

Brussels, 18 July 2025  
(OR. en)

11777/25

DEVGEN 131  
COHAFA 71  
ACP 77  
RELEX 1036  
SUSTDEV 58  
COHOM 129  
SAN 474  
FAO 34

#### **OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

---

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	18 July 2025
To:	Delegations

---

No. prev. doc.:	10216/25 + ADD 1
Subject:	Strengthening resilience in partner countries through EU external action - Council conclusions (18 July 2025)

---

Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on strengthening resilience in partner countries through EU external action, as approved by the Council at its 4114th meeting held on 18 July 2025.

## **Council conclusions on strengthening resilience in partner countries through EU external action**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. The Council notes with concern the growing global challenges and their negative impact on the international aid environment and development systems. In this context, the EU – as the largest provider of official development assistance (ODA) globally – remains a reliable partner committed to strengthening resilience worldwide.
2. The Council recognises that the changing geopolitical landscape, where conflict and fragility are driving extreme global poverty, coupled with current funding constraints, creates a need to use the available resources more strategically and further focus on a transformative approach aiming to integrate prevention, stabilisation, peace, anticipatory and resilience building measures. This requires partner countries' ownership and sustained engagement based on understanding of local and cultural sensitivities.
3. The Council recalls its conclusions on the strategic approach to resilience in external action<sup>1</sup> together with its commitment to keep supporting partner countries in building resilience as a priority of the EU external action through mutually beneficial interventions. The Council recognises that the peace, prosperity and security of the EU and its Member States are increasingly intertwined with that of our partners. Embedding preparedness in its external action, in line with the Preparedness Union Strategy presented on 26 March 2025, and strengthening resilience of our partners contribute to strengthening the EU's own resilience. Developing mutual resilience with partners also contributes to countering cyber and hybrid threats such as disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference.

---

<sup>1</sup> ST 14191/17 A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action – Council conclusions (13 November 2017).

4. The Council reaffirms its commitment to upholding all EU values, including international law and international humanitarian law. The Council further confirms the commitment of the EU and its Member States to the effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda and to continue supporting effective and inclusive multilateralism.

## **STATE OF PLAY**

5. The Council emphasises the potential transformative force of resilience building for enhancing development progress and fostering stability. The Council highlights the need to prioritise cooperation with partner countries based on responsibility and ownership as well as on shared values and commitment to long-term sustainable development objectives. To deliver on these objectives, it will be key to pursue investments and interventions in key areas:
  - a. Resilience must be strengthened at all levels – individual, community, national, regional and international. Supporting resilience drives convergence for those furthest behind.
  - b. The Council underlines that inclusive, transparent, independent and accountable public institutions are critical for building long-term resilience at all levels.
  - c. Civil society and community groups are important development and humanitarian partners. Women and youth play a critical role as leaders and agents of change in strengthening resilience. Investing in building the capacity of such actors helps the frontline response when humanitarian crises hit.
  - d. The Council further stresses the importance of media freedom, pluralism, combating disinformation and strengthening media literacy, in fostering an informed and resilient civic space, enabling citizens to participate actively in democratic processes and to hold institutions accountable.

- e. The Council reiterates its full commitment to support and implement the international framework on gender equality and the full enjoyment of all human rights by all women and girls and their empowerment in its own right and as a goal and driver of sustainable development, taking note of the EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III as adopted by the Commission and the European Union's High Representative, and welcomed through Presidency Conclusions.
- f. The Council underlines the vital role of science, technology and innovation as key enablers for building resilience and sustainability.
- g. The Council recalls that secure, trusted, resilient, inclusive, accessible, available and affordable digital infrastructure, connectivity solutions, internet freedom and cyber capacity building are a decisive factor for economic and social progress and development opportunities.
- h. The Council recognises the importance of disaster risk reduction (DRR), anticipatory action and disaster preparedness, in saving and sustaining lives and preserving well-being and dignity, reducing humanitarian needs, adapting to climate change, and protecting development gains and livelihoods.
- i. The Council recalls its conclusions on water in the EU's external action<sup>2</sup>, calls for renewed efforts to achieve SDG 6 and underlines the importance of supporting integrated natural resources management, as well as reinforcing EU global action to strengthen water resilience, in line with the European Water Resilience Strategy<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>2</sup> ST 14108/21 Water in the EU's external action – Council conclusions (19 November 2021).

<sup>3</sup> ST 9932/25 European Water Resilience Strategy. Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions (4 June 2025).

- j. The Council stresses the importance of shock-responsive social protection for all, as vital to increase the resilience of affected populations. Wherever feasible, humanitarian assistance, while respecting humanitarian principles, should explore linkages with national social protection systems as a means to strengthen local capacity and ownership, promote coordination and lay grounds for durable solutions for affected populations.
- k. The Council emphasises that education and lifelong learning lies at the heart of resilience efforts. The Council recalls the importance of education for all, at all stages of children's development and in all crisis contexts, as well as of Technical and Vocational Education and Training programmes to foster sustainable development and eradicate extreme poverty and hunger.
- l. The Council underlines that inclusive, transparent and accountable institutions are critical for building long-term resilience at all levels. The partner countries are responsible for their own development and implementation of necessary reforms and the EU should prioritise long-term capacity building, recognising that strengthening national expertise is essential to enable countries to design and implement their own reforms, including in the financial sector.
- m. The Council recalls its conclusions on stepping up the support to global food security and nutrition in a Team Europe approach<sup>4</sup>, aligned with the 'Nutrition for Growth' summit held in Paris at the end of March 2025. Consistent with the EU Vision for Food and Agriculture, the Council further calls for supporting partner countries in their food sovereignty, resilience and sustainability, ensuring access to safe, affordable, high quality and nutritious food for all.

---

<sup>4</sup> ST 16901/24 Stepping up Team Europe's support to global food security and nutrition – Council conclusions (16 December 2024).

- n. The Council recalls its conclusions ‘EU Global Health Strategy – Better health for all in a changing world’<sup>5</sup> and its conclusions on the European Court of Auditors’ Special Report No 18/2024<sup>6</sup>, and remains committed to supporting resilient health systems.
- o. The EU remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights and to the full and effective implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action and the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the outcomes of their review conferences, and remains committed to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in this context. With that in mind, the EU reaffirms its commitment to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to, their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence. The EU further stresses the need for universal access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and health-care services.
- p. Recalling its conclusions on the European Court of Auditors’ Special Report No 17/2024, the Council commends ongoing efforts to counter irregular migration, including via comprehensive and strategic partnerships in dialogue with countries of origin, transit and destination. While development cooperation already contributes to tackling the root causes of irregular migration, EU external action should address them, through innovative approaches, as a matter of priority, in a focused, coherent and comprehensive manner, fostering economic perspectives for sustainable livelihoods of local communities in regions of origin and support host countries.

---

<sup>5</sup> ST 5908/24 EU Global Health Strategy – Better health for all in a changing world – Council conclusions (29 January 2024).

<sup>6</sup> ST 9395/25 European Court of Auditors’ Special Report No 18/2024 on ‘EU financial support for health systems in selected partner countries: Broad strategic objectives followed but interventions affected by coordination and sustainability issues’ – Council conclusions (26 May 2025).

6. The Council recalls its conclusions on Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development nexus<sup>7</sup> as well as the conclusions on Disaster Risk Reduction in EU external action<sup>8</sup> and emphasises that international actors need to contribute to resilience building across the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus.

## **LOOKING FORWARD/NEXT STEPS**

7. The Council calls on the Commission to continue integrating a resilience-oriented approach into current programming across its humanitarian, stabilisation, development and peacebuilding action. Resilience building demands sustained, integrated approaches, based on granular analysis of local contexts that address both underlying vulnerabilities and the capacity to withstand increasingly frequent and severe shocks.
8. ODA, including that channelled through International Financial Institutions (IFIs), will continue to play a key role in development cooperation. The Council emphasises the need for mobilising flexible, strategic and catalytic resources from a wide range of available financial sources, from all development actors and the private sector. The Council recognises the potential behind innovative financing mechanisms, such as mobilising private funds, and encourages the Commission to reflect further on these instruments. The Council also stresses the critical importance of supporting partner countries in improving domestic revenue mobilisation and in reinforcing institutional capacities for sound public financial management. The Council recognises the need to make use of existing and innovative sources of funding to support the most vulnerable countries in building resilience to specific shocks, in particular climate shocks.

---

<sup>7</sup> ST 9383/17 Operationalising the Humanitarian-Development Nexus – Council conclusions (19 May 2017).

<sup>8</sup> ST 14463/22 Disaster Risk Reduction in EU external action – Council conclusions (28 November 2022).

9. The Council recognises the Global Gateway as one of the main strategies of EU external action and its contribution to achieving sustainable development in partner countries through investment in sustainable, resilient, high-quality infrastructure in mutually beneficial and equal partnerships. The Council calls for continued implementation of Global Gateway in a Team Europe spirit in line with the EU's and partner countries' mutual interests and based on the strategy's investment priorities: digital, climate and energy, transport, health, education and research. With a focus on key value chains and strategic corridors, the Council notes the importance of scaling up Global Gateway investments in a Team Europe approach, contributing to strengthening climate resilience, food security, and nutrition. While Global Gateway is also being deployed in several contexts with high or extreme levels of fragility – with context-specific challenges addressed through the 360° approach – continued attention is needed to ensure that this is done in a conflict sensitive manner and in support of more tailored and flexible approaches that specifically address fragility. The Council notes that the conditions for engaging in Global Gateway partnerships may not be present in all partner countries, and stresses the need for a differentiated EU approach in contexts where investment-driven models may not be suitable or effective.
10. The Council also recognises that in fragile and (post-)conflict settings particular attention should be given to supporting democratic transition processes, economic and social resilience and the strengthening of institutions and communities, with a focus on sustainability, inclusion and local ownership. The Council underlines the need to further enhance the EU's Integrated Approach to External Conflicts and Crises and to stay engaged in a pragmatic but principled manner.
11. The Council calls on the Commission to continue to cooperate in a mutually beneficial way with countries of origin and transit by building comprehensive partnerships. In this context, the Council calls on the Commission to develop sustainable approaches towards more coherence between development and migration policy, in line with EU and international law, including by addressing the root causes of irregular migration in a sustainable manner.



12. The Council calls on the Commission to integrate humanitarian, development, stabilisation and peace approaches into its programming and ensure coherence and complementarity between projects and with activities of Member States, IFIs, United Nations and civil society wherever possible. The Council also encourages closer coordination with other like-minded donors and implementing partners. The Council reiterates that the EU and its Member States will continue shaping and coordinating their interventions on the basis of policy coherence for development.
13. The Council underlines the importance to continue the work on a Commission-wide integrated approach to fragility. With regard to fragile countries, and in particular in politically constrained and complex settings, the Council calls for a differentiated approach. The Council encourages Member States to continue supporting a close collaboration between the EU, IFIs/MDBs and United Nations in fragile settings.
14. The Council calls on the Commission to continue improving early warning and conflict prevention, monitoring and risk analysis to inform programming as well as non-programmable actions. The Council encourages the Commission, the High Representative and Member States to continue and improve sharing their analyses, reviews and lessons learned as well as action plans in a Team Europe approach, to ensure collective learning and swift and coherent response from the EU and its Member States.
15. The Council encourages further reflection on a comprehensive, value-based European offer to human centric e-governance, supporting EU's and partner countries' mutual resilience and digital sovereignty.
16. The Council encourages the Commission, the High Representative and Member States to continue highlighting the EU's support to resilience in their communication and awareness raising efforts, to emphasise that the EU is a stable, trustworthy and reliable partner providing unwavering support. The Council encourages strategic communication in local languages and through channels accessible to the local population.
17. The Council encourages the Commission to continue keeping a strong focus on building resilience, enhancing stability, fostering peace, addressing protection risks and overcoming fragility in partner countries in the reflections on the future of EU external action, without pre-empting the negotiations of the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).