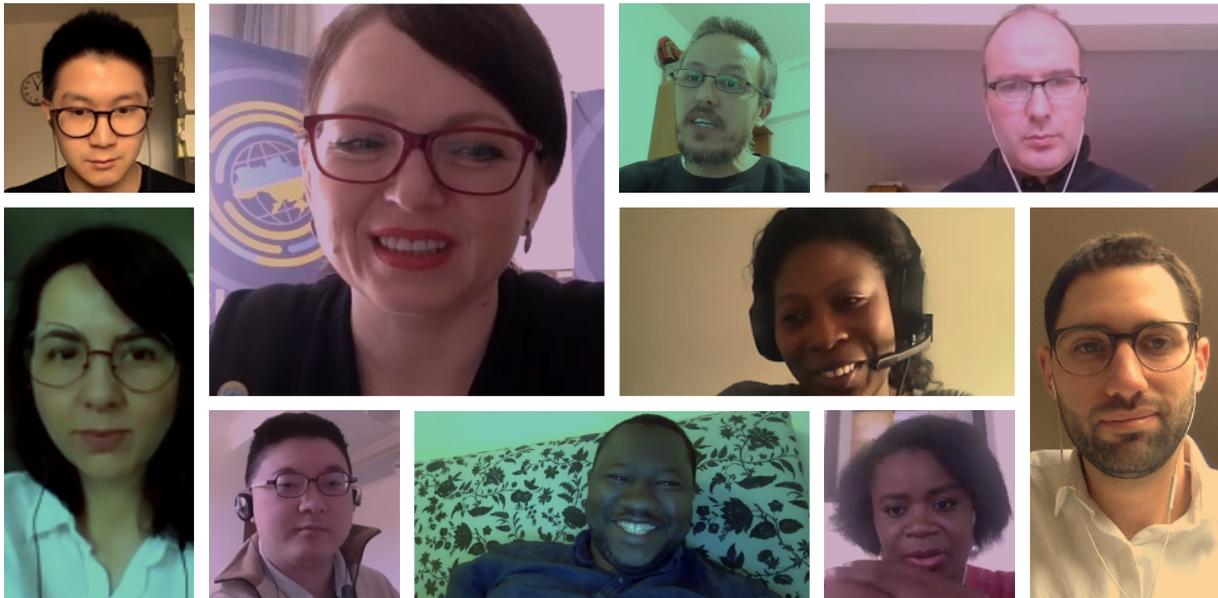


EDIF | European Union Global Diaspora Facility



DIASPORA CONSULTATION: WESTERN EUROPE

29-30 April 2020
4-5 May 2020

REPORT

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Executive summary

The European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) held its second of five Diaspora Consultations on 29-30 April (in French) and 4-5 May 2020 (in English) online. Twenty-three diaspora organisations from seven Western European countries took part in the event, representing countries of heritage from various regions of the world.¹

The main objectives of the consultation were to exchange on the opportunities and challenges linked to diaspora engagement for the development of countries of origin; to better grasp the profile and dynamics of diaspora organisations in Western Europe; and to facilitate new connections between diaspora organisations. In the light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the format of the consultation was adapted both to be online and to allow for peer-to-peer exchange of good practices on diaspora-led initiatives in response to the pandemic.

Participating organisations highlighted the following points:



Sustainability of diaspora actions is an important issue. Access to funds, capacity building in project management and professionalization of diaspora organisations – including by moving beyond pro-bono engagement and voluntarism – as well as the ability to further strategize interventions are key factors to maximise the sustainability of diaspora work.



Diaspora organisations stressed the need to build umbrella organisations and supranational platforms. Based on discussions, the development of thematic umbrella organisations or meetings in specific fields of activities (e.g. education, integration, health, etc.) should be explored. Existing umbrella organisations could share experiences and good practices in this regard.



There is a need to promote further the work done by diaspora organisations and to leverage diaspora expertise. Greater visibility could optimise the impact of activities carried out by the diaspora, including the efforts deployed by diaspora organisations in response to the Covid-19 epidemic. Recognition of the work done by diaspora organisations helps create an enabling environment for diaspora engagement and is therefore important to support. Such recognition also includes that of diaspora expertise.



Technology is an opportunity for the optimisation of diaspora activity. A number of diaspora initiatives discussed involve some element of technology, and this is seen as a potential growth area to facilitate diaspora engagement. Technology is also seen as a target area for development in countries of heritage to which diaspora could contribute. The restrictions on movement imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic have resulted in new and existing diaspora-led initiatives taking place online.



The outbreak of Covid-19 has shown that diaspora organisations are critical crisis responders. Diaspora communities and organisations in Western Europe have demonstrated their ability to adjust their activities to respond to the crisis both in their countries of residence and origin. Many have been heavily impacted by the current context. The rise of hate speech and xenophobia is a major challenge that has been aggravated by the crisis, and the fight against discrimination should be integrated into Covid-19 support initiatives.

During the event, participants developed a set of operational recommendations. EUDiF will carry these recommendations through to its dialogue, capacity building activities and deployment of diaspora experts to support development projects in countries of origin. They will be combined with the operational recommendations from the other Diaspora Consultations to build a consolidated set of recommendations to be presented to authorities in countries of origin or destination, and to the EU.

¹ Participants were selected based on the size of the diaspora community they represent and the fact that they implement development-related activities in their country of origin. A preference was given to organisations active in the response to the outbreak of Covid-19.



Introduction

Diaspora consultations are part of the facility's **Outreach & Partnership Component**, which aims to create, maintain and formalise communication and interaction by acting as a channel for exchange between the European Union (EU) (including EU Member States) and Europe-based diaspora groups.²

Five diaspora consultations will be organised during the project in order to cover all regions of Europe. The Diaspora Consultation: Western Europe, which is the second in this series of events,³ gathered representatives from diaspora organisations based in **seven Western European countries** (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom).

Western Europe is characterised by a great diversity in terms of diaspora communities. Traditionally, it is considered to be a major destination region at global level. Each country in Western Europe displays a unique composition of diaspora communities. However, similarities can be observed within Western Europe as certain non-EU diaspora communities are established in most countries of the region, such as the Indian, Moroccan and Chinese diasporas.

Diaspora diversity extends beyond countries of origin and destination, to culture, language, religion and socio-economic background and more. Diaspora-led organisations have been set-up in response to the interests around such groupings. Some organisations seek to **enhance and formalise the diaspora's contribution to development of their country or region of origin**. As the EU wishes to support such initiatives, it is important to understand these organisation's interests, aspirations, needs and challenges as development actors.

The main objectives of these consultations are to exchange on the opportunities and challenges linked to diaspora engagement for the development of countries of origin; to better grasp the profile and dynamics of diaspora organisations in Western Europe; and to establish networks between diaspora organisations. In addition, in an effort to **react to the situation caused by the current pandemic**, this consultation ought to highlight the **role of diaspora organisations in the context of Covid-19** and the significant efforts already deployed by diaspora organisations in Western Europe to respond to the epidemic.

The Diaspora Consultation: Western Europe was initially scheduled to take place in Paris, France, on 20 and 21 March 2020. However, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, the event was **transformed into an online consultation** and divided into two separate sessions; a Francophone session took place on 29 and 30 April 2020 and an English edition on 4 and 5 May 2020.

2 The European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDIF) is built around four main components: 1) Diaspora engagement mapping, research and evidence; 2) Capacity building activities for governments and diaspora actors; 3) Outreach and partnership activities; and 4) a roster of diaspora development experts to be deployed for development projects.

3 The first consultation - Diaspora Consultation: Southwest Europe - took place in Lisbon, Portugal, in November 2019.

1. Profile of the participating diaspora organisations

General overview

23 diaspora organisations took part in the consultation. The most represented Western European countries of residence were Belgium and France, which were home to four and six of the participating organisations respectively. A significant share of the organisations (nine out of 23) were **umbrella organisations or networks of diaspora organisations**. Sixteen representatives were acting as President, Director or Chair in their respective organisations.

In addition to the Western Europe-based organisations, two organisations based in Spain and Portugal - Fundación Ibn Battuta and Fundo de Apoio Social de Cabo-verdianos em Portugal- took part to 'pass the baton' and share highlights from the previous event in the series, the Diaspora Consultation: Southwest Europe.

Participating organisations - Francophone edition		
Country/ region of origin	Country of residence	Organisation
Africa	Belgium	ADEPT – Africa Europe Diaspora Development Platform
Africa	Belgium	ADNE – African Diaspora Network Europe
Africa	Austria	ADYFE – African Diaspora Youth Forum in Europe
Armenia	Belgium	AGBU Europe – Armenian General Benevolent Union
Cameroon	Germany	Camfomedics – German-Cameroonian Forum for Medical and Paramedical Sciences
China	France	AJCF – Association des Jeunes Chinois de France
Global	France	FORIM – Forum des Organisations de Solidarité Internationale issues des Migrations
Guinea	France	AJGF – Association des Jeunes Guinéens de France
Haiti	France	PAFHA – Plateforme d'Associations Franco-Haïtiennes
Moldova	France	AMOL – Association des Moldaves de Lyon
Morocco	Spain	Fundación Ibn Battuta
Niger	France	CONIF – Conseil des Nigériens de France

Participating organisations - English edition

Country/ region of origin	Country of residence	Organisation
ACP countries ⁴	Belgium	ACP-YPN – ACP Young Professionals Network
Africa	Belgium	ADEPT – Africa Europe Diaspora Development Platform
Africa	Belgium	ADNE – African Diaspora Network in Europe
Africa	United King- dom	AFFORD – African Foundation for Development
Cabo Verde	Portugal	FASCP – Fundo de Apoio Social de Cabo-verdianos em Portugal
China	United King- dom	UKFCP – UK Federation of Chinese Professionals
Philippines	Europe	ENFiD – European Network of Filipino Diaspora
Ghana	Germany	Union of Ghanaian Associations in Germany
Global	Germany	BV-NeMO – Bundesverband Netzwerke von Migratenorganisationen e.V.
India	Ireland	IIBA – Ireland-India Business Association
Moldova	Netherlands	Noroc Olanda – Hello Netherlands
Somalia	Netherlands	HIRDA – Himilo Relief and Development Association
Ukraine	Germany	German-Ukrainian Academic Society
Ukraine	Germany	Global Ukraine Foundation

Sectors of activity

The vast majority of participating organisations (83%) focus on integration issues and community support activities **in Europe**. Other important sectors of activity included cultural promotion as well as education and youth. Certain umbrella organisations and networks were also involved in training and network coordination activities.

⁴ African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

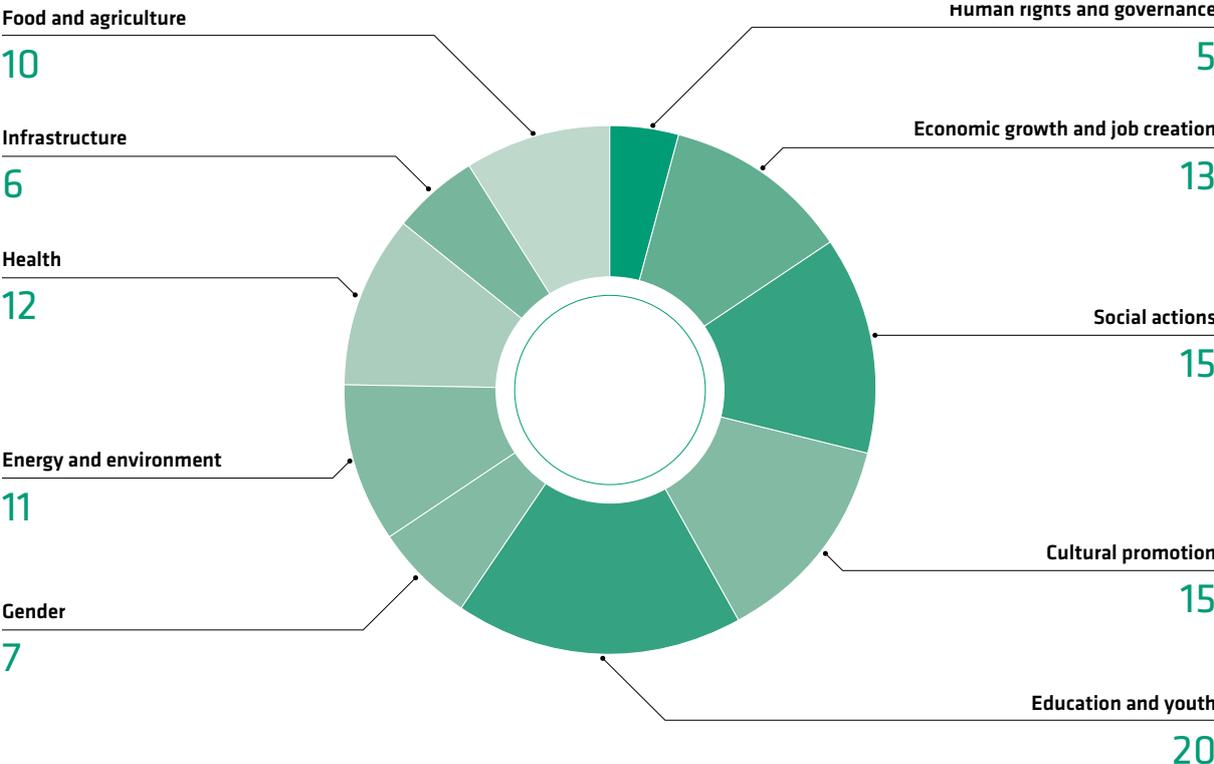
During the event, most representatives presented concrete examples of actions taken to respond to the Covid-19 pandemic and mentioned the **strong impact of crisis on their activities**.

Several participants had had to cancel or postpone activities due to the restrictions on movement imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some had to adjust their activities despite the circumstances by, for example, organising events and meetings online.

Others indicated that they had developed new activities in response to the situation caused by Covid-19 epidemic, such as advocacy campaigns to tackle the rise of hate speech and xenophobia in Europe, or community support activities to assist diaspora communities in need.

Areas of activity in countries/regions of origin

As illustrated in the diagram below, participating diaspora organisations implement a wide variety of activities in their countries or regions of origin. Some of the main areas of work in countries of origin reflect activities carried out in Europe, notably concerning cultural promotion and education and youth.



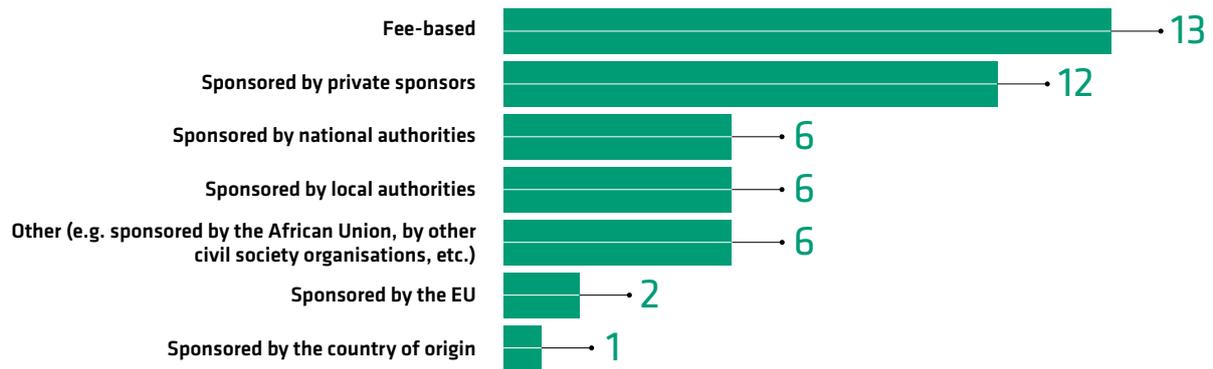
Sources of funding

The main sources of funding of participating organisations are **membership fees and donations from private sponsors**. About half of the participants (12) also receive funding from either national or local authorities in Europe. Interestingly, the European Union and the African Union provide funding to an equal number of entities among the participating organisations (two each). In some cases, umbrella organisations receive funding from other diaspora organisations in the form of membership fees.

Representatives highlighted the impact of Covid-19 on their sources of funding, with **organisations reporting the loss of up to 70% of their funding** due to the crisis caused by the pandemic.



Sources of funding



2. Needs and challenges

Sustainability of diaspora actions

Participants highlighted the issue of sustainability of diaspora actions as a key long-term objective for organisations. The ability of organisations to access funds was identified as a prerequisite to achieve sustainability and enable them to move beyond pro-bono engagement and volunteerism.

Another key need identified was capacity building of diaspora organisations, especially in the areas of project development, project management and communication. Finally, the issue of professionalization of diaspora organisations was cited as a key success factor to ensure the sustainability of diaspora work.

Partnerships, inclusive dialogue and outreach

Further dialogue and cooperation is needed between diaspora organisations and national authorities in both Europe and countries of origin. The importance of engaging effectively with the EU, notably through diaspora networks and coordination structures, was also emphasised during discussions.

Participants noted the need to build umbrella organisations or provide supranational coordination mechanisms in order to create opportunities for synergies and collaboration. Representatives also mentioned the creation of thematic dialogues based on the profile of participants and their fields of activities (e.g. education, integration, health sector, etc.) as an opportunity to explore in the future. Finally, they underlined the added value of existing umbrella organisations – such as the ADEPT platform (www.adept-platform.org) – and indicated that these could be considered as good practices on which to build upon in the future.

Promotion of diaspora work

The promotion and visibility of the work done by diaspora organisations in a wide variety of sectors emerged as an important need during the discussions. Participants agreed that diaspora initiatives merit greater visibility, believing this could optimise their impact. Typically, participants stressed the urgency of visibility and recognition of diaspora-led response initiatives to the Covid-19 pandemic to enhance impact and understanding of diaspora potential for development and crisis response. Participants stressed the need for more visibility on existing media platforms, both in Europe and in countries of origin. Better promotion of the work done by diaspora organisations in Europe could also advocate for the positive value of diaspora work and expertise and contribute to building a better enabling environment for diaspora engagement.

In relation to this issue, representatives stressed the importance of valuing and mobilising the expertise of the diaspora, notably by mapping diaspora skills and developing pools of diaspora experts with recognised skills in specific areas.

New technologies and digital tools

Since many diaspora-led actions had to be put on hold due to budget losses or travel bans, the Covid-19 pandemic prompted several diaspora organisations to increase their focus on online activities such as advocacy campaigns or information sharing. Several representatives cited the need to develop their online activities further, in particular in areas linked to support to diaspora entrepreneurship, business digitalisation or education.



Participants requested to continue exchanges of best practices between diaspora organisations on new technologies and digital tools.

Supporting emergency assistance and recovery

Throughout the event, representatives discussed the role that their organisations have played in the response to the Covid-19 epidemic. They underlined their ability to adjust activities in order to assist diaspora communities in need.

Participants pointed out the heavy impact that the crisis had on various diaspora organisations and communities in the Western Europe. Several representatives cited discrimination and the rise of hate speech and xenophobia as pre-existing challenges that were further aggravated by the outbreak of Covid-19, and they requested the reinforcement of national and regional resolutions to fight discrimination and protect minorities, especially in times of crisis.

Diaspora organisations wish to be involved in crisis response plans in the future. Coordination with humanitarian actors and other civil society organisations needs to be improved in anticipation of potential future emergencies.

3. Recommendations

The participants generated recommendations in working groups which were then refined in a plenary session. The recommendations are as follows:

- Promote peer-to-peer exchanges between diaspora organisations;
- Strengthen the capacity of diaspora organisations' management systems and capacities in communication and awareness raising in Europe and countries of origin,;
- Establish a European fund easily accessible to diaspora organisations and encourage complementary co-financing opportunities at both European and national level in host countries;
- Map diaspora skills in specific areas and establish pools of diaspora experts;
- Encourage the development of supranational platforms or networks for diaspora organisations to facilitate cross-diaspora cooperation in Europe;
- Foster dialogue and discussion based on the profile of diaspora organisations and their fields of activities (e.g. education, integration, health, etc.) to facilitate thematic exchanges of experiences and best practices;
- Involve diaspora organisations in different crisis response plans and mechanisms, and strengthen coordination between diaspora organisations and humanitarian actors in times of crisis;
- Support diaspora organisations in their role against xenophobia and discrimination, especially in times of crisis;
- Encourage exchanges of best practices among diaspora organisations in the use of new technologies and digital tools, as well as the potential for diaspora organisations to contribute to digital development in countries of origin.

EUDiF will explore ways to both promote and respond to the recommendations via its capacity building and dialogue activities, as well as through the future deployment of experts in development projects.



4. Conclusions and way forward

This diaspora consultation further corroborated the trends and findings identified during the first diaspora consultation in Lisbon in November 2019. This event constitutes an important step towards creating a mosaic profile of diaspora organisations in Europe, notably through information shared by representatives regarding their structures, capacities, thematic focus, activities, needs and challenges.

This event differed from the previous consultation as it discussed the impact that the Covid-19 crisis has had on daily activities of diaspora organisations based in the region.

As requested by participants, a LinkedIn group dedicated to further networking and dialogue has been created. Through this group, diaspora organisations are able to exchange information on their respective activities and access relevant information.

The consultation report is publicly available on the EUDiF website. Additionally, the recommendations will be shared with the participants of the subsequent consultations and will be used as a basis to develop concrete recommendations to be presented to authorities in the countries of origin or destination or to the EU. These recommendations will help identify themes and issues for the Annual EU Global Diaspora Forums. Subsequently, key recommendations will be operationalised through capacity building activities and diaspora expert deployment to support development projects in countries of heritage.



The EU Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) is the first EU-funded initiative to take a global approach to consolidating diaspora engagement for development. EUDiF supports diaspora organisations in Europe, countries or origin and the European Union and its Member States to engage and collaborate more effectively with each other and mainstream diaspora involvement on development issues. Running from June 2019 - December 2022, EUDiF takes a multi-stakeholder, consultative approach in its research, capacity building, dialogues and diaspora expert deployments.

European Union Global Diaspora Facility

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