

**EPLO Brief accompanying the EPLO statement on Global Europe  
September 2025**

**Ensuring the EU continues to fund conflict prevention and peacebuilding after 2027**

This document has been developed by the European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) to offer more details to readers of the EPLO Statement on the proposed Global Europe regulation of September 2025. It further outlines the context and rationale for the statement's recommendations.

**Preventing and addressing violent conflict is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic and economic necessity**

**Strategic:** The EU's role as a leading donor and actor in conflict-affected regions is **vital for maintaining its influence internationally** amid rising challenges. Today's global landscape is marked by the highest levels of active conflicts since the end of the Second World War.<sup>1</sup> Insufficient peacebuilding efforts have left many conflicts unresolved, with reliance on military responses proving ineffective. Investing in CP-PB fosters **stability for all**. Even conflicts beyond the EU's borders have domestic repercussions, fuelling political polarisation and social tensions. These trends highlight the urgent **need for cooperative, comprehensive strategies to address interconnected global challenges**.

**Economic: Preventing violent conflicts makes economic sense.** The cost of violence was EUR 17 trillion in 2024, equivalent to 11,6% of the world's economic activity, or EUR 2 090 per person.<sup>2</sup> Today's conflicts are disrupting critical supply chains, forcing the displacement of over 123 million people at the end of 2024,<sup>3</sup> exacerbating impacts of the climate crisis, and creating conditions for transnational crime and armed groups to thrive. One quarter of the world's population live in countries affected by violent conflict, with these countries the furthest behind in progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The UN and the World Bank have demonstrated that **investments in conflict prevention yields significant returns** in terms of avoiding conflict-related costs, with **every EUR 1 invested in peacebuilding saving EUR 16 in costs due to conflict**.<sup>4</sup>

Investing in CP-PB responds to strategic and economic necessities, in addition to fulfilling the EU's objectives for sustainable development and peace, through which it contributes to **saving lives** and **upholding rights**.

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<sup>1</sup> Rustad, Siri Aas (2024), Conflict Trends: A Global Overview, 1946–2023. PRIO Paper. Oslo: PRIO.

<sup>2</sup> Converted from USD. Institute for Economics and Peace (2025), Global Peace Index 2025: Measuring Peace in a Complex World, Sydney.  
<https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/Global-Peace-Index-2025-web.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> UNHCR (2025), Global Trends: Forced displacement in 2024. Copenhagen, Denmark: United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.  
<https://www.unhcr.org/global-trends-report-20244>.

<sup>4</sup> UN/World Bank (2018), Pathways for Peace: Inclusive Approaches to Preventing Violent Conflict, World Bank, Washington, DC, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28337>.

**EPLO recommendations to co-legislators regarding the proposed Global Europe Regulation**

**1. Invest in the EU's global role and global public goods through an accountable budgetary framework**

- Support the Commission's proposal to **invest more** in external action
- Ensure that Global Europe continues engaging in **fragile, conflict-affected** and complex settings
- Balance flexibility with **targets<sup>5</sup>, earmarking** and **minimum amounts** to avoid deprioritising global public goods and to ensure an accountable and transparent governance of the Global Europe instrument
- Ensure that EU **migration** policies comply with international law and human rights obligations, and that they do not undermine the Union's commitment to the SDGs and global public goods

**2. Ensure that all Global Europe is conflict-sensitive**

- Restore and fully implement the requirement of **conflict and gender sensitivity** in the general programming approach **for all actions** under Global Europe, including Global Gateway projects
- Restore conflict-analysis **screening tools** that have been successfully developed and expand the mandatory use and application of these tools to inform programming of all external actions
- Maintain **gender-sensitive conflict analysis** and gender-sensitive screening tools
- Ensure that these tools are **sufficiently resourced** throughout EU external action, to enable full and effective implementation

**3. Ring-fence funding dedicated to peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the global pillar of Global Europe**

- Raise the allocation for the global pillar of Global Europe to **at least €15 billion**
- Increase the significance of CP-PB under the “peace, security, stability and response to crises” objective to ensure that **50% of the objective's funds** are earmarked for conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and set a proportionate and clear ratio of programmable so that the EU remains in a position to act with impact
- Reinstate support for CP-PB activities that enhance **gender and youth inclusion** in peacebuilding, **transitional justice** and reconciliation, and **peace education**. Expand on the types of CP-PB interventions foreseen under the global pillar to ensure a wide and SDGs-aligned scope of activities are supported, covering at a minimum the activities described under the NDICI-GE

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<sup>5</sup> Gender action targets (with 20% for actions that have gender action as a principal objective and 85% for actions that have gender action as a principal or significant objective), a target for official development assistance (ODA) for human development at 20%, a DAC-ability target at 93%, a climate and environment target at 35%

- Preserve — and where feasible, enhance — the **dedicated specialised staffing resources** and the multi-country, cross-regional approach embedded in the current NDICI-GE thematic programming on CP-PB
- Reinstate support for **disarmament initiatives** and for **arms control** as stated in the EU' strategic goals and needed to support the global disarmament agenda

#### 4. Mainstream peacebuilding and conflict prevention across geographic pillars of Global Europe

- Ring-fence funding for CP-PB objectives, including by setting a clear and **proportionate minimum of programmable funding**
- Prioritise peace objectives under the geographic pillars based on **needs and funding gaps** according to objective criteria
- Enhance the **capacity of EU Delegations and geographic units at headquarters** to design and deliver relevant, locally owned and gender transformative CP-PB initiatives
- Ensure that **gender action** is effectively and explicitly mainstreamed in the peace objectives of the geographic pillars
- Continue addressing **societal and post-conflict CP-PB** through the geographic pillars
- Integrate CP-PB as an effective tool for other geographic objectives such as **climate mitigation and adaptation** and addressing the root causes of **displacement**
- Enhance the linkages between the humanitarian, development, and peace efforts, and between flexible crisis response mechanisms and **longer-term programming**.

#### 5. Support, fund and engage with civil society

- **Increase** the overall budget allocations for civil society organisations (CSOs), including through adequate core funding, and ensure direct, flexible, and long-term funding is available specifically for locally led CSOs
- Restore a **stand-alone, dedicated global pillar objective** supporting the work of CSOs
- Support **women's rights organisations** specifically in the global and geographic pillars including through direct, core funding
- Ensure that **partnerships with local civil society actors** are more equitable, transparent, responsible and accountable
- Reinforce the requirement to **meaningfully engage** with locally led civil society in the design, implementation and monitoring of all external action programming including through **dialogue platforms** and structured dialogues with coordination mechanisms
- Ensure that the EU's **migration** policies do not lead to undue suspension of funds for CSOs
- Increase the **coherence** of the EU's support for civil society across geographies
- Restore support for CSOs **capacity building**
- Restore funding for **awareness-raising** on development issues such as in the NDICI-GE

**Further detail under each recommendation is outlined below.**

## 1. Invest in the EU's global role and global public goods through an accountable framework

As stated in its Treaties, the EU seeks to “contribute to peace and security and the sustainable development of the Earth.”<sup>6</sup> Fulfilling this commitment requires more investment, especially as the challenges facing the EU's partner countries are set to intensify in the coming years. Without sufficient funding, the EU risks undermining its credibility and compromising both its global commitments and strategic interests. That is why **strong support is needed for the Commission's proposal to invest €200.3 billion for external action under the post-2027 MFF and calls on other EU institutions to support this in the negotiations.**<sup>7</sup> This increase, once taking into account inflation, is not as significant as it first appears.

Other EU institutions should support the commitment made in the general principles of the regulation to **continue engaging in contexts experiencing extremely high levels of fragility, conflict areas, and other complex settings.** But this principle should also have clearer implications for the rest of the regulation and its implementation, including in terms of ring-fenced allocations for CP-PB and supporting a wide range of CP-PB activities.

Investing in external action will only yield positive outcomes for the EU and global public goods within a **framework that balances budget flexibility with predictability and accountability.** Predictability is essential to allow EU funding to be impactful. The far-reaching mergers proposed in external action through Global Europe are a concern in this regard, especially for CP-PB. Indeed, these mergers risk diluting focus on the EU's various external action objectives. They would create a permanent situation of ad-hoc trade-offs between development, peace and humanitarian objectives - where a long-term vision and commitment is needed for each in order to fulfil the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus. Long-term efforts, such as peacebuilding, will likely be undermined for shorter-terms political priorities.

Without **clear, numerical targets** concerning human development, gender action and climate change in the Global Europe regulation, **the EU risks deprioritising these crucial goals for the fulfilment of the SDGs,** including when it funds peacebuilding and conflict prevention.<sup>8</sup>

Important targets that should feature in the Global Europe regulation include:

- the 20% target of official development assistance (ODA) for human development
- the target according to which at least 85 % of new actions should have gender equality as a principal or a significant objective

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<sup>6</sup> Article 3 of the Treaty on the European Union.

<sup>7</sup> 2018 prices, see COUNCIL REGULATION (EU, Euratom) 2024/765 of 29 February 2024 amending Regulation (EU, Euratom) 2020/2093 laying down the multiannual financial framework for the years 2021 to 2027 [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L\\_202400765](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:L_202400765).

- an increased proportion of actions (20%) that should have gender equality and women's and girls' rights and empowerment as a principal objective
- the 35% target for climate and environment action included in the overall post-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) – a specific reference in the Global Europe should be made, as it was the case in the NDICI-GE
- the DAC-ability target at the previous level under NDICI-GE, 93%

Failing to set these targets would weaken the **governance** of the EU's external action and the ability to carry **ex-post assessment**. Likewise, setting only indicative financial allocations for each geographic and global pillar rather than **minimum amounts** will make the instrument less accountable and risks decreasing the **needs-based proportionality** of EU external action funding, including as regards CP-PB.

The **migration conditionality** contained in Article 12 could have a grave impact on the principles and effectiveness of EU international cooperation if adopted. Conditioning all EU funding to the compliance of partner countries with EU migration policies, without any limitation or cap, would put in jeopardy the effectiveness of the support of the Union for the SDGs and global public goods.

## 2. Ensure that all EU external action is conflict-sensitive

It is of central importance to **restore the requirement of conflict-sensitivity and gender sensitivity in the general programming approach of Global Europe**. EPLO welcomed the promotion of a conflict-sensitive and gender-sensitive approach in all actions and programmes<sup>9</sup> under the current NDICI-GE and the introduction of conflict analysis screenings<sup>10</sup> as a requirement when drafting programming documents for fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions. These requirements must be maintained, and efforts should continue to **regularly update conflict analyses and ensure their integration in programming**, as well as to ensure conflict analyses are **gender-sensitive**<sup>11</sup>. The proposed Global Europe regulation only refers to conflict-sensitivity as concerns actions related to crisis, peace and foreign policy needs, yet **all actions under Global Europe** can have negative impacts on conflict dynamics if they are not informed by locally-grounded conflict analysis.

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<sup>9</sup> Recital (58), EU (2021), *Regulation (EU) 2021 / 947 establishing the NDICI-GE*.

<sup>10</sup> Following the adoption of the Regulation, the EU developed the conflict analysis screening (CAS) tool to inform a conflict-sensitive programming under the NDICI-GE and to identify conflict prevention and peacebuilding actions in the countries where the CAS are carried out. The CAS process was adapted from the process outlined in the 2020 guidance note, following the same principles and including a conflict-sensitivity risk component focused on annual or multi-annual programming priorities.

<sup>11</sup> See EPLO CSDN meeting report [The EU and Gender-Responsive Conflict Analysis](#), September 2023 and EPLO CSDN background paper Gender-Responsive Conflict Analysis Frameworks: [Existing tools and methods](#)

The mid-term evaluation of NDICI-GE underlined that “the [conflict sensitivity requirement] can help to mainstream support to peace and security more coherently and to better focus on the needs of the partner country and the responses needed”<sup>12</sup>. Well-designed external actions that continue to adapt to changing contexts are more likely to succeed. With adequate investment in conflict- and gender-sensitivity during both the design and implementation phases, actions avoid causing unintended harm, namely exacerbating social, political, and economic tensions, deepening inequalities, and further marginalising already vulnerable groups. Understanding and responding to these dynamics is essential for reinforcing the positive impact of and public support for the actions themselves.

Consequently, to achieve more sustainable outcomes, the EU should not reduce but **expand the mandatory use and application of these tools to inform programming of all external actions**, and not just for countries and regions that are already designated as fragile and conflict-affected. This must include investments under the Global Gateway Initiative to minimise potential harm and ensure that investments have a positive impact for the EU, partner countries, and local populations. To enable full and effective implementation, the EU should ensure conflict-sensitive measures are **sufficiently resourced**, including through providing adequate capacity-building for EU headquarters, delegations and implementing partners to apply conflict and gender sensitive programming and project management.

### **3. Ring-fence funding dedicated to peacebuilding and conflict prevention in the Global Pillar**

Peacebuilding and conflict prevention feature in a specific sub-objective of the Global Pillar of Global Europe under the global objective "Contributing to peace, security, stability and response to crises", which is positive. However, funds under the global pillar available for conflict-prevention and peacebuilding could remain very limited. Firstly, global pillar funding would be spread across more global objectives than under NDICI-GE's global thematic programmes (by 20%). Secondly, within the global objective on peace, security, stability and crisis response, if funding is allocated equally across sub-objectives, CP-PB would receive less than 17% of this global objective's funding. Under NDICI-GE, which had less global objectives, CP-PB received 29% of the global thematic programme on Peace, Stability and Security, and this was already not sufficient to meet the needs.

**It is important and concerning to note the extremely condensed description of specific sub-objectives** under the “peace, security, stability and response to crises” objective of the Global Pillar of Global Europe. This risks reducing funding for key CP-PB activities such as gender and youth inclusion in peace, transitional justice and reconciliation, and the promotion of a culture of non-violence via peace education.

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<sup>12</sup> [Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on the evaluation of the European Union's External Financing Instruments for the 2014 - 2020 and 2021 - 2027 Multiannual Financial Frameworks](#), p.27

It is also concerning that **disarmament initiatives and support for arms control have not been included in Global Europe**, whether through the Global Pillar or the Geographic Pillars. The EU must continue engaging in this critical field for global security and human rights. By cutting funding, the EU would cease life-saving activities and key initiatives for sustainable security such as demining, small arms and light weapons proliferation or yet efforts to address the threats posed by weapons of mass destruction.

#### **4. Mainstream conflict prevention and peacebuilding as objectives across all external action funding in Global Europe**

In order to have an impact at scale in partner countries, it is imperative to **effectively engage with CP-PB under the geographic programmes** (which will channel more than 80% of external action funding) rather than solely funding the EU's response to rising levels of violent conflict through the more limited budgets of the Global Pillar. Investing in CP-PB through the geographic programmes is cost-effective as it contributes to context-driven responses that support human development, reduce poverty, and support the achievement of the SDGs in line with the EU's approach to the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus.

**The geographic pillars of Global Europe include stability, peace, security, resilience, reconstruction and preparedness as objectives** (in full or in part), which is positive. But these objectives are not prioritised equally across geographic pillars. In particular, these objectives rank second to last for Sub-Saharan Africa, while this geography hosts 55% of the world's conflict affected states<sup>13</sup>. They are also further down in the list of priorities for Asia Pacific, and are subsumed under a broad objective for the geographic pillar of the Americas & Caribbean. **The EU should prioritise peace objectives based on needs and funding gaps**, taking into account conflict and instability assessments produced by independent organisations, such as the OECD state of fragility reports.

It is important to note that CP-PB was included in the geographic objectives under NDICI-GE, yet this was not translated to significant CP-PB programming under this funding stream. This has been attributed to the absence of ring-fencing of funding for this objective and to the fact that EU delegations and headquarters have been insufficiently equipped to develop and prioritise CB-BP initiatives<sup>14</sup>. The EU should ring-fence **dedicated funding for these priorities** within each geographic pillar to ensure that funds cannot be diverted to serve shifting or short-term political interests. This includes **setting a proportionate and clear ratio of programmable funding** under the geographic pillars and their objectives on peace, security, stability and response to crises. The EU should also **develop the capacity of EU Delegations and geographic units at headquarters to**

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<sup>13</sup> World Bank, Classification of Fragile and Conflict-Affected Situations, 2025

<sup>14</sup> A Growing Gap, EU Peace and Security Funding Beyond Ukraine, Policy Brief by Abi Watson and Julia Friedrich, GPPI, 2024, p.10



**design, deliver, monitor and learn from CP-PB initiatives.** This includes ensuring that non-specialised staff possess the necessary expertise to implement CP-PB effectively and make use of the full range of adequate tools and approaches.

It is concerning that there is **no inclusion of the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence nor gender-sensitive Security Sector Reform** under the peace/security/stability objectives in the geographic pillars (unlike under NDICI-GE). While a stand-alone objective on “Promoting human development and gender equality” exists under all geographic pillars, addressing gender inequalities and SGBVs specifically under the objective on peace/security/stability is essential to **ensure that gender action is effectively and explicitly mainstreamed.**

Regrettably, the approach taken in Global Europe to CP-PB under the geographic pillars **gives less attention than NDICI-GE to societal and post-conflict issues** such as social cohesion, local community engagement, women and youth inclusion, post-conflict integration, and Disarmament, Demobilisation, and Reintegration of former combatants (DDR).

When implementing geographic objectives on addressing climate change and on migration cooperation, **peacebuilding and conflict prevention** should be considered as an effective tool to contribute to context-driven and conflict-sensitive **climate mitigation and adaptation** measures and to address the **root causes of displacement.**

Strengthening the connections between short-term crisis response funding and longer-term programming under the geographic pillars is vital to contribute to peace, the prevention of conflict and therefore to stability. Too often, successful initiatives initiated under crisis response funding tools are discontinued because of a lack of uptake by geographic pillars funding, reducing the sustainability of their impact. Therefore, the EU should act on the Council's recommendations which "recall that support for 'Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention' and security is a cross-cutting priority of the NDICI-Global Europe, including within geographic pillars and encourages the Commission to enhance the linkages between flexible crisis response mechanisms and longer-term development."<sup>15</sup>

## **5. Increase support, funding and engagement with civil society**

Civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly locally led CSOs, play a critical role in peacebuilding by **defining and implementing relevant, locally owned, conflict sensitive, impactful, and sustainable responses to conflict and instability.** Yet, as civic space is increasingly suppressed in many parts of the world, civil society is facing an increasingly challenging political and funding landscape. Consequently, EU support is more crucial than ever. CSOs are a lifeline for many in their

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<sup>15</sup> Mid-Term Evaluation of the NDICI-Global Europe external financing instrument - Council conclusions (24 June 2024).



communities and are essential for building social cohesion, resilience, accountability, and transparency, especially amid rising instability and increasing threats to democracy.

To uphold its values, strengthen its credibility and to demonstrate global leadership, the EU must **increase the overall external action budget allocations for CSOs** and ensure civil society has access to **increased, more flexible, and longer term funding**.

Regrettably, the Global Europe proposal does not contain a **stand-alone global funding stream dedicated to supporting CSOs**, unlike the current NDICI-GE instrument. Some specific sub-objectives on civil society support are contained in other global pillar objectives (“strengthening partnerships” and “democracy, human rights and the rule of law”). But there is a high risk that these sub-objectives will be deprioritized if they are not ring-fenced within a stand-alone civil society support objective. Regrettably, raising awareness of European citizens on development issues has not been included, unlike in NDICI-GE.

**Civil society support is partly mainstreamed** in the geographic pillars, which is positive. However, it is concerning that specific support for women’s rights organisations is not mentioned (whether under the civil society geographic objectives, or the gender equality global and geographic objectives). Also, the types of civil society support is very heterogeneous across regions, which could unduly reduce support.

The **migration conditionality** contained in the Global Europe proposal (see section 1) is broadly concerning. Further to its impact on principled ODA at large, it is important to note the **adverse consequences** that Article 12 would have **on the work of CSOs**. Indeed, the blanket suspension of funds foreseen by Article 12 does not foresee any exemption, even for projects implemented by CSOs. This would further compound the impact of this migration conditionality on the Union’s commitment to the SDGs and global public goods by weakening civil society and discontinuing impactful projects, including conflict prevention and peacebuilding initiatives.

The EU must ensure that **partnerships with local civil society actors** that are established through intermediaries (including UN and Member State agencies, and international NGOs) are more **equitable, transparent, responsible and accountable**. Clear mechanisms should guide these partnerships - in relation to joint decision making and the equitable sharing of budgets, including overhead costs, for instance - and intermediaries should be held to account for upholding these requirements.

**The Commission maintains derogations to provide support in grants in a flexible and timely manner in difficult conditions**, which is positive. This includes cases of urgency and crisis, and instances of support for human rights defenders and other civil society actors and for CSOs with no legal personality under national law. The EU should expand these provisions in particular for national civil society implementing partners and beneficiaries of sub-grants to benefit from more qualitative funding with less cumbersome administrative requirements.



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Finally, further to funding, the EU should **reinforce the requirement to meaningfully engage with civil society in the design, implementation, monitoring and learning of all external action programming** to maximise effectiveness. It is concerning in this regard that mentions of **structured dialogues with civil society** have been weakened compared to the NDICI-GE. The EU should restore in Global Europe the commitment to dialogue platforms and structured dialogues with coordination mechanisms.