

FOR A **FRENCH PRESIDENCY**  
OF THE COUNCIL **OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**  
THAT PROMOTES  
**INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY**

DECEMBER 2021



## **COORDINATION SUD IS THE NATIONAL PLATFORM OF FRENCH INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY NGOS (ISOs).**

Founded in 1994, Coordination SUD today brings together more than 170 NGOs, around 100 of which are members via six different umbrella organizations (CLONG-Volontariat, Cnajep, Coordination Humanitaire et Développement, CRID, FORIM, Groupe Initiatives). The activities of its members include emergency humanitarian aid, development assistance, environmental protection, and human rights among disadvantaged people both abroad and in France, as well as advocacy and education in citizenship and international solidarity. Coordination SUD pursues a fourfold mission: communicating its members' common positions to public and private institutions in France, Europe and the world; upholding and promoting NGOs; monitoring and analyzing the international solidarity sector; and supporting and strengthening French NGOs.

**The Coordination SUD Europe Working Group** brings together member NGOs carrying out advocacy activities on European issues concerning international solidarity, as well as Coordination SUD's representatives to CONCORD.

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**The project "Towards an open, fair and sustainable Europe in the world"** (or European Presidency Project - EUPP), carried out during the French presidency of the Council of the European Union from January to June 2022, aims to put in place several activities to improve French NGOs' understanding on the role and the place of the European Union regarding international solidarity. These actions revolve around knowledge-sharing between NGOs on European and solidarity issues, as well as around creating advocacy spaces (conferences, workshops, and institutional meetings), in order to promote a more open, fair and sustainable Europe in the world.

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At a time when international solidarity is evermore necessary, due to the multiplication of crises revealing our increasingly global interdependencies, France will chair the Council of the European Union from January to June 2022.

In this context, Coordination SUD and its 176 member organizations active in humanitarian action, development and international solidarity have decided to mobilize. This position paper, which also reflects our collective's increased commitment to the European dimension, proposes **nine essential priorities** to make this political opportunity a privileged moment to **place international solidarity at the heart of the European Union's agenda**.

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For France, this presidency is also a real opportunity to play a leading role on issues of international solidarity at the European level, and thus contribute to re-gilding the European project in the eyes of its citizens. The priorities presented in this position paper also give the French government the opportunity to show that beyond «recovery, power and belonging», as asserted as key themes for this presidency during the Council of Ministers of November 4, 2021<sup>1</sup>, these notions can rhyme with fair partnerships, gender equality, agro-ecology or the protection of human rights, and particularly with international solidarity.

Coordination SUD will closely follow the major orientations and priorities adopted by France within the European Union, as well as the efforts undertaken to enable dialogue between civil society and the authorities of the European Union. Our collective will make every effort to ensure that international solidarity is truly placed at the heart of the European project of today and tomorrow.



**Olivier Bruyeron,**  
**Coordination SUD President**

<sup>1</sup> Elysée, Minutes of the Council of Ministers, November 4, 2021.



In a communiqué on the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union presented on November 4, 2020, Clément Beaune and Jean-Yves Le Drian recalled that **"today people aspire to a more inclusive Europe."**

The 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) came into force on June 14, 2021. A Europe aspiring for international solidarity finds itself with extremely little room for maneuver if it wants to live up to the 2030 Agenda and deal with crises related to the Covid-19 pandemic. Only 9.2% of this MFF is earmarked for external action (compared to 11.6% in the previous one), and yet the needs of the people in countries outside the European Union have grown exponentially along with the health crisis and its economic and social consequences.

France will hold the presidency of the Council of the European Union from January to June 2022. Against a backdrop of health, economic, and social crises, France's leadership in the field of international solidarity will be crucial. Strong and determined action would enable it to position solidarity at the heart of the European Union's external action. In addition, significant collaboration between France and its two **«trio» partners who will hold the EU presidency after France—the Czech Republic and Sweden**—could help to give a truly lasting orientation to the EU's foreign policy so that it supports the 2030 Agenda, which is now in its 7th year.

Coordination SUD, the platform of French CSOs of humanitarian action, development, and international solidarity, is taking action within the framework of the French Presidency of the Council of the European Union (FPEU). Because the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted social, health, climate-related, and other interdependencies, we must rethink the role of international

solidarity within European policy. Following the negotiations on the new external action instrument (NDICI/Global Europe), Coordination SUD's mobilization will focus on promoting civil society organizations, their contribution, their added value, and their impact on development.

**Our collective, backed up by its 176 members, wants France to strongly advocate for a Europe of international solidarity and to put forward nine priorities.** Overall, the action of Coordination SUD during the FPEU is to put international solidarity at the heart of the latter's agenda, and above all to show that international solidarity, and solidarity in all its expressions, are the only lasting, relevant, and effective solution to the problems and inequalities experienced by our contemporary societies.





## **PROMOTING THE "RIGHT OF INITIATIVE" OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS AND THE NEEDS OF VULNERABLE PEOPLE**

Too often, calls for projects define an already very precise intervention framework to deal with increasingly political issues (e.g., relations with partner countries, security-minded perspectives on migration, etc.). This framework prevents CSOs from highlighting their own objectives, which more closely match the needs of the local people. Funding that supports CSOs' own initiatives and promotes an enabling environment for civil society action represents a tiny share (0.7%) of total funding for CSOs.

### **OUR DEMANDS**

- **Promote CSOs' right of initiative in EU calls for projects. This would allow them to report on their own projects and initiatives based on needs identified at their level.**
- **Promote the participation of aid beneficiaries, through comprehensive and regularly evaluated political dialogue with partner countries in which representatives of civil society participate in all their diversity—including women, children and youth, and impoverished and extremely vulnerable people.**
- **Ensure the sustainability of EU mechanisms for consultation with civil society, when they exist and create them when they do not exist.**



## **FINANCING AND ACCESS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN ALL THEIR DIVERSITY**

Many mid-sized, small, and very small organizations encounter significant difficulties in accessing EU funds. Indeed, the budget allocations of calls for projects are increasingly higher, having increased from a total of €1.031 billion euros for 1,641 contracts in 2011, to €1.966 billion for 1,006 contracts in 2016. They are intended above all for large organizations and international networks.

Nonetheless, smaller organizations often have advantages that facilitate project implementation, such as greater flexibility and responsiveness. Because they are based closest to people—especially marginalized populations—their local actions help to better round out large-scale actions. Furthermore, civil society organizations are also struggling with the increasing importance placed on the complex administrative aspects of managing EU contracts. The management fees in these contracts are limited to 7%, which does not correspond to the real management and requirement costs of an EU project (e.g., anti-terrorist procedures, increasingly complex auditing, etc.). Moreover, these new procedures and requirements require increasingly substantial human resources, even though the share of human-resources costs is limited in EU budgets.

### **OUR DEMANDS**

- **Maintain *ad hoc* funding and mechanisms for small and medium-sized initiatives by European international solidarity organizations and their local partners, when the impact of those initiatives is largely comparable to that of larger operations.**
- **Enable the funding of small- and medium-sized projects by lowering the thresholds for calls for projects.**
- **Simplify procedures to make them less complex and time-consuming.**





## **MEASURES TO HELP DEVELOPMENT CSOS IMPROVE THEIR CAPACITY FOR ACTION**

The European Union has set up restrictive measures in the framework of financing CSO development actions. Those measures include many requirements that can run counter to their principle of actions, especially the principle of non-discrimination of the end beneficiaries. They also exacerbate the increasingly time-consuming burden of administrative constraints on projects.

### **OUR DEMANDS**

- **Expand the derogations set out in the framework of humanitarian actions to development actions with regard to the need to screen final beneficiaries of the projects on the sanctions lists.**
- **Build on existing good practices at CSO level in management control, to avoid adding extra anti-money-laundering and anti-terrorist financing requirements.**





## **PROTECTION OF HUMANITARIAN SPACE AND PERSONNEL**

Today we are witnessing an intensification in global humanitarian needs (especially those related to food crises, which still today are often caused by conflicts), in the unprecedented shrinking of humanitarian space, and in the growth of attacks on humanitarian organizations. As President Emmanuel Macron stated during France's National Humanitarian Conference (NHC) in December 2020, this intensification requires us to rebuild the French and European international commitment on the protection of humanitarian space and personnel.

France, alongside its European partners, and in order to continue the work initiated by the recent German presidency, must take the opportunity of its presidency to reinforce the EU's commitment to and leadership in removing the growing constraints affecting humanitarian action, as well as to promote and apply international humanitarian law. This requires stronger action multilaterally and in countries undergoing crisis, so as to improve the protection of civilian populations, humanitarian workers, and human rights defenders, as well as to support access to humanitarian space and to preserve it from the impact of sanction regimes and counter-terrorism measures.

### **OUR DEMANDS**

- **Ensure a firm commitment by the EU and its partners to the protection of humanitarian space. The commitment should ensure the following:**
  - Humanitarian exemptions in sanction mechanisms
  - A mechanism to facilitate bank transfers in countries under sanction
  - Strengthened measures to protect civilian populations and humanitarian and development personnel at the multilateral level and in the countries of intervention.
- **Simplify funding procedures and to reduce administrative burdens for humanitarian workers, thereby promoting effective humanitarian responses implemented by local stakeholders in particular.**



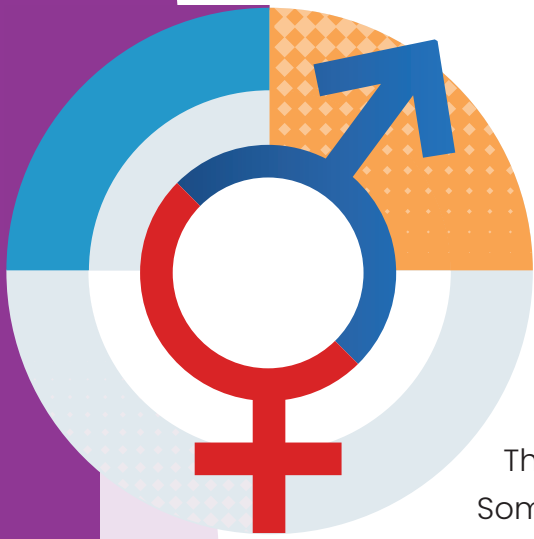
## **AFRICAN-EUROPEAN UNION PARTNERSHIP AND COHERENCE OF PUBLIC DEVELOPMENT POLICIES**

The Covid-19 pandemic caused upheaval in the 2020 agenda, which was supposed to include the renewal of the European Union's partnership approach with third countries and especially those of Africa (post-Cotonou framework, new EU-Africa strategy). Many key events were postponed in 2020 and 2021. This is notably the case of the EU-UA Summit, which will now be held in Brussels in February 2022.

The FPEU should capitalize on this change in schedule to organize other events with the African countries upstream and as follow-up to the Summit, with aims of disengaging from the donor-recipient logic and of co-constructing egalitarian relations.

### **OUR DEMANDS**

- **Take advantage of the AU-EU Summit to lay the foundations for a new joint strategy on themes such as fighting Covid-19, preparing for future pandemics, combating climate change, social protection, trade, and creating green jobs.**
- **Organize events with African countries on the EU partnership policy, with emphasis on the alignment of EU aid with third countries' national priorities for sustainable development, the alignment of aid-financing instruments with the SDGs and the commitment to dedicate 0.7% of the EU's combined gross national income to official development assistance.**



## **PUTTING GENDER EQUALITY IN THE FOREGROUND**

The EU is becoming increasingly divided on gender issues. Some Member States are moving increasingly backwards when it comes to the rights of women, girls, and LGBTQIA+ people: they do not hesitate to obstruct or even block negotiations in the Council, such as the adoption—which was late in coming—of the third European Union Gender Action Plan (GAP III, 2021-2025), promoting solidarity or the ratification of the Istanbul Convention. In contrast, some European States and the European Commission have become leaders of action coalitions of the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) or have made commitments to advance gender equality.

Four countries in the world that have declared that they are conducting a feminist foreign policy: two of them—France and Sweden—will be part of the trio of the FPEU. The European Presidency of the Council of the EU is a significant opportunity for France to act as a model in carrying out its «feminist foreign policy» and to put into action the commitments made in its recent Framework Legislation on Inclusive Development and the Fight Against Global Inequality. France must thus make equality between women and men and between girls and boys a priority of its presidency and an integral part of its program, which it must put into action through a series of strong measures that bring gender issues to the forefront of the European agenda.

### **OUR DEMANDS**

- **Make the issues of gender equality and of the rights of women, teenage girls and young girls a cross-cutting and specific priority of the FPEU.**
- **Work toward making the EU's official development assistance and its external policy commensurate with feminist foreign policy by fully implementing GAP III and by systematically consulting and involving CSOs, in particular local feminist organizations in partner countries and youth organizations in the development of any new EU strategy under the FPEU.**
- **Promote a cross-cutting gender- and youth-actor approach at all levels during the FPEU, with special attention on young and teenage girls, by ensuring that all major summits under the French presidency—e.g., AU-EU Summit and the European Humanitarian Summit—include gender and participative youth in a cross-cutting way in their agendas and results.**



## **MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE**

Since the late 2000s, an increasing number of Member States, including France, have chosen to make their assistance to developing countries conditional on cooperation in migration and border control. In addition, the MFF has for the first time included a section on migration and border management within the European Union.

Coordination SUD has always been firmly opposed to ODA targeting migration as the EU defines it, insofar as it would mean the EU is looking to control movement more than it is aiming to reduce inequality. This is all the more true as development has no impact on the reduction of migration in the short and medium term. On the contrary, improvement in living conditions of the targeted populations provides them with greater possibility of mobility. By constantly targeting migration, the EU is choosing to divert ODA from people's real needs.

### **OUR DEMANDS**

- **Definitively decouple development and migration policies. If development policy is to serve one purpose in relation to migration, it should be to help create the conditions for all people to make a free and informed choice as to whether to leave their country.**
- **Financial assistance to countries bordering the EU should therefore take into account respect for the rights of every human being.**



## **TRANSFORMING FOOD SYSTEMS**

Agricultural and food systems are currently unable to feed the world's population in terms of quantity, quality, and diversity of products. Nor can they cope with climate, social, economic or health crises, as shown by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has caused food insecurity figures to explode in all regions of the world, including Europe. According to SOFI (2021), 3 billion people cannot afford a healthy diet, and up to 811 million people are suffering from hunger—a figure on the rise since 2014.

France must use the presidency of the Council of the European Union to tackle the root causes of hunger (including the climate crisis, inequalities, etc.) and promote an in-depth transformation of agricultural and food systems so as to make them sustainable, resilient, and fair.

### **OUR DEMANDS**

- **Put agroecology at the heart of the future EU–Africa partnership.**
- **Prioritize local production and consumption that promote the creation of local jobs; ensure fair prices for producers and consumers; reduce countries' dependence on imports and their vulnerability to fluctuations in international prices; and support small-scale food producers.**

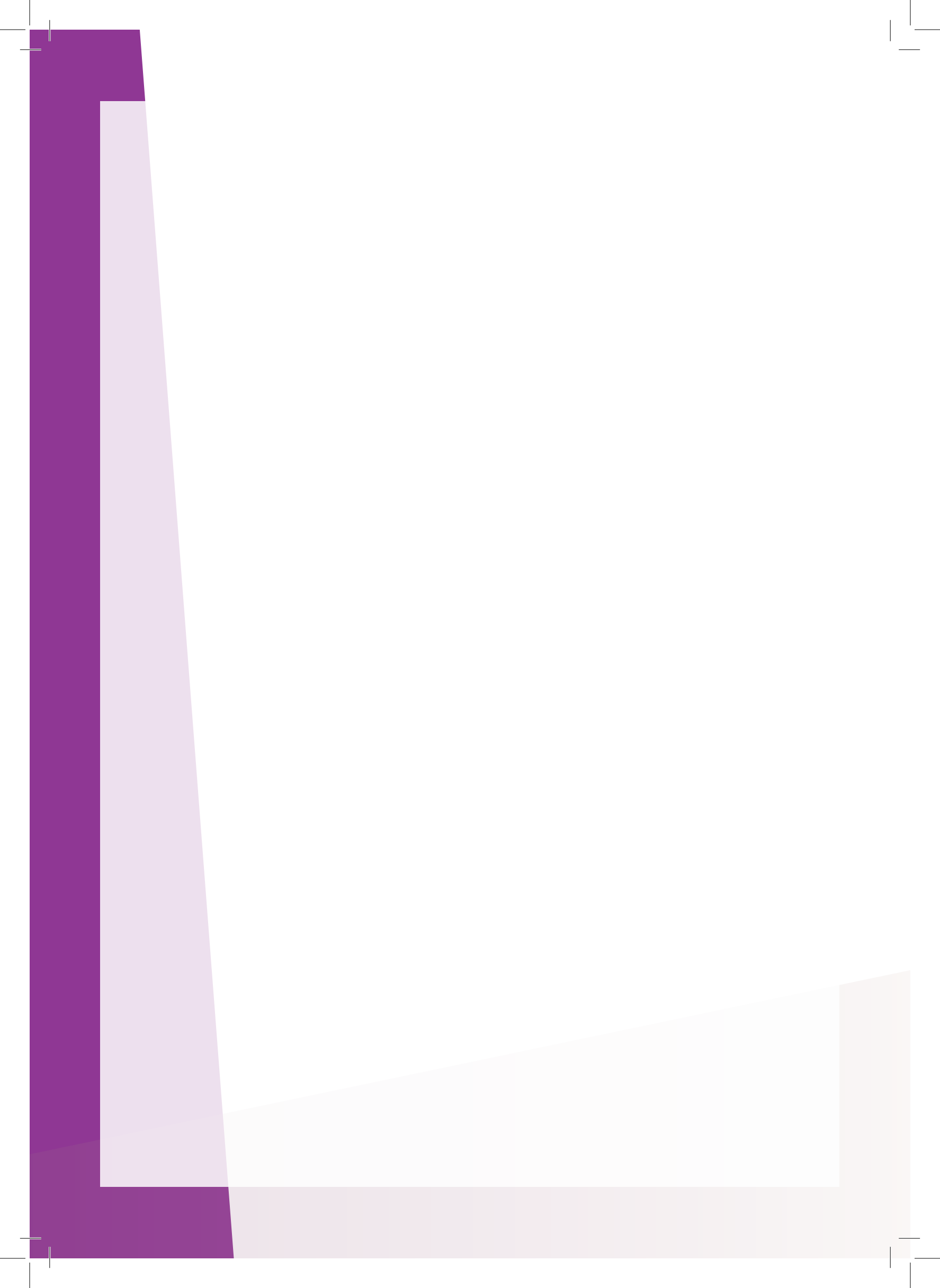


## **IMPROVING GLOBAL ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE**

The Covid-19 pandemic has demonstrated the need to rethink European strategy on global health. France has historically been a driving force in global health. The Paris Peace Forum was also the occasion to launch the One Health High-level Expert Panel in 2020. In 2021, the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs and Agence Française de Développement began reviewing their own strategies.

### **OUR DEMANDS**

- **Push for a review of the EU strategic framework regarding global health, in particular on:**
  - Pandemic preparedness and response
  - Strengthening health systems and especially primary care
  - Universal health coverage
  - Sexual and reproductive health, especially for young people
  - Access to safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene
- **Urge the European Union to commit itself to effective access for all to healthcare products and to contribute to international work on the evolution of intellectual property rules on tools to combat health threats.**







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## Gathering and taking action for global solidarity

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