

For immediate release

A bigger budget won't matter if Global Europe swaps development for geopolitics

July 18, 2025 - ActionAid welcomes the significant increase proposed by the Commission to the EU's external budget for the next seven years – officially known as the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and its Global Europe Instrument. but warns that it puts EU's exclusive interests first, while ignoring the needs and interests of Global South countries on the frontline of the climate crisis and in debt crisis. It's a self-serving budget which lacks political vision.

Javier Garcia, Head of Europe and The Americas Region, commented on the proposal:

"A bigger Global Europe budget sounds good—but without a clear vision, it's just a foreign policy toolbox chasing EU exclusive interests. By sidelining development, the EU risks reducing partnerships to politicized, transactional deals."

"It ignores a stark reality: most Global South countries are facing climate crisis and unsustainable debt—problems this offer will only exacerbate. Empty references to 'mutual interests' and 'values-based partnerships' cannot hide the fact that this proposal sidelines human development, climate justice, and local ownership."

Garcia added: "We are calling for a clear distinction in the proposal between development policy and economic diplomacy, with distinct frameworks and financing tools. We also want to see a clear commitment from the EU to put climate action, human development and localisation at its core."

Eva Baluganti, EU Women Rights and Migration Advocacy Advisor at ActionAid, said:

"Women and girls are already paying the highest price of public sector cuts, climate change, conflicts and global reductions to aid budgets. While women's rights organisations are the backbone of locally led humanitarian and development response, this proposal does not do them justice. Rather, it dilutes gender equality commitments, by removing the financial targets currently present in the previous aid budget."

"Once again, the proposal confirms the EU's short-sighted and selfish approach to migration, only aiming at deterrence and containment. This will not only impact how development assistance will be rendered increasingly more conditional based on how vulnerable countries cooperate on migration, but it will also lead to new cases of severe human rights violations against migrants and refugees supported by EU public funds".

Hamdi Benslama, EU Advocacy Advisor at ActionAid, on the proposed foreign aid budget:

“This is neither a development policy nor a genuine foreign (economic) policy. It’s a financial toolbox focused on EU’s exclusive interests and deprived of a coherent political vision of partnerships.

“The Commission seems to have learned nothing from its own review of the previous aid budget. Despite clear evidence that providing blended finance - public and private funds together – along with guarantees, fail in fragile contexts and don’t meet development needs, these instruments are further mainstreamed in the proposal.

“Development and climate resilience are top priorities for the Global South. If the EU wants influence and credibility, its financial architecture must reflect partner realities—not exclusively European investment priorities.”

[ActionAid](#) is a global federation working for a world free from poverty and injustice. We want to see a just, fair and sustainable world, in which everybody enjoys the right to a life of dignity, and freedom from poverty and oppression. We work to achieve social justice and gender equality, and to eradicate poverty.