



European Union  
Global Diaspora Facility

## DIASPORA CONSULTATION: WESTERN EUROPE

### 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.<sup>1</sup>

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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.



**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.

## 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.

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