



# For a globally responsible Europe

PROPOSALS FROM LA COORDINADORA DE ORGANIZACIONES PARA EL DESARROLLO<sup>1</sup> FOR A MORE JUST, INCLUSIVE, GREEN AND FEMINIST GLOBAL EUROPE

Spanish Presidency of the European Union Council  
July to December 2023

## INTRODUCTION

Spain will assume the Presidency of the EU Council at a key moment when it is more important—and urgent—than ever to **adopt political decisions that address the current global crises** (democratic, social, environmental, humanitarian, food, energy, etc.) **in Europe and beyond, and are centred on people and the planet.**

It is also doing so in a context impacted by a convulsive political situation due to Spain's snap general election. La Coordinadora de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo hopes that the Government that assumes the Spanish Presidency and takes over after the July 23rd elections will rise to the occasion at such a decisive moment and **carry out the Presidency of the EU Council as a national project that goes beyond party interests.**

We are concerned about the rise of political and social movements in the European Union that go against the values of liberty, equality, democracy and the respect for human rights that inspired its founding. Additionally, the European agenda continues to be defined by the pandemic's socioeconomic impacts and the effects of the energy and food crises following more than a year of war in Ukraine. In light of this situation, **Spain is responsible for using this unique opportunity to champion the reorganisation of our societies through a fair triple transition (ecological, socioeconomic and digital) based on a feminist and policy coherence approach for sustainable development.** This applies not only within the European Union but also to its external action and international cooperation policies.

The Spanish Presidency will take place in the final stretch of the **European institutional cycle**, so many legislative projects should be closed. Some of the biggest milestones that will shape the agenda for these six-month period are the presentation of the EU's first voluntary exam on the execution of the 2030 Agenda during the United Nations High-Level Political Forum; renewed bilateral relations between the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean within the framework of the European Union - Community of Caribbean and Latin American States (EU-CELAC) Summit; adoption of the Directives on Due Diligence and on combating gender-based violence and domestic violence; the Euro-Mediterranean and Southern Neighbourhood Summit; review of the EU Gender Action Plan III on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Relations 2021-2025 (GAP III); negotiations for processing and adopting the European Pact on Migration and Asylum; and the Regulation on Artificial Intelligence (AI) are some of the key milestones that will define the six-month agenda for the Spanish Presidency.

This document contains the proposals and demands of La *Coordinadora de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo* within the framework of European domestic policy and its external relations. Our goal is for the Spanish Presidency to ensure that **all the measures** adopted in the heart of the EU are bound by **three core principles**: contributing to **social justice** and the **reduction of inequality**; protecting the **respect and exercise of human rights** by guaranteeing the spaces and mechanisms needed for **citizen participation**; and driving a **feminist, decolonial and intersectional** focus.



# WORKING TOWARDS FAIR RULES OF THE GAME

To support social justice and reduce inequalities

The successive crises in recent years have tested society's ability to face rising inequality and poverty. Following a decade marked by austerity policies, the pandemic, worsening military conflicts and the climate emergency, we are faced with a pressing reality: **we can no longer delay the transition towards a social model that is fairer in terms of ecological, digital and socioeconomic matters.**

This triple reorganisation must be addressed through **policy coherence for sustainable development**, in which people and the planet are at the heart of the measures adopted and guaranteeing citizen participation when redefining this new social model.

The Green Deal, the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Commission's Work Plan for 2023 are three clear examples that show **the policy strategy can help achieve climate neutrality, an inclusive digital future that respects human rights, and a social economy.** Implementing those policies as ambitiously as possible could make the European Union a global benchmark—among Member states and abroad—for leading a paradigm shift.

From a policy coherence perspective, **the agenda for a fairer and more sustainable Europe should be shared with the rest of the world** through external action and international cooperation. An excellent opportunity for this initiative is to renew bilateral relations with Latin America and the Caribbean at the EU-CELAC Summit that will take place in Brussels on 17 and 18 July, at the start of the Spanish Presidency of the EU.

During its presidency, Spain can champion a new bi-regional agenda in which the EU shows that **making economic investments and establishing business agreements (or in the area of energy, digital, infrastructure or services) is compatible with due diligence processes** that ensure compliance with environmental protections and rights by all the companies involved; **with closing the digital divide and restricting the use and governance of technology and artificial intelligence;** and **with promoting policies that help strengthen democracy and social justice through a feminist and human rights focus.**

## PROPOSALS



**Defending a fair triple transition—ecological, digital and socioeconomic—through a policy coherence approach for sustainable development** that helps reduce poverty and inequality by promoting the social and solidarity economy as an alternative for recovery and resilience based on the principles of fairness, dignified employment, ecological sustainability and cooperation.



**Backing the adoption of an ambitious European Due Diligence Directive** that is applied to the entire global value chain and by all businesses and industries, without exception.





**Promoting the adoption and application of the agreements and recommendations from the International Labour Organization (ILO)** in the European Union and beyond, particularly Convention 189 on dignified employment for domestic workers.



**Supporting digital, scientific and technological education** that includes gender and age perspectives, and limiting the use of artificial intelligence that poses a risk to human rights.



**Establishing fair tax measures to deal with the crises and minimise their impact**, giving States the resources needed to reduce inequality and bolster their welfare systems in a sustainable manner (economically, socially and environmentally) to include at least the following provisions:

- Activating tax measures against the inflation crisis.
- Consolidating the corporate taxation reforms package.
- Championing a new taxation agenda for wealth and capital gains.



**Strengthening the European international cooperation system** (financing and development) to transform it into a strategic policy that supports at-risk groups, protects and promotes global public assets, and builds more resilient societies that are aligned with sustainable development, equality, human rights, decolonialism and democracy.



**Using policy coherence and a transformative approach to include a feminist view in EU public policies** to help eliminate all forms of violence against women.



**Improving the strength, coordination and resources of financial aid mechanisms for civil society organisations**, particularly those that defend human rights, migrants, radicalised groups, feminists, women, and children and youth. Examples include Team Europe Initiatives, the Global Gateway and the NDICI-GE (Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe), ensuring their transparency in light of the intermediate review of the long-term financial framework and the subsequent programming.



Within the framework of **relations with Latin America, the Caribbean and the Southern Neighbourhood**, defining an agenda aimed at **defending human rights and social cohesion, reducing inequality, protecting civic space, and addressing the climate/food crisis**, including a transformative gender focus in line with the feminist diplomacy promoted by the EU and the Government of Spain.



Specifically, as part of renewing EU-CELAC relations:

- **Driving a social pact that supports equality in the region** and includes funding for social policies and fair transitions aimed at reducing inequality, preventing austerity policies and guaranteeing civic space.
- **Allocating Global Gateway funds towards reducing inequality and achieving Sustainable Development Goals**, beyond private and geopolitical

interests, guaranteeing transparency and accountability by establishing spaces for tracking and monitoring in which civil society is involved.

- **Ensuring the EU fulfils the climate commitments outlined in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)** and championing the promotion of new production and consumption models that are compatible with the environmental systems that sustain life.
- **Having the EU support debt cancellation efforts** for the governments of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) in multilateral spaces.
- **Promoting the adoption of a bi-regional care pact**—based on the European Care Strategy and the Comprehensive Care Systems in LAC—**and a bi-regional pact for eliminating all forms of gender-based violence**, as per the frameworks established by the Istanbul Convention and the Belém do Pará Convention.

## FOR A PEOPLE-CENTRIC WORLD

To ensure that human rights are respected and exercised, protecting the spaces and mechanisms needed for citizen participation

The current context exacerbates the conditions of at-risk groups, which primarily include children and women. We are witnessing **concatenated humanitarian crises** that are increasingly longer, more virulent and with harsher consequences that cause forced displacements of people inside their country of residence and abroad.

There are many causes behind these crises: conflicts, water and food shortages, disasters and extreme weather events that are, to a large extent, linked to climate change, but above all, to a development and production model that is unsustainable for life and the planet. We live in an increasingly dangerous and unsafe world where it seems to have been forgotten that peace, security and development are essential for lasting peace. **We no longer refer to achieving inclusive economic growth, but rather survival.**

All political decisions must be centred on people, their rights and their demands. Overcoming the current crises and including the humanitarian aid and cooperation goals in the new agenda for sustainable development and peace requires the participation of all the social actors and **the drive of organized, empowered and committed global citizens.**

**Investing in education** is one of the keys to achieving this. This applies to all ages, but particularly the education of women, adolescents and girls. It is the only way to expand their opportunities for making informed decisions about their lives, reduce the risk of experiencing any form of violence and exploitation, and increase their involvement in and contribution to their communities and societies.

Safeguarding the right to education has become more essential than ever because in a crisis, it is the first right to disappear and the last one to be reinstated. Education plays a fundamental role in strengthening the critical and committed role of citizens and giving people tools against new threats that violate human rights. This applies to digital settings as well, particularly in the latest context created by artificial intelligence.



Far from this, in recent years, we have witnessed a **disturbing reduction of civic space** throughout Europe and across the globe. The degree of this reduction varies by region. Whereas the right to protest is restricted in Europe and it is increasingly harder to establish space for dialogue and tracking mechanisms, civil society in Latin America, the Caribbean and the Maghreb region is constantly attacked by authorities, and the Sahel region is systematically made invisible by international and regional agents. Additional examples can be found in Afghanistan, where women’s rights have been trampled, and in numerous African nations, where LGTBBIQA+ people are attacked and persecuted.

We, therefore, hope that the EU guarantees participation and gives priority to **protecting civil society as a whole, especially human rights defenders**, as per EU directives on human rights, by fostering a favourable environment for their work and ensuring that the situation and matters posed by these defenders, particularly women and civil society, are addressed at the highest political levels and are placed at the centre of EU commitments with third countries.

## PROPOSALS



**Fostering comprehensive multi-sector responses through the triple link** that exists between humanitarian action, peace and the development of societies under the international agreements and frameworks on human rights and International Humanitarian Law. Guiding these actions to improve the resilience and protection of everyone, particularly those whose rights are violated, such as women, children, migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons, ethnic groups and other collectives that are discriminated against.



**Promoting Spanish and European external action for peace** through political initiatives that prioritise prevention, investing in development and addressing humanitarian needs by placing people at the heart of the response, developing local and national capabilities, and ensuring predictable, flexible and long-term funding.



**Making children and adolescents a priority** during the Spanish Presidency of the European Union by implementing the following measures: increasing investments in childhood and adolescence, with a focus on gender and a special focus on education, health and protection to guarantee their rights in a global context of overlapping crises; establishing formal mechanisms for children and adolescents to participate in such a way that guarantees their opinions are taken into consideration for decision-making; and harnessing digital learning to restore and transform education, with special emphasis on closing the gender gap.



**Promoting quality and inclusive public education systems** focused on gender; ensuring safe and violence-free learning environments; supporting second chance programmes for dropout recovery; guaranteeing uninterrupted education in humanitarian responses and extended crises by allocating at least 10% of humanitarian aid from Spanish cooperation to education in emergencies, particularly for girls and female adolescents; contributing to multilateral funds like the Global Education Alliance (GEA) and the Education Cannot Wait (ECW) global fund. Supporting the allocation of 8% of Official Development Assistance



(ODA) to basic education. Finally, highlights the importance of education that promotes global citizenship and gender equality, in line with the significance of having children participate in global change.



**Guaranteeing the human right to food and food sovereignty** for the entire population, particularly at-risk groups, providing access to healthy diets at a reasonable and affordable cost, and bolstering international cooperation with those countries most affected by the food crisis to guarantee the right to food and sustainable food systems globally, in terms of its production as well as the environmental impact.



**Having the EU acknowledge the global water crisis and take action to protect and manage water as a shared good** through sustainable, democratic and fair management. **Promoting water governance based on the principles of human rights**, fundamental universality, non-discrimination and citizen participation in decision-making, and particularly the equal participation of women, who have traditionally been excluded from these processes. **And expanding ODA to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6)**, primarily in the form of donations (especially in the case of less developed and heavily indebted countries), and ensuring that at least 50% of that ODA is allocated to establishing appropriate hygiene and sanitation.



**Furthering the creation of a Common European Asylum System** whose migration and asylum policies are centred on respecting the human rights and lives of migrants and refugees, particularly women, children and adolescents. Spain should drive the focus of negotiations for the European Pact on Migration and Asylum to prioritise the protections and guaranteed rights of people, including unaccompanied minors, the right to health as well as the sexual and reproductive rights of migrants, and international protections for people who are victims of reprisals or threatened for defending these rights; additional safe legal alternatives for obtaining protections; the elimination of border outsourcing and of making development aid conditional on migration controls; and based on mandatory relocations, foster the solidarity and shared responsibility between Member States. Spain should also support keeping the European Temporary Protection Directive in place and expanding its application.



Defending and promoting **civic space**:

- **Guaranteeing and promoting spaces and mechanisms for participation**, applicable to civil society in Europe and the Global South, strengthening the rule of law and favourable legislation, bolstering democratic structures, and defending and protecting human rights defenders.
- **Establishing effective participation mechanisms for civil society in spaces for foreign policy dialogue, in monitoring agreements with third countries and in processes for programming, monitoring and evaluating European and Member State cooperation instruments.**





- **Implementing the recommendations of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) that invites countries to protect, defend, support and include the civil society from a plural and independent Global South.** This also includes **simplifying the accountability and bureaucracy for receiving public funds** based on the access to funds on behalf of migrants, women’s organizations, feminist movements, human rights defenders and environmental defenders.



### **Approving the European Regulation on Artificial Intelligence, guaranteeing:**

- Exhaustive bans of all AI systems that pose an “unacceptable risk” to fundamental rights.
- Significant obligations of public transparency and accountability on the public use of AI systems and all “users” of high-risk AI.
- Reparations mechanisms and rights to empower people affected by AI systems.
- Technical standards should not address matters related to fundamental rights.

## **FOR A NEW PERSPECTIVE**

To drive a feminist, decolonial and intersectional focus

In light of the current global junction, the search for realistic, responsible and sustainable solutions, like the ones we propose, will not result from analysing reality using the same approach as always. This is why **we propose the need for a thorough change in perspective to gain a different understanding of the problems and be open to new priorities.**

To work towards this new paradigm of climate and gender justice, **it is imperative to give EU action a feminist, intersectional and decolonial focus**<sup>1</sup> that explains and addresses, through policy coherence, the various forms of discrimination and violence people face, taking into consideration different types of oppression such as ethnic or racial origin, sexual orientation or gender identity (LGTBIQA+), age, economic status, religious beliefs, disability and place of origin.

We ask the Spanish Presidency to advocate for **including the human rights-based feminist, decolonial and intersectional perspective in all EU policies, actions and funds**, primarily for the decisions it adopts regarding the triple transition (ecological, digital and socioeconomic).

A specific commitment is also needed for the design and implementation of a **comprehensive system that promotes and tracks European policies through feminist focuses** centred on the sustainability of life, and care, strengthening the agenda for women and girls, and meeting the targets for the Sustainable Development Goal 5 (SDG 5).

<sup>1</sup> The decolonial focus entails continuously questioning the single subject and examines the concept of women in their aspiration for universality within the framework of the various systems of domination and power. It considers and values the numerous contributions of Afro-descendant and racialized women from Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa, at their places of origin and in the diaspora, as well as from other colonised nations. It feeds off of community and common knowledge to build a critique of the way in which feminism has set out women’s emancipation or sexuality and non-binary genders.

The intersectional focus helps us understand how different identities come together in the access to rights and opportunities, which has yet to truly and effectively materialise in many places throughout the world. These forms of discrimination may be caused by ethnic or racial origin, economic status, sexual orientation or gender identity (LGTBIQA+), age, religion, disability or place of origin, among others.





## PROPOSALS



Placing human rights along with their regional and international protection mechanisms at the centre. The multiple forms of discrimination must be addressed through a perspective that guarantees access to queries and participation for affected individuals, and the implementation of effective mechanisms that protect their rights.



**Furthering the implementation of the EU Global Health Strategy** approved by the European Commission to provide universal health coverage, including all the services for sexual health as well as sexual and reproductive rights.



**Driving the adoption of an intersectional feminist focus and a decolonial perspective in all EU actions**, both internal as well as external, that favour the fair distribution of resources, respect people's rights to their resources and are centred on eliminating discrimination in its various forms.



**Promoting the adoption of the EU Gender Action Plan III on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Relations 2021-2025 (GAP III) by Member States.**



Regarding **gender-based violence**:

- **Driving the ratification of the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence** (Istanbul Convention, 2011) by Member States and the rest of the world.
- **Backing the approval of the European Directive on combating violence against women**, ensuring it contains a definition of rape that is based on the absence of consent and addresses all forms of gender violence and situations in which it can occur, including domestic violence and violence in the workplace, with support from unions and civil society organisations, and paying special attention to at-risk women.
- **Giving continuity to EU strategies on equality for gipsies and the LGBTIQ+ collective, and adopting the Council's conclusions on gender equality regarding matters of health, including sexual and reproductive health.**
- **Considering female genital mutilation as a form of gender-based violence against women and girls** and a violation of their human rights. Approving and applying an EU strategy to eradicate female genital mutilation throughout the world, promote initiatives to empower survivors and improve protections for at-risk women in the EU and abroad.



**Including a more accurate view of the impact of gender-based actions, such as analysing how assistance with an impact on gender is accounted for and how it deals with gender-based inequality** (promoting equality; empowering women politically, socially and economically; reducing discrimination based on gender, ethnicity or race; etc.).



On the topic of **funding**:

- **Progressively allocating the entire ODA budget so 30% of total funds are destined primarily to promoting the rights of women for their empowerment and equality**, as per the markers system of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC).
- **Adopting GAP III recommendations** so the gender focus is a major objective in 85% of new programmes, implementing the G0, G1 and G2 markers (qualitative statistical tools used to register development activities in which gender equality is defined as a political goal) of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD).
- **Specifically assigning 6% of total ODA to health as well as sexual and reproductive rights.**
- **Prioritizing at least 30% of repayable assistance for projects specifically destined for local women** and improving the ability to collect data by gender.

La Coordinadora de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo  
The Spanish Development NGO Platform, La Coordinadora

Reina Street 17 - 3º (28004 Madrid)

Tel.: 91 521 09 55 – Fax: 91 521 38 43

E-mail: [informacion@coordinadoraongd.org](mailto:informacion@coordinadoraongd.org)

Web: [www.coordinadoraongd.org](http://www.coordinadoraongd.org)

Founded in 1986, the Coordinadora de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo (Spanish Development NGO Platform, La Coordinadora) is a national network of organizations and social platforms working in the field of development, international solidarity, humanitarian action, education for global citizenship and the defence of human rights anywhere in the world.

Composed of 75 members organizations, six associates and 17 regional coordinators. In total, more than 600 organizations work in more than 100 countries defending human rights, gender equality and the protection of the planet.

Graphic design and layout: Marian León – [photo@marianleon.es](mailto:photo@marianleon.es)

Edition date: June 2023



This work is distributed under an Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License Spain (CC BY-NC-SA 3.0) available at:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/3.0/es/>

The electronic version of this report can be downloaded at:

<http://www.coordinadoraongd.org>





This publication co-funded by the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of La Coordinadora de Organizaciones para el Desarrollo and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.