

ANNUAL REPORT 2020

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From our Board Chair

Adebayo Olukoshi

The year 2020 will be remembered as one of the most sobering in the history of our world. The coronavirus outbreak that initially began as a local problem in Wuhan, China, soon assumed global dimensions, and the spread of COVID-19 quickly shut down everyday life as we had become accustomed to living it. The pandemic's immediate social, economic and political costs were heavy and continue to be felt. The longer-term consequences are expected to be even heavier in numerous respects.

ECDPM, like everyone else, was compelled to adopt rapid and drastic changes to its mode of operations to ride out the initial challenges brought by the pandemic and comply with the measures imposed by public health authorities and governments to contain it. It is a great credit to the staff and partners of the Centre that beyond the initial shocks associated with lockdowns around the world, it was still possible to accomplish all of the work carried out and reported in the pages to follow.

Amidst the disruptions and dislocations, the COVID-19 pandemic, ironically, also brought into sharp relief the complex web of interconnections that bind together peoples, economies and cultures around the world. Building on this fact in a manner that privileges inclusion and equity in a revamped international multilateral system is one of the key leadership challenges of these times.

ECDPM continues to be uniquely positioned to play a frontline role in working with stakeholders, especially in Europe and Africa, to promote a system of mutually beneficial cooperation that can make for a more balanced and just world order. The Centre's track record of independent policy analyses and honest brokerage is an especially useful asset in these times, as the pandemic is ushering in a rethink of key pillars of international development policy and cooperation. ■



From our Director

Carl Michiels

The COVID-19 pandemic has had enormous health, social and economic impacts around the world. Many of these will be felt for decades. The pandemic has had drastic effects for us at ECDPM too. As a 'think and do tank', our normal modus operandi consists of participating in seminars, conferences and workshops, meeting people face-to-face, and going on field visits. All of the above were curtailed, practically overnight, limiting us to the two-dimensional digital world.

I'm happy to say that we quickly rose to the challenge. Not only were we able to deliver on the objectives we set in our strategy and work plan, but we also conducted in-depth evaluations of our performance and processes and drafted our next five-year strategy. In addition, we managed to carry out substantial analyses of the consequences of the pandemic in all our focus areas.

As this annual report makes clear, most of our work in 2020 revolved around, was impacted by or touched upon the COVID-19 crisis. The report describes our involvement in assessing the EU's response to the crisis, with a focus on the 'Team Europe' approach and the EU's financial commitments to a global

recovery. It also presents our work on African regional responses to the pandemic and the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on Africa-Europe relations. In addition, the report showcases our work on a sustainable economic recovery, a more circular economy, security and resilience, trade and transport, climate adaptation, sustainable food systems, migration, and gender equality. Many of these are key areas for the relationship between Africa and Europe. For evident reasons, we also explored new themes, particularly global health and digitalisation.

I am extremely proud of and thankful to the Centre and its staff, who demonstrated adaptability and resilience while delivering relevant contributions in the search for solutions to the global challenge facing us all. I am also grateful to our partners, who allowed for some flexibility in this unusual year.

COVID-19 will continue to shape the world in the coming years. Besides daunting challenges, it will also present unimagined opportunities. Our Centre will continue to be on the lookout for both with eagerness, enthusiasm and unbridled curiosity for the unknown. ■

A photograph of a man in a dark sweater and glasses standing and presenting to a seated audience in a modern room with wood-paneled walls. The room features display cases filled with framed documents and photographs. The audience is seated at long tables, looking towards the presenter. The overall atmosphere is professional and academic.

Who we are and what we do

ECDPM is a leading independent 'think and do tank' that wants to make European and African policies work for inclusive and sustainable development.

Good policies can lay a foundation for change and play a crucial part in making the global development and international cooperation agenda a reality for all. We want to help institutions and governments across Europe and Africa create policies that work.

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

and, most importantly, design practical solutions together.

We have over thirty years of experience in development policy and international cooperation and a thorough knowledge of African and European institutions. Our focus is on EU foreign policy and European and African policies related to conflict, migration, governance, sustainable food systems, regional integration, business, finance and trade.

Our partners include representatives of ministries and government institutions, international organisations, think tanks, academia and social and economic actors from Africa, Europe and beyond. ■



What we offer

Partnerships & dialogue

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

Expert information

We provide background information to our partners and the media.

Events

We organise and speak at debates, conferences and workshops.

Advice, training & support

We offer practical policy advice, training and support.

Research & analysis

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

What sets us apart



We are more than a think tank.

We are researchers and analysts – but we are also facilitators, advisers, evaluators and trainers. It's that combination of roles which sets us apart from other think tanks. To make policies effective 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 are not here to defend the interests of anyone – apart from the most vulnerable people in society.



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 African and European policy landscape inside and out.

Africa-Europe relations is in our DNA. For over thirty years we have worked with institutions, governments and partners across both continents. This has resulted in a broad network, a solid institutional memory of what has and hasn't worked before, and a knack for discerning how policy arenas will evolve.



We are in it for the long run.

We engage in policy processes from beginning to end and commit to long-term relationships with our partners – to jointly accomplish changes over time.

Our programmes in 2020

Our work contributes to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly SDG 1 (no poverty), 2 (zero hunger), 5 (gender equality), 8 (decent work and economic growth), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 10 (reduced inequalities), 12 (responsible consumption and production), 13 (climate action), 15 (life on land), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships for the goals).

In 2020, we strategically focused our work through five interlinked programmes.

European External Affairs

The European Union (EU) is dealing with a number of challenges close to home, while at the same time seeking to play a more significant global role. Our European External Affairs programme wants to help the EU institutions and member states in working towards coherent and effective international cooperation, particularly with Africa. [Learn more](#)

African Institutions and Regional Dynamics

The African Union (AU) and its member states, and the numerous regional blocs across the African continent, all develop and implement policies promoting Africa's socio-economic development. Our African Institutions and Regional Dynamics programme works to help African institutions and regions pursue that goal. [Learn more](#)

Migration

Migration and mobility can stimulate development as drivers of social and economic change, but they also pose significant challenges. Our Migration programme wants to help tackle these challenges, making use of the potential of migration for global development and improving cooperation between Europe and Africa. [Learn more](#)

Security and Resilience

African and European institutions are torn between managing urgent crises and tackling the structural causes and consequences of violent conflict. Our Security and Resilience programme works to support the development of effective and sustainable ways to prevent conflict and build peace, and it promotes strategic partnerships between Africa and Europe. [Learn more](#)

Economic and Agricultural Transformation

Economic and agricultural transformation is central to many African and European development strategies. It can create more and better jobs, stimulate sustainable economic growth and tackle inequality. We want to help accomplish these goals. Our programme teams focus on trade, investment and finance; the private sector; and sustainable food systems.

Trade, investment and finance

In Europe and Africa, a transition to sustainable economies is essential to prevent issues of poverty and environmental degradation from escalating, and to ward off major crises in the future. The trade, investment and finance team contributes to shaping policies that are sustainable, resilient and take into account the needs of the most vulnerable. [Learn more](#)

Private sector engagement

A transition to socially and environmentally sustainable economies cannot be achieved without responsible businesses. The private sector engagement team supports public and private actors to help shape policies, instruments and collaborative efforts that contribute to private sector development and put sustainability at the heart of production, development and trade. [Learn more](#)

Sustainable food systems

Our food systems struggle to provide the growing global population with affordable, healthy and nutritious foods. They also create livelihood stresses for producers and damage our natural environment. The sustainable food systems team wants to help change that. We promote policies and investment to improve the sustainability and resilience of food systems in Africa and globally. [Learn more](#)

All our programmes jointly contribute to our work on Africa-Europe relations, on policy coherence for (sustainable) development, on climate change, on gender and on youth. ■

Highlights in 2020

Below you can find our most memorable highlights from January through December. Pages 14 to 31 then zoom in on eleven projects. These feature the work of our programmes throughout the year, demonstrating how we contributed to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and how all our work is connected.

Go to ecdpm.org/2020 for all our events, publications, magazine issues and commentaries from the past year. If you are looking for particular categories, use the filters to narrow your search.



Presentation / Workshop



Meeting / Partnership



Publication / Research



Commentary



Podcast / Multimedia

JANUARY

We shared our [analysis of prospects for a more equal partnership](#) between the EU and the AU with several news outlets, including [EURACTIV](#), [POLITICO](#), [Deutsche Welle](#) and [African Newpage](#).



Ahead of the UK's official withdrawal from the EU, we analysed the [potential impact of Brexit on EU-UK development cooperation](#). We were also invited to [speak during a meeting of the House of Lords EU External Affairs Sub-Committee](#) on how the UK should cooperate with the EU on development policy after Brexit.



FEBRUARY

For the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), we looked at how [private sector engagement is embedded in different stages of the migration cycle](#). Later in the year, we presented our work to Dutch foreign ministry representatives.



With the Netherlands Permanent Representation to the EU, we organised a [debate on the 'geopolitical' European Commission and a new EU partnership with Africa](#). We presented an updated version of our [2019 brief on the topic](#) to African and European policymakers.



With the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), we kicked off the two-year [AgrInvest project](#), which aims to promote private investment for more sustainable food systems in Africa. At the end of the year, we published our first study – a [political economy analysis of the Kenyan food system](#).

We presented our [analysis of the 2021-2027 EU programming for international cooperation](#) to the [Development and Foreign Affairs committees of the European Parliament](#).

MARCH / APRIL

A few days before the European Commission announced its plans for a new Africa strategy, [we mapped six areas of common and diverging interests in the EU-Africa partnership](#). We presented the work to representatives of African and European think tanks during an [event organised by the European Think Tanks Group \(ETTG\) and the United Nations Development Programme \(UNDP\) Africa](#) in Addis Ababa. We also [scrutinised the EU strategy plans](#).



We organised a [workshop for the Scottish government's external affairs directorate](#) on how to best promote policy coherence for sustainable development in its policies and programmes. Later in the year, we published a [paper on policy coherence issues emerging from COVID-19 with a focus on healthcare supply chains](#), and a study for the [CASCADES project on policy coherence lessons learnt in EU development cooperation](#).

As countries imposed lockdowns, we explained [how COVID-19 revealed the complexities of migration debates](#).

We provided the first analysis of the [European Commission's 'Team Europe' global COVID-19 response package](#) just a few days after it was launched.



MAY

We zoomed in on the [pandemic's impact on remittances and its effects on development in Africa](#).



As part of our work on [food systems in the Arusha area](#), we created a [visually engaging collection of interviews with small-scale farmers, researchers and government officials](#), in collaboration with the Giangiacomo Feltrinelli Foundation.



We published four proposals to implement a ['One Health' approach](#) centred on sustainable food systems, as the need to tackle health-related threats like COVID-19 makes it ever more pressing to link the wellness of humans, animals and the shared environment.

We examined the [trend of closing civic space](#), drawing implications for development cooperation and analysing wider measures to mitigate and respond to threats to civil society in developing countries. Later in the year, we presented our work to members of CONCORD, the European confederation of relief and development NGOs, at a [roundtable organised by the Slovenian umbrella organisation SLOGA](#).

Our paper on [African regional responses to COVID-19](#) looked at cooperation at the continental and regional levels in Africa, highlighting for instance how collective action among states would help generate greater bargaining power for access to vaccines.



With the German Development Institute (DIE), we conducted [a study on EU cooperation with sub-Saharan Africa](#) for the evaluation department of the Dutch foreign ministry

(IOB). It was used as a reference in Dutch Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation Minister Sigrid Kaag's letter to parliament to inform the Netherlands' House of Representatives on European development cooperation. We also [shared some of the lessons learnt](#) during the intense months of analytical work behind the study.



Deutsche Welle interviewed us on the [EU visa code and its implications for migration cooperation with African countries](#), a topic we also explored in one of [our commentaries](#), which was used by African policymakers in discussions on migration conditionalities.



JUNE

We helped draft the EU internal working guidelines on trade policy and trade facilitation, and trained EU officials on aid for trade.

With DIE and the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET), we organised a series of online expert workshops on AU-EU cooperation. We also wrote papers on the topics of the workshops: the [African Continental Free Trade Area \(AfCFTA\)](#) and [digitalisation](#). These were published by ETTG. The work was done for a programme under the German Presidency of the EU Council, initiated by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), with financial support from the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).



We published a paper on the [integration of climate change and circular economy](#)

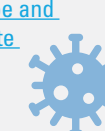
[in the foreign policies](#) of the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland, with PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency. We presented and discussed the findings in a webinar with government officials from different Dutch ministries.



We participated in a three-day online consultation on the EU's new guidelines for mediation and mediation support. With FemWise-Africa, we organised a session on [what the EU can learn from female African mediators and the AU's experience in mediation](#). We later shared our [takeaways](#).



With the Deutsche Stiftung Weltbevölkerung (DSW) and ahead of the launch of the 2020 EU research and innovation strategy, [we looked into research and innovation collaboration between Europe and Africa, sharing some concrete recommendations](#).



We looked at how the [EU's 'Team Europe' approach could respond to the challenges posed by COVID-19](#) by stimulating greater cooperation among EU institutions, member states and their development finance institutions.

With DAI, we organised [four webinars on connecting public and private responses to COVID-19](#) and the pandemic's impact on global development.



As part of our work on China-Africa relations, we looked back at the [China-Africa summit on COVID-19](#). Earlier in the year, we wrote a piece about China's ['Corona diplomacy' in Africa](#), which was picked up by [The Financial Times](#) and [The China-Africa Project](#).



JULY

As part of the [Horizon 2020 RESPECT project](#) on Europe's soft power in external cooperation and trade, we looked at [civil society engagement in EU trade agreements](#). An issue of our Great Insights magazine focused on using [trade policy for non-trade objectives](#).

We launched a [guide for implementing a food systems approach in practice](#).

After EU leaders agreed on the new seven-year budget and an extraordinary COVID-19 recovery package worth €1.8 trillion, we looked at the sums allocated to external action and created a [data set comparing the previous proposals with the latest agreement](#).

Following our [brief on the impact of COVID-19 on conflict in Africa](#), we were invited to present our work during an [internal meeting hosted by the European Parliament Secretariat](#).

We analysed the [political economy of the Nacala and Beira transport corridors connecting Malawi to Mozambique](#) and their impact on trade and connectivity. Our work highlighted the need to understand state-business relations, which have underpinned the Beira corridor but undermined progress in the Nacala corridor thus far.



SEPTEMBER

We broke the news on the [postponement of the sixth AU-EU Summit](#).

We designed and delivered an online training on the programming of the €79.5 billion Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI) to officials from the European External Action Service (EEAS), the European Commission and EU delegations.

With the International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food), we organised an expert [roundtable](#) to discuss how EU trade policies can contribute to a global transformation to sustainable food systems. These discussions inspired a [joint brief](#), which we submitted to the EU Trade Policy Review process.

With the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the Association of European Development Finance Institutions (EDFI), we organised and moderated the event [Team Europe: Joining forces for financing the global recovery](#). European international partnerships commissioner Jutta Urpilainen delivered the keynote speech.

We explored the place of the [European Peace Facility \(EPF\)](#) within EU external action on peace and security, as well as its relevance for the EU-AU partnership. Earlier in the year, we analysed how the EPF will relate to the [future of the EU's support to security sector reform](#). Our work on the EPF led to several invitations for contributions to expert panels and newsletters.

After the European Commission presented its long-awaited proposal for a new migration and asylum pact, [we shared our thoughts](#) on what the pact means for EU external migration governance and the EU's partnership with African countries.

OCTOBER

We published the first comprehensive independent [analysis of the EU's role in global health in the era of COVID-19](#) to improve the EU's approach in this area.

In the lead-up to the first-ever Climate Adaptation Summit in January 2021, we produced the [Climate Adaptation Talks](#) podcast series, in which speakers from Africa, Europe and beyond shared insights on adapting to an increasingly volatile climate.

ECDPM Director Carl Michiels wrote an [open letter to European Council President Charles Michel](#), arguing that it would be a mistake to only have a superficial discussion on EU-Africa relations during the October meeting. The [Council President responded](#).

We organised a [dialogue on rice sector development and trade policies in West Africa](#) with IPAR (Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale) – undertaken with financial support from GIZ – during which we shared the [findings of our research](#). The ECOWAS agriculture commissioner used our [dialogue report](#) as input for an informal meeting of ECOWAS ministers. Earlier in the year, our [commentary](#) ahead of a meeting of ECOWAS representatives on the 'Rice Offensive' initiative was picked up by regional media. We also wrote for Developing Economics on how a [regional response could help avoid rice shortages in West Africa](#).

We dedicated an issue of our Great Insights magazine to [AU-EU relations in times of COVID-19](#), with high-level contributions from EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and AU strategic partnerships head Levi Uche Madueke.

Building on earlier work on sustainable textile value chain development, we moderated a meeting between a civil society organisation (CSO) textile strategy coalition and private sector representatives united in the Policy Hub, aimed at better understanding each other's views and potential alignment for a future EU strategy for sustainable textiles.

In light of the EU's proposed new migration and asylum pact, we analysed the [dynamics driving or preventing migration reforms in North Africa](#), focused on Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria and Egypt, and proposed ways for the EU and its member states to help strengthen migration governance and protection systems in the region. We presented our findings during a discussion with representatives from the Danish foreign ministry and embassies in the focus countries.

NOVEMBER

We explored the key aspects of the [Africa-Europe relationship using a gender lens](#).

We contributed to a report for the EEAS on the [EU's role in the protection and enhancement of cultural heritage in conflict and post-conflict contexts in the Middle East](#). We then co-hosted a [virtual conference](#) on the topic.

We took part in an independent evaluation for the European Commission that analysed the [EU's global support for conflict prevention and peacebuilding between 2013 and 2018](#). The

outcome of the evaluation was presented at a virtual conference hosted by the European Commission. We later shared lessons on how the [EU can step up its support for conflict prevention and peacebuilding](#).

We wrote a brief on the [election process for a new AU Commission](#), which took place in February 2021. We looked at the role of the AU's institutional management reforms in the elections – especially the key requirements of gender parity and regional representation.

We developed and facilitated training for CONCORD on private sector finance for sustainable development. The one-day interactive online training helped CONCORD members and staff engage on this topic.

With Oikos East Africa, the Sokoine University of Agriculture and AgriProFocus, we organised a [workshop in Arusha](#) to discuss our [research on food system diversification](#). Participants agreed on the important yet underexploited role of indigenous vegetables in the local food system. These will now be included in the Arusha Food Smart City Initiative.

We published a [brief on artisanal small-scale mining in Burkina Faso](#), with a focus on the use and trade of toxic chemicals and highlighting the need for reforms.

We looked at the [potential benefits expected from the AfCFTA](#) and were invited to speak at a [roundtable discussion on the AfCFTA and the role of external partners during the 2020 Potsdam Winter Dialogues](#). Earlier in the year, we dedicated an issue of our [Great Insights magazine to the AfCFTA](#), including contributions from the AU and EU trade commissioners.

With GIZ, we analysed lessons learnt on [private sector engagement in conflict prevention and peacebuilding](#) to identify when and how the private sector can engage with the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). We were invited to share our insights with the AU's Peace and Security Department, and at the UNDP Prevention in Action Global Forum in March 2021.

DECEMBER

Ahead of International Anti-Corruption Day, we explored the [impact of communication around corruption](#) – based on earlier work drawing [lessons for anti-corruption efforts by European donors](#).

During the year, we continued to provide political economy support to the EU delegation in Tunisia. Early in 2021, [we captured our experience in a paper](#) with lessons for development partners seeking to take a more politically informed approach to their work.

We were invited to an expert meeting by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) to discuss the relationship between the AU and regional economic communities in the context of the AfCFTA.

►► In March 2020, many countries imposed strict lockdowns to curb a thus-far underestimated virus. The COVID-19 outbreak quickly grew into a pandemic, drastically changing life as we knew it.



How COVID-19 brought life to a standstill

The COVID-19 pandemic is one of the greatest global challenges of the last decades. Its enormous health, social and economic impacts will be felt for decades by societies around the world. Already the pandemic has taken more than three million lives, sickened hundreds of millions of people, upended countless livelihoods and inflicted trillions of dollars in economic damages.

As the crisis unfolded in 2020, we closely followed and analysed how the spread of the coronavirus affected policies and processes related to all our areas of work. For instance, we assessed the EU's ongoing response to the crisis, focusing specifically on the [‘Team Europe’ approach](#) and the [EU finances needed to support a global recovery](#). Our work on that last topic culminated in a [high-level debate with EU international partnerships commissioner Jutta Urpilainen](#). We also analysed [African regional responses](#) to COVID-19, and looked at the pandemic's impact on [Africa-Europe relations](#).

We zoomed in on what COVID-19 means for [migration cooperation between Africa and Europe](#) and for [remittance flows to Africa](#), as well as the [migration debate](#) more broadly. We looked at the impact of the pandemic on [fragility, peace and security in Africa](#) and [funding for peacebuilding](#), and explored [China's ‘Corona diplomacy’ in Africa](#), focusing also on geopolitical considerations around the [China-Africa](#)

[summit on COVID-19](#). We stressed how the crisis highlighted the urgent need for [sustainable and resilient food systems](#), for a [‘One Health’ approach](#), and for [businesses to mitigate human rights and environmental risks](#) along their supply chains.

Finally, we paid attention to communication, perceptions and narratives. Early in the year, for instance, we looked at [how COVID-19 could affect public opinion on international cooperation](#). We also explored the [pandemic's effects on how we communicate with each other](#) and the knock-on effects this could have on policymaking, as well as how the pandemic suddenly shifted [African and European narratives](#), on migration for instance. Our article on migration, in particular, was widely read and republished by [AllAfrica](#).

In the remainder of this annual report, it will become clear that most of our work in 2020 revolved around, was impacted by or touched upon the COVID-19 crisis. While we hope 2021 will eventually guide us towards a better situation, much of our work for the foreseeable future will inevitably relate to the long-term impact of the pandemic. ■

Want to see all our work on COVID-19 or learn more about what we do? Visit ecdpm.org/corona or get in touch with Virginia Mucchi or Carl Michiels via ecdpm.org/people.

►► *The year 2020 was supposed to be a key moment for Africa-Europe relations, with the sixth AU-EU Summit scheduled for October. But Africa-Europe relations also fell victim to COVID-19, as both continents' major concern became tackling the immense socio-economic challenges posed by the pandemic, and new virus waves in Europe made an in-person summit impossible.*



A turbulent year for Africa-Europe relations

The year started out hopefully for Africa-Europe relations, with a more assertive AU Commission and a new European Commission that stressed its commitment to a different way of working with Africa. In late 2019 and early 2020, we shared our [analysis of the prospects for a more equal partnership](#) with several news outlets, including [EURACTIV](#), [POLITICO](#), [Deutsche Welle](#) and [African Newswire](#).

A few days before the European Commission announced its plans for a new strategy 'with' Africa, we mapped six areas of [common and diverging interests](#) in the EU-Africa partnership in one of our most-read papers of the year. Both the EU strategy plans and our [paper were discussed by African and European think tanks](#) at an event organised by ETTG and UNDP Africa in Addis Ababa. We also [scrutinised the EU strategy plans](#).

Just days after the EU's Africa strategy plans were launched, lockdowns were imposed in many parts of the world, and our focus shifted to exploring the impact of the pandemic on [Africa-Europe relations](#). In September, we were the first to communicate the [news about the cancelled AU-EU Summit](#). On the days the summit would have taken place, we launched an issue of our Great Insights magazine dedicated to the [AU-EU relationship in times of COVID-19](#), with high-level contributions from EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and AU strategic partnerships head Levi Uche Madueke.

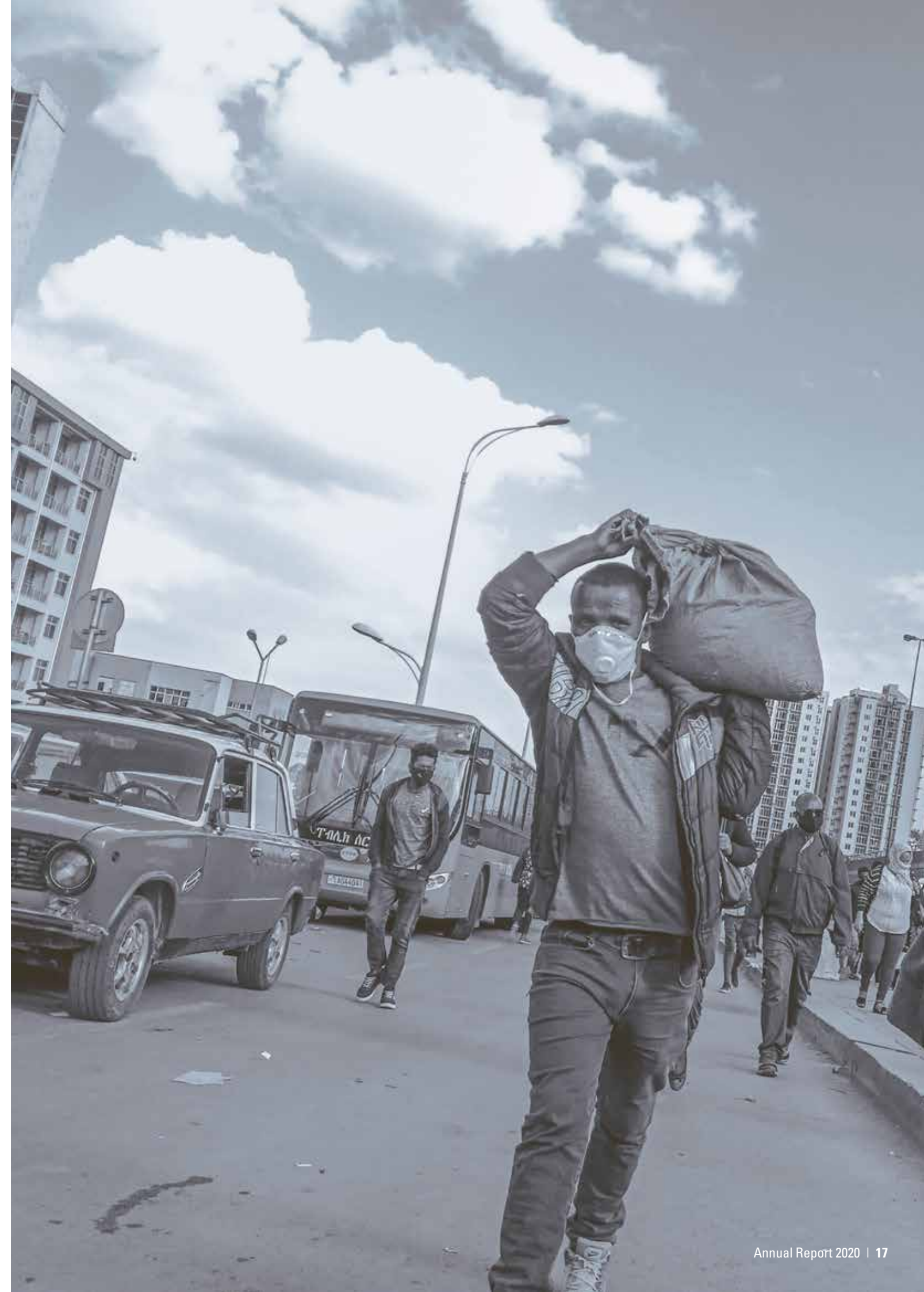
After the cancelled summit, the European Council kept Africa-Europe relations on the agenda for its

October meeting to show its commitment to the partnership, yet this risked becoming a superficial discussion. In an [open letter to Council President Charles Michel](#), published by EUobserver, ECDPM Director Carl Michiels stressed that this would be a mistake. The Council President [responded](#).

Beyond COVID-19 and the cancelled summit, we organised a seminar with the Institute for Security Studies (ISS) on [how to build a stronger AU-EU partnership](#). In our [analysis ahead of the 2021 AU elections](#), we looked at what a new AU leadership could mean for AU-EU relations. We also explored more specific themes relevant to the partnership, such as [gender](#), [migration](#) and [climate change](#). With DIE and ACET – for a project initiated by BMZ, with financial support from GIZ – we organised webinars and wrote about EU-Africa cooperation in light of the [AfCFTA](#) and [digitalisation](#), and organised an event on [EU-West Africa cooperation on a 'One Health' approach](#).

Africa-Europe relations is at the basis of most of our work, and so we will continue feeding analysis into the eventual next AU-EU Summit. In early 2021, for instance, we asked [young people from Africa and Europe what they think African and European policymakers should do differently](#). ■

Want to know more about our work on Africa-Europe relations? Visit ecdpm.org/africaeurope or get in touch with Amanda Bisong or Geert Laporte via ecdpm.org/people.





►► *European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen intends to make her Commission a 'geopolitical' one, strongly focused on foreign policy, including a new partnership with Africa. The COVID-19 crisis, which became a source of geopolitical competition, strengthened European aspirations to defend multilateralism and offered an opportunity for the EU to position itself more strongly – but the jury is still out on whether it succeeded or not.*



The EU's geopolitical positioning in times of COVID-19

After an initially slow response to the pandemic, the EU mobilised its full firepower – including health coordination, economic measures and market regulation – to address the COVID-19 crisis within its borders. Yet, in facing a global pandemic that knows no borders, it is in Europe's interest to mount an effective global response at scale. That's what the European Commission's 'Team Europe' response package tried to achieve. A few days after it was launched, we [analysed the package](#), concluding that it was a good start, but focused mainly on traditional diplomatic, humanitarian and development instruments insufficient for the task at hand. Our analysis was [picked up by the media](#) and led to several requests for private briefings to European stakeholders.

Later in the year, we looked at the [EU's role as a global health actor in times of COVID-19](#). We analysed the scale and scope of the EU's global health role and offered perspectives on its future role in this area. The paper was positively received by European Commission officials working on health who engaged with us on the topic. We presented it at a virtual event co-organised by DSW and civil society partners (such as Global Health Advocates) ahead of Universal Health Coverage Day. It also led us to co-organise a webinar with DIE on [EU-West Africa cooperation on 'One Health'](#).

In 2021, we continue to follow how the EU positions itself as a global health player. The year is an

important one for health, notably with the Global Health Summit planned for October and the EU's ambitions to contribute to the reform of the World Health Organization (WHO). These will be crucial for us to monitor as they have strong bearing on the EU's global role. We also plan to build on our health work to analyse the momentum for increased investments in human development in post-COVID-19 programming, and how this fits with the EU's wider political objectives and interests.

We will follow the EU's global response to COVID-19 as well as its geopolitical ambitions. In early 2021, for instance, we looked at how the ['Team Europe' concept has been applied to date](#). We also explored the prospects, added value and challenges of the EU and member states working better together, enhanced visibility and the potential for a stronger voice in multilateral fora. Of particular importance in 2021 will be the ongoing worldwide roll-out of COVID-19 vaccines. In this regard, we looked at the challenges for [securing vaccines in fragile countries in Africa](#) and analysed the performance of the EU in supporting equitable access to vaccines, as well as the geopolitical implications. ■

Want to know more about our work on the EU's role in global affairs? Visit ecdpm.org/programmes/european-external-affairs or get in touch with Alexei Jones, Chloe Teevan or Pauline Veron via ecdpm.org/people.

►► *The EU's global response to COVID-19 includes a significant budget. While a large part of governments' and institutions' financial response is rightly focused on the health emergency, it should also be used to incentivise private investment. The private sector's role will be essential for a sustainable recovery in lower-income countries, particularly in Africa.*



Development finance and the quest to build back better

While the recession is global, poorer countries are less able to adopt rescue and countercyclical measures to support their economies. The private sector, particularly micro-, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), is under threat – especially in least developed and low-income countries. The COVID-19 crisis is a fundamental test of the role and relevance of multilateral development banks (MDBs) and development finance institutions (DFIs), whose job is to be countercyclical and help restart private finance for a sustainable and inclusive recovery. In 2020, we looked at how DFIs and MDBs can best respond to the COVID-19 crisis and support the recovery, and how the EU can contribute to this global response to support private finance to build back better, greener and in a more gender-sensitive and sustainable way.

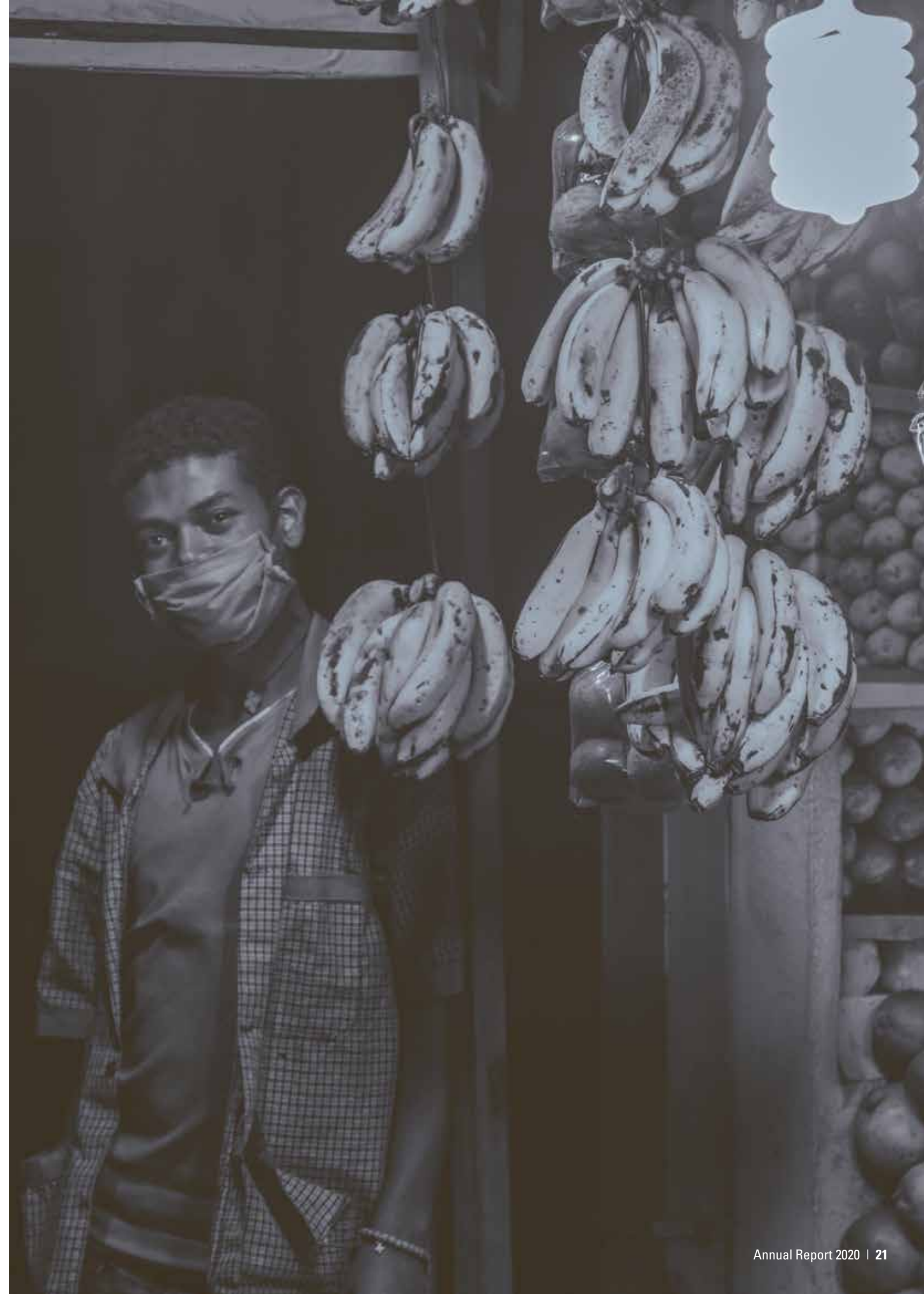
At the international level, we became a member of the coordination group of the [Tri Hita Karana Blended Finance network](#), led by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). We drafted a [statement](#) for public endorsement on the role of DFIs and MDBs in response to COVID-19, building on our earlier [background analysis](#). With the OECD and ETTG, we organised an [event on the role of multilateral development finance](#) in the recovery, and we presented recommendations to the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) Community of Practice on how MDBs' and DFIs' activities can better contribute to the recovery and be tailored to local contexts. For Devex, we looked at what more [DFIs could do to help MSMEs survive COVID-19](#). We also partnered with DAI for a webinar

series on [connecting public and private responses to COVID-19](#), and with Hivos for an event on [finance for a green and gender-driven COVID-19 recovery in Africa](#), focused on energy. Ahead of that last event, we wrote a paper on an inclusive and [gender-sensitive recovery](#) and the role of DFIs.

At the EU level, our work helped shape the global response of the EU and its financial institutions for development. We analysed the [EU's global COVID-19 response](#), and with the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and UNECA, we looked at the need for Europe to contribute to [saving Africa's private sector jobs](#). We looked at how Europe can improve its COVID-19 response with [smarter finance](#) and enhanced [collaboration efforts](#), as well as how to better [track EU COVID-19 development finance](#). With EBRD, EIB and EDFI, we organised a [high-level debate on recovery finance with EU international partnerships commissioner Jutta Urpilainen](#).

In 2021, we continue our work with MDBs, DFIs and policymakers on recovery finance, helping to translate ambitions into concrete proposals. We will also focus on the European financial architecture for development. In early 2021 for instance, we looked at how European financial institutions can work better together for [sustainable and green investment](#). ■

Want to know more about our work on development finance? Visit ecdpm.org/programmes/trade-investment-finance or get in touch with San Bilal via ecdpm.org/people.



►► *To build back better in a green and sustainable way, the transition to a circular economy will be key. This means designing waste and pollution out of our economic system, keeping products and materials in use for as long as possible and regenerating natural systems to stay within the boundaries of our planet, while satisfying societies' basic needs.*



Towards a more circular economy

Our world is only 8.6% circular. More effort is needed for the transition to a circular economy, including in value chains connecting Africa and Europe. Cooperation between the EU and the AU for more circularity is fully in line with the European Green Deal, the EU's Farm to Fork Strategy and its Circular Economy Action Plan. While the African side has been less vocal about the centrality of a circular economy in AU-EU cooperation, it fits with the circular economy paths that various African countries have embarked on, such as Ghana, Kenya and South Africa.

A circular economy can create jobs, foster more resilient industries and limit environmental impacts. At the same time, the transition to a circular economy is not without challenges, including limited institutional and regulatory capacity, limited access to finance, and uneven access to technology. Furthermore, African exporters may find it challenging to comply with the EU's increasingly stringent sustainability requirements.

Throughout the year, we looked at how the shift towards a more circular economy is being integrated into EU policy, particularly foreign policy, and trade between Africa and Europe. For instance, for PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency, we wrote a paper on how [climate and circular economy are integrated in the foreign policies](#) of the EU, Finland, France, Germany, Sweden and Switzerland,

looking at lessons the Netherlands could draw from this. On two occasions, we presented the paper to Dutch government officials from several ministries, including the foreign affairs ministry – to inform the environmental strategy of its Sustainable Economic Development Department, among other things.

For the EU-South Africa Partners for Growth project and with DNA Economics, we identified [opportunities for promoting circularity in food trade between South Africa and the EU](#), zooming in on packaging. The EU delegation in South Africa is keen to use our study, which was published in early 2021. We wrote several articles on the topic as well, looking for instance at the [importance of Africa-Europe cooperation](#) for the circular economy transition. We also wrote about the [EU's new circular economy action plan](#), focusing on measures to promote circular textile value chains, building on our extensive [engagement on textiles in 2019](#).

In 2021, we continue our work on the topic, which remains high on the agendas of African and European policymakers. For instance, at the next AU-EU Summit, the circular economy will be discussed as part of the EU's plans for a new strategy with Africa. ■

Want to know more about our work on the circular economy? Visit ecdpm.org/circulareconomy or get in touch with [Jeske van Seters](#) or [Nadia Ashraf](#) via ecdpm.org/people.

►► *Building back better will also mean overcoming COVID-related and pre-existing barriers to trade between countries – which is the premise of the AfCFTA. But while cross-border trade and transport are often perceived as technical issues, they are in fact highly political. Fluctuating political relations between countries and domestic concerns, for instance, can either support or hinder the development of transport corridors, and thus ambitions for greater trade and industrialisation.*



Trade and cross-border transport in East and Southern Africa

In 2020, TradeMark East Africa (TMEA) asked us to look closer at these dynamics in Southern Africa. We did so by zooming in on the corridors connecting Malawi and Mozambique, particularly those leading to two major ports in Mozambique: Beira and Nacala. These ports are linked to Malawi by roads and a railway system. Goods transport along these corridors is managed by a complex system of actors, each with its own vested interests. Moving goods is not risk-free, as armed assaults, theft and corruption are frequent, on top of overloading and delays.

Our scoping study provided an overview of the transport systems and dynamics between Malawi and Mozambique. We also looked at the countries' connections with the wider region, as the transport of goods towards and from key destinations like China often happens via other major cities, such as Durban in South Africa. We gathered valuable insights into the transport dynamics within Southern Africa, and other regions within and outside the continent. We were also able to better understand complex environments and careful trade-offs that external partners need to consider when engaging with the transport sector in the region.

[Our final study](#), published in English and Portuguese, was presented to TMEA to inform its future programming in the Southern African region. It was also shared with a wider range of actors during a meeting involving the World Bank, the UK Department for International Development (which has since been replaced by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office) and other researchers on transport in the region.

Based on this work and the approach we used, we have been asked to pilot a tool that TMEA can use to systematically gather information on East African political economy dynamics to help them design their trade and transport programmes in the region. We were also asked to train TMEA staff in making the best use of the tool. Our first training session took place virtually with the TMEA Burundi country team. In 2021, we will conduct further studies on the political economy dynamics of trade and transport in other regions where TMEA is active, potentially including the Horn of Africa. ■

Want to know more about our work on the transport sector in East and Southern Africa? Get in touch with Bruce Byiers or Poorva Karkare via ecdpm.org/people.

►► *Shifting focus from Southern and Eastern Africa to the Sahel brings us from complex transport and trade dynamics to complex governance, peace and security dynamics. The Sahel is a place of many ongoing conflicts. Pressure on the region is growing, too, due to COVID-19, as well as climate change, environmental shocks and other development and socio-political challenges.*



Resilience on many fronts: Zooming in on the Sahel

Despite its many challenges, the Sahel region is a showcase of resilience, especially at the local level. Important efforts are being made to strengthen community resilience and manage the risk of communal violence and conflicts over natural resources. In 2020, much of our work focused on the Sahel related to resilience, particularly when it comes to climate change, development, peace and humanitarian action.

We conducted two evaluations of how non-governmental actors are aiming to strengthen resilience across the region. These concerned Partners for Resilience, a coalition of Dutch NGOs, and the Dutch NGO Cordaid. The results of these evaluations were highly appreciated. They were used by the Dutch foreign ministry and contributed to strategic discussions among NGOs about future programmes focused on resilience in the Sahel. We also joined a consortium consisting of three partners in the Netherlands and three universities in the Sahel (in Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali). The group will look at the role of higher education in grasping the issues of resilience, climate change and conflict, and seek to strengthen regional cooperation. Results of this work will be published in 2021.

Finally, in the framework of the [Cascading climate risks: Towards adaptive and resilient European societies \(CASCADES\)](#) project, we looked at how climate change is expected to affect communities across the Sahel, again with a specific focus on Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali. As part of this work,

we will contribute to a series of regional workshops to unpack the vulnerabilities and development and security risks in the region due to the changing weather patterns, alongside risk reduction measures and future scenarios for climate resilience in the Sahel. The outcomes of our research and the regional workshops in 2021 will be summarised in a report and policy briefs.

In 2021, the region is still grappling with the consequences of the COVID-19 crisis. In the Sahel, the pandemic risks exacerbating existing grievances towards governments, in a context of simmering conflicts and communal violence. These are great hindrances to building back better, but also to successful vaccination campaigns in the region. In work carrying over into early 2021, we looked at the [long-term socio-economic impacts of the pandemic](#) and explored its potential to exacerbate fragility and conflict in Africa. We also focused on the importance of [securing vaccines for the most vulnerable](#) and hard-to-reach populations, including in the Sahel.

We will continue our focus on climate change, which is high on the political agenda. This is an important moment to correct the current mismatch between climate adaptation needs and financing, which often does not reach the countries most affected by climate change, including in the Sahel. ■

Want to know more about our work on resilience in the Sahel? Get in touch with Sophie Desmidt or Volker Hauck via ecdpm.org/people.

►► To tackle the current and future effects of climate change and build climate-resilient societies, climate adaptation plays a crucial role. But it is also a precondition for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and addressing current pressing problems – not least conflict, migration, poverty and inequality. It is therefore no surprise that climate adaptation is moving up on political agendas.



Climate adaptation takes a seat at the table, finally

The impact of climate change will increasingly be felt – particularly in Africa, but also in Europe. Through the European Green Deal, the EU has committed to climate neutrality by 2050. In early 2021, it launched its new Adaptation Strategy. In Africa, the AU's Agenda 2063 emphasises the importance of climate adaptation for the continent's growth, and most African countries have adaptation plans in place. The EU institutions have significantly increased their adaptation finance over the years, but the finance gap in Africa remains significant and is expected to grow in the future.

In early 2021, the Netherlands, with the Global Center on Adaptation, organised the first global Climate Adaptation Summit (CAS 2021), and in mid-2021, the European Climate Change Adaptation Conference (ECCA 2021) took place. The year 2021 will also see the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) and the UN Food Systems Summit, which will focus on climate resilience for more sustainable food systems as well. Climate adaptation will be on the agenda of the next AU-EU Summit too.

Our 2020 work contributed to the discussions in the lead-up to these events. We informed our audiences about how to bring the European and African agendas on climate adaptation closer together. In the months prior to CAS 2021, we produced the [Climate Adaptation Talks](#) podcast series, with guests from Europe, Africa and elsewhere. The five episodes have already been played some 1,500 times. In addition, the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS) invited us as guests for a [podcast on African nationally determined contributions](#), and earlier in the year, we were interviewed by Cimpatico Studios on [climate](#)

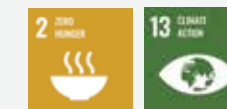
[adaptation in the context of Europe-Africa relations](#) – as we are one of the few think tanks specialising on this theme.

We looked at [how the EIB can help tackle climate change in Africa](#) as part of a consultation around its Climate Bank Roadmap. For the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), we wrote an article on the [barriers to Europe-Africa cooperation on climate change](#). We also analysed the [lessons learnt by the EU on policy coherence for development](#), pointing to the need for coherent mitigation and adaptation policies. Finally, we undertook studies on the [link between climate change and security in North Africa](#) and the [challenges to adaptation in the agri-food system in Tunisia](#). Both were published in early 2021. These last three studies are part of our work for the [CASCADES project](#), which focuses strongly on climate adaptation.

The year 2021 has the potential to gear up action towards greater climate adaptation, and we will continue to contribute to the debates to inform policymakers in Africa and Europe. We are building on our work in 2020 and elaborating on concrete solutions to help pave the way to more effective Europe-Africa cooperation in the field of adaptation – with a special focus on agri-food systems, conflict prevention and resilience building, as well as adaptation finance. ■

Want to know more about our work on climate adaptation? Visit ecdpm.org/climatechange or get in touch with Hanne Knaepen via ecdpm.org/people.

►► Climate adaptation is an important element of making food systems more sustainable – think of climate-resilient crops and seeds for instance. Currently, our food systems are damaging the natural environment, while struggling to provide the growing global population with sufficient affordable, healthy and nutritious food. The COVID-19 pandemic has made it even clearer that our food systems are unsustainable and need to change.



How to make food systems more sustainable

To make food systems fit for the future, global leaders need to support a transition to systems that are more sustainable for people and the environment. But navigating the complexities of food systems transformation is no easy task. We still have much to learn about what it means in practice to make food systems more sustainable.

In 2020, we developed a [guide for policymakers and practitioners](#) on how to use a sustainable food systems approach to design policies and interventions. This approach gives policymakers and practitioners tools to better understand food systems dynamics, to identify key sustainability challenges and opportunities to address these, and to formulate context-appropriate interventions. It can also be used to understand and address trade-offs between different kinds of food systems interventions, as demonstrated in a [paper we published in early 2021 based on our work in Nakuru County, Kenya](#).

Our food systems approach has been informed by our [work on local food systems in Tanzania and Kenya](#), and by our engagement with experts, policymakers and practitioners. For example, we participated in the NWO-WOTRO Food & Business Research Programme, for which we [co-authored a study](#) and explored [power dynamics and sustainability transitions of food systems](#). We also engaged with the Dutch foreign ministry, the Dutch Food & Business Knowledge Platform, the Irish Forum

for International Agricultural Development, the European Commission and FAO on the relevance of a food systems approach. We even used the approach to inform the [Irish foreign ministry's development aid strategy and programming](#).

We are now testing and refining our food systems approach in the context of the [AgriInvest project](#), a collaboration with FAO and local partners to stimulate private investment to improve the sustainability of local food systems in four African countries: Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya and Niger. Our first study under this project, a [political economy analysis of the Kenyan food system](#), was produced in late 2020.

In 2021, we continue to engage with European and African policymakers and practitioners to promote the use of a food systems approach. We will also contribute to the debates ahead of the upcoming 2021 UN Food Systems Summit, while continuing to raise awareness of the importance of a transition towards more sustainable food systems and exploring practical ways to support this transition. ■

Want to know more about our work on sustainable food systems? Visit ecdpm.org/programmes/sustainable-food-systems or get in touch with Sean Woolfrey or Paulina Bizzotto Molina via ecdpm.org/people.

►► *Climate change and increasing hunger worldwide are two important causes of migration. But there are many more factors driving migration, as well as preventing or altering it. This year brought a new complicating factor in migration debates and realities: the COVID-19 pandemic.*



Migration, mobility and COVID-19

Lockdowns and other measures taken to curb the spread of COVID-19 have unavoidably affected the mobility of people around the world, both within nations, as well as between countries and continents. They have also worsened conditions for certain categories of migrants, especially those in irregular situations and working in the informal economy or in sectors hard hit by the pandemic, such as tourism. Refugee resettlements came to a halt, and in some cases, large return flows of migrant workers and irregular migrants continued, but under much more difficult circumstances.

At the same time, the pandemic has revealed the importance of labour mobility and the need to rethink the governance of labour migration for both low-paid and high-paid work. It has also exposed the need to protect and strengthen migrant workers' rights – including social security, health and welfare benefits. More so, the contributions of migrant workers to both their host and origin countries have become more pronounced and celebrated, especially those of migrants working in essential services.

Much of our work on migration in 2020 therefore focused on the impact of COVID-19 on migration and development issues. We looked at the [effects of the pandemic on migration and mobility in Europe and Africa](#) in the short and long term. This was one of the earliest commentaries on how COVID-19 was changing migration and mobility,

and several European and African researchers and policymakers used it in their work and discussions. We also published a forward-looking brief on [migration cooperation between Africa and Europe in a post-COVID-19 setting](#), highlighting six issues that policymakers on both continents will need to consider in the near future.

In our most-read paper of the year, we explored the [impact of COVID-19 on remittance flows in Africa](#), which are an integral part of development finance. This was one of the first contributions analysing predictions by the World Bank. Building on this work, we wrote a brief for Oxfam Novib looking at concrete steps that international organisations can take to reduce the cost of remittances and facilitate remittance transfers during the pandemic.

The work done in 2020 constitutes the basis for our work in 2021. We will continue analysing how the changes introduced by the pandemic could affect remittance transfers and policies, and how to restart labour mobility, given the slump in movement and the need to ensure economic recovery. We also plan to look at the possible policy innovations in migration governance that have emerged as a result of the pandemic. ■

Want to know more about our work on migration?
Visit ecdpm.org/migration or get in touch with Anna Knoll or Amanda Bisong via ecdpm.org/people.





►► *Around half of international migrants are women and girls. They often face additional problems, but also have different needs. Migration is not the only area where gender plays a role – women and girls are also differently affected when it comes to climate change, conflict, trade, jobs, food, nutrition and COVID-19. Taking gender into account in all these areas is not just a matter of rights, but an essential condition for sustainable development.*



Her turn: Closing the gender gap in international cooperation

We are working to meaningfully integrate gender into our research on all these different topics. Since 2017, we have paid particular attention to the gender dimension of our work. We set up an in-house gender task force, which helps our programme staff apply a gender lens to their activities and has helped us build up a gender portfolio.

In 2020, 25 years after the Beijing Declaration of the Fourth World Conference on Women, we looked at [what Africa and Europe can celebrate on International Women’s Day](#) and [how Germany and South Africa together can protect and advance the Women, Peace and Security agenda](#). We also participated in a three-day online consultation on the EU’s new guidelines for mediation and mediation support. As part of that event, with FemWise-Africa, we organised a [debate on what the EU can learn from female African mediators and the AU’s mediation experience](#). After the debate, we shared our main takeaways, arguing that [representation of women in mediation is one thing and real inclusion another](#). Finally, as we have been advocating for gender mainstreaming, we [explored key aspects of the relationship between Africa and Europe using a gender lens](#).

Beyond gender in Africa-Europe relations, we looked at how [development finance institutions can support a gender-sensitive COVID-19 recovery](#). We also contributed to an [evaluation of the EU’s external action support to gender equality and](#)

[women’s and girls’ empowerment](#) between 2010 and 2018, which was finalised in late 2020. In our Great Insights magazine issue on the AfCFTA, one of our contributors looked at how the [free trade area can advance gender equality in Africa](#). For our [paper ahead of the 2021 AU elections](#), we analysed the role that the AU’s institutional management reforms would play in the elections – especially when it comes to meeting the key requirement of gender parity.

In 2020, our gender task force developed a gender marker to help staff incorporate gender throughout the various stages of proposal writing, research design and outreach. We also continued our contributions to the activities and outreach of the Brussels Binder – an initiative seeking to improve gender balance in policy debates – including through research on women’s representation at events and female authorship.

In 2021, we continue working with the Brussels Binder and supporting our programmes to apply a gender lens in their work. We are also looking at gender in the EU’s external action, including the implementation of the new EU Gender Action Plan and the Women, Peace and Security agenda. ■

Want to know more about our work on gender and international cooperation? Visit [ecdpm.org/gender](#) or get in touch with Sophie Desmidt or Virginia Mucchi via [ecdpm.org/people](#).

Learning and Quality Support

ECDPM's Learning and Quality Support unit aims to make learning and quality part of all our activities. That helps us to be more effective and maximise our added value. Ultimately, the team aims to increase the impact of all ECDPM work.

The unit has four main responsibilities:

Planning and review

We lead the Centre's operational planning, as well as regular reviews of progress made in the different policy processes we engage in.

Monitoring, evaluation, learning and reporting

We strengthen the Centre's monitoring and reporting approaches and systems and give advice and support to raise the quality of our work and learning. Learning and review take place around theories of change, formulated to accompany the implementation of the ECDPM 2017-2021 strategy.

Quality support

We develop and support methodologies for quality assurance, including a peer review system, as well as in-house training in cooperation with the human resources and communications teams.

Advice and support on research methodologies and cross-cutting issues

We help ECDPM programmes and partners refine their policy research approaches and methodologies. Examples are political economy analysis and policy coherence assessments. We also take part in ECDPM's dedicated task forces on gender issues, climate change and Europe-Africa relations.

OUR UNIT IN 2020

In early 2020, we conducted an internal assessment of our [2017-2021 strategy](#), in which all units across the organisation assessed the relevance of their work and their contributions to the outcomes and impacts envisaged in the strategy. This then led into an [independent external evaluation of our 2017-2021 strategy implementation](#). Simultaneously, several working groups across the Centre analysed

our external environment, explored specific topics, consulted institutional partners and fed lessons and recommendations from the external evaluation into the process of drafting our next five-year strategy.

Also in 2020, we initiated a second round of programme learning sessions, reflecting on progress made within each of our work streams since the first round in 2019. We laid the basis for a more systematic approach to peer review, and continued to advise colleagues and partners on political economy analysis. For instance, we supported the [AgrInvest project](#) undertaken with FAO, shared knowledge and tools with the EU delegation in Tunisia and with TMEA, and facilitated an interactive ten-session course for colleagues, led by external experts. In a similar vein, we continued our [work on policy coherence](#), supporting for instance the Horizon 2020 [CASCADES project](#). We conducted research on policy coherence in relation to COVID-19 and medical supply chains, and in relation to civic space and anti-corruption efforts.

REPORTING

We report our monitoring data in line with the standards of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Progress reports outline what we do, where, how much, with whom and to what effect. For each of our work streams, we report on budgets and expenditures, participating organisations, and geopolitical and sector spread. In terms of performance, we report on both outputs and outcomes for each work stream.

IATI seeks to provide clarity on how aid, development and humanitarian resources are spent, to increase the effectiveness of their use to tackle poverty. The voluntary initiative brings together donor and recipient countries, civil society organisations and other experts on aid information. ■





What we learnt this year

Learning is a crucial element of our strategy. By integrating learning into all our activities, we create more valuable knowledge and practices, enhance our organisational efficiency, inform our strategic programming, and ensure that we deliver on our ambitions. Below are some of the lessons we learnt this year, highlighting what we did well and where we still have room to grow.

CENTRE-WIDE

What we did well – The external evaluation found that we successfully implemented our 2017-2021 strategy. It praised our timely and relevant knowledge and noted our position as a top think tank and resource on EU policymaking and external action. It stated that our knowledge of Africa and our deep understanding of EU policymaking processes reinforce our potential to contribute to mutual appreciation of the diverse interests and priorities of European and African policymakers.

Where we can still grow – Given the rapidly changing environment in which ECDPM operates, the evaluation team

recommended that we strengthen our collaborations; engage differently and more dynamically with, in and on Africa; and increase the diversity and agility of the organisation (see also page 47).

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

What we did well – We rapidly adapted our research, dissemination and engagement to the virtual world in the wake of the COVID-19 restrictions, and provided the first substantive analysis of the EU's international COVID-19 response. We also explored new topics such as global health and digital aspects of European external action and EU-Africa collaboration.

Where we can still grow – We want to engage more with African actors on European policy evolution. In regard to the EU's external affairs agenda, it is time for us to shift focus to analysing, engaging and informing on the implementation phase, as these last few years were dominated by the negotiations surrounding the new Commission's political priorities, the EU's long-term budget for 2021-2027 and the post-Cotonou cooperation framework.

AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL DYNAMICS

What we did well – We adapted our work to changing circumstances and quickly mobilised to look at regional

cooperation to stem the effects of COVID-19 in Africa. We met increased demand for applying our political economy approach to regional and cross-border corridors and other trade and transport dynamics, and our work on the AU reform process led to continued demand for contributions in that arena.

Where we can still grow – We can and will work harder to engage more regularly and consistently with African researchers and other actors on the different policy research agendas in front of us. We can also better link our more Africa-focused research to work on European instruments by other ECDPM programmes, to make the Africa-Europe link more explicit.

MIGRATION

What we did well – We looked at the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on migration and development, examining both immediate and long-term effects of the pandemic on migration and mobility in Europe and Africa and openings these may provide for policy innovations

in migration governance. Several of our papers and commentaries were among the Centre's most-read publications of the year.

Where we can still grow – We want to highlight the interlinkages between migration and other thematic areas within the Centre. In particular, we will work towards connecting our research on migration, security and climate change.

SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

What we did well – Thanks to our ability to develop several innovative methodological elements, such as digital stakeholder workshops, we managed to successfully finalise our evaluation for Partners for Resilience on how non-governmental actors are working to strengthen resilience across the Sahel region, despite the pandemic.

Where we can still grow – While our team has used ECDPM's well-established approach to political economy analysis, which is methodologically close to conflict

assessments and analyses, this has often been done rather implicitly. We want to use political economy analysis more proactively in the future, and link it more explicitly with conflict analysis.

ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

What we did well – We adapted our work streams, pooling our expertise and joining forces with other relevant actors to better understand and address the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19. We emphasised the social, gender and private sector dimensions of building back better and greener, with a focus on the resilience and sustainability of economies and food systems in Africa.

Where we can still grow – We can better link the global agenda with European and African endeavours to promote inclusive, gender-sensitive, green and sustainable economic and agricultural transformation for recovery. ■

Communications

Communication is crucial for ECDPM to perform its role as a strategic broker for informed policy dialogue. Our mission is to stimulate dialogue with our partners and get ECDPM's work and ideas to the right people, in the right way, at the right time. This builds understanding and capacity for more inclusive policies and practices. It also cements our legitimacy and reputation and fosters our audiences' trust in us.

Our team is a multidisciplinary one. We bring together expertise in social media, press relations, online communications, website development, writing and editing, multimedia and print publications, graphic design, and content curation.

OUR UNIT IN 2020

All our activities in 2020 upheld the four pillars of our communication strategy:

Coherent

Our research and communications are in line with ECDPM's overall strategy and complement what is done elsewhere in the Centre.

Bespoke

Our programme communication strategies target the specific needs and audiences of the individual programmes.

Integrated

Communication efforts are integrated into research processes from the start.

Long-term

Communication activities are planned and analysed with a medium- to long-term policy change perspective.

Despite the lockdowns and all team members working from home, we were able to continue our regular activities to promote new publications. We moved our outreach work, events and facilitation online. Readership in 2020 confirmed the continued quality and success of our Weekly Compass newsletter, as we received regular positive feedback from policymakers in Africa and Europe. We paid particular attention to further increasing our subscriber numbers, as registered contacts dropped significantly after the EU's privacy law took effect in 2018. Finally, in the run-up to the first-ever Climate Adaptation Summit, held in January 2021, we produced the [Climate Adaptation Talks](#) podcast series.

We strived to improve the level of support to our researchers and developed further strategic communication planning tools. As a team we offered valuable contributions to the development of the Centre's new five-year strategy. Specifically, we carried out an environment scan and were involved in the decisions on new thematic priorities. We also continued the production of our internal newsletter, which was very well received throughout the organisation – especially in times of COVID-19. ■

Website

828,384 page views

177,245 visitors

35.5% Europe

32.5% Africa

17% Asia

13.5% Americas

1.5% Oceania

Publications

42 publications

3 issues of our Great Insights magazine

29 commentaries

4 'Climate Adaptation Talks' podcast episodes

18,802 publication and magazine downloads via our website

Our Great Insights magazine articles were viewed online **176,256** times

Our commentaries were viewed online **117,185** times

Followers and subscribers

9,847 Twitter followers (+9.2%)

9,522 Facebook followers (+0.5%)

4,600 LinkedIn followers (+19.3%)

You Tube

12,048 YouTube video views (+39%)

515 YouTube subscribers (+210%)

4,087 subscribers to our Weekly Compass newsletter (+31%)

Top 5 publications 2020



- (1) [The impact of COVID-19 on remittances for development in Africa](#)
- (2) [Beyond good intentions: The new EU-Africa partnership](#)
- (3) [The challenge of scaling up the European Union's global response to COVID-19](#)
- (4) [African regional responses to COVID-19](#)
- (5) [EU development cooperation with Sub-Saharan Africa 2013-2018: Policies, funding, results](#)

Top 5 commentaries 2020



- (1) [Migration, mobility and COVID-19 – A tale of many tales](#)
- (2) [Turning the tables: African and European narratives in the time of Corona](#)
- (3) [Testing the relationship: China's 'Corona diplomacy' in Africa](#)
- (4) [Can COVID-19 create momentum for sustainable and resilient food systems?](#)
- (5) [The AU-EU Summit didn't prove immune to COVID-19 – but that may be a blessing in disguise](#)

Media hits



Interviews and articles appeared on African Newpage, AllAfrica, Bloomberg, De Standaard, Deutsche Welle, Devex, EUobserver, EURACTIV, the Financial Times, Foreign Policy, HuffPost Italia, Middle East Online, MO*, Omvärlden, POLITICO and Sahel Standard, among others.

Finances

The year 2020 started promisingly, with ECDPM’s ‘order book’ about 90% full. However, like the rest of the world, we were quickly confronted with the COVID-19 crisis and its consequences. In addition, 2020 was a period of intense review. In preparation for our new strategy for 2022-2026, we conducted in-depth evaluations of our performance and processes. That time-consuming internal commitment, however, was not necessarily externally fundable.

We are therefore all the more proud of the remarkable resilience and adaptability demonstrated by our staff members, and grateful that we ended the year with an overall positive balance of €121,000 – or €261,000 when including our investment portfolio yield of €140,000. Throughout the year, we managed to reduce costs while delivering on commitments to our partners. We are also grateful for the flexibility shown by our funders, who allowed for budgetary changes from operational budget lines (for instance, for travel and events) to working time budget lines, and giving us more time to deliver our work.

CREATION OF A TRANSFORMATION FUND

ECDPM has done fairly well since its creation in 1986. We managed to become a recognised and respected intellectual powerhouse and source of reference on many topics relevant to the relationship between the EU and Africa. We expanded our financial base by attracting core funding from nine European countries, in addition

to the institutional funding received from our founder, the Netherlands. We saw our staff numbers grow to an impressive 63, and the latest independent external evaluation recognised us as the go-to institution in our field.

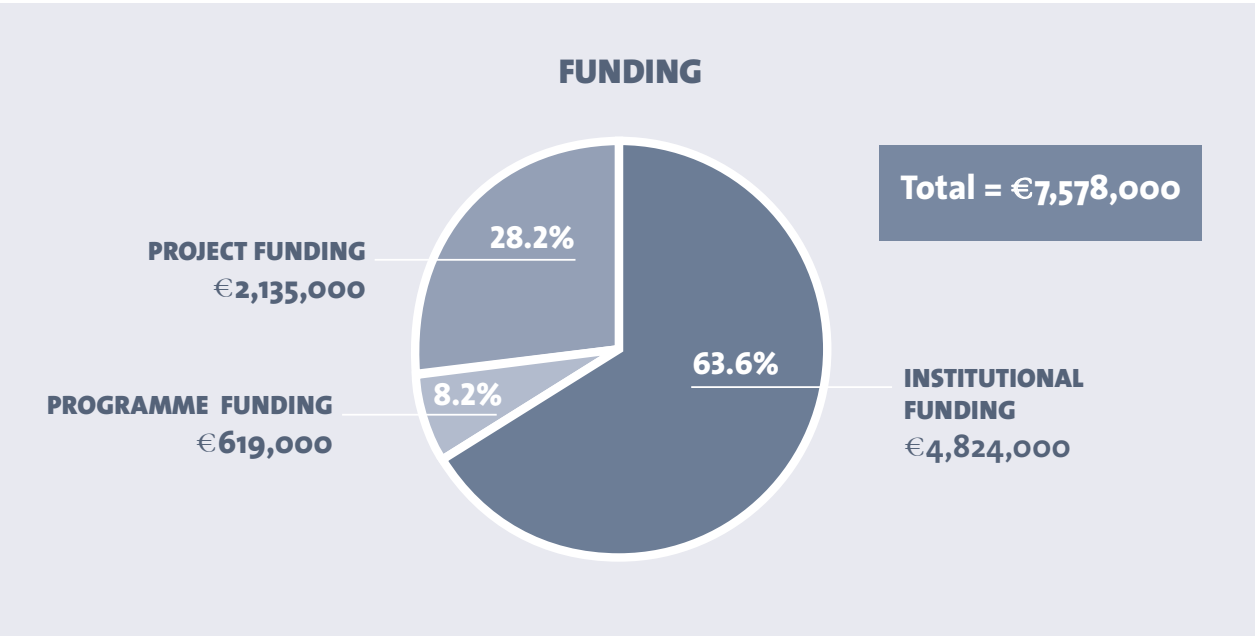
However, we will need to transform our operating model to be well-equipped for the next strategic period. In other words, we must become leaner and more flexible, effective and financially sustainable. To inform and guide this transformation, we set up a ‘fit for future’ team (see also page 47). For this investment in ECDPM’s future sustainability, we created a transition fund with €640,000 of the Centre’s equity.

ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY

We continue to strive for the highest standards of accountability and transparency. Twice a year an auditor reviews our finances, financial procedures and internal control mechanisms. Our current auditor, BDO, confirmed that our 2020 financial statements give a true and fair overview of the Centre’s financial position.

Since 2014, Transparify has evaluated the financial transparency of think tanks around the world. ECDPM has been consistently awarded Transparify’s maximum five-star rating.

For more information, visit transparify.org.



INSTITUTIONAL FUNDERS

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
the Netherlands, €2,700,000

Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs*
Sweden, €590,513

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
Switzerland, €348,643

Irish Aid*
Ireland, €300,000

Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs*
Luxembourg, €323,132

Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation*
Belgium, €250,000

Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs*
Finland, €215,000

Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs*
Denmark, €207,571

Austrian Development Agency (ADA)*
Austria, €98,264

Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs*
Estonia, €8,000

*Funding for highlighted funders also includes programme funding. For a breakdown of institutional and programme funding, see our [detailed funding overview](#).

PROGRAMME FUNDERS

The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
Italy, €275,730

European Commission
Belgium, €96,936

Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research - Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca (UNIMIB)
Italy, €28,738

PROJECT FUNDERS

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
United States, €726,394

European Commission
Belgium, €338,286

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ)
Germany, €212,925

European Commission - Particip
Germany, €134,114

The Netherlands Red Cross
the Netherlands, €129,951

TradeMark East Africa (TMEA)
Kenya, €111,841

Camões - Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua
Portugal, €57,823

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs
the Netherlands, €49,606

European Commission - mediatEUR
Belgium, €47,670

European Investment Bank (EIB)
Luxembourg, €40,299

German Development Institute (DIE)
Germany, €38,717

PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency
the Netherlands, €36,895

Cordaid
the Netherlands, €25,016

GFA Consulting Group GmbH
Germany, €18,900

Netherlands Enterprise Agency
the Netherlands, €16,711

Maastricht School of Management (MSM)
the Netherlands, €15,200

DAI Global
United Kingdom, €15,000

European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)
the Netherlands, €14,760

Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas F.S.P - FIIAPP
Spain, €13,956

DMI Associates
France, €11,250

MDF Training & Consultancy
the Netherlands, €9,922

Scottish government
United Kingdom, €8,120

Ecorys Netherlands
the Netherlands, €7,350

NWO-WOTRO
the Netherlands, €6,612

Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation
Belgium, €6,381

CONCORD
Belgium, €5,000

United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa)
Morocco, €4,500

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation
the Netherlands, €4,215

Oxfam Novib
the Netherlands, €4,128

Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)
the Netherlands, €4,000

AgriTerra
the Netherlands, €3,750

Hivos
the Netherlands, €3,518

Caritas Europa
Belgium, €3,306

Other funders < €2,500
various, €9,080

BALANCE SHEET

After allocation of result 2020, as per 31 December 2020

In thousands of euros

	31 December 2020	31 December 2019
ASSETS		
Intangible fixed assets	103	96
Tangible fixed assets	2,169	2,313
Financial fixed assets		
Investment portfolio with ABN AMRO	4,515	4,374
Participation in EDCS share fund	13	13
Total financial fixed assets	4,528	4,387
Current assets		
Payments in advance	69	36
Debtors	803	925
Tax contributions	9	63
Cash	2,462	1,630
Total current assets	3,344	2,654
TOTAL ASSETS	10,144	9,450
LIABILITIES		
Current liabilities		
Creditors	36	36
Tax, pension and social security contributions	186	233
Current debts	1,695	1,230
Total current liabilities	1,917	1,499
Provisions	145	130
TOTAL LIABILITIES	2,062	1,629
EQUITY		
From annual results		
Operational results from income over current costs	2,000	2,519
Innovation fund	150	150
Transformation fund	640	0
Contribution from the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy for housing	2,269	2,269
From investment portfolio		
Realised capital gains from investment portfolio	3,023	2,883
TOTAL EQUITY	8,082	7,821
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND EQUITY	10,144	9,450

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

From 1 January until 31 December 2020

In thousands of euros

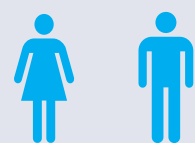
	Results 2020	Budget 2020	Results 2019
INCOME			
I Funding			
1.1 Institutional funding	4,824	4,769	4,885
1.2 Programme funding	619	688	446
1.3 Project funding	2,135	2,407	1,712
Total funding	7,578	7,864	7,043
II Investment portfolio results			
2.1 Interest and dividend	56	p.m.	49
2.2 Result on sales	46	p.m.	22
2.3 Result on market value	61	p.m.	418
2.4 Banking costs	-23	p.m.	-19
Total result from investment portfolio	140	p.m.	470
TOTAL INCOME	7,718	7,864	7,513
EXPENDITURE			
III Operational expenses	841	1,084	775
IV Staff and office costs			
4.1 Salaries and other personnel costs	5,754	5,858	5,875
4.2 Accommodation expenses	219	233	213
4.3 General and administrative expenses	290	307	325
4.4 Small investments	0	7	3
4.5 Information technology	207	230	208
4.6 Depreciation	116	126	124
4.7 Miscellaneous	29	19	-20
Total staff and office costs	6,616	6,780	6,728
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	7,457	7,864	7,503
UNFORESEEN	0	100	0
TOTAL RESULT	261	-100	10
<i>Results from investment portfolio</i>	<i>140</i>	<i>p.m.</i>	<i>470</i>
Operational result	121	-100	-460
ALLOCATION OF RESULT			
<i>Addition to the general reserves</i>	<i>261</i>	<i>-100</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>Withdrawal from the innovation fund</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>8</i>
Total allocation of result	261	-100	10



Our people

ECDPM is home to some 60 policy, communications and support staff from more than 20 countries around the globe.

At the end of 2020



43 **20**

A total of 63
ECDPM employees



43 based in the
Maastricht office



8 based in the
Brussels office



1 based in Rome



11 split their time
between the offices



2 temporary staff
hired via agencies

Throughout 2020



60.1

FTE average
(including
temporary
staff hired
via agencies)



11 programme
associates



3 interns

25 nationalities in 2020

(including our programme associates)
Australian, Belgian, British, Canadian, Dutch,
Ethiopian, Finnish, French, German, Greek,
Indian, Irish, Italian, Kenyan, Mauritanian,
Nigerian, Pakistani, Portuguese,
Russian, Rwandan, Saint Lucian,
South African, Spanish, Swiss
and Ugandan.



INVESTING IN OUR PEOPLE

We encourage our staff to grow professionally and allocate a yearly budget per staff member to facilitate this. This year, our staff took part in a range of training programmes to improve their skills and efficiency and broaden their thematic knowledge in a number of areas:

- Political economy analysis
- Macro-economic policy and financial markets
- Languages (French, Dutch and Arabic)
- Public speaking
- Proofreading and editing
- Information and communication technology
- Data protection and privacy
- Works council and confidential advisers
- First aid
- Finance

Our junior staff are assigned relatively high levels of

responsibility, which allows them to quickly gain relevant experience.

OUR WORKS COUNCIL

Our works council, created in 2014, represents staff on a variety of matters, especially issues regarding personnel policy and employment conditions. In January 2020, a new five-member works council was elected for a two-year period. One member stepped down during 2020, leading to a new member joining in June 2020.

In 2020, the works council was involved in multiple activities:

- Discussions on split contracts for staff dividing their time between the Brussels and Maastricht offices
- Discussions on our data protection policy for the processing of personal data on staff, programme associates and consultants
- Discussions on our budget and financial outlook

- Discussions on a strategic approach to talent management
- Revision of our staff manual
- The work of the 'new normal' task force and staff morale under new COVID-19 restrictions and working conditions (see also page 45)

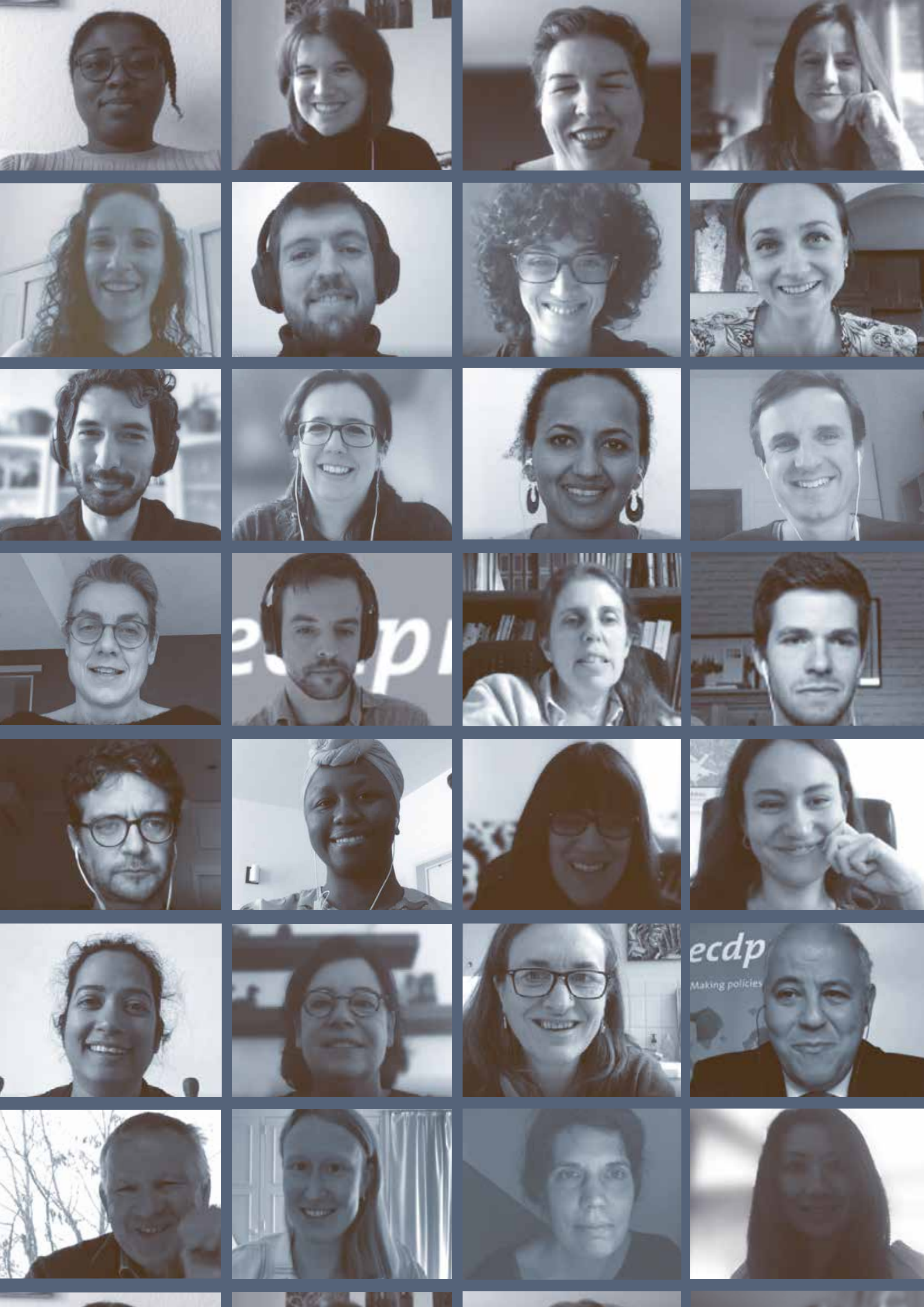
The works council had several formal meetings with management, and met with the Board during official Board meetings. It also took part in a one-day training session with an external adviser.

STAFF CONFIDENTIAL ADVISERS

In 2020, we had two confidential advisers whom staff could approach to discuss any concerns or difficulties they faced.

SICK LEAVE AT ECDPM

In 2020, our sick leave was 2.56% in the Netherlands and 0.6% in Belgium. ■



COVID-19 and ECDPM

The COVID-19 pandemic has made a major mark on the world – and it is not over yet. As the first part of this annual report has made clear, most of our 2020 analysis and research revolved around or was impacted by the pandemic. It also affected the internal functioning of the organisation.

In March, we took measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 and to ensure the safety of our staff and partners around the world, in line with the guidelines of public health experts at the WHO and the Dutch and Belgian governments. We closed our offices and asked our staff to work remotely. Our travels were suspended, and we cancelled or postponed all external meetings and events to a later date, or arranged for these to take place online.

We also set up a ‘new normal’ task force to keep track of developments in Belgium, the Netherlands and globally. The team was responsible for drawing up, communicating and implementing guidelines and restrictive measures and for thinking about how we could adapt our offices and way of working to the new normal, both in the short term and in the longer term. In cooperation with the human resources department, the task force offered support and advice on working from home and mental well-being.

WORKING FROM HOME
Our flexible storage, document management and communication systems and the fact that all our staff have laptops made the switch to working from home relatively easy. However, we did make some changes in terms of our video conferencing systems, to facilitate the increase in virtual meetings both internally and externally.

We created a COVID-19 project code for staff members who were unable to work as a result of having to combine work with care for children or parents. The aim was to monitor the effects of the pandemic and find solutions within teams, but also to signal to staff the Centre’s understanding of changes in productivity and people’s individual circumstances. We also provided staff with tips on working from home in an ergonomic way. If needed, staff members could pick up their office chairs, big screens and other equipment.

WELL-BEING
We actively monitored staff well-being. After the initial phase of the pandemic, mental health became a top priority in our COVID-19 approach. While some of us appreciated being able to work from home more, others struggled with the lack of contact, limited space at home, and combining home-schooling with work commitments. We asked colleagues to stay in touch with each other, and organised question and answer sessions which gave all staff opportunities to share their feelings and ways of dealing with the situation.

COVID-PROOF OFFICES
During the summer, the situation in Belgium and the Netherlands allowed for a bit more flexibility. Our offices reopened, starting with a few days a week to, eventually, five days a

week, but with a maximum number of visitors each day. For this, we set up a registration system.

We significantly reorganised our offices to make them COVID-proof. For instance, we created clear office guidelines and added routing signs everywhere, installed protective screens, closed certain office spaces to ensure people could keep their distance, and provided face masks and sanitary and disinfection materials on all desks.

When the situation deteriorated after the summer, working from home became the standard again, in line with government recommendations. However, we kept our offices open for staff members who needed to use them for printing, essential meetings or a quiet work space.

TEMPORARY CONTRACTS
Eight staff members on temporary contracts that were set to end in the course of 2020 saw their contracts renewed for another year. Management considered it crucial to offer assurance and security in an otherwise unknown and exceptional situation.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE
In 2021, we will continue to closely follow the situation and adapt our way of working accordingly. In line with our ongoing exercise aimed at preparing ECDPM for the future (see also page 47), we will explore hybrid working and events modalities. ■

Governance

Members of our Board in 2020



Adebayo Olukoshi,
Chair of the Board
Regional Director for Africa and West Asia for the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and former Director at the African Institute for Economic Development and Planning
Nigeria



Koos Richelle,
Vice-Chair of the Board
Chair of the Dutch Advisory Committee on Migration Affairs and former Director-General at the European Commission, first at DG AIDCO and DG Development, then at DG EMPL (Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion)
The Netherlands



Maria de Jesus Veiga Miranda
Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Cabo Verde to the United Nations Office and the other international organisations in Geneva, Permanent Mission of Cabo Verde
Cabo Verde



Jean-Claude Boidin
Former EU Ambassador and former Head of Unit at DG International Cooperation and Development, European Commission
France



Betty Maina
(stepped down from the Board in April 2020)
Permanent Secretary for East African Affairs in Kenya, former Chief Executive at the Kenya Association of Manufacturers, and member of the UN High-level Panel on the Post-2015 Development Agenda
Kenya



Alan Hirsch
Professor of Development Policy and Practice at the Nelson Mandela School of Public Governance, University of Cape Town, and senior economic policy advisor to four South African presidents
South Africa



Ruth Jacoby
Former Director-General for International Development Cooperation at the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, member of the UN High-level Panel on System-wide Coherence, former Executive Director of the Board of the World Bank, and former Ambassador of Sweden to Germany and Italy
Sweden



Richard Dohmen
Partner at PricewaterhouseCoopers
The Netherlands

Honorary advisor to the ECDPM Board on European external affairs:



Dieter Frisch
Former Director-General for Development, European Commission
Germany

Members of our management team in 2020



Carl Michiels
Director
Belgium



Geert Laporte
Deputy Director
Belgium



Marleen Ackermans
Head of Human Resources
The Netherlands



Virginia Mucchi
Head of Communications
Italy



Anna Knoll
Head of ECDPM's Migration programme
Germany



Jeske van Seters
Head of the private sector engagement team of ECDPM's Economic and Agricultural

Transformation programme
The Netherlands



Roland Lemmens
Head of Finance and Operations
The Netherlands



James Mackie
(retired in September 2020)
Head of Learning and Quality Support
United Kingdom

CHANGES IN OUR GOVERNANCE

In 2020, a new programme manager was appointed to the management team, replacing a programme manager who had completed the two-year term. Also, at the end of September, management team member James Mackie retired. There were changes in the composition of our Board as well. In April 2020, Board member Betty Maina stepped down.



TOWARDS A NEW STRATEGY AND ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

The year 2020 offered an opportunity to reflect on our strategy and internal organisation. In preparation for our new five-year strategy, we undertook an internal assessment and an [independent external evaluation of our 2017-2021 strategy implementation](#) (see also page 32). On the basis of these reviews, as well as analyses of our external environment and consultations with our partners and the Board, a small team drafted our strategy for 2022-2026, which will be published in the course of 2021.

To prepare ourselves for the 2022-2026 strategy and adapt to the rapidly changing global context, we started discussions on how to make ECDPM 'fit for future', building on lessons learnt during the past five years of implementing the current strategy. In 2021, a dedicated task force,

consisting of management and staff representatives, will devise an action plan to structure and prepare our organisation to effectively deliver on our new strategy.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

In 2020, our gender task force raised awareness of gender and diversity issues both within and outside the organisation (see also page 31). We also set up a diversity and inclusion working group, which finalised a [diversity and inclusion strategy](#), building on work initiated by the gender task force. In 2021, we will develop an actionable roadmap towards a more diverse and inclusive organisation, based on a survey of global data as well as data within our Centre.

DATA PROTECTION

In May 2018, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) – the EU's privacy law – came into effect.

To guide compliance with the law, in late 2017 we set up a privacy team including members of different ECDPM departments, supported by an external legal adviser.

In 2020, we continued our work on data protection, including the processing of personal data on staff, programme associates and consultants, in cooperation with the works council. In May 2020, the original privacy team was discontinued, as it had delivered on its initial tasks, and one privacy officer was appointed instead. We reported one low-risk and low-impact data breach incident regarding our website management system to the Data Protection Authority in the Netherlands and took steps to prevent similar incidents in the future. ■

To see our public privacy policy, visit ecdpm.org/privacy.

Our partners

Partnerships are at the heart of our work. Partners inspire new ideas and enable systematic exchanges of experiences and best practices. Most importantly, combined efforts are more powerful than any individual, uncoordinated actions could ever be.

ECDPM collaborates with a broad range of partners, who increase the value of our work. Our inputs, in turn, add value to work done by others. We also connect our partners, stimulating strategic collaboration among them towards common goals.

INSTITUTIONAL PARTNERS

Austrian Development Agency (ADA)

Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation

Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Irish Aid

Luxembourg Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs

Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

PROGRAMME AND PROJECT PARTNERS

AgriTerra

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Camões - Instituto da Cooperação e da Língua

Caritas Europe

Centre for the Promotion of Imports from developing countries (CBI)

CONCORD

Cordaïd

DAI Global

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)

DMI Associates

Ecorys Netherlands

European Commission

European Forum for International Mediation and Dialogue (mediatEUR)

European Institute of Public Administration (EIPA)

European Investment Bank (EIB)

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)

Fundación Internacional y para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas (FIIAPP)

German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

GFA Consulting Group

Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research

Maastricht School of Management (MSM)

Maastricht University

MDF Training & Consultancy

Netherlands Enterprise Agency

Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD)

Nuffic - the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education

NWO-WOTRO

Open Society European Policy Institute

Oxfam-Magasins du monde

Oxfam Novib

Particip

PBL Netherlands Environmental Assessment Agency

Scottish government

The Netherlands Red Cross

TradeMark East Africa (TMEA)

Transparency International

United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG Africa)

Università degli Studi di Milano-Bicocca (UNIMIB)

Wageningen Centre for Development Innovation

INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS, NETWORKS AND PLATFORMS

African Union Commission

Association of European Development Finance Institutions (EDFI)

Dutch Food & Business Knowledge Platform (F&BKP)

Dutch Knowledge Platform on Inclusive Development (KPSRL)

ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States)

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

European External Action Service (EEAS)

European Parliament

European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO)

FoodFIRST Coalition, Socires

FriEnt, the German Working Group on Peace and Development

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

Practitioners' Network for European Development Cooperation

SLOGA – Slovenian NGO platform

EUROPEAN THINK TANKS GROUP (ETTG)

Elcano Royal Institute

European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)

German Development Institute (DIE)

Institute of International Affairs (IAI)

Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations (IDDRI)

Overseas Development Institute (ODI)

PARTNERS

adelphi

African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET)

African Studies Centre Leiden

Agence Française de Développement (AFD)

amfori

Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut (ABI), University of Freiburg

CARE Netherlands

Center for Global Development (CGD)

Centre Africain pour le Commerce, l'Intégration et le Développement (CACID)

Chatham House

CIDOB (Barcelona Centre for International Affairs)

CINOP Netherlands

Clingendael

CSR Europe

Democritos

DNA Economics

EUROCHAMBRES

European University Institute

Fair Trade Advocacy Office

Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli

Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES)

Friends of Europe

German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP)

German Marshall Fund Belgium

Hairgaissa Cultural Centre

Initiative Prospective Agricole et Rurale (IPAR)

Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP)

Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)

Institute for Security Studies (ISS)

The International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems (IPES-Food)

KEMEA

King Baudouin Foundation

Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS)

Kreisky Forum for International Dialogue

Laboratoire d'Analyse Régionale et d'Expertise Sociale (LARES)

Lead Africa Global Partnership for African Development

Nordic Africa Institute (NAI)

Polish Institute of International Affairs

Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research (PIK)

South African Institute of International Affairs (SAIIA)

Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI)

The Netherlands Red Cross Climate Centre

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore (UNICATT)

Università degli Studi di Pavia (UNIPV)

Università degli Studi di Scienze Gastronomiche (UNISG)

Université Abdou Moumouni, Niamey (UAM)

Université Joseph Ki-Zerbo, Ouagadougou (UJKZ)

Université des Sciences Juridiques et Politiques de Bamako (USJPB)

University of Twente

Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC)

Wageningen University and Research (WUR)

Wetlands International

Sustainability

ECDPM promotes better international policies that benefit sustainable global development. But making the planet a better place starts with ourselves. We recognise that given the nature of our work, our efforts and activities inevitably impact the environment. We aim to minimise this environmental impact, through compliance with regulations and legislation and via our own initiatives. Integrating sustainability into all our daily activities is a learning process, but we eagerly work towards that goal.

INTEGRATING SUSTAINABILITY

Four years ago, ECDPM started the 'Greening ECDPM' initiative, to further integrate sustainability into our daily activities, for example, through energy efficiency measures and awareness-raising among colleagues.

Our first efforts included a switch to LED lights at our Maastricht office. Replacing our emergency lighting with LED resulted in a 56% decrease in wattage per light fixture in 2017. We have since continued the gradual switch to more energy-efficient lighting and appliances. We have also continued to work with a supplier of green energy produced in the Netherlands, which compensates for customers' energy use by participating in forest protection projects. We use environmentally-friendly cleaning products at our offices, and seek ways to reduce our use of plastics. For example, we minimise the number of individual waste bins to reduce our consumption of bin liners.

The unusual events of 2020 make it difficult to measure our sustainability gains over the year. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our offices used much less energy, water and paper, and produced less waste. On the other hand, our

staff members' individual energy and water bills probably went up.

TRAVEL

In 2020, no travel took place after early March. Before the pandemic, we incentivised public transportation, in particular by rail, to minimise our travel footprint. However, travel by plane is typically unavoidable, given the nature of our work. Therefore, we continued to participate in the Bluebiz CO2ZERO service, which contributes to the reforestation project CO2OL Tropical Mix in Panama and holds a 'Gold Standard for the Global Goals' certificate. Nevertheless, as we make the transition to, hopefully, a post-pandemic situation, we will continue our aim to reduce travel, not only between our offices in Maastricht and Brussels, but also to our partners, through intelligent use of electronic communications and video conferencing.

SUSTAINABLE SOURCING

Our purchasing policy emphasises sustainable products and services. Whenever possible, we work with local suppliers who stand by a commitment to sustainable sourcing. ■



CONCEPT

Nina Thijssen, Virginia Mucchi and Yaseena Chiu-van 't Hoff

TEXTS

Nina Thijssen and Valeria Pintus

ART DIRECTION AND DESIGN

Yaseena Chiu-van 't Hoff

Thank you to Michelle Luijben for providing editorial assistance and to all ECDPM staff who contributed to the report.

PHOTO CREDITS

Front cover and page 1
People queuing in Lagos.
Photo: Adeyinka Yusuf, iStock.

Page 2
ECDPM Board Chair Adebayo Olukoshi.
Photo: University of Johannesburg.

Page 3
ECDPM Director Carl Michiels. Photo: Austrian Development Agency (ADA).

Page 4 and 5
ECDPM's James Mackie speaks at a workshop on policy coherence for sustainable development in Edinburgh. Photo: Fabien Tondel, ECDPM.

Page 6 and 7
ECDPM's Koen Dekeyser with local finance providers and farm workers researching how to bridge the finance needs of farmers with local capital providers in Nakuru County, Kenya. Photo: ECDPM.

Page 8 and 9
A field of beans on a farm in Nakuru County. Photo: Koen Dekeyser, ECDPM.

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Flags of the United Kingdom and the European Union waving in front of Big Ben in London. Photo: luaeva, iStock.

The European Parliament building in Brussels. Photo: Jorisvo, iStock.

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A truck on a gravel road in Bwabwata National Park, Namibia. Photo: DarthArt, iStock.

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Passerelle Tondo, Maison des Parlementaires, Brussels. Photo: Bernardo Lorena Ponte, Unsplash.

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A man with a protective mask carrying a load of wheat on his shoulder in Addis Ababa. Photo: Amanuel Sileshi, iStock.

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ECDPM's Chloe Teevan speaks at an event on the 'geopolitical' European Commission and a new EU partnership with Africa, organised by ECDPM and the Netherlands Permanent Representation to the EU in Brussels. Photo: ECDPM.

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A shopkeeper selling fruits and vegetables in Addis Ababa. Photo: Amanuel Sileshi, iStock.

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Workers on the production line in a textile factory in Africa. Photo: paco_bw, iStock.

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Saharawi refugee camps in Algeria at sunrise. Photo: Margot Lenzi, iStock.

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A street vendor holding her child between the bags of tomatoes. Photo: poco_bw, iStock.

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ECDPM's Kathleen van Hove and Anna Knoll at ECDPM's head office in Maastricht. Photo: Yaseena Chiu-van 't Hoff, ECDPM.

Page 34 and 35
ECDPM's Volker Hauck at a Partners for Resilience evaluation workshop in Mali. Photo: ECDPM.

Farmer Benard Ngigi talks with financier Jane Mbinya about how to attract more investment in Nakuru County, Kenya. Photo: Koen Dekeyser, ECDPM.

African indigenous value chain actors during a stakeholder forum at the Grand Royal Swiss in Kisumu. Photo: David Makongo.

Page 42 and 43
ECDPM staff participate in a leadership training workshop in Maastricht. Photo: Kathleen van Hove, ECDPM.

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ECDPM staff on video calls. From top to bottom, left to right: Amanda Bisong, Chloe Teevan, Joyce Olders, Nina Thijssen, Catarina Farinha, Sean Woolfrey, Claudia Rosano, Inna Perova, Alfonso Medinilla, Tilly Bogataj-De Coninck, Lidet Tadesse, Bruce Byiers, Sabine Mertens, Koen Dekeyser, Virginia Mucchi, Ashley Neat, Francesco Rampa, Philomena Apiko, Annette Powell, Pauline Veron, Poorva Karkare, Ghita Salvino, Kathleen van Hove, San Bilal, Geert Laporte, Sophie Desmidt, Eunike Spierings and Yaseena Chiu-van 't Hoff.

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ECDPM staff at a strategic team meeting in Maastricht. Photo: Virginia Mucchi, ECDPM.

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ECDPM's head office in Maastricht. Photo by Yaseena Chiu-van 't Hoff, ECDPM.

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ECDPM has two offices: in Maastricht (the Netherlands) and Brussels (Belgium).

We would love to hear from you. Contact us by telephone or email (info@ecdpm.org). If you would like to get in touch with any of our staff members directly, visit ecdpm.org/people for their individual contact details.

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