



**Trade union input to the EU Global Strategy for Foreign and Security Policy:**  
***Development and decent work at the core of EU foreign and security policy  
for more inclusive and resilient EU partners***

Trade Union Development Cooperation Network / European Trade Union Confederation  
2 June 2016

In late June 2016, the EU High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy/European Commission Vice-President Federica Mogherini, will unveil the **EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy** (EU Global Strategy). This document is set to address the challenges of EU foreign policy in a more connected, contested and complex world, and could mark an opportunity to recalibrate the different tools of the EU's external action in a more coherent and efficient manner.

Trade unions believe that **development policy should be an essential part of the EU Global Strategy**. Development is not possible without security, and security is not possible without development. The EU Global Strategy should avoid a pure security and defence approach, but rather pursue a holistic approach in defining relations between EU and partner countries and regions. In this sense, social partners and civil society must be seen as fundamental actors in guaranteeing more resilient and sustainable societies.

The EU Global Strategy should contribute to the realisation of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, pioneering the implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Trade unions are particularly committed to realising goals and targets to end poverty, foster decent work, ensure quality education, provide public services, infrastructure and social protection policies, reduce inequalities, champion women's participation in the work force and improve fiscal, wage and social protection policies, ensure a just transition with green jobs as a way to mitigate climate change and address root causes of migration while promoting free movement areas.

Therefore, **trade unions are a natural partner of the EU in advancing the SDGs implementation and follow-up** in partner countries and in international fora. The universality of the 2030 Agenda should also be reflected in the external action of the EU, which should lead by example and mainstream the SDGs in all policies, including development cooperation, trade, migration and human rights.

**Multilateralism and multi-stakeholder dialogue as guiding principles for EU's foreign and security policy**

- Trade unions fully support the EU's role in fostering global development architecture, through multilateralism, policy coherence for development and coordination of Member States for improved harmonisation and transparency.
- The EU should make the most of its leading role in multilateral arenas and bilateral relations, advancing a social justice agenda that involves social partners and civil society.

- The EU should take part in global efforts to support decent work, social dialogue and social protection, pursuing a proactive leading role in raising awareness and promoting the role of social protection in accordance with international labour standards and the Decent Work agenda, in collaboration with the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and other international bodies.
- It is important to enhance the role of developing countries in international fora, such as the UN, in order to ensure a fairer representation of interests.
- The EU must also strengthen European diplomacy, enhance its operational capacities to prevent conflict, support democracy and peace, manage crises and build alliances through mediation and dialogue, and promote and empower civil society.

### **EU's decent work diplomacy: social dialogue, social protection and core labour standards as tools for the development of resilient and sustainable societies**

- Decent work and social protection are key elements that guarantee stability and resilience of states. Social Dialogue and collective bargaining play a crucial role in ensuring fair wages, while also tackling informal work. Addressing the issue of the “working poor” constitutes one of the most important priorities in fighting inequality.
- Ensuring the participation of social partners (trade unions and employers’ representatives), through social dialogue, in the design of development policies and strategies (at national, regional and global level), is the only way to foster equitable growth for sustainable development.
- Countries with solid social protection schemes are better equipped to cope with the effects of economic downturn or crisis. Social protection not only protects people against global crises but also against all kinds of risks that occur throughout their life. Social protection also brings social peace and therefore provides stability. This is especially important in the context of fragile states.
- Good governance of partner countries requires the respect of international standards. ILO Conventions and recommendations provide a set of benchmarks that assist countries in implementing good governance, allowing workers to organize themselves and bargain in a collective way.

### **The role of the EU in fostering and protecting vibrant civil societies in partner countries**

- Basic human and labour rights are under threat in many countries, and must be defended with vigour and commitment. Autocratic and repressive regimes are increasingly efficient in undermining human rights, democracy, freedom of association and the development of an active civil society. EU human rights policy should be at the forefront of EU external action and be coherent with trade, migration and climate policies.
- International actors are often the only ones that can play a crucial role in providing political and operational support for the independence and autonomy of CSOs in the partner country, in fostering their right of initiative, and in promoting social dialogue and other mechanisms for democratic participation.
- The way in which the EU builds and defines partnerships needs to be reviewed in order to enhance country ownership and further incorporate a multi-stakeholder approach (involvement of partner countries’ civil society in the design of EU development policy).
- Trade unions note that establishing closer relationships with non-state actors, social partners and civil society is also crucial to ensuring a comprehensive approach to global challenges, such as climate change.

## **A coherent, cross-cutting, accountable approach to private sector, trade and climate change and aid effectiveness**

- The 2030 Agenda as well as the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development promote private finance as a source of funding for development of growing importance. The development of the private sector in developing countries is important to create job opportunities, deliver services and enhance wealth creation. However, unconditional criteria are needed to ensure that private sector intervention is in line with the public interest and business is accountable for development results, especially if this is supported by public resources. The EU can make an important contribution as a normative power by promoting the observance of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs), to address and reduce corporate-related human rights abuses.
- EU external policy should not promote a privatisation of the development agenda. The private sector is not a viable alternative to the state in providing public services. Trade unions reaffirm their doubts on the accountability and responsibility of the private sector in the wake of innovative financing instruments such as “blending” and “public private partnerships” (PPPs).
- The EU should use its representation in international and European development banks to impose fairer conditions to loans and guarantees, namely the respect by the recipients of ILO Conventions and the obligation not to operate from tax havens.
- Climate catastrophes are increasing and hurting working people. The EU’s diplomacy should promote compliance of international climate commitments, particularly related to just transition, green economy and green jobs. Trade unions point to the importance of compliance with international labour and environmental protection standards, which gives greater transparency to the social and environmental commitments of companies to ensure fairer development in the countries where they operate.
- Labour standards can be gravely affected by trade patterns. Investment treaties and agreements should guarantee the enforceability of national labour laws and internationally recognised labour standards. Trade agreements should not mean giving up national tools for structural transformation and their capacities to define policies that would generate state income and create decent work.
- The EU should continue promoting aid effectiveness in the framework of the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation (GPEDC), taking into account the positions and expertise of civil society and social partners in this process.
- The EU and its member states should work towards coherent positions and action on development cooperation within the 2030 Agenda, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the EU Global Strategy, the upcoming revision of the EU Consensus on Development and the outcome of the 2<sup>nd</sup> High Level Meeting of the GPEDC.

\*\*\*

For more information, contact Joan Lanfranco, Advocacy Officer, TUDCN, [joan.lanfranco@ituc-csi.org](mailto:joan.lanfranco@ituc-csi.org).  
Permanent link: <http://www.ituc-csi.org/EUGlobalStrategy>



**The Trade Union Development Cooperation Network (TUDCN)** is an initiative of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC), bringing together affiliated trade union organisations, solidarity support organisations, regional ITUC organisations, the Global Union Federations (GUFs), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the Trade Union Advisory Committee to the OECD (TUAC). TUDCN's objective is to bring the trade union perspective into the international development policy debates and improve the coordination and effectiveness of trade union development cooperation activities.

*Le Réseau syndical de coopération au développement (RSCD) est une initiative de la Confédération syndicale internationale (CSI) réunissant des organisations syndicales affiliées, des organisations de solidarité, les organisations régionales de la CSI, ainsi que les Fédérations syndicales internationales (les fédérations sectorielles - FSI), la Confédération européenne des syndicats (CES) et la Commission syndicale consultative auprès de l'OCDE (TUAC). Le RSCD a pour but de traduire la perspective syndicale dans les débats sur la politique en matière de développement international et d'améliorer la coordination et l'efficacité des activités syndicales dans le domaine de la coopération au développement.*

La **Red Sindical de Cooperación al Desarrollo (RSCD)** es una iniciativa de la Confederación Sindical Internacional (CSI), que agrupa a diversas organizaciones sindicales afiliadas, organizaciones solidarias (OS), organizaciones regionales de la CSI, las Federaciones Sindicales Internacionales (FSI), la Confederación Europea de Sindicatos (CES) y la Comisión Sindical Consultiva ante la OCDE (TUAC). El objetivo de la red es aportar la perspectiva sindical a los debates políticos y mejorar la coordinación y la eficacia de las actividades sindicales relacionadas con la cooperación al desarrollo.



This project is co-funded by the European Union

[dce@ituc-csi.org](mailto:dce@ituc-csi.org)

+32 (0) 2 224 02 25



@TUDCN\_RSCD



/TUDCN.RSCD

[www.ituc-csi.org/development-cooperation](http://www.ituc-csi.org/development-cooperation)