



# Work plan 2021

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>AfCFTA</b>	African Continental Free Trade Area
<b>AU</b>	African Union
<b>CARIFORUM</b>	The Caribbean Forum
<b>CASCADES</b>	CAScading Climate Risks: Towards ADaptive and Resilient European Societies
<b>CPPB</b>	Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding
<b>DFI</b>	development finance institution
<b>ECDPM</b>	European Centre for Development Policy Management
<b>EDF</b>	European Development Fund
<b>EFSD</b>	European Fund for Sustainable Development
<b>EPA</b>	economic partnership agreement
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
<b>NDICI</b>	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
<b>PCSD</b>	policy coherence for sustainable development
<b>RECs</b>	regional economic communities
<b>SDG</b>	Sustainable Development Goal
<b>US</b>	United States

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

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ECDPM's mandate focuses on Europe-Africa relations and the interface between the African and European continents. Our mission is to make policies work for sustainable and inclusive development. To accomplish that, we forge partnerships and inform and influence European, African and international policies.

This work plan outlines each of ECDPM's five programmes and their planned activities for 2021. This is the final year of the ECDPM 2017-2021 Strategy. That strategy explains the changing global context of our work and the rationale underlying the four key impact areas to which Centre activities contribute:

- Effective international cooperation frameworks and tools for tackling global challenges
- Legitimate and accountable public institutions and engaged societies
- Peaceful societies based on the rule of law, social cohesion and human dignity
- Sustainable economic transformation with shared prosperity and decent jobs

Our strategy implementation plan explains how ECDPM organises itself to deliver on its 2017-2021 strategy.

**Essential building blocks are the following:**

- **The ECDPM way of engagement.** Our core roles, our focus on implementation, our way of thinking and working politically, our ability to bridge policy domains, and our experience in Africa-Europe relations. ECDPM is respected for its wide network of partners and privileged access to key stakeholders and policymakers in the foreign and development policy communities of Europe, Africa and beyond. Our partners come from ministries, institutions, international organisations, academia, social and economic agencies, and think tanks in Africa and Europe, like the members of the European Think Tanks Group.
- **Our organisational structure.** Five core programmes, alongside the Centre's horizontal support functions. The programmes are European External Affairs; African Institutions and Reform Dynamics; Migration; Security and Resilience; and Economic and Agricultural Transformation. That last programme has three teams: (i) trade, investment and financing for sustainable development; (ii) food systems, agricultural transformation and food security; and (iii) private sector engagement.

**The ECDPM approach to strategic planning and learning, monitoring and evaluation.** We apply a theory of change approach, formulating specific theories of change for each of our work streams. This allows us to plan our work and take advantage of opportunities in ways that are consistent with our strategy. We regularly review and adapt our theories of change and use them as an input to our annual work plans.

The coming year will be marked by the effects of the election of Joe Biden as 46<sup>th</sup> President of the United States and progress towards the wide and equitable distribution of COVID-19 vaccines. There will also be new episodes in the aftermath of Brexit, continued unrest on Europe's Eastern borders, migration pressure, and COVID-19's economic and social consequences.

Against this backdrop, ECDPM will follow the 'Team Europe' pandemic response and implementation of the new Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), which promises more coherence and less fragmentation. We will follow the implementation process of the European Green Deal, the further development of the European Pact on Migration, the consequences of the Corona crisis on migration flows and the roll out of the European Peace Facility.

In Africa, we will closely follow the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) which could prove an effective post-pandemic stimulus instrument. In 2021, ECDPM will further examine the implications of the new college of African Union (AU) commissioners as a part of the AU reform process and how this will contribute to the positions adopted by the AU on several key points and discussions leading up to the Sixth AU-EU Summit. This will build on our analysis of the candidates for the new college and the key issues to be discussed at the Summit. We will follow the entry into force of an eventual post-Cotonou agreement, and ECDPM will zoom in on the outcomes of the AU 'Silencing the Guns' initiative.

We will continue our work on sustainable food systems, and our focus on the climate crisis will become even more prominent ahead of the Climate Change Conference (COP26) in Glasgow at the end of 2021. Applying our expertise in development finance, we will conduct research on private fund mobilisation, blending with European financial institutions, and creation of instruments to ‘get to the trillions, not millions’ needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. We will continue our multi-stakeholder approach, including non-state actors such as the private sector and new social movements.

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## TO FOLLOW OUR WORK

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ECDPM’s website offers content highlighting progress on all the activities described in this work plan:

- Publications (reports, papers and briefs)
- Commentary
- Our quarterly Great Insights magazine
- Events
- Multimedia presentations

Some of our topical work is collected in *special dossiers*. If you are looking for work on a specific topic, try our *search function*. Use the filters to narrow your results. To stay up to date on our work, subscribe to our Weekly Compass newsletter

We report our monitoring data in line with the standards of the International Aid Transparency Initiative (IATI). Reports include overviews of our activities designed to generate politically informed, evidence-based and practical knowledge and to facilitate knowledge uptake by key public and private actors through dialogue, implementation support and smart communications. We also provide outcome narratives reflecting on the contributions we make to the changes envisaged in our specific theories of change.

# EUROPEAN EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

**The European External Affairs programme informs actors on the policies and approaches of the EU institutions and member states as they seek to develop coherent and effective international cooperation, particularly with Africa.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has created extraordinary and unprecedented challenges in Europe and around the world, amidst an already volatile geopolitical order. This will have a strong bearing on EU foreign and development policy in 2021. The pandemic has put greater pressure on domestic political and economic priorities within Europe, while also increasing the urgency of effective foreign policy and global collective action. In parallel, the Black Lives Matter movement is focusing attention on the stark reality of racial injustice, and on systemic inequalities and the implicit ways power is exercised between and within societies. This has highlighted the importance of working in solidarity with partners to address global challenges, including the SDGs, rising inequality, COVID-19 and climate change. The 2021-2027 EU budget entails a rationalisation of EU foreign policy instruments. This means that key strategic and operational decisions on budget implementation are ahead in 2021.

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## INTEGRATED EU EXTERNAL ACTION

The European External Affairs programme will work with stakeholders on options for a more coherent and integrated EU external action, including in multilateral fora. We will analyse how global developments and domestic politics – COVID-19, China’s role, the US elections and Brexit – affect EU foreign and development policy, funding priorities, and partnerships.

We will follow the agenda of Europe’s political leadership, particularly the objective to become more strategic, united and assertive, and to achieve more coherence between the internal and external aspects of EU engagement. We will look at how effectively the EU brings these aims into traditional areas of foreign and development priorities, including sustainable development, peacebuilding and migration. We will also examine how these aims play out in relation to the external dimension of the Commission’s Green Deal and digitalisation priorities.

We will follow implementation of the NDICI, analysing its contributions to a more integrated and strategic approach to international cooperation. We will also unpack the EU’s new ‘Team Europe’ approach, initially rolled out for a collective, coherent EU response to COVID-19. That approach has potential to help the EU and member states work together more effectively and better brand their collective actions in Africa and elsewhere.

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## EU DEVELOPMENT POLICY AND PRACTICE

We will address implementation of EU policies and initiatives in partner countries, and impacts of new priorities on development cooperation and the SDGs. We will link our activities to EU programming, which will gather momentum with decisions on priority objectives, country allocations, implementation modalities and partners. These decisions are increasingly guided by political choices reflecting EU strategic interests, overshadowing development objectives at times. We will prioritise integrating the SDGs, climate, digitalisation and gender into the EU programming cycle and the 'build back better' post-pandemic agenda.

We will examine how the EU institutions and member states can work better together and with implementing agencies, development finance institutions, civil society and the private sector. We will look at opportunities within the new financial framework and NDICI, and their political, strategic and technical implications, including budgetisation of the European Development Fund (EDF), flexible and functional approaches to foster partnerships and ownership, and new funding approaches such as the External Action Guarantee in the framework of the enhanced European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD+). We will also look at forms of collaboration beyond aid: technical assistance, triangular cooperation, promotion of global public goods, and cooperation in research and innovation. One focus will be modernising EU relations and sharpening EU tools for middle-income and least-developed countries.

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## AFRICA-EU RELATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

EU relations with Africa are a growing patchwork of partnerships and economic and diplomatic frameworks. The past year has shown that Africa-EU relations are often weighed down by history and institutional path dependency, despite a stated desire for a stronger and renewed partnership. The coming year, 2021, will see the continuation of this new partnership rhetoric and diplomatic process, including the Sixth AU-EU Summit, but in a context of global pandemic, economic crisis and geopolitical competition. The challenge will be to open and sustain meaningful new ways of intercontinental cooperation.

COVID-19 is but one of many reasons for the delays in negotiating a new agreement between the EU and the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States yet a political agreement was made between the lead negotiators in December 2020. We will continue to follow developments, incorporating these into our analysis and engagement.

With a range of partners we will inform African and EU policymakers through critical analysis on partnership structures and substance in areas such as climate and digitalisation. We will work on African continental integration, focusing on the foreign policy of African states and the AU. We will look at Africa's evolving partnership strategies with powers like China and India, at African collective agency in the multilateral space, and the effects of these on Africa-EU interactions and future relations.

# AFRICAN INSTITUTIONS AND REGIONAL DYNAMICS

The African Institutions and Regional Dynamics programme analyses and provides insights into the actors and factors behind different reform processes on the continent. We examine the political economy drivers and constraints to reform at the continental, regional and national levels. We aim to make more explicit the interests and incentives of actors engaged in African policies and change processes, including regional and continental structures as well as external actors, such as international partners. This contributes to better identify, understand and explain the hurdles that need to be overcome to move from policy to practice. By explicitly recognising these hurdles and their implications, we aim to inform and facilitate more fruitful and realistic dialogue among development actors, thereby supporting efforts towards more effective reforms and development outcomes, whether in terms of economic transformation or broader governance issues.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic will be an important cross-cutting element of our work on continental and regional agendas. We will examine how much of a critical juncture the pandemic represents in shifting incentives around institutional reforms, citizen demands, and regional and continental responses. The AfCFTA has been lauded as a 'post-pandemic stimulus plan' for Africa. Finalisation and implementation of the continental trade agreement will be a key fixture in our 2021 work, particularly its implications for regional and state-society dynamics and for trade and industrialisation. We will also follow discussions around the planned AU-EU Summit, particularly the AU's role on the international stage and how it represents and engages with its member states and civil society. Calls to 'decolonise development' will be an important contextual element in our work, bringing more focus on how Africans see their own developmental paths and implications of this for international partners.

We will follow up our past PEDRO project (on the Political Economy Dynamics of Regional Organisations). Upcoming work will analyse the AU and regional institutions, particularly continental and regional responses to COVID-19 and African trade and connectivity in relation to the AfCFTA and mobility of people, with special emphasis on implementation challenges at the continental and regional levels, particularly given COVID-19. We will also explore continental and regional governance frameworks, particularly how they shape African countries' participation in the democratic transition and the AU's use of its reform process to take a more prominent international role.

Our team will continue analysing the political economy of between-country relations and interactions around different regional agendas, including industrialisation and regional value chains, potentially linked to the green transition.

State-society relations and political governance shape the way regional institutional frameworks and dynamics 'land' on the ground. This refers to the 'demand side' of reforms, from mobilised citizens, but also to the 'supply' of governance, like integrity of political processes such as elections. We will continue to link our continental and regional work to analysis of domestic actors and factors shaping or blocking national-level reforms. This may relate to cross-border collaboration, for example, along trade corridors, or to domestic reform processes where civil society could play a role, for example, in Tunisia.

# MIGRATION

**Migration and displacement pose major challenges. But they can also be a strong driver of social and economic change and sustainable development. Our work on migration provides an evidence base and fosters policy dialogue relevant to both European and African actors. The end goal is to foster a comprehensive and balanced approach to migration in support of sustainable development on both continents.**

While responses to COVID-19 have disrupted mobility and migratory flows, the global health crisis has revealed migrant workers' importance in both Africa and Europe. This provides openings for policy innovations in migration governance.

In Africa, post-pandemic recovery could bring measures to promote mobility across the continent, in support of the AU's Migration Policy Framework for Africa and Protocol on the Free Movement of Persons. However, political and social hurdles continue to hinder domestic enactment of regional migration agreements and policy, though the pandemic has propelled initiatives for migrant protection and reintegration.

In Europe, irregular migration and asylum remain priorities. Amid fears of increased migration due to the pandemic, cooperation with African countries is high on the agenda as part of the new European Pact on Migration. Nonetheless, EU member states remain divided in their views on migration and unable to agree on strengthening labour mobility opportunities in Africa-Europe cooperation.

We will conduct research on institutions, policy processes and practices related to migration and development in Africa. A special focus of this work will be African governments' interest in and scope for cooperation on African mobility, asylum, return and reintegration in the post-COVID context. This research will include the AU and regional economic communities (RECs), but also focus on African states and the role of various stakeholders – such as diaspora and the private sector – in state-led processes.

The programme will analyse shifts in migration cooperation between Africa and Europe, both due to COVID-19 and in the context of new policy frameworks, such as the European Pact on Migration and an eventual post-Cotonou agreement. We aim to highlight African perspectives concerning Africa-Europe processes on migration,

including those related to remittances, legal mobility, migrant protection and reintegration, and opportunities for diaspora engagement.

Research will bring out interlinkages between migration and broader concerns, including gender and climate aspects, in migration governance. In particular, we will connect migratory dynamics with food and nutrition security as well as broker knowledge on private sector engagement in migration governance, to facilitate constructive and innovative practices.

# SECURITY AND RESILIENCE

Peace and security remains a pressing topic on the agendas of African and European decision makers. Institutions on both continents must often choose between a focus on short-term responses to violent conflict or investment in long-term, structural engagements that build sustainable peace and prevent further violent conflict. ECDPM's Security and Resilience programme contributes to institutionalised, inclusive, long-term peace and security responses. It focuses on countries encountering conflict and protracted crisis in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

Within Europe there is a pressing urgency for strategic engagement to prevent and respond to violent conflicts abroad. Recent geopolitical trends, the implications of COVID-19, migration pressures, and the consequences of Brexit and the Trump presidency are driving Europe towards a more pragmatic, strategically autonomous approach to foreign policy. This raises questions about how the EU can reconcile an interest-driven security policy with its commitment to uphold values and build sustainable peace.

Peace and security is high on the AU's policy and institutional agenda as well. Its 'Silencing the Guns' initiative and broader reform agenda revisit the principle of subsidiarity between the AU and regional organisations (RECs and regional mechanisms). Securing predictable funding for AU-mandated peace and security operations will remain an important part of the reform agenda. The planned AU-EU Summit and progress on both sides will influence the future orientation of the peace and security partnership.

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## PROMOTING INTEGRATED EU APPROACHES TO CONFLICT

We will respond to demands from the EU institutions and member states for information and facilitation processes supporting policy and practice in peace and security, especially related to Africa. We will pursue development and implementation of integrated EU frameworks, policies, tools and financing mechanisms to prevent and address violent conflict, including partnership modalities with the AU and other international and regional organisations.

Regarding the new multiannual financial framework, we will contribute to discussions on EU financing for peace and security, the implications of EDF 'budgetisation', the off-budget European Peace Facility, and institutional adaptations stemming from discussions on the EU budget and its implementation. A related topic is the functioning of the EU Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) and the role of civilian crisis management missions and operations in EU external action. Here, we will build on our involvement in the Horizon 2020-funded CIVILnEXT project.

Following on our participation in the EU Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding (CPPB) evaluation, we will remain engaged in conflict prevention and mediation support, under contract with the European External Action Service (EEAS). As CPPB is high on the EU's 2021 agenda, we will continue to inform EU approaches to long-term peacebuilding, resilience support and governance strengthening.

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## CONTRIBUTING TO DISCUSSIONS ON AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY

We will pursue greater cross-fertilisation between our experience in European decision-making processes and our growing understanding of African peace and security dynamics. We do this to address the needs of African stakeholders, who rarely get to fully collaborate and feed into European political processes, despite being affected by them. By brokering knowledge in two directions, we aim to promote an informed Africa-Europe partnership on peace and security.

We will partner with Africa-based organisations and contribute to African-led, institutionalised responses to conflicts on the continent. For this, we will monitor and assess the impact of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), including regional processes and frameworks pursued through the RECs. Our focus will be on the Horn of Africa and the Sahel, where we will engage on connective topics such as women and peace and security.

Another core area will be resilience in the face of challenges, particularly climate change, conflict and deteriorating governance contexts. Building on the Horizon 2020-supported CASCADES project, we will investigate how climate change affects peace and conflict dynamics in North Africa and the Sahel. The programme will remain open to exploring new areas of work, such as private sector engagement and peace and security.

# ECONOMIC AND AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The Economic and Agricultural Transformation programme focuses on the private sector, finance, trade, regional integration and sustainable food systems. Economic and agricultural transformation is central to most development strategies, in Africa and in Europe. The aim of such transformation is to create more and better jobs, to end hunger, and to stimulate sustainable and inclusive economic growth. We want to help accomplish these goals.

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## 1. TRADE, INVESTMENT AND FINANCING FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

COVID-19 has ushered in a global crisis with consequences felt most acutely among the poorest and most vulnerable populations and countries. The global supply and demand shocks precipitated by the pandemic have led to contraction of economies and drastic human and social suffering. In addressing such an emergency, stimulating sustainable and inclusive countercyclical investment becomes all the more important, as well as ensuring a sustainable, climate-responsible and pro-poor recovery in Africa with specific concern for the youth and women. Coherence and complementarity across enabling policies, such as trade, investment and financing for sustainable development, are critical to achieve this sustainable and inclusive recovery.

### Trade

The work stream on trade will focus on trade integration dynamics in Africa, as epitomised by the AfCFTA. We will look at how the AfCFTA can be supported by enhanced trade relations between Africa and Europe. We will give particular attention to means of increasing the sustainability and green dimension of EU trade policy, promoting more resilient, responsible and inclusive trade practices.

Fostering more sustainable value chains, through appropriate trade and investment initiatives, has become a central concern of the EU and of many developing countries, in particular in Africa, in their efforts towards economic transformation. Our work will emphasise linkages between trade and investment opportunities, private sector engagement and local sustainable productive capacities, with particular attention to micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) and women.

ECDPM will actively follow the further negotiations and implementation of the economic partnership agreements (EPAs). We will continue to be an active member of the Joint Consultative Committee of the CARIFORUM-EU EPA.

## Financing

We will explore sustainable responses to the pandemic and recovery through EU and local mechanisms and initiatives. As COVID-19 can increase inequality and poverty, we will investigate sustainable and inclusive countercyclical investment approaches, including human capital and gender dimensions.

Regarding Europe's financial architecture, we will examine the role of development finance institutions (DFIs) and blended finance, synergies and complementarities with traditional development cooperation, investment climate reforms, sustainability and inclusivity criteria, and local ownership. The team will follow the EU External Investment Plan (EIP) and its extension to all developing countries with the EFSD+ and External Action Guarantee. We will monitor NDICI programming and implications, particularly in Africa. We will study coordination and partnership opportunities for development investment, involving the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), European DFIs, and regional and national public and private financial institutions.

As part of the CASCADES project, we will work on climate and green finance with leading universities and institutes. In the AgrInvest initiative, we will collaborate with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) on the financing of sustainable value chains. We will also investigate ways to strengthen the local dimension and ownership of blended finance in Africa, with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the G20 Compact with Africa, the African Center for Economic Transformation (ACET), and other think tanks.

## Resource-based industrialisation

We will integrate our efforts to promote better governance and linkages between the extractive sector and the rest of the economy, towards resource-based sustainable economic transformation and industrialisation, into our investment and private sector engagement work.

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## 2. FOOD SYSTEMS, AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION AND FOOD SECURITY

World hunger has increased, reaching levels unseen in a decade. This is partly due to greater climate variability, more frequent extreme weather events and the impacts of COVID-19. These have caused severe food crises, especially in Africa, which already confronts the worst undernourishment. Yet, undernutrition now coexists with obesity in low-income countries, exposing the inefficiency and unsustainability of our food systems. Today's food systems deplete resources and pollute the planet, while generating income inequality and malnourishment for two thirds of the global population.

For food systems to simultaneously serve the needs of people, planet and profit, availability and consumption of diverse and nutritious foods must increase.

Environmentally sustainable production, investment and trade are the way to achieve this. We will work on food system sustainability and resilience, focusing on improved food and nutrition security in Africa, particularly through effective food value chains, private investment and intra-regional trade.

### **Sustainable food systems**

The collaboration launched last year with the FAO AgrInvest initiative will be a focus of our 2021 work. The initiative seeks to create multi-stakeholder frameworks for dialogue and partnership between public and private actors for increased private investment to improve the economic, social and environmental sustainability of food systems in Africa.

We will further refine and build on our 'food system approach' developed over the past two years. The approach iteratively combines four components – food system, sustainability and political economy analyses and development of transformation pathways – to advance food system sustainability. Through this work, we will make methodological contributions to the emerging 'community of practice', and help governments, farmer organisations and donors pilot and understand the implications of adopting a food system approach in their activities.

Finally, we will continue to support sustainable food system processes at the global level, particularly with the Rome-based agencies. This will include exploring with partners better uses of climate finance for food and agricultural sector adaptation and contributing to preparations for the global Food Systems Summit planned for the fall of 2021.

### **Regional value chains in West Africa**

In West Africa and the Sahel, we will continue to support regional policy processes for development of inclusive and resilient agrifood markets and regional trade, brokering policy-relevant knowledge between public and private actors. Through our partnership with FAO AgrInvest, we will engage in processes to promote sustainable investment in specific agrifood subsectors in Burkina Faso and Niger. As part of the Horizon 2020-funded CASCADES project, we will continue examining the impacts of climate change in Burkina Faso and the Sahel, and the dynamics of climate change adaptation, to support better strategies for the management of climate risks. We will continue to advise European, West African and international actors seeking to support the development of competitive and inclusive agrifood value chains and promote trade and investment in a sustainable agrifood economy.

### **Sustainable agri-food value chains in Eastern and Southern Africa**

In Eastern and Southern Africa, we will continue to support the development of sustainable agrifood value chains and more sustainable food systems, focusing particularly on value

chains and local food systems in Ethiopia and Kenya. Through AgrInvest, we will work with local, regional and international partners and stakeholders to identify promising opportunities to promote sustainable investment in agrifood value chains and local food systems in these two countries.

We will support establishment of inclusive multi-stakeholder frameworks to promote sustainable investment in agrifood value chains. These frameworks will be designed to facilitate dialogue between relevant stakeholders, including farmer representatives, agribusinesses, public authorities and financial institutions. They will focus on building trust, fostering partnerships and spurring coordinated action to address the main obstacles to value chain development and food system sustainability. We will pay particular attention to obstacles related to financing and private investment, as well as to social and environmental sustainability objectives.

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### 3. PRIVATE-SECTOR ENGAGEMENT

The United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights celebrate their tenth anniversary in 2021. While the concept of business and human rights has gained momentum during this time, application of the principles continues to lag. Tackling the economic downturn and building more socially and environmentally sustainable value chains requires action and collaboration by public and private stakeholders.

As companies seek to weather the crisis, they are still expected to mitigate risks of human rights violations and environmental degradation in their supply chains. The public sector's role here is to cultivate an enabling sustainable business environment, using smart mixes of measures from different policy domains. Relevant policy developments in the EU include the Commission's commitment towards EU due diligence legislation, the EU conflict minerals regulation that enters into force 1 January 2021, and early implementation of the external dimensions of the Circular Economy Action Plan, adopted in 2020.

We will pursue more effective European and African policies, approaches and instruments to leverage and foster private sector contributions to sustainable development. We will follow and engage with public and private actors in the EU and Africa on topics including the 'greening' of private sector development support, but also due diligence legislation. The aim is to achieve smart mixes of regulatory and non-regulatory measures, contributing to policy coherence for sustainable development.

With FAO and local stakeholders, we will examine and contribute to private sector engagement for socially and environmentally sustainable development of specific agrifood value chains in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya and Niger. We will do this in a politically aware way, considering the interests of all sides, from local industrialists to foreign companies, governments and farmers.

Our work will bring out African priorities, gauging how they fit into broader EU agendas on topics like digitalisation, private sector development and green economy. More explicit identification of the priorities of both sides will help identify overlapping interests.

# CROSS-CENTRE **TASK FORCES** AND POLICY COHERENCE

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## EUROPE-AFRICA RELATIONS

The Europe-Africa Relations task force serves as a facilitating platform for the Centre to build strong, coordinated approaches to understand, evaluate and critically analyse the continent-to-continent partnership. The task force will coordinate the Centre's work on various relevant themes, while mobilising expertise from within the programmes to facilitate nexus approaches that bring together, for example, challenges related to security, trade and governance.

Through the coordinating role of the task force, we will engage more with African think tanks, civil society organisations and networks. Our aim is to learn about the changing dynamics in Africa, while also building knowledge and understanding in Africa of European cooperation processes that impact the continent. This will help the EU fine-tune its support, while enabling African stakeholders to make the most of EU support to build better and more equitable societies in the aftermath of the pandemic.

We will follow the progress of African and European processes, such as the implementation of the AfCFTA, the implementation of the AU reform processes and the assumption of office of the new college of AU commissioners, the entry into force of the post-Cotonou agreement and implementation of the Africa pillar, the adoption of the 2021-2027 EU budget, the EDF's integration into the new NDICI, and emerging areas of Africa-EU partnership, such as digitalisation and research and innovation. Our analysis will shed light on the implications of these developments for programming.

We will also participate in the policy discussions leading up to the Sixth AU-EU Summit. Our analysis will highlight the different layers of engagement between the EU and the AU given the economic and social implications of the COVID-19 pandemic on both continents specifically (and globally in general).

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## GENDER

The gender task force will continue to function as a platform for exchange on gender-related and gender-focused work across the Centre, while promoting the integration of gender in current and future work. In light of ECDPM's ongoing strategy discussions, and the decision to shift management-level discussion on gender to a dedicated working group headed by Human Resources, the task force will focus on content work. It will continue to support research on the linkages between gender and ECDPM's core themes, particularly trade and finance, governance, food security, climate change,

migration, peace and security, and the EU external agenda. Other, newer issues, such as digitalisation and the green transition will be given more attention.

In particular, the task force will work on development of tools to support deeper integration of gender in ECDPM's work streams and strengthen staff capacities to integrate gender into their respective work areas. Another priority is more proactive and targeted networking for relevant contacts and funding opportunities. At the same time, the task force will maintain exchanges on issues of organisational culture and gender sensitivity.

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## CLIMATE CHANGE

The Climate Change task force is ECDPM's coordination and communication platform for climate work. It will continue to serve as a vehicle for strategic thinking in defining ECDPM's specific niche in the climate change arena in Africa-Europe cooperation. The task force will identify areas of work where ECDPM can have an impact, given its specific research, expertise and methodology.

In 2021, the task force will continue exploring avenues of funding and partnership-building for work related to climate change, as we would like to step up our contributions in this field. We will also be involved in concrete climate change projects, among others, under the Centre-wide Horizon 2020-supported CASCADES project.

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## POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

ECDPM will continue to manage the Policy Coherence community of practice. This involves organisation of two annual meetings bringing together policy coherence for development (PCD) 'focal points' from several foreign affairs ministries and interested ECDPM institutional partners. Each meeting will tackle specific thematic, strategic areas from a policy coherence perspective, while also looking at methodological issues in policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD). Based on demand, we will provide support to other European public and non-state actors in strengthening capacities to promote PCSD in their countries.

We will continue to contribute to the Horizon 2020-funded CASCADES project on the implications of climate change for Europe's economy and security, to promote coherent policy responses. Through our involvement in projects across the Centre, we will contribute to analysis of policy coherence issues in areas such as political governance support, policymaking for the SDGs, climate change and nexus approaches. We will also support application of PCSD tools and methodologies in relevant situations.

# CENTRE MANAGEMENT

This final year of the 2017-2021 ECDPM Strategy will see continuation of ongoing work, building on the long-term support of our institutional funders, who confirmed their commitment to the Centre at the annual institutional partners meeting in September.

The unprecedented crisis brought by the coronavirus has prompted us to advance work on our next five-year strategy (2022-2026). Indeed, the pandemic's political, economic and social effects led us to revisit the assumptions, ambitions and objectives we formulated at the start of this strategy period. Discussions in 2020 – with staff, institutional funders, the external evaluation team and our Board – left no doubt: the topics constituting our core business and expertise remain squarely relevant, now and in the coming years. But we do need to interlink them more with newer topics, such as climate and digitalisation. Overall we need more flexibility to navigate the unpredictability of our times.

An advantage of having done our homework early, is extra time to transition to a more agile organisation, to make ECDPM resilient to whatever the future holds. We will adapt our governance systems for more strategic steering and efficiency, without losing the participatory element so essential to ECDPM's corporate culture and success. We will remodel our programme structure to increase opportunities for cross-programmatic work, mobility and career advancement, especially for mid-level and younger staff.

The timely adaptation of our strategy will enable us to attract the right talent for strategy implementation. To bring out staff's full potential, we will increase the staff development budget.

Because of COVID-19, staff has worked from home since mid-March 2020 with limited presence in the offices. While we hope for a speedy medical solution for the virus, we expect the current situation to continue into early 2021. Thankfully, our systems have proved well equipped to allow working from home. While normal contacts were missed, working routines have continued. After a solution is found for COVID-19, we will look into our routines and at how our offices and infrastructure are arranged. We have created budgetary space for ventilation system upgrades and a working from home allowance.

Our multi-annual institutional partnership with the Netherlands and nine other European states has been a cornerstone of ECDPM's way of working. These partners have subscribed over multiple years to ECDPM's mandate, strategy and work plans. This has allowed us to perform our roles as facilitator, as provider of information and analysis, and as non-partisan broker. In 2021, we expect institutional funding to make up 60% of our budget (2020: 61%). The other 40% of our funding comes from programme and project funding.

Overall, the Centre has secured €6.6 million in funding for 2021, in signed or pending contracts, making up 87% of our total annual budget for 2021, which is set at €7.7 million. The main challenge in 2021 will be to deliver on these contracts. To do this, we will need to increase productivity at all levels of the organisation.

Programme related operational costs are budgeted by programme managers making conservative estimates while also taking into account commitments to our funders. General and administrative costs are based largely on contractual agreements and experience from the past. Personnel costs are somewhat below budgeted in 2020, as a result of three retirements in 2020 and one unfilled position. Costs include increases from the collective labour law agreement for Dutch civil servants and expected salary increases for staff. The staff development budget has been increased given our talent management objectives. The overall size of our staff in 2021 will be somewhat lower than in 2020, with a budgeted number of 61.7 FTEs (2020: 64.7 FTEs).

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