competition and miscommunication, difficult to define and promote mutually beneficial interests

## 1.2. A new strategy: the Global Gateway strategy



- 225 flagship projects
- Increasing number of proposals, also by EU MS
- Half in climate & energy
- Primarily in Africa
- EBRD: 17 flagship projects
- EIB (2022-2023): committed €11 bn, mobilising around €60 bn in investment (= 60% of its €100 bn target under Global Gateway)
- 2023 Global Gateway Summit; EU Summits with third parties (AU, ASEAN, LAC); GG high-level Team Europe missions in partner countries
- Many examples of Global Gateway projects related to urban development

# 1.3. A new instrument: the NDICI-Global Europe

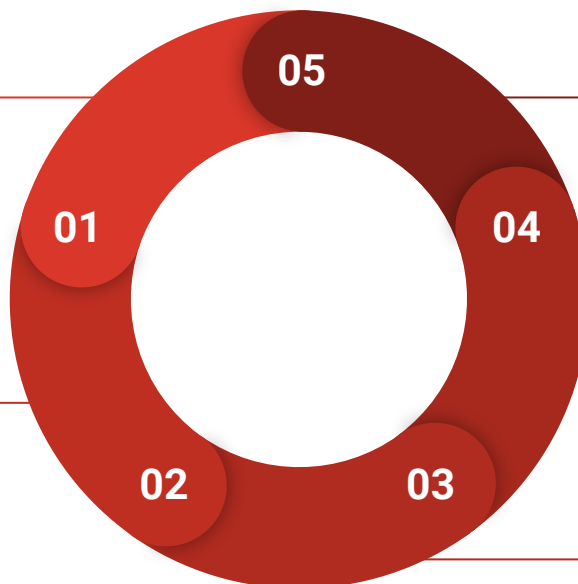
- Transition from the European Development Fund to the NDICI-Global Europe
- **Some new principles:**

## Policy first

Focus on geopolitical priorities and mutual interests, bringing together different areas of EU's external action and other EU's policies

## Geographisation

Actions at the most appropriate level (subsidiarity): country, regional/multi-country (beyond RECs)



## Financialisation and mobilisation of private funding

Reinforce the EU's capacity to leverage private sector resources for development (EFSD+)

## Partnership

Increase impact and leveraging resources + innovative tools/investments (EU+MS/Team Europe incl DFIs, other players)

## Integrated

Understanding and acting on interactions and synergies between objectives

# 1.4. What does this mean for EU development policy?

## A stronger focus on EU policy priorities

- > More strategic, **more assertive, more honest?**
- > **Shift away from donor-recipient** relations towards equal partnerships based on mutual interests

- >> *Tension between needs-based approach and **own interests as the starting point** for development cooperation*
- >> *Risks for country ownership*

## A more integrated and coordinated EU external action

- > More coherent EU action across policy areas, **maximising synergies**
- > More inclusive/ joint approaches
- > New integrated financial instrument NDICI-GE

- >> *Need for **new ways of working and breaking silos**, strong path dependency*
- >> *Keeping the momentum on Team Europe while avoiding **Eurocentric approach***

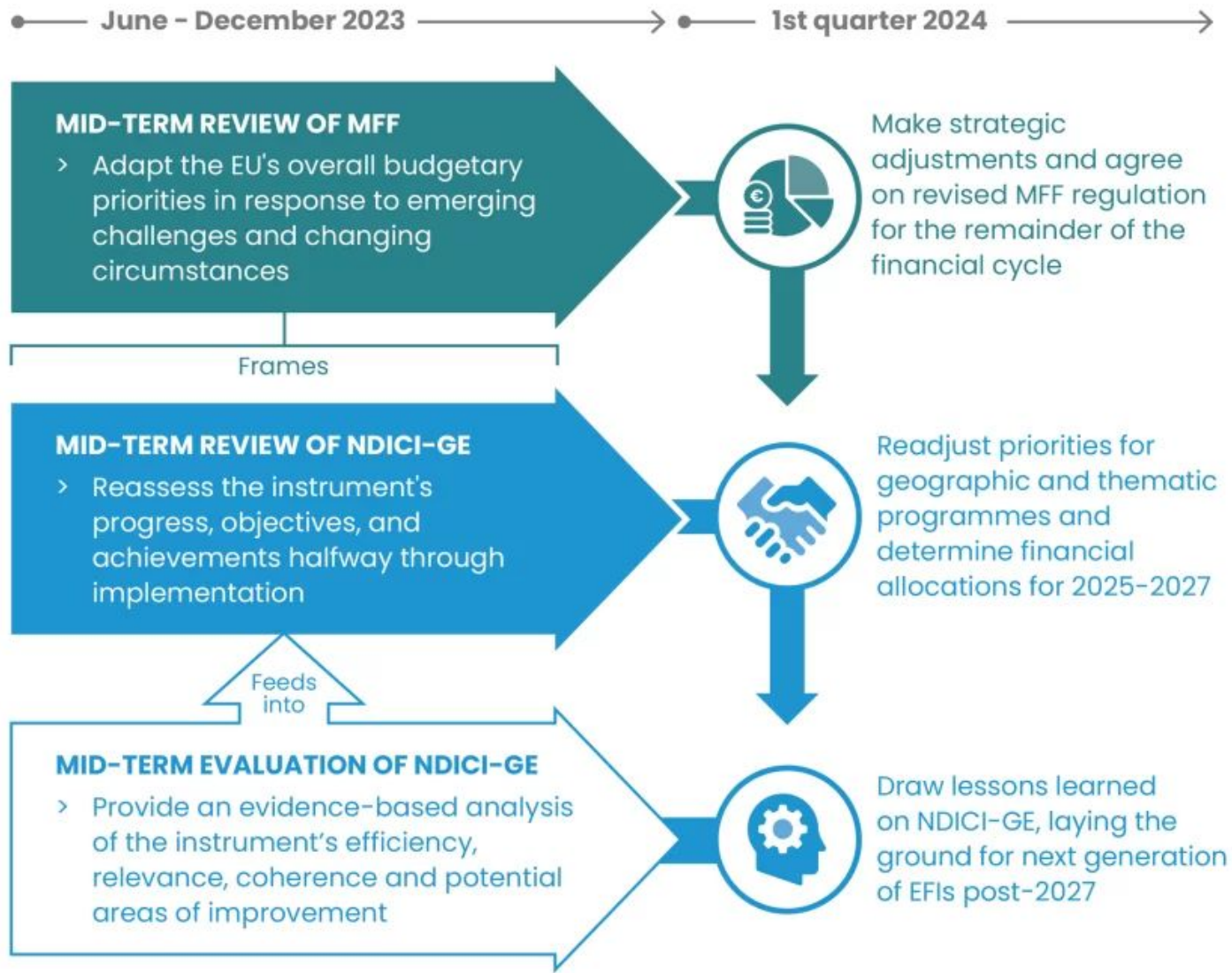
## A stronger emphasis on visibility, branding and communication

- > Reaffirming EU's role as a global actor, **influence in partner countries & multilateral fora**
- > Countering disinformation and battle of narratives

- >> *Need to **rebuild trust**, understand **perceptions of EU** in partner countries*
- >> *EU and Team Europe will be **judged more on 'results'***

## **Part 2. The midterm evaluation and review**

## 2.1. Midterm evaluation, review: where are we?



## 2.2. What has been the impact of these changes in Europe's approach?



EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN UNION EXTERNAL ACTION

INSTRUMENTS EVALUATION

EUROPEAN UNION'S EXTERNAL FINANCING  
INSTRUMENTS (2014-2020 AND 2021-2027)

Volume I: Synthesis Report  
March 2024



ECDPM key part  
of the  
evaluation  
team - over  
1500  
documents  
analysed, over  
350  
interviewed,  
over 250  
questionnaires



There is a **trilemma of reconciling**, in coherent decision-making, the **EU's premium placed on partnership and ownership priorities**, the **EU's values**, and the **promotion of the EU's interests**;



Managing the transition implied by the new approach requires more **time, energy and creativity** than expected;



**Reduced scope to engage strategically with all stakeholders** including civil society and Local Authorities;



Insufficient flexible funding at partner country level to adequately respond to fragility and protracted crises.



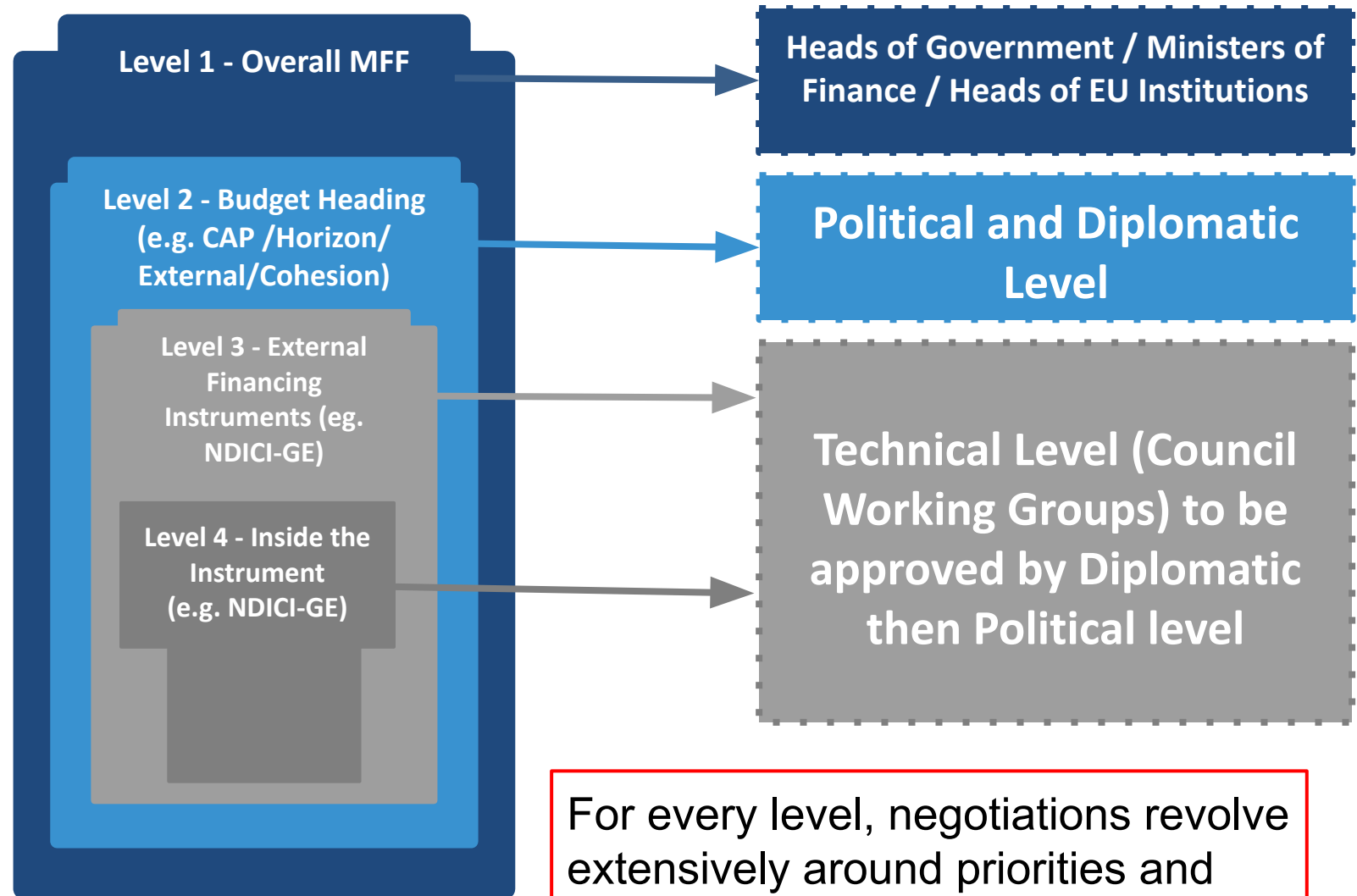
**Areas of limited progress** are noted (e.g., the predictable and effective use of **incentives, conditionalities** and **performance-based schemes**, the **mobilisation of private capital**)

## 2.3. What about the civil society?

- **Multi-stakeholder approach** and the wish to strengthen new ways of collaborating with civil society are reaffirmed.
- CSOs remain **key actors of governance** under the NDICI-Global Europe and most of the EU delegations have a **focal point for CSOs**.
- **Spending target for democracy and human rights**
  - But: can hardly be used as a policy monitoring tool
- Support to democracy and human rights seen as an **added value of the EU**, which is perceived as the only donor engaging on this at all levels
  - But: some concerns that these priorities might be **overshadowed by emerging challenges and crises** (migration crisis and border management challenges, war in Ukraine and in the middle East)
- **NDICI-Global Europe + Team Europe approach** → strengthened the partnership among the EU and the MS
  - But: civil society “suffers from **persistent weakness**, exacerbated by the accelerating phenomenon of **shrinking space**”.
- **Partnership with national CSOs** has continued
  - But: some obstacles remain and keep **challenging the CSOs’ access to funding** (EU’s use of larger envelopes than before, and capacity constraints)

## **Part 3. Beyond the midterm evaluation and review, what's next?**

# 3.1. What is ahead? The MFF multilayered negotiations



For every level, negotiations revolve extensively around priorities and amounts, incl. mainstreaming of priorities

## 3.2. What is ahead? Key challenges

- Where should **Agenda 2030/SDGs** be in this EU change and new narrative? How to reconcile the goal of **fighting poverty with other interests/objectives**?
- What does this shift mean for EU **cooperation with LDCs / fragile & conflict countries**?
- By what **additional/new criteria** is EU international cooperation going to be judged a **success**?
- How much change is there really... – is this more a **retorical shift**, is it mostly/too much **“business as usual”** – and how can European bureaucracies evolve/adapt?
- How to keep **Africa/LDCs** as a European focus the longer (and more expensive) the Russian War in Ukraine & the Ukrainian reconstruction becomes?
- How to mobilise the EU based **private sector** and leverage more resources without just becoming a tool purely of economic diplomacy / commercial interests?
- Can Europe get smarter about pursuing the **“values agenda”** with partners?

### 3.3. What are the (new) entry points for civil society?

- Renew the entry points → Global Gateway strategy?
- Explore and extend potential allies → MS promoting a value driven agenda, get closer to the EFIs, LAs to promote shared vision of **inclusive and sustainable local ecosystems**
- Make sure important elements of EU external action are there as a top priority: human development, Human rights, environmental protection
- Do not underestimate and use your potential as a big coalition, connected with your counterparts in partner countries
- Global gateway strategy → front and centre, only offer?

# Further information & recent analysis on ECDPM's work on available from:

[www.ecdpm.org](http://www.ecdpm.org)

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This powerpoint was designed for a discussion to be accompanied by a verbal presentation and Q&A.

Please note as a standalone document it could be subject to misinterpretation.  
For questions please get in contact with ECDPM.

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