

Draft report on the EU in a changing global environment – a more contested, connected, complex world

Amendments proposed by PLATFORMA¹

The need to rethink the EU’s external action is timely, given the number of crises that are taking place in Europe’s immediate and wider neighbourhood as well as the recent adoption of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. We particularly welcome the importance given to partnerships with a variety of actors and the reference to the promotion of economic development and resilience, as these are key in addressing the global threats the EU is facing today.

Nevertheless, **the report ignores the local dimension**. Indeed, many of the global challenges the EU faces today have local roots and must, as a result, be tackled at the local level. This is particularly true in the field of migration and climate change, two of the main challenges identified in the Strategic Review. While the report mentions the role of non-state actors and civil society organizations, local and regional governments (LRGs) are absent from the text. We recall that local and regional authorities are key actors for democratic governance at local level, and for basic services delivery. Furthermore, they have been recognized by both the European Union² and the United Nations³ as development actors. In consequence, the EU would benefit from further involving LRGs in the design and implementation of its external assistance in third countries.

Moreover, the report should also refer to the recently adopted 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda and Paris Agreement on Climate Change. Both documents and the actions that derive from them are of capital importance if the EU is to become an influential global actor.

On the basis of the above-mentioned points, we suggest the following amendments:

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<i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i>	<i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i>
(New)	- having regard to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in September 2015, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;

Justification: Given their significance as well as their relevance to the topic of concern, it is important that the report takes note of the recently adopted 2030 Agenda and Paris Agreement on Climate

¹ PLATFORMA is the network of local and regional governments, and their associations, active in the field of development cooperation between Europe and partner countries.

² European Parliament reports on “*the role of local authorities in developing countries in development cooperation*” (2015/2004(INI)); European Commission Communication “*Empowering Local Authorities in Partner Countries for enhance governance and more effective development outcomes*” of 2013

³ Report ‘*Dialogue on localizing the Post-2015 Development Agenda*’ prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Global Taskforce for local and regional governments and UN Habitat, of 31 October 2014.

Change. Promoting the sustainable development of partner countries will benefit Europe’s external influence and open new opportunities for commercial exchanges.

Stabilise Europe’s wider neighbourhood

8.

<i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i>	<i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i>
<p>8. Is of the opinion that in order to build stability and peace, the EU should keep up its enlargement commitments and continue cooperation with very closely associated countries within the context of the newly revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP); recalls that according to Article 49 TEU any European state may apply to become a member of the European Union, provided it adheres to the Copenhagen criteria and the principles of democracy and respect for fundamental freedoms and human and minority rights, and ensures the rule of law;</p>	<p>8. Is of the opinion that in order to build stability and peace, the EU should keep up its enlargement commitments and continue cooperation with very closely associated countries within the context of the newly revised European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP); believes that the ENP should further incorporate a multi-stakeholder approach and involve local and regional governments and civil society ; recalls that according to Article 49 TEU any European state may apply to become a member of the European Union, provided it adheres to the Copenhagen criteria and the principles of democracy and respect for fundamental freedoms and human and minority rights, and ensures the rule of law;</p>

Justification: The review process of the European Neighbourhood Policy is a good opportunity to rethink its methods, including the way the EU interacts with partners. In this regard, it is important that the report highlights the positive move towards a more flexible tool that ensures partner countries’ sense of ownership. Moreover, LRGs and their associations should be able to benefit from this opportunity and be more engaged at an institutional level in the design of the bilateral action plans.

9.

<i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i>	<i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i>
<p>9. Calls for sustainable management of asylum and migration policies on the basis of common principles and solidarity; in this context, asks the Commission to propose effective and sustainable solutions; believes that in this regard the EU should promote a more practical and comprehensive approach to assistance in Africa;</p>	<p>9. Calls for sustainable management of asylum and migration policies on the basis of common principles and solidarity; in this context, asks the Commission to propose effective and sustainable solutions; believes that in this regard the EU should promote a more practical and comprehensive approach to assistance in Africa; supports the establishment of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, which should contribute to building local communities’ resilience and economic development;</p>



Justification: Migration policies need a holistic approach⁴ which effectively tackles the root causes in the countries of origin. In this regard, it is important to build the resilience of local populations as well as a more enabling environment for local economic development.

10.

<i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i>	<i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i>
10. Believes that inclusive multilateral diplomacy under the leadership of the VP/HR is a crucial tool in conflict resolution in the neighbourhood; believes that more links and synergies need to be made between diplomacy and home affairs;	10. Believes that inclusive multilateral diplomacy under the leadership of the VP/HR is a crucial tool in conflict resolution in the neighbourhood; believes that more links and synergies need to be made between diplomacy, and home affairs, and development cooperation ;

Justification: As previously said, underdevelopment is one of the main driving forces behind the emergence of conflicts. In consequence, the VP/HR should involve DG DEVCO in its diplomatic efforts in order to ensure a multidimensional approach to conflict resolution.

Become a stronger actor in a multipolar world

11.

<i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i>	<i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i>
11. Believes that the EU should be a constructive and resilient global actor with a regional focus and aspire to be a 'rule-maker', establishing efficient multilateral global governance;	11. Believes that the EU should be a constructive and resilient global actor with a regional focus and aspire to be a 'rule-maker', establishing efficient multilateral global governance; stresses that the promotion of good governance and decentralised institutions that are accountable to their citizens in third countries can contribute positively to the security of EU citizens ;

Justification: The promotion of good governance and decentralised and accountable institutions should be part of the EU's role as a global actor. Decentralization and accountability are means to improve democracy, the justice system, and the rule of law as well as to effectively tackle corruption.

15.

<i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i>	<i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i>

⁴ As recommended the European Parliament in its report on The situation in the Mediterranean and the need for a holistic EU approach to migration (2015/2095(INI))

<p>15. Emphasises that enhancing cooperation with global and regional actors on global threats is necessary in order to achieve a global rules-based order; believes that pairing up on specific sectoral issues with interested regional actors allows European values to be shared and contributes to growth and development; notes that establishing closer relationships with non-state actors civil society is also necessary and that the way the EU builds and defines partnerships needs to be reviewed;</p>	<p>15. Emphasises that enhancing cooperation with global and regional actors on global threats is necessary in order to achieve a global rules-based order; believes that pairing up on specific sectoral issues with interested regional actors allows European values to be shared and contributes to growth and development; reminds that global threats often have local causes and that, as a result, their solution requires the involvement of local actors; notes that establishing closer relationships with non-state actors, and local and regional governments and civil society is also necessary crucial to ensure a comprehensive approach to global challenges such as climate change and terrorism, and that the way the EU builds and defines partnerships needs to be reviewed in order to enhance partners' sense of ownership and further incorporate a multi-stakeholder approach;</p>
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Justification: The international community is increasingly sensitive to the need to involve as many key stakeholders as possible in tackling today's global problems. LRGs and their associations are important players that need to be taken into account in the new paradigm, as phenomena such as migration and climate change, on top of being global challenges, also have important local causes and solutions. Moreover, a multi-stakeholder approach is key to the effectiveness of external assistance, as it enhances third countries' sense of ownership.

17.

<i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i>	<i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i>
<p>17. Notes that in order to attain the above objectives, the EU must deepen its partnerships with other global and regional actors and its partnerships with non-state actors and civil society;</p>	<p>17. Notes that in order to attain the above objectives, the EU must deepen its partnerships with other global and regional actors and its partnerships with non-state actors, local and regional governments and civil society by, involving them in the design and implementation of partnerships;</p>

Justification: As said before, it is important that the report explicitly highlights the need to involve LRGs in the EU's partnerships. Moreover, the report should also call for this partnerships to offer a *real* inclusion of the actors involved in the design and implementation of programmes of external assistance.

18.

<i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i>	<i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i>
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<p>18. Emphasises that the EU must continue and reinforce its efforts to promote economic development and resilience in its neighbourhood and in regions that are critical to EU interests;</p>	<p>18. Emphasises that the EU must continue and reinforce its efforts to promote economic development and resilience in its neighbourhood and in regions that are critical to EU interests; recalls that small and medium enterprises are the prime suppliers of jobs and that facilitating their work is thus crucial to foster economic development;</p>
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Justification: Economic development has a strong local dimension because of the weight SMEs have in a number of third countries as important contributors to economic activity and employment. Hence, the report should recognize this fact and call on the EU to reinforce its support to SMEs.

Engage – the EU, national parliaments and European citizens

22.

<i>Text proposed by the European Parliament</i>	<i>Amendment of PLATFORMA</i>
<p>22. Strongly urges European policy-makers to engage with citizens and civil society on the necessity and benefits of providing a stronger framework for Europe’s security.</p>	<p>22. Strongly urges European policy-makers to engage with citizens, local and regional governments and civil society on the necessity and benefits of providing a stronger framework for Europe’s security.</p>

Justification: As previously said, it is essential that European policy-makers involve LRGs in the discussions around the global strategy, as the latter are the closest to citizens and, hence, the most aware of their demands, needs and fears.

PLATFORMA is the network of local and regional governments (LRGs), and their associations, active in the field of development cooperation between Europe and partner countries. PLATFORMA has 34 members: national, European and international associations, as well individual local and regional governments. The Secretariat is hosted by the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (more information on www.platforma-dev.eu).

Since its launch, PLATFORMA has actively engaged with the European institutions to inform and constructively participate in shaping the EU development policy with two main objectives; i. strengthening EU support to local governance in partner countries and, ii. strengthening EU support to decentralised cooperation as an implementation means of development cooperation.

In 2015, PLATFORMA signed a Strategic partnership with the European Commission Directorate-General for International Development and Cooperation, whereby signatories commit to take actions based on common values and objectives to tackle global poverty and inequality, and to promote democracy and sustainable development.