



Civil Society Dialogue Network Discussion Paper

Renewing the EU's approach to Fragility: policy coherence, impact and the role of civil society

Terms of Reference

Background

In 2022, the OECD identified a record high of 60 contexts experiencing extreme or high fragility across the globe. Since then, levels of fragility have not decreased.

For several years, the EU has been discussing renewing its approach to fragility. As per Commissioner Hadja Lahbib's mission letter, the responsibility to develop this approach has been entrusted to DG ECHO, who is currently drafting a Communication on Humanitarian Aid that will incorporate a focus on fragility.

This Communication is being developed as major discussions are taking place on funding instruments and the future orientation of the EU's external action. The Commission's proposal for a post-2027 Global Europe Instrument addresses fragility in its general principles and geographic programming principles, notably stating that the EU should stay engaged in extremely fragile contexts and making partner countries' commitment to address the drivers of fragility a parameter informing cooperation. Overall, the Regulation proposal commits in its recitals to a differentiated approach to address the root causes of fragility. The 360-degree approach to Global Gateway is also relevant for EU policy discussions on fragility.

This Discussion Paper will inform and deepen the reflections on the EU's approach to fragility by analysing EU policies to date (especially as relates to the conflict component of fragility), by assessing the implementation and tools of these policies, and by providing recommendations for ongoing policy development on renewing and integrating the EU's approach to fragility, including beyond 2027, with a principal focus on the Communication on Humanitarian Aid.

Objectives of the discussion paper

The overall objective of the paper is to make the case for sustaining and strengthening the EU's engagement with Fragile and Conflict Affected States (FCAS), and for increasing the coherence and effectiveness of its approach to fragility. With a view to ensuring that the EU's external action contributes to breaking the cycle of fragility for FCAS – especially as regards to conflict – this paper will focus on the following sub-objectives:

- 1) Explain the relevance of fragility as a concept for policy-making for EU external action and the need for a differentiated approach for Fragile and Conflict Affected States
- 2) Analyse the EU's policy framework on fragility to date
- 3) Assess the tools (including funding tools), implementation and impact of these policies, as well as the role of civil society in them
- 4) Offer recommendations to the EU for improving its approach to fragility, particularly as concerns the Communication on Humanitarian Aid, the next EU Multiannual Financial



Framework and Global Gateway's 360° approach. This will include recommendations reflecting on the role of civil society.

Deliverable and scope of work

The external consultant will carry out the research (including conducting interviews) for the paper on the basis of initial guidance by EPLO.

The consultant will take part in a check-in meeting halfway through the drafting of the Discussion Paper, and submit a draft for the Discussion Paper which EPLO will provide feedback on, before submitting the final draft. EPLO has the right to revise the final draft.

Timeframe - 10 working days are estimated.

Deadline for expression of interest	07/01/2025
Interviews	Week of 12/01/2025
Signature of contracts and kick off meeting	16/01/2025
Check-in	Week of 2/02/2025
First draft due	19/02/2025
Final draft due	01/03/2025

Format

The Discussion Paper will be written in English (British English). The Discussion Paper will have a length of approx. 5,000 words, plus an executive summary of maximum two pages in the format of the template for Discussion Papers (approx. 500-750 words).

Required expertise and experience:

- Proven knowledge of EU policies in fragile and conflict affected settings, EU policies on ODA and the triple nexus, the EU's external action in Sub-Saharan Africa and the MENA region
- Experience conducting interviews
- Proven strong research, analytical, writing and editing skills
- Experience working with the non-profit sector
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in English
- Alignment with EPLO's objectives and values
- Availability within the timeframe

Application procedure:

Qualified and interested candidates should send the following documents to jobs@eplo.org (subject line: Fragility paper) by **7 January 2026**:

- An up-to-date CV
- Cover letter setting out how they will approach the research task, along with the financial offer
- Links to 2-3 recently published papers

Applications will be reviewed, and short interviews will be scheduled with short-listed candidates.

Remuneration:

10 days' work in the range of 500-700 EUR (excl. VAT) per day.