

Georgia Papoutsi, Policy Manager, International Co-operative Alliance, reporting back from the EU and the Neighbourhood regional meeting

Thank you Sara. Good morning Mr. Doens, good morning colleagues.

The European and Neighbourhood PFD was also held virtually on the 17th of July. The core of our discussion touched upon the following:

Geographic & Thematic programming

The PFD representatives raised concerns as to whether the shift toward geographic programming will undercut cross-regional cooperation.

Although some topics will be addressed in the geographic programming, the PFD members present, requested clearer guidelines for EUDs to ensure that cross-cutting topics are included in the Multi-annual Indicative Programmes and therefore, incorporated through the country support measures. Those topics prioritised are Enabling Environment, Human Rights and democracy, decentralisation, and financial support to CSOs and LAs.

- Our first question is whether specific envelopes will be dedicated to CSOs & LAs, following an actor-based approach, under each geographic programme?

EU Delegation Roadmaps

Regarding EUD roadmaps, we all recognise their added value. But to be fully effective, they must be more inclusive and transparent. This means increasing engagement with local authorities and grassroots organisations, including cooperatives and trade unions. This also means ensuring the inclusion of global and regional PFD networks. These networks can support national institutionalised multi-stakeholder dialogue given their representativity and outreach. Roadmaps for Local Authorities were also suggested to guarantee their consultation in geographic programming.

2 questions stem here:

- o What is DG Devco's vision on ensuring that programming at EUDEL level includes the wide diversity of developmental partners and the current FPAs?
- o Is Joint Programming at country level going to include only Member States, or other key stakeholders such as CS and LAs?

On the EU priorities:

Economy that works for people

- a) When discussing the economy that works for the people, the emphasis is placed on the promotion of public services, decent work and the need for Universal Social Protection. The EU needs to focus its private sector support on strengthening local sustainable and inclusive business models, and SMEs, to create decent and sustainable jobs. A clear plan is also needed on how to reach informal workers who constitute the majority of the labour force in the global south.
- b) When it comes to the PS engagement in development cooperation, PFD reps emphasized the importance of accountability and transparency mechanisms to ensure responsible business conduct and local resource mobilisation.

Digitalization

Digitalization and the increasing need for access to digital services were a clear priority and members reiterated that digitalization should be a people-centred effort in line with SDG 8(8.2).

Questions remain about how the EU will ensure that its programming and investments under the EFSD+ will support digitalisation with a focus on the democratisation of data, access to information, and redistribution of wealth and social protection for workers.

Green Deal

The PFD members highlighted the close link of the Green Deal with digitalization and the need for digital infrastructure to ensure a just green transition. The Green Deal and the just transition must be systematically integrated across all EU priorities. EU programming should be in line with "do no harm" principles and continue to support fair and green economy actors.

Aid Modalities

Our last point is on Aid modalities, a topic of utmost importance. PFD members expressed their concerns about the weight of blended finance in the proposals for the next MFF (eg. EFSD+), considering its positive development impact is not proven yet.

- Will the next financial cycle include clear indicators and monitoring of impacts and recipients of blended finance?

Thank for your attention.