

Towards efficient External Financing Instruments serving a multi-stakeholder development policy

Political position adopted by PLATFORMA Political Council, meeting on 26th of April

We, Political representatives of PLATFORMA – the coalition of more than 100.000 local and regional governments for development cooperation between Europe and partner countries – call on the European institutions and Member States to adopt the following recommendations in view of the mid-term revision of the External Financing Instruments, as well as in view of the future programming period.

Considering:

- The universality of the Sustainable Development Goals and their recognition of the key importance of **multi-stakeholder involvement** to reach the objectives;
- The shared position paper of CSOs and Local Authorities in the context of the Policy Forum for Development calling for the EU's support to a Multi-Stakeholder Approach in development;
- The draft evaluation of the External Financing Instruments, and in particular of the Development Cooperation Instruments clearly highlights that the Local Authority component of the CSO-LA programme did not reach its full potential due to **unsuited modalities and under-capacitated European Union Delegations**;
- That addressing challenges with a local approach allows for true realisation of the differentiation principle and is the most appropriate way to **address inequalities within countries**.

We recommend therefore:

- That the European development cooperation policy continues to be value driven, and aiming at eradicating poverty and inequalities. In this regard, we call on the EU **to build on the international action of European local and regional government** to strengthen EU development policy in all partner countries, including those to be graduated, middle income countries and upper middle income countries.
- **A political and strategic approach** to engage with local and regional governments in partner countries, notably to implement development effectiveness principles – particularly to guarantee local ownership. The EU delegations must engage in a regular dialogue and systematic consultation with local and regional governments –preferably with their representative associations at national or regional level – in order to design development programmes, to define the most suitable financing modalities, as well as for the monitoring process. In this respect, a **Roadmap for cooperation with local and regional governments** could be drafted by EU delegations in each country.
- The systematic inclusion of **capacity building** for local and regional governments and their associations in EU development programmes in partner countries and the recognition that **local and regional governments** involved in decentralised cooperation (North/South, South-South) are key to support their counterparts in partner countries.

We call upon the European Union institutions to:

- Take full account of **the specificities of local and regional authorities as one tier of government** in order to fulfil its commitments to engage with local authorities in multi-stakeholder dialogues¹. Local and regional governments are both policy makers and service providers in their own right, bounded by a national legal framework. The EU programming should recognise this, for instance by simplifying financial rules and allowing support to local government civil servant staff.
- Design **new financial support modalities** that better fit the specificities of local and regional governments in partner countries. For instance, specific modalities could be included in budget support so that the funds be appropriately devolved to benefit population at the local level, and contribute to the implementation of the SDGs.
- Recognise that local and regional governments are not limited as an isolated sector but are **relevant stakeholders in a number of policy fields** addressed by the different European Financial Instruments, such as for democracy, good governance and human rights; climate change mitigation and adaptation; agriculture and food security policies; public services delivery (water and sanitation, electricity delivery, health, education, access to public spaces and infrastructures, etc.); local economic development; resilience; human mobility and demographic change policies; urbanisation, etc. In this regard, call on the European Commission and its Delegations in partner countries to include local and regional governments **in all programmes related to local and regional governments' competencies**.
- Consider the role of local and regional governments in refugee transit and host countries. Considering that it is estimated that refugees live on average for 17 years in refugee camps, **migration challenge must be put in a longer-term perspective** that also addresses policies such as urban and local economic development. Making enhanced participation of subnational governments key to effectively tackle the root causes of migration
- Systematically adopt a **Territorial Approach to Local Development** through the EU delegations in order to strengthening citizens through democratic and accountable local representative governments and guaranteeing qualitative decentralisation accompanied by governance capabilities to engage in multi-stakeholder cooperation at all levels. In this regards we emphasise the strong potential of programming designed to engage local and regional governments and the civil society organisations simultaneously.
- To involve representatives of local and regional governments that could benefit or be affected by knock-on effects of the EU Trust Funds and blending facilities to be involved in their governance and decision making

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.

¹ European Commission Communication "[Empowering Local Authorities in Partner Countries for Enhanced Governance and More Effective Development Outcomes](#)", and the [Council conclusions](#) of July 2013.