



The think tank ECDPM
is looking for
a new director

ecdpm

ECDPM is a leading independent think tank that wants to make policies in Europe, Africa and beyond work for inclusive and sustainable development. We have two offices: in Maastricht (the Netherlands) and in Brussels (Belgium).

With current director Carl Michiels retiring in autumn 2024, we are looking for a new director with a solid understanding of the rapidly changing context of international cooperation and international relations. The new director should have intellectual curiosity, enthusiasm for ECDPM's unique mission and an ability to help the organisation flourish through a people-centred and participative management approach suited to a modern think tank.

The ECDPM director will lead a team of over 60 policy, communications and support staff from more than 20 countries around the globe. They will take office in a multicultural foundation, functioning under Dutch law and operating in a rapidly evolving environment with increased competition for reduced budgets. The director will alternate between working at our headquarters in Maastricht and our Brussels office.

ecdpm.org



About ECDPM

We believe that good policies are extremely powerful. They can tackle society's biggest problems at the root, lay a foundation for change and play a crucial part in making the global development agenda a reality for all. That is why we want to help institutions and governments across Europe, Africa and beyond create policies that work.

Our independent policy experts contribute sharp analysis, thorough research and fresh ideas. But making policies work requires stepping off the sidelines too. It means working closely with the people who create, implement and are impacted by policies. We bring different groups around the table, smooth the way for debate and make sure that everyone's voice is heard. We provide advice and training and design practical solutions together.

We have over 35 years of experience in development policy and international cooperation and know the African and

European institutions inside out. Our main focus is on EU foreign policy and European and African policies related to conflict, digital cooperation, climate, migration, governance, food security, regional integration, business, finance and trade. More and more, we are also looking at these issues in their global setting.

Our partners include officials from government ministries and institutions, international organisations, think tanks and academia, as well as social and economic actors from Africa, Europe and beyond.

What we do



RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS

We provide thorough policy research, sharp analysis and fresh ideas.



ADVICE AND TRAINING

We provide practical policy advice, training and support.



EXPERT INFORMATION

We provide background information to our partners and the media.



EVENTS

We organise and speak at debates, conferences and workshops.



PARTNERSHIPS AND DIALOGUE

We connect people, broker partnerships and create space for dialogue.

What sets us apart



WE ARE MORE THAN A THINK TANK

We are researchers and analysts, but we are also facilitators, advisors, evaluators and trainers. It is that combination of roles which sets us apart from other think tanks. To make policies work, we need solid knowledge of what works and what doesn't, but also to work with the people who are crucial in implementing those policies.



WE ARE INDEPENDENT

Our unique funding situation allows us to maintain operational autonomy and set our own, non-partisan agenda.



WE LOOK BEYOND PROMISES

Whether policy change is good, bad or absent usually depends on a number of factors and people. That is why we look beyond policy statements and analyse what drives or prevents change. That means looking at all political constraints and incentives.



WE KNOW THE INS AND OUTS OF THE AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN POLICY LANDSCAPE

Africa-Europe relations is our main focus. For over 35 years, we have worked with institutions, governments and partners across Africa and Europe. We have a broad network, a solid institutional memory of what has and has not worked before, and a knack for foreseeing how policy arenas will evolve. This knowledge, experience and network allow us to look more broadly at the global level.



WE ARE IN IT FOR THE LONG RUN

Making policies work cannot happen overnight. We engage in policy processes from beginning to end and commit to long-term relationships with our partners, to jointly accomplish changes over time.





Director's role and profile

Tasks and expected achievements

The director will lead ECDPM towards its strategic goals **and ensure its continued adaptation to a changing context**, both in terms of the developing relations between Europe and Africa and between Europe and other parts of the world, and regarding possible changes in funding modalities and opportunities. In doing so, the director will preserve and develop the organisation's strengths, particularly the staff's dedication to ECDPM's core mission and their willingness to walk the extra mile when required.

The director should be **visible in the public debate**. They should be able to represent ECDPM and its work when relevant and, on such occasions, draw on ECDPM's rich array of research and practice. Networking should come naturally.

The director will provide **intellectual leadership** to the organisation and be personally involved in content work in their area of competence, while providing support and encouragement to experts across the organisation.

They will be responsible for ensuring a sound financial base for the organisation and **lead, participate in, support and supervise fundraising efforts** at all levels of the organisation. Ideally, the director will take a creative approach to fundraising, helping the organisation compete and tap into new, strategically aligned areas of funding. They will particularly ensure diligent management of relations with major funders.

The director will be accountable to ECDPM's board of governors and will **ensure that board members are informed** about progress in and obstacles to the achievement of strategic goals and outcomes in a timely manner. They will also ensure that the board has relevant interactions with other senior managers and staff.

As head of the organisation, the director will **ensure a participatory and communicative management style** at all levels of the organisation, leading by example. Openness to arguments, evidence and dialogue, and a consensus-seeking approach are essential, though ultimately, decision-making is the prerogative and duty of the director.

The director will **supervise and support other ECDPM managers** in facilitating core workstream work and overarching areas such as communications, learning and quality support, finances, human resources management and administrative support. They will ensure that support functions constantly adapt to the needs and funding situation of the organisation.

The director will lead the regular management team meetings and other senior management meetings.

The director will **ensure the requisite cohesiveness of quality, approaches and focus areas** within ECDPM's strategic framework, ensuring that staff is involved in and informed about changes to this framework. Given the dynamic nature of Europe's external relations and the political, economic and social developments globally and in particular in Africa, which is the core focus of ECDPM's work, the director will keep abreast of developments in this area, drawing on the extensive knowledge available within the organisation, among other things.

The director will **be directly responsible for senior appointments**. They will supervise human resources management and be responsible for consultations with the works council, which represents staff on a variety of matters. They will also ensure that ECDPM's gender and diversity action plan continues to be implemented and further developed.



Qualifications and experience

The skills, knowledge and attitudes needed to perform the key tasks listed above include intellectual capacity and curiosity, empathy and reflective ability, excellent communication and listening skills, strong interpersonal skills, the ability to broker, and the capacity to lead strategically in and with respect for a culturally diverse environment.

The position further requires a suitable combination of:

- **Solid experience in leading research programmes** and advisory services in knowledge-producing, advocacy, research or advisory organisations, alongside proven experience in shaping and delivering on an agreed strategic direction.
- **Significant experience (8 years+) in senior management**, either as a director/CEO or as a member of the executive leadership team, including board exposure.
- **Experience in senior management functions**, including programme management, people management and financial management, preferably in a knowledge-producing organisation.
- **A deep understanding of and/or experience in particular policy areas** relevant to the evolving landscape of relations and cooperation between Europe and Africa and/or Europe and other parts of the world.
- **The ability to lead by inspiring others both within and outside the organisation** and at all levels.
- **The ability to lead a change process** that will bring the organisation into the next phase of its development.
- **The ability to coach and mentor others**, including the next generation of senior managers.
- **Active listening skills** and the ability to foster consensus, yet be decisive if necessary.
- **Excellent verbal and written communication and presentation skills**, with fluency in English and proficiency in French, knowledge of Dutch is an asset.
- **A postgraduate level in an appropriate discipline**, and preferably a track record of policy-relevant publications.
- **Proven experience in fundraising and with networks** that include public agencies and foundations which fund ECDPM and organisations similar to ECDPM.
- **A relevant network of senior-level contacts** and experience in influencing networks in settings similar to those in which ECDPM operates, including in the Brussels-based EU community.
- **The willingness and ability to credibly present, showcase and facilitate engagement** with ECDPM's policy-oriented research at a high level across the topics of the centre.

Package

The director is hired on the basis of a renewable time-limited contract. The performance of the director will be reviewed by the board on a regular basis. The salary for this position is €137.000 - €155.000 gross per annum based on a full-time employment contract, plus a generous leave package and other benefits, including a pension plan and relocation support.



Our workstreams

To deliver on our current **five-year strategy**, we have organised our work in ten workstreams. These are grouped into three clusters to encourage cross-thematic teamwork. The three clusters are **(A) Europe and Africa in the world, (B) peaceful societies and accountable governance, and (C) sustainable African economies and climate action.**

EU FOREIGN AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY

Our EU foreign and development policy team explores the implications of the EU's growing geopolitical focus and wants to contribute to more coherent and integrated EU foreign and development policy.

Topics we look at include:

- EU cooperation with Africa, the neighbourhood and international institutions
- Collaboration and coordination between EU member states – particularly within the 'Team Europe' approach
- Gender, green transition and digitalisation aspects of EU foreign and development policy
- The EU's financial resources for development and international cooperation – particularly the NDICI-Global Europe instrument and major EU initiatives such as the Global Gateway strategy

DIGITAL ECONOMY AND GOVERNANCE

Our digital economy and governance team wants to promote digital cooperation within and between Africa and Europe as a way to advance sustainable development.

Topics we look at include:

- The EU's geostrategic interests in its digital cooperation with Africa
- The role of digital tools in African regional integration
- Digital infrastructure investments and financial services
- Digital regulation and governance
- Digital transformation for human development

MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

Our migration and mobility team wants to help maximise the development potential of migration and mobility while minimising risks. We work to promote effective and human-centred migration governance in Europe and Africa and contribute to improved Africa-Europe cooperation on migration.

Topics we look at include:

- European and African migration policies
- Labour migration and mobility
- Return and integration
- Diaspora engagement
- Gender aspects of migration policies

AU-EU RELATIONS

Our AU-EU relations team explores how both parties can create a mutually beneficial and interest-driven partnership – in times of geopolitical shifts.

Topics we look at include:

- The institutional setups of the AU and the EU
- Summits, strategies and dialogues relating to the partnership
- Common and diverging African and European priorities – with a focus on green and digital transition, sustainable growth and jobs, peace and security, health, governance, and migration and mobility
- The partnership agreement between the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the EU and how it complements or competes with the AU-EU partnership

PEACE, SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

Our peace, security and resilience team promotes the transition of fragile and conflict-affected countries towards peaceful, well-governed and prosperous societies, and encourages a strategic peace and security partnership between Africa and Europe.

Topics we look at include:

- European, African and international conflict prevention, peacebuilding and security policies
- Peace and security cooperation between Europe and Africa, and multilateralism
- The EU's approach to the humanitarian-development-peace nexus
- The women, peace and security agenda
- Links between conflict and climate change

INCLUSIVE GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

Our inclusive governance and accountability team wants to contribute to a context-specific and politically informed understanding of the drivers of governance and accountability.

Topics we look at include:

- Africa-Europe dialogue on political governance
- The roles of local, national and international actors in inclusive governance
- The governance agenda in multilateral and regional institutions, such as the AU and the EU
- Demand for governance through civil society and citizens' movements
- Gender equality
- Rule of law and anti-corruption initiatives

ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND TRANSFORMATION

Our economic recovery and transformation team wants to contribute to effective European and African policies and instruments for a sustainable and inclusive economic recovery and transformation in Africa.

Topics we look at include:

- Private sector development, finance, trade and investment in Africa-Europe relations
- The European financial architecture for development and climate action and EU sustainable corporate governance legislation – and their impact on African countries
- Circular economy, deforestation and due diligence
- Women's economic empowerment

CLIMATE ACTION AND GREEN TRANSITION

Our climate action and green transition team wants to contribute to ambitious, fair and effective responses to the climate crisis, promote a green COVID-19 recovery, and explore the European and African politics of green transition and renewable energy deployment.

Topics we look at include:

- Climate finance in Africa-Europe relations and international cooperation
- The geopolitics and external dimensions of EU climate, energy and green transition policies, including the European Green Deal, green industrialisation and value addition
- Management of transboundary climate impacts – focusing on adaptation and resilience
- Locally-led green transition and adaptation

SUSTAINABLE FOOD SYSTEMS

Our sustainable food systems team wants to support transitions to sustainable, resilient, equitable and inclusive food systems.

Topics we look at include:

- The effects of EU policies on food systems in Africa, including the Farm to Fork Strategy
- Governance of and finance for food systems
- Sustainability analysis of food systems
- Climate adaptation and resilience
- Gender imbalances in food systems

AFRICAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

Our African economic integration team wants to bring the dynamics around regional integration into better focus and understand how policies can adapt to who or what is driving or blocking progress.

Topics we look at include:

- Regional and continental trade in Africa, including the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
- The political economy dynamics of Africa's regional organisations
- Cross-border corridor initiatives, including transport
- Industrialisation and economic development





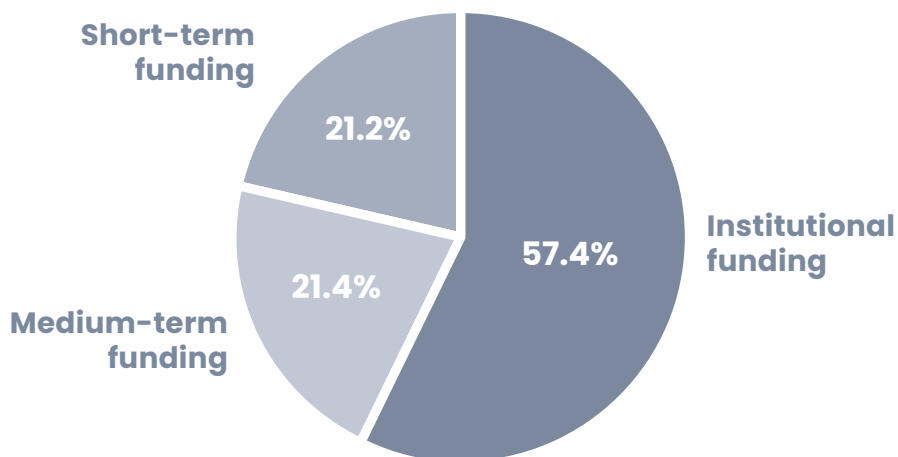
How we are funded

Our income in 2023 was close to €9 million. The governments of the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Ireland, Luxembourg and Sweden cover more than half of our revenue, and we have a special relationship with them as our institutional partners.

We also receive significant funding from a wide range of organisations and institutions. Among our funders are the European Commission, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Open Society Foundations and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

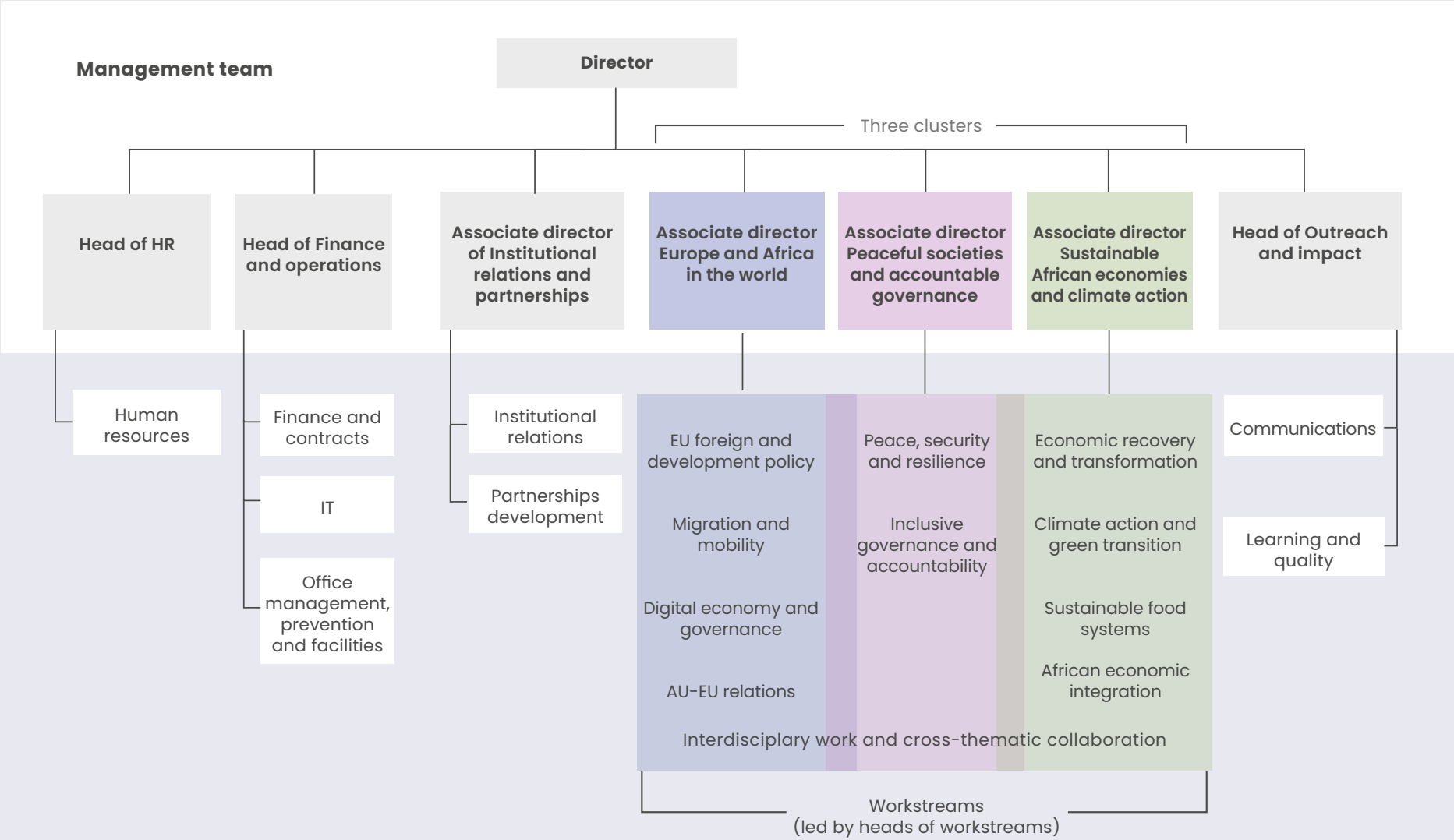
What makes our funding situation unique is the high level of institutional funding. This type of funding is flexible and allows us to set our own, independent agenda. Yet finding strategically aligned resources and meeting our fundraising target is a continual challenge for the organisation and the director.

For more information, visit ecdpm.org/funding.



Our organisational set-up

ECDPM is organised into four functional units and three clusters of our content work. The leaders of each of these groups serve on the management team, which is chaired by the director.



Our people

At the heart of our work is a group of extremely dedicated people, both policy experts and the professionals supporting them. We are home to over 60 policy, communications and support staff from more than 20 countries around the globe. In 2023, we represented 23 nationalities.

For more information, visit ecdpm.org/people.

Our board

Our board of governors, which oversees our strategy and operations, is made up of respected policy experts and former high-level officials from Africa and Europe.



Adebayo Olukoshi
Chair of the board
Nigeria



Marie-Roger Biloa
Cameroon



Koos Richelle
Vice-Chair of the board
The Netherlands



Bience Gawanas
Namibia



Ruth Jacoby
Sweden



Said Djinnit
Algeria



Richard Dohmen
The Netherlands



Roeland van de Geer
The Netherlands

For more information, visit ecdpm.org/board.



Working and living in Maastricht and Brussels

ECDPM has two offices: in Maastricht (the Netherlands) and Brussels (Belgium). Our Brussels office is strategically located near to the European institutions and is the workplace of 20 staff members. Our head office is in Maastricht, where 40 staff members work. The Maastricht office is located in the historic Pelican House, a landmark building and winner of a 2011 award for its outstanding refurbishment.

Brussels is the well-known capital of Belgium and Europe and home to many EU institutions. It has a strong and diverse international community with the accompanying infrastructure.

Maastricht, less well known, is home to 122,000 people. It is a vibrant mediaeval city within a dynamic Euroregion – a place where Germanic and Latin cultures meet. The city is international, has a strong welcoming character and is known for its joie de vivre.

In 1992, Maastricht was put on the map globally with the Treaty of Maastricht, marking the birth of the euro. The city is home to a number of international knowledge institutions, including the European Institute for Public Administration, Maastricht University, the European Journalism Centre and a campus of the United Nations University. It has a large community of international knowledge workers and students. Attracting global talent and integrating the international community into a thriving knowledge economy are explicit regional and city priorities.



ECDPM's office in Maastricht, the Netherlands.

Maastricht has a dynamic cultural and sports scene. As a leisure destination, it is popular throughout the Netherlands and in neighbouring Belgium and Germany. It hosts a number of international events, including the world's leading art and antiques fair '[TEFAF](#)', the Netherlands' largest gastronomic festival '[Preuvenemint](#)', the Netherlands' largest [Christmas market](#) and the annual [carnival celebrations](#).

The broader Maastricht region has numerous beautiful nature areas. [Saint Pieter](#), for example, with its meadows, hills, caves, forest, fort and mountain bike routes, is just a 20-minute walk from ECDPM's office.

Maastricht is a family-friendly city. It has a newly built [United World College international school](#) catering for four- to eighteen-year-olds. The wider region offers Dutch, French and German language schooling options as well.

Maastricht is well connected by train to the rest of the Netherlands, but also to Belgium and Germany. The airports of Brussels, Düsseldorf and Cologne are easily accessible, serving hundreds of European and global destinations, with Schiphol airport in Amsterdam, two hours by car and two hours and forty minutes by train. The preferred mode of transport within Maastricht is the bicycle.

For more information, visit expatcentremaastrichtregion.nl.



Vineyard on the hill of South Limburg.

Application process and more information

The board of ECDPM is leading the recruitment process, assisted by the management team, the works council and the human resources department. Applications, including an up-to-date CV and a cover letter outlining the candidate's relevant experience and qualifications for the position, should be submitted electronically to Marleen Ackermans, Head of HR at ma@ecdpm.org, no later than 12 January 2024. Ms Ackermans will be happy to provide further information. Applications and requests will be treated as highly confidential.

No more than five preselected candidates will be invited to the first round of interviews on 8 March 2024. They will be asked to give a 15-minute presentation on 'Opportunities and challenges of a think tank in this rapidly changing world and how to navigate them', followed by a 75-minute interview with the board recruitment team and a 75-minute interview with the staff recruitment team.

After this round, the remaining candidates will be assessed by an external consultant. A reference check will be done by our human resources department.

On 25 April 2024, the final candidate will be presented to the works council for advice and to the board of governors for final approval.

As our current director will be retiring on 1 October 2024, the new director is expected to take office in the course of September 2024.

We believe that diversity is good for our people and our organisation. We promote and value diversity and inclusion among our staff and candidates – irrespective of their gender, age, nationality, race, culture, religious beliefs, sexual orientation or disability.

For more information about ECDPM, please visit ecdpm.org, or read our [latest annual report and strategy for 2022–2026](#).

CREDITS

FRONT COVER

ECDPM's office in Maastricht, the Netherlands. Photo by Maurice Bastings.

PAGE 3

ECDPM's Cecilia D'Alessandro with a farmer in Kasungu, Malawi, showing her recently-acquired land title, and Griffin Zgambo, consultant part of the team evaluating the EU's support to sustainable agri-food systems in partner countries between 2014 and 2020. Photo: Herbert Mwalukomo, Centre for Environmental Policy and Advocacy (CEPA).

PAGE 4

ECDPM's Karim Karaki, Philomena Apiko and Sophie Desmidt. Photo by Yaseena Chiu-van 't Hoff, ECDPM.

PAGE 5

ECDPM's library. Photo by ECDPM.

PAGE 6

ECDPM's Geert Laporte, Alexei Jones, Fabien Tondel, Amandine Sabourin, Katja Sergejeff, Hilda Milka Koyier, Mariella Di Ciommo, Pauline Veron and Ennatu Domingo at the ECDPM office in Brussels, Belgium. Photo: Kathleen Van Hove, ECDPM.

PAGE 8

Left: ECDPM's Martin Ronceray and Katja Sergejeff at the Council of the EU before their presentation on anti-corruption. Photo: ECDPM.
Right: ECDPM's Philomena Apiko discusses the EU-Africa partnership during the Crisis Talks lecture series at the invitation of the federal and European affairs minister of the German state of Hessen and the Leibniz Research Alliance 'Crises in a Globalised World'. Photo: Zacarias Garcia.

PAGE 10

ECDPM's Nadia Ashraf at a textile mill in Thika, Kenya. Photo: Jeske van Seters, ECDPM.

PAGE 11

Left: ECDPM's Andrew Sherriff gives a presentation at the ADA Annual Conference in Vienna, Austria. Photo: Frank Helmrich, ADA.
Right: Meeting of the ECDPM Council, consisting of the management team and heads of ECDPM's workstreams. Photo: Virginia Mucchi, ECDPM.

PAGE 14

View of Maastricht with from left to right the St. John Church, the Basilica of Saint Servatius and the Basilica of Our Lady. Photo by CumulusNL from NLwikipedia.

PAGE 15

Top: ECDPM's office in Maastricht, the Netherlands. Photo by Ernst van Loon.
Bottom: Vineyard on the hill of South Limburg. Photo by Joophoek, Dreamstime.

ecdpm

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