THE EU GREEN DEAL IN INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS:
An examples’ guide of EU and SOLIDAR members’ work
INTRODUCTION

Climate change and environmental degradation are some of the most pressing challenges of our times. The European Union's answer to this challenge has been the introduction of a Green Deal for Europe, that is a policy strategy aimed at promoting reforms towards the achievement of a sustainable and green socioeconomic model for the continent. The Green Deal sets ambitious goals for the EU, including the achievement of climate neutrality by 2050, as well as the commitment of the Union to promoting a fair and inclusive transition underpinned in the 20 principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights.

The EU's ambitions for a green transition extend also beyond its borders, to its international partnerships. In this regard, a series of Green Alliances will be promoted with governments and regional partners across the world, and 30% of the new EU development funding tool, the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI), will be dedicated to fighting climate change.

As enshrined in 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its sustainable development Goals (SDGs), the successful implementation of the European Green Deal inside and outside the EU relies on ensuring the connection between the environmental, social and economic policies.

The scope of the present paper is to provide SOLIDAR member organisations with an overview of the EU Green Agenda and its impact on international partnerships, as well as to provide examples of programmes financed by the EU which might be of inspiration and guidance for SOLIDAR Members’ programmes promoting a Just Transition.

The paper also highlights SOLIDAR’s approach to what the green transition should look like. In fact, while SOLIDAR praises the EU's efforts to promote a Green Agenda as a major political priority, we also note the lack of a clear link in the Green Deal between the Green SDGs and Social SDGs, especially in the realm of international partnerships, as well as the lack of a clear path for the transformation of our existing economic system. In view of this, in line with the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, SOLIDAR proposes a more holistic vision of the green transition as a Just transition, in which social and environmental goals are pursued alongside each other and as complementary.

Finally, the paper offers advice to SOLIDAR members for their engagement with EU Delegations in relation to the Green Deal.
1. OVERVIEW: EU DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION POLICY AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

The EU is the leading Official Development Assistance (ODA) donor in the world, providing, together with its member states, more than half of global development aid. EU development cooperation policy aims to contribute to sustainable development, the eradication of poverty, peace and the protection of human rights by implementing international objectives which the EU helped develop and committed to achieve, such as the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement.

In 2019, the newly elected European Commission (EC), led by President Ursula von der Leyen, decided to rename the former EC’s Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) as DG for International Partnerships (DG INTPA), communicating the maturation of the EU’s relationship with its development partner countries and a will to move away from a “donor-recipient relationship”, and achieve a “partnerships of equals” instead. The Commission also presented a new set of International Partnership priorities, that will guide EU development cooperation actions for the 2019-2025 period. These consist in forging:

1. Green Alliances and Partnerships
2. Alliances for Science, Technology, Innovation & Digital
3. Alliances for Sustainable Growth and Jobs
4. Partnerships for Migration and Mobility
5. Partnerships for Human Development, Peace and Governance

In addition, a series of cross cutting, all-encompassing priorities have also been put forward, such as (1) the inclusion of and dialogue with civil society, public and private actors in development cooperation action and debates, (2) the safeguard of fundamental rights, gender equality and women’s empowerment, (3) the increase in human capital, including health and education, and (4) the promotion of multilateralism and regional integration.

A further substantial change introduced by the new Commission was the creation of a new single development financing instrument which will blend together and streamline existing EU development financing tools into one: the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). This will be organised around a series of geographic and thematic priorities and will also include a ‘rapid response’ component. Of particular notice is that 30% of its total budget for the 2021-2027 programming period, consisting of €79.5 billion, will be allocated to programmes contributing to the achievement of the Climate and Green agenda.

1 European Commission, 2020, Mission Letter for Commissioner for International Partnerships
2. THE EU GREEN AGENDA: INITIATIVE WITHIN THE EU

The presentation of the new 2019-2025 International Partnership priorities, the first of which consists of the forging of Green Alliances, together with the introduction of the NDICI with its special emphasis on the achievement of climate and green objectives, reflect a broader shift in focus at the EU level towards an issue that has become increasingly urgent over the years: Climate Change and the necessity to promote a Green Transition of our economies and societies.

In 2019, President von der Leyen clearly recognised climate change and environmental degradation as the biggest contemporary challenges facing our global societies and generation, and put forward the creation of a ‘European Green Deal’ as the first of the political priorities to be achieved by the European Commission during her mandate. The Deal will constitute Europe’s structural response to the climate and environmental emergency, and a new growth strategy that sets out ambitions to transform the EU into a modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy where:

1. There are no net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050;
2. Economic growth is decoupled from resource use;
3. Natural capital is protected, sustainably managed and restored;
4. The health and well-being of citizens is protected from environment-related risks and impacts; and
5. No person and no place is left behind.

How will the Green Deal ambitions be achieved?

These objectives will be achieved through a series of actions that the EU pledged to implement, including the introduction of a European Climate Law - provisional agreement for which was reached by the European Parliament and the EU Council in April 2021 - that will enshrine the 2050 climate neutrality objective in legislation, making this a legally binding EU-wide common target. The Climate Law will comprise provisions for emission reductions, investment in climate-friendly technology and environmental protection. Moreover, the Green Deal also foresees a series of other flagship initiatives aimed at contributing to the achievement of climate neutrality in Europe, such as:

- A Circular Economy Action Plan, adopted in March 2021, which introduces legislative and non-legislative measures targeting how products are designed, and promotes circular economy processes, encouraging sustainable consumption, and aiming to ensure that waste is prevented and the resources used are kept in the EU economy for as long as possible. The Action Plan will also be complemented by a new EU Industrial Strategy, which will address the twin challenge of the green and the digital transformation.

- A ‘Farm to Fork’ Strategy, which will aim to accelerate our transition to a sustainable food system through both regulatory and non-regulatory initiatives.

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2 European Commission, 2019, Communication on The European Green Deal.
5 European Commission, Farm to Fork Strategy.
• A 2030 Biodiversity Strategy, a long-term plan for protecting, sustainably managing and restoring nature, as all drivers of biodiversity loss. This will be complemented by a renewal of the EU Forest Strategy, through which the EU aims to reduce its contribution to global deforestation and forest degradation.

• A Zero Pollution Action Plan for Water, Air and Soil, which has the objective to secure healthy ecosystems and a healthy living environment for Europeans and people globally, including by preventing and remediating pollution from air, water, soil, and consumer products. This will also be accompanied by a Chemicals Strategy for sustainability, to ensure a toxic-free environment.

• A European Climate Pact, that is an EU-wide initiative inviting people, communities and organisations to participate in climate action and build a greener Europe by connecting, sharing knowledge and implementing joint solutions.

How will the Green Deal be financed?

The initiatives under the Green Deal will be financed through a number of financial instruments, the most important of which will be well as reversing environmental degradation by addressing the Sustainable Europe Investment Plan (also known as European Green Deal Investment Plan), which will mobilise at least €1 trillion to support sustainable investments over the next decade through the EU budget and associated instruments, in particular InvestEU.12

Importantly, moreover, the Green Deal Investment Plan also foresees a Just Transition Mechanism (JTM). In its 2019 Communication on the Deal, in fact, the European Commission recognised that the green transition “can only succeed if it is conducted in a fair and inclusive way”, and that “careful attention will have to be paid when there are potential trade-offs between economic, environmental and social objectives.” Guided by the principles of the European Pillar of Social Rights – the European social agenda - the Commission thus introduced the JTM as the instrument that will ensure that “no one is left behind” in the green revolution. The JTM will focus on the regions and sectors that are most affected by the transition because they depend on fossil fuels or carbon-intensive processes, and will include a Just Transition Fund that will provide primarily grants to these regions to support workers to develop skills and competences for the job market of the future, to support SMEs, as well as the creation of new economic opportunities and jobs; moreover, the Fund will also support investments in clean energy transition, for example in energy efficiency. Finally, the Commission announced the launch of a Just Transition Platform, which will provide a single access point for authorities and beneficiaries to find support and knowledge related to the Just Transition.

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6 European Commission, Biodiversity strategy for 2030 - concrete actions.
7 European Commission, EU Forestry explained.
8 European Commission, Zero Pollution Action Plan.
9 European Commission, Chemicals Strategy.
10 European Commission, EU Climate Pact.
12 The aim of InvestEU is to provide long-term funding to companies and constitutes one of the main instruments for EU recovery from the Covid-19 crisis, with 30% of its total budget being dedicated to fighting climate change.
13 European Commission, 2019, Communication on The European Green Deal.
# EU GREEN DEAL

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Main objectives</th>
<th>Main initiatives</th>
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<td>1. No net emissions of greenhouse gases by 2050;</td>
<td>European Climate Law</td>
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<td>2. Economic growth is decoupled from resource use;</td>
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<td>3. Natural capital is protected, sustainably managed and restored;</td>
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<td>4. The health and well-being of citizens is protected from environment-related risks and impacts;</td>
<td>2030 Biodiversity Strategy</td>
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<td>5. No person and no place is left behind.</td>
<td>Zero Pollution Action Plan for Water, Air and Soil</td>
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<td>European Climate Pact</td>
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1 trillion mobilised through Sustainable Europe Investment Plan

**Just Transition Mechanism**

Provides technical support and funds to regions and Member States, especially those that still heavily depend on fossil fuels and carbon-intensive processes.

"Careful attention will have to be paid when there are potential trade-offs between economic, environmental and social objectives."
While the Green Deal is an EU focused initiative, it nonetheless recognises that the green transition cannot be understood only as a European challenge, but as a global one that requires a worldwide effort and response. This is why the Deal sets the EU to be a global leader in the climate and environmental transition, and commits the Union to continuing to promote and implement ambitious environment, climate and energy policies around the world, while ensuring support and opportunities to those people who are most affected by and vulnerable to the consequences of this transition.

In the realm of development cooperation, this will translate into the forging of Green Deals as the top priority in international partnerships. Here are some examples of programs and partnerships that have already been established:

**Bi-regional cooperation**

At the **regional level**, for instance, the EU and the African Union have established an *Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP)*, that will be one of the pillars of the new Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES). This will constitute a long-term framework for strategic dialogue between the two continents, aimed at sharing knowledge, setting political priorities and developing joint programmes on the key energy issues. The overall objective of the AEEP will be to improve access to secure, affordable and sustainable energy for both continents, with a special focus on increasing investment in energy infrastructure in Africa.

**Sub-regional cooperation**

At the sub-regional and country level, the EU will also reinforce its support to the green and climate transition through funding tools such as the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). The funding allocation of the NDICI will depend on the joint elaboration of country and regional Multiannual Indicative Programs (MIPs).
In the draft *Regional MIP for Sub-Saharan Africa 2021-27* prepared by the EU - that is yet to go through a series of consultation rounds before being finalised - for instance, the green and climate transition appears as one of the main areas of cooperation and investment. In particular, the EU is set to finance programmes revolving around:

- **Energy**: renewable energy production (hydropower, solar, wind, hydrogen), interconnectivity, energy efficiency, storage, and distribution;

- **Resilient agri-food systems and climate change adaptation**, including nutrition, women empowerment and digital services;

- **Biodiversity, environment and wildlife management**, including fighting against wildlife, forest trafficking and illegal exploitation, as well as promotion of circular economy and restoration of biodiversity loss;

- **Water and oceans**, including the promotion of a sustainable, circular, inclusive and equitable blue economy, as well as water resource management.

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### Linking the Green Deal and Social Deal for a Just Transition - EU Projects

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<th>Green Deal target areas</th>
<th>Social/Human Development objectives</th>
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<td>Cambodia, Switch Garment project</td>
<td>Sustainable energy practices in manufacturing</td>
<td>Decent working condition, including occupational health and safety (OHS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>North Cameroon, ReSI-NoC project</td>
<td>Sustainable and ecological agriculture, agricultural innovation</td>
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<td>Burkina Faso, Transformation of Household Wastes into Fertiliser</td>
<td>Sustainable waste management</td>
<td>Right to health, access to hygiene and sanitation</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

14 Capacity4Dev, Preliminary overview of what could be envisaged in the future multi-annual indicative programme (MIP) for Sub-Saharan Africa 2021-27
**Country level**

At the country level, some examples of programs financed by the EU to promote environmental sustainability and a green economy are:

- The *ReSI-NoC project* in North Cameroon, that has a 2.5 million euro budget, being implemented over a 4-year timeframe (2020-2024). Its objective is to strengthen agricultural innovation systems with a view of promoting agro-sylvo-pastoral production systems that are economically profitable, ecologically sustainable and socially equitable.

- The *SWITCH Garment project* in Cambodia, also being implemented over 4 years (2020-2021) and with a budget of more than 2.5 million euros. Its objective is to increase the competitiveness and decrease the environmental impact of the Cambodian garment industry through sustainable production. More specifically, the project aims to increase the investment in sustainable energy practices (such as efficient technologies, switch to renewable energy and good operations management) by garment factories in Cambodia.

- A project concerning the *Transformation of Household Wastes into Fertiliser in Burkina Faso*, which was implemented over 3 years between 2015 and 2018 and had a budget of 225,000 euros. Its main objective was to collect about 3,000 tons of waste per year and convert it into composts which shall be used by the local growers for cashew nuts to seize opportunities for green development; increased trade and investment nationally and at the counties in green technologies.

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**Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)**

**Tot. Budget 2021-2027: €79.5 billion**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Geographic programmes</th>
<th>€60.38 billion</th>
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<tr>
<td>€19.32 Neighbourhood</td>
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<td>€29.18 Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
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<td>€3.39 LA &amp; Caribbean</td>
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<td>€8.48 Asia &amp; Pacific</td>
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<tr>
<th>Thematic Programs</th>
<th>€6.36 billion</th>
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<td>Human Rights and Democracy</td>
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<td>(up to 25% to electoral observation missions)</td>
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<td>Civil Society Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<th>Rapid Response</th>
<th>€6.36 billion</th>
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<tr>
<td>Crisis response, Conflict prevention, Resilience, Linking humanitarian and development actions, Foreign policy needs and priorities</td>
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<tr>
<th>Unallocated Funds</th>
<th>€9.53 billion</th>
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<td>For-unforseen events &amp; emerging challenges</td>
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Where will resources come from?

The main funding instrument for the implementation of the Green Deal objectives in international partnership will be the Neighbourhood, Development and Cooperation Instrument (NDICI). This will have a 30% spending target on climate change objectives, and its allocation will be divided mainly between Geographic and Thematic priorities (Figure 1). The new instrument merges together a series of previously independent instruments existing under the 2014-2020 EU budget cycle, including the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) - now replaced by the ‘Human Rights and Democracy’ thematic priority - and the Civil Society Organisations and Local Authorities (CSO/LA) instrument, replaced in the NDICI by the thematic priority ‘Civil Society Organisations’.

In addition, the EU will also finance climate- and environment-related programs in partner countries through a series of other initiatives that fall outside the NDICI and that was introduced or reinforced in the Green Deal. These work mainly through financing agreements with partner countries, international organisations as well as private sector entities, although some opportunities for funding may also be available for CSOs, for instance through the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) initiative.

Working Towards a Just Transition - SOLIDAR Network’s vision

As shown so far, the green transition is clearly a top priority for the EU, and its programs in the coming years will be greatly focused on promoting environmental protection and adaptation to climate change. It is however important to remember that the green transformation does not come in a vacuum: this is in fact set to have a great impact on people and communities worldwide, especially in countries of the Global South, which are the most affected by the consequences of climate change and are now facing the additional challenge posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

It is for this reason that the SOLIDAR Network highlights the need to make of the green transition a Just Transition first and foremost. This concept, first introduced by the trade union movement, implies that the greening of our economies and societies must take into account the human development needs of populations, the necessity to guarantee them decent work opportunities as well as skills training to adapt to the new needs of the green markets, and social protection mechanisms to make sure that no one is left behind. Social and civil dialogue, the involvement of all sectors of society in all stages of policy making, from design to implementation and evaluation, must also be a fundamental element of the Just Transition. Importantly, as the International Labour Organisation also highlights, “the idea of Just Transition should not be an ‘add-on’ to climate policy; it needs to be an integral part of the sustainable development policy framework.” That is, social goals as part of the green transition must not be secondary to environmental goals, but equal and mutually reinforcing.

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15 Some initiatives are: the Global Climate Change Alliance Plus (GCCA+) initiative, aimed at helping the world’s most vulnerable countries to address climate change; the Switch to Green Flagship Initiative, aimed at facilitating the transition to an inclusive green economy that generates growth, creates decent jobs, and helps reduce poverty; and the Development Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture (DeSIRA) initiative, which has the objective to contribute to climate-relevant, productive and sustainable transformation of agriculture and food systems in low and middle-income countries.

16 ILO, 2018, Just Transition Towards Environmentally Sustainable Economies and Societies for All.
The work of our members already provides very good examples of what working towards a Just Transition means in practice:

- **ARCS Arci Culture Solidali**, for example, works in West Cameroon on the project ‘ENTER’, whose aim is to contribute to the improvement of the quality of life and public health in the region by promoting access to cleanwater and renewable energy, strengthening natural resource management skills and increasing the use of appropriate technologies in 20 pilot villages.

- **Movimento Por la Paz (MPDL)** works in Nicaragua on a project promoting rural women empowerment and participation in the agroecology transition, with the aim of ensuring that women’s rights to a dignified life, a decent job, and freedom from violence are guaranteed in this transition.

- **ACPP works in 6 Mediterranean countries** (Spain, Greece, Portugal, Palestine, Tunisia and Jordan) on the project MedTOWN (ENI CBC MED 2014/2021), promoting a more sustainable and fair economic model that is based on the principles of the Social Solidarity Economy (SSE). The model is based on the creation of bottom-up multilateral partnerships for the ‘co-production’ of social policies with the use of complementary currencies (electronic public currencies). It includes social experiments carried out in each country, including two focused on climate action and environmental protection, such as the installment of a Local Waste Management System in Palestine and Community Building around the Agroforest Bela Flor in Lisbon, Portugal.

- **Solidar Suisse** works towards promoting Decent work and Just Transition in several Asian countries through its Asia Programme, building increased awareness and capacity among workers, especially women, to self-organise into democratic organisations allowing them to bargain for decent work. Through its program, Solidar Suisse campaigns to raise awareness on occupational safety and health issues linked to hazardous working conditions related to unsafe chemicals, asbestos, pesticides, and the outlook of future additional pressure due to climate change and increased resource allocation conflicts.

- **APHEDA** works on promoting Decent work and Energy Democracy for Energy sector workers in Nepal, the Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and India, promoting knowledge creation and capacity building among workers, trade unions and policy makers about their role in the Just Transition and in the fight against climate change, and promoting the decarbonisation of the energy sector.

Through our work and campaigns, the SOLIDAR Network will be at the forefront of international efforts to promote and achieve a Just Transition. At the EU level, SOLIDAR will continue advocating for the EU to concentrate its efforts on promoting a Just Transition through its international partnerships programmes and alliances.

Moreover, it will contribute to knowledge creation on this topic by giving visibility and promoting good practices on Just Transition from the grassroots work of our members and partners. At the same time, SOLIDAR will also work on the capacity building of its members as well as encourage peer-to-peer learning and collaboration on Just Transition.
## Linking the Green Deal and Social Deal for a Just Transition - SOLIDAR Members projects

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<td>Nicaragua, Rural women’s involvement in agroecology (MDPL)</td>
<td>Sustainable agricultural production</td>
<td>Gender equality, women’s empowerment, decent working conditions</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mediterranean countries, MedTOWN (ACPP)</td>
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<td>Community building, social justice, Social and Solidarity Economy</td>
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<td>Asia Programme, Asia - multiple countries (Solidar Suisse)</td>
<td>Abolishing environmental- and health- damaging production materials and chemicals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decent work and Energy Democracy for Energy sector workers, Nepal, Philippines, Vietnam, Indonesia and India (APHEDA)</td>
<td>Awareness raising on Just Transition, decarbonisation of the energy sector</td>
<td>Decent work</td>
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What can you do to promote a Just Transition?
Tips to engage with EUDs

It is our collective responsibility as civil society groups, knowledgeable about the real struggles and challenges of local communities in the Global South, to make sure that EU development funding supports the development and improvement of the life conditions of those who are most in need. To do this, civil society’s engagement and dialogue with the EU Delegations (EUDs) in partner countries is crucial, as EUDs are responsible for deciding on the country-level allocation of most EU development funding.

In the context of the EU Green Agenda, it is important to stress to the EUDs that the only fair and humane way for this to be achieved is by implementing a Just Transition, that is by making sure that social objectives are pursued at the same time and with the same determination and commitment as the green objectives. In particular, the following aspects should be stressed in consultations and dialogue with the EUDs:

1. All EU development interventions should be underpinned by a human-rights-based approach and respect the ‘do not harm’ principle. European Green Deal ‘solutions’ should not have adverse human rights impacts on people in the Global South, as exemplified by biofuels and commodity imports, which cause deforestation and land and water grabs. It is also important that interventions comply with and strengthen human rights and natural resources rights, including the right of local communities and indigenous peoples to Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC), and that development cooperation supports community-led solutions.

GENERAL TIPS TO ENGAGE WITH EUDs

1. Get Organised
   • Make sure that your organisation and others are aware of the programming process and opportunities for engagement with the EUD.
   • Coordinate your information gathering and responses by grouping together, for example as a thematic network or general civil society grouping.

2. Be Proactive!
   • Contact SOLIDAR’s secretariat for the template letter to get in touch with the EUD.
   • Reach out to the EUD, share information about your organisation and work.
   • Ask to be informed about and involved in consultation processes.
   • Invite the EUD to events that your organisation holds in relation to the political situation or policy issues that are important in your country or in EU/national government relations.

3. Keep in touch
   • Keep the EUD informed about your work, new publications and projects.
   • Get in touch regularly to ask for timely notification of consultations and other information from the EUD so that you (civil society) have time to prepare and coordinate.
2. In all climate change and nature loss activities, gender equality should be promoted and safeguarded and women and girls supported as agents of change. Women and girls are in fact more vulnerable to the impacts of extreme events and of biodiversity loss as climate change reduces vulnerable communities’ access to, use of and control over a wide range of resources. At the same time, women are also at the forefront of defence of natural resources and first responders in climate disasters.

3. In line with the Green Deal’s proposal for a ‘Climate Pact’ in Europe, emphasis should also be placed on dialogue with, support and protection of civil society and grassroots initiatives in partner countries, as well as indigenous groups, as they are at the forefront of climate and environmental defence, including suffering murder and attack as human rights and environmental defenders.

4. EU interventions should aim to foster the growth of the Social and Solidarity Economy (SSE). Complementary and in synergy with the circular economy, this is essential for the ecological transition and will be crucial to ensure the inclusion of those most affected by this change. EU actions should thus encourage the exchange and dissemination of good SSE practices in partner countries as well as the creation of legal frameworks for all SSE enterprises and an operational definition of the social economy.
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CONTRIBUTING ORGANISATIONS
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APHEDA
ARCS
MPDL
Solidar Suisse

SOLIDAR is a European network of 60 NGOs working to advance social justice in Europe and worldwide. SOLIDAR voices the concerns of its member organisations to the EU and international institutions across the policy sectors social affairs, international cooperation and lifelong learning. 
For more info www.solidar.org
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Organising International Solidarity (OIS)
A presentation of the OIS programme can be found at the following link: https://prezi.com/view/9zuxuivoqUSD3w1pGJSz/