

EU Country Roadmap for engagement with civil society in Brazil



Photo of Vera Lúcia Flores da Rosa, who heads a cooperative of recyclable materials waste pickers and participated in an EU funded project coordinated by Fundação Luterana Diaconia in support to Cooperatives and Associations of Recyclable Materials in the State of Rio Grande do Sul.

INTRODUCTION

The Brazil Roadmap for EU engagement with civil society 2020 – 2025 is a follow up of the first Roadmap that was prepared in 2014 and partially updated in 2018. In 2019 the EUD launched a review process due to changes in the country context and the election of a new government. This process included the review of relevant documents on contexts and strategies as well as a number of meetings and consultation seminars with CSOs. Based upon these meetings and analysis the Roadmap 2020 – 2025 was developed. The Roadmap was approved on 8 April 2020 by the EU Heads of Missions in Brazil and this document is a summary of the Roadmap.



BRIEF ANALYSIS OF CONTEXT AND PAST ENGAGEMENT

Political and institutional dimension

The Brazilian elections of October 2018 has brought changes in the composition of the federal government, with changes of position within the scope of international agreements as well as redirection of social and environmental policies. There are new challenges in the relationship with organised civil society, which feels that its ability to positively influence public policies at the national level has diminished. Civil society participation in institutional spaces is increasingly limited. The political polarisation remains as an additional challenge for the democratic institutions.

In this context, new actors with increasing protagonism emerge. They include (i) state governments and municipalities that started to articulate themselves in forums and consortia with increasing visibility, including on the international scene (ii) the National Congress, which has been taking the lead in the formulation of many public policies in favour of democratic governance and (iii) institutions of the judiciary power, filed to protect collective rights.

Socio-economic and environmental dimension

There are uncertainties about the behaviour of the economy in the coming years. The last cycle of economic growth dates back to 2009 – 2014. In 2019 the unemployment rate improved slightly, reaching 12.6 million people, but the economic situation deteriorated substantially as a result of the coronavirus pandemic in 2020. Despite advances in recent decades, inequality persists as a structural problem, with signs of growth in recent years. In 2018, 13.5 million lived in extreme poverty. Brazil appears to farther from fulfilling one of its key 20230 Agenda commitments to eradicating poverty by 2030. In addition to regional disparities, the black population is the most impacted with 75% of the people living in extreme poverty being black.

The denial of education opportunities for everyone has been partially addressed in the last two decades but is currently facing a moment of uncertainty. Almost half of the adult population has not completed high school and 23% of 15 – 29 year olds neither study nor work. These are the young people most exposed to violence. In recent years, Brazil has faced major environmental disasters, which partly reflects changes in policies. Prospects for economic growth continue based on commodities exports and the pressure on natural resources is expected to grow in the coming years.

Human rights and rule of law

The new government made changes in human rights policy and orientation. During one of the CSO consultations, it was reported that progress was made since the 1988 Constitution but also that an escalation of violation of rights took place due to the recent political process. The consultation highlighted a number of aspects to be observed by European cooperation. Those included: the increase in the criminalisation of leadership and social movements, the institutional and financial weakening of protection programmes for human rights defender and the lack of official recognition in the role of CSOs in the protection of human rights. It also indicated a paralysis in the regularisation processes to have indigenous and quilombola lands and the flow of refugees and migrants to Brazil.

All in all, it was considered that the most urgent common challenges that deserve special attention from European cooperation include:

- Overcoming social and economic inequalities
- Strengthening civil society and promoting an enabling environment
- Human Rights Protection
- Environment and climate
- Development of a sustainable economy

Those priorities include sensitive topics that underpin the guiding principles of the SDGs. Therefore, the 2030 Agenda will still work as a link in the relationship between European cooperation and Brazilian civil society.



Photo of project “Civil society organizations in the Northeast Region monitoring, through participatory mechanisms, the implementation of public policies”, coordinated by Casa Pequeno Davi in partnership with European organization United Purpose and Brazilian CSOs Menina Feliz and Instituto Frei Beda de Desenvolvimento Social, together with the Citizen Education Network (RECID).

EU STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR ENGAGING WITH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

CENTRAL CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES	PRIORITIES FOR EU ENGAGEMENT	ACTIONS (analysis, policy dialogue, operational support)	MEANS (programmes/instruments, etc.)
<p>1. Inequality in Brazil persists as a structural problem and manifests itself in many ways. Achieving the SDG 10 goals is particularly defining for the achievement of the other 16 sustainable development goals.</p>	Overcoming social and economic inequalities to meet the SDG targets.	<p>1.1. Inserting the ethnic/racial issue as a structural axis in the EU's development lines.</p> <p>1.2. Support the production of independent information and analysis on inequalities in Brazil.</p> <p>1.3. Reinforce the gender approach</p> <p>1.4. Prioritise the issue of inequality in the political dialogue</p> <p>1.5. Strengthen the role of local groups in through specific calls for small project funds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Programme Civil Society Organisations • European Instrument for the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) • Win-win: Gender Equality means good business EU-Brazil Sector Dialogues Support Facility • Member States cooperation
<p>2. The role and strategies of civil society must be reconsidered in a context of a tendency to reduce spaces for participation and dialogue between CSOs and the State. Implementation of SDG 16</p>	Strengthening of civil society and promotion of a favourable environment for its activities.	<p>2.1. Boost the implementation of MROSC</p> <p>2.2. Continue cooperation with local authority associations through political dialogue, calls for proposals and capacity building actions</p> <p>2.3. Calls for proposals prioritise implementation international agreement commitments: SDGs, Paris Agreement, Mercosur Association Agreement, EU.</p> <p>2.4. Support national and international advocacy actions to ensure a favourable environment for CSOs.</p> <p>2.5. Regularly promote structured dialogues on the general state of Brazilian civil society with the participation of Member States.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Programme Civil Society Organisations . EU-Brazil Sector Dialogues Support Facility • Responsible Business Conduct in Latin America and Caribbean • EU R&I programmes Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) and Horizon Europe (2021-2027) • Member States cooperation
<p>3. Increasing vulnerability in acquired collective rights. Guarantee of human rights is a precondition for compliance SDGs.</p>	Overcoming social and economic inequalities to meet the SDG targets.	<p>3.1. Inserting the ethnic/racial issue in EU's development lines.</p> <p>3.2. Support the production of independent information and analysis on inequalities in Brazil.</p> <p>3.3. Reinforce gender approach as important element of European cooperation, focusing on less sensitive issues: e.g. economic autonomy and violence against women.</p> <p>3.4. Prioritise inequality in the political dialogue with the Brazilian State for the construction of public policies.</p> <p>3.5. Strengthen the role of local groups in addressing inequalities through specific calls for small project funds.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thematic Programme Civil Society Organisations • European Instrument for the Promotion of Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) • Win-win: Gender Equality means good business. • EU-Brazil Sector Dialogues Support Facility • Member States cooperation

4. Trend of reversal in the progress made by Brazil to protect the environment and biodiversity.

Environment and climate change

- 4.1. Support the creation of social mechanisms for control and monitoring of social and environmental indicators.
- 4.2. Support climate change mitigation and adaptation projects in all Brazilian biomes - not just the Amazonia.
- 4.3. Prioritise support for free, prior, and informed consent processes from the application of Convention 169 in Brazil.
- 4.4. Establish strategic partnerships for Brazil to implement the Agenda 2030 and Paris Agreement commitments.
- 4.5. Contribute to urban climate and environmental mitigation public policies.

- Thematic Programme Civil Society Organisations
- EU-Brazil Sector Dialogues Support Facility
- IUC: Sustainable and Innovative Cities and Regions in LAC
- SPIPA - Support for the implementation of the Paris Agreement
- EU R&I programmes Horizon.
- Member States cooperation

5. Encourage the development of sustainable economic activities in the context of an association agreement between Mercosur and the European Union.

Development of a sustainable economy

- 5.1. Promote civil society participation mechanisms in the construction and implementation of the European Union-Mercosur Association Agreement, ensuring transparency and visibility.
- 5.2. Support sustainable income generation initiatives, prioritising vulnerable social groups
- 5.3. Encourage partnerships between companies and enterprises of the popular economy to build new ethical and sustainable models; engage CSOs in the Research and Innovation Programme.
- 5.4. Support civil society participation in initiatives for sustainable supply chains
- 5.5. Support business association projects to strengthen corporate social and environmental responsibility and a decent work agenda.

- Thematic Programme Civil Society Organisations . Policy Support Facility
- EU-Brazil Sector Dialogues Support Facility
- Responsible Business Conduct in Latin America and Caribbean
- EU R&I programmes Horizon 2020 (2014-2020) and Horizon Europe (2021-2027)
- Member States cooperation