

Executive summary

The European Union Global Diaspora Facility (EUDiF) held its third of five Diaspora Consultations on 29-30 September online. Seven diaspora organisations from four Northern 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 Northern Europe; and to facilitate new connections between diaspora organisations.

Three main messages emerged from discussion with the participating organisations:



Empowerment is key to ensure sustainability of diaspora actions. It is essential to empower diaspora organisations and ensure the sustainability of their actions through providing: information on funding opportunities, capacity development in leadership, project management and professionalisation of diaspora organisations, along with awareness raising and advocacy highlighting the role of diaspora as development actors.



Sustained multi stakeholder dialogue, with actors in countries of heritage, countries of residence, and the EU is critical for effective coordination and network building. In this regard, participants requested support in forming networks and establishing effective coordination mechanisms for intra-country and cross-country diaspora interaction in Europe. A 'collectivisation of diaspora' is key to building networks and accessing partnership opportunities with different stakeholders.



Further efforts are needed to build enabling environments for diaspora engagement in their countries of heritage as well as countries of residence. This includes - inter alia - building trust, improving access to information, addressing issues linked to bureaucracy, corruption, and censorship. In addition, there was a call to address the issue of racism, xenophobia and discrimination in the country of residence, as well as to develop specific funding schemes for diaspora.

During the event, participants developed a set of operational recommendations. EUDiF will carry these recommendations through its dialogue, Capacity Development Lab and Diaspora Professionals for Development Mechanism. 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 heritage or residence, 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.



Introduction

Diaspora consultations are part of the EUDiF'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 are planned during the project in order to cover all regions of Europe. The **Diaspora Consultation: Northern Europe**³, which is the third in this series of events,⁴ gathered representatives from diaspora organisations based in **four Northern European countries**: Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland.

Northern Europe is home to many diaspora communities from various parts of the world. However, a significant number of diasporas living in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden belong to West Asian and South-Central Asian countries like Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan. Along with these communities, there are significant African and Eastern European diasporas (mainly from Russia, Ukraine and Belarus) in Northern Europe.

Many diaspora communities in the region maintain active links with their countries of heritage and they have therefore established various associations with the objective to contribute to the development of their countries of heritage and/or support integration activities. The EU wishes to support such initiatives and respond to requests to enhance and formalise diaspora contributions to development. It is, therefore, important to create opportunities to better understand these organisation's interests, aspirations, needs and challenges as development actors.

The main objectives of the Diaspora Consultations are to **exchange on the opportunities and challenges linked to diaspora engagement for the development of countries of heritage**; to better grasp the profile and dynamics of diaspora organisations in Northern Europe; and to establish networks between diaspora organisations.

² **EUDiF** is built around four main components: 1) Diaspora engagement mapping, research and evidence; 2) Capacity development 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 Northern Europe constitute the Scandinavian and Baltic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

⁴ The 1st consultation - [Diaspora Consultation: Southwest Europe](#) - took place in Lisbon, Portugal, in November 2019; the 2nd consultation - [Diaspora Consultation: Western Europe](#)- took place online (due to COVID-19) in May 2020

1. Profile of the participating diaspora organisations

General overview

Seven diaspora organisations took part in the consultation. The most represented Northern European country of residence was **Sweden**, home to four of the participating organisations. Amongst the participants was **one umbrella organisation and a network of diaspora organisations**. A significant number of participants held the Chairman, Director or Manager positions in their respective organisations.

In addition to the Northern European-based organisations, two members of a Moldovan diaspora organisation based in Netherlands - [Noroc Olanda - Hello Netherlands](#), took part in the event to 'pass the baton' and share highlights from the previous consultation in the series, the Diaspora Consultation: Western Europe.

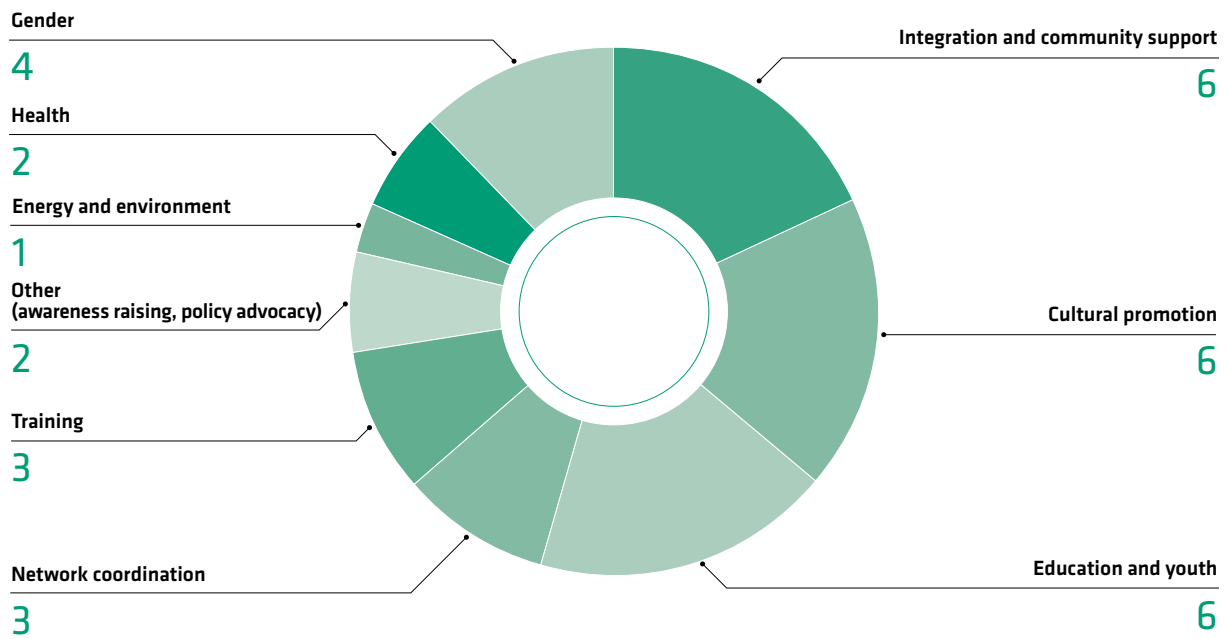
Participating organisations		
country/region of heritage	Country of residence	Organisation
Afghanistan	Sweden	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
Afghanistan	Sweden	Afghanska Föreningen i Örebro
Somalia	Sweden	Somali Youth Association in Sweden (SUIS - Somaliska Ungdomsförbundet i Sverige)
Afghanistan	Sweden	Bureau for Rights Based Development (BRD)
Afghanistan	Norway	FAROE and Global Happiness
Eritrea	Denmark	AZMARA.DK Danish-Eritrean Network
Global	Finland	Moniheli ry

Sectors of activity in Europe

All (or almost all) participating organisations focus on **integration issues, cultural promotion, community support, as well as education and youth activities** in Europe. The umbrella organisations and networks that participated in the consultation are also involved in training, awareness rising, policy advocacy and network coordination activities.



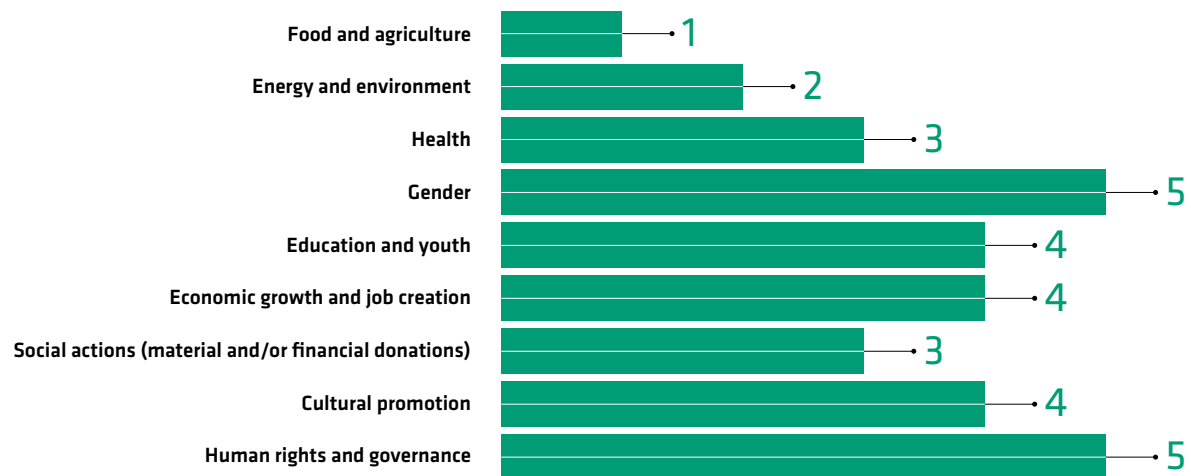
Sectors of activity in Europe



Areas of activity in countries of heritage

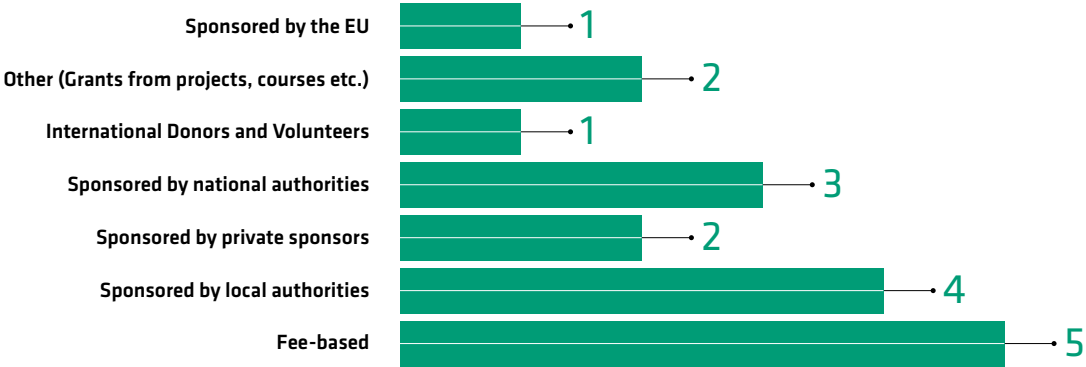
In terms of activities in the countries of heritage, the two key areas are **human rights and governance**, and **gender**. Other areas of work include economic growth and job creation, cultural promotion and education and youth.

Areas of activity in countries of heritage



Sources of funding

The primary source of funding for the participating organisations is the **membership fee**. Additionally, sponsorship from national and local authorities were among the leading sources of funding cited by participants. In some cases, the organisations also received funding through grants and in payment for courses they offer.



2. Needs and challenges

Empowerment and sustainability

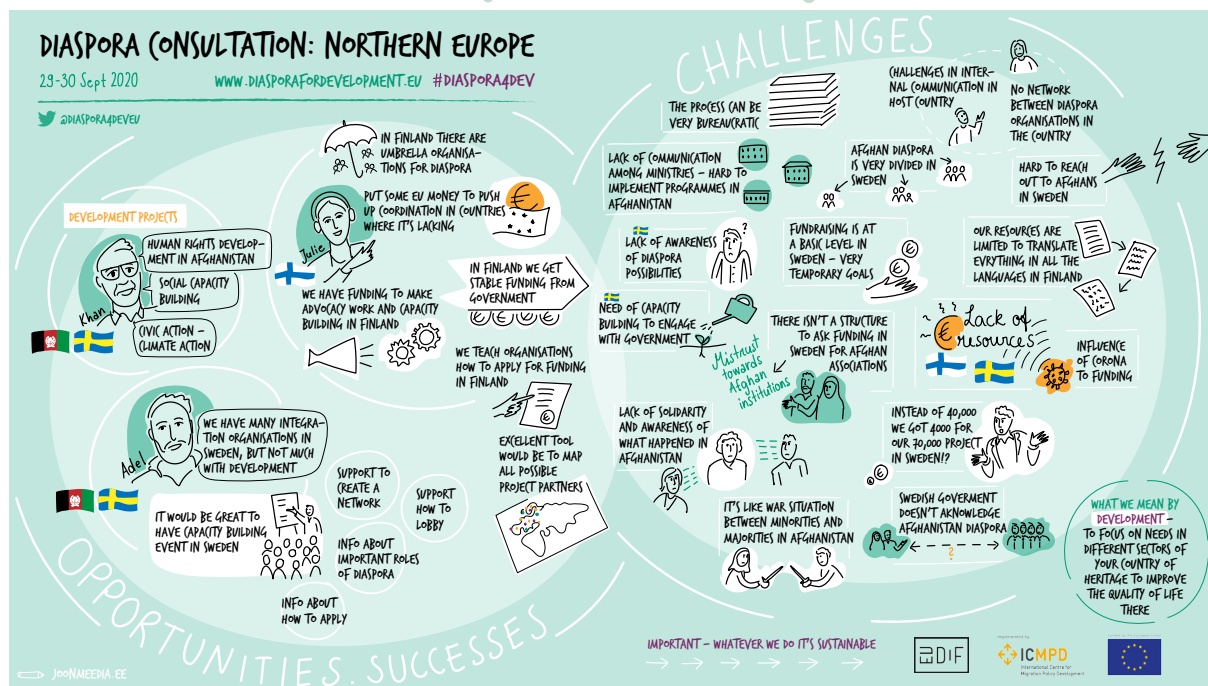
One of the key challenges that the participants noted during the discussion was the difficulty to sustain their actions over time. The limited overall organisational capacity, low level of professionalisation, lack of information on various funding opportunities and lack of regular funds are critical factors that prevent diaspora organisations from moving beyond ad hoc pro-bono engagement and voluntarism. To overcome this, participants requested to be supported and empowered with capacity development in fundraising, project design and management, organisational leadership, advocacy and communication.

Participants also emphasised the need to raise awareness about the role of diaspora members as agents of development among various stakeholders (both in countries of residence and countries of heritage).

Multi-stakeholder dialogue, coordination & network building

First, representatives highlighted the need to map and identify the main stakeholders promoting diaspora engagement at local, national (countries of heritage and countries of residence) and global level and further establish an open database to facilitate information sharing between these different actors.

Moreover, the participants underlined the importance of engaging in multi-stakeholder dialogue with the various actors in countries of heritage, countries of residence, and at pan-European level for effective network building and coordination. In this regard, a key challenge that diaspora organisations face is the lack of coordination and fragmentation among various diaspora groups due to mistrust, issue of transparency, and biases (e.g. relating to ethnic and linguistic differences).



In order to overcome these differences and to create opportunities for synergies and collaboration, participants requested support in building network organisations and establishing effective coordination mechanisms for intra-country and cross-country diaspora interaction in Europe. Furthermore, representatives highlighted that the ‘collectivisation of diaspora’ would be key to establish better partnerships with stakeholders including civil society organisations, national institutions, international institutions and to allow for lobbying of greater resources for diaspora actions.

Enabling environment

Participants stressed the need to address various challenges in their respective countries of heritage that would contribute to building a better enabling environment for diaspora engagement. This includes issues of trust, limited access to information, challenges linked to bureaucracy, corruption, and censorship. Additionally, we noted a common need to identify focal points in countries of heritage to facilitate diaspora work and act as liaison between diaspora and institutions (including ministries and local authorities).

Similarly, participants also underlined the need to address issues related to racism, xenophobia and discrimination in countries of residence. Additionally, countries of residence can enhance the potential of diaspora in carrying out both development and integration activities by supporting them with various capacity development trainings, along with funding opportunities. In this regard, one participant cited a good practice from Finland where opportunities to access structural funding, as well as capacity development support are available to diaspora organisations. The possibility of involving the private sector in the country of residence or country of heritage to tap into existing support for diaspora and local enterprise was also discussed. Finally, participants highlighted the need for continued support to facilitate peer to peer exchange between diaspora organisations of different countries to share best practices and lessons learnt.

3. Recommendations

The participants generated the following recommendations in a participatory discussion.

- **Enhance professionalisation of diaspora organisations** through capacity development in advocacy, leadership, communication, and project management.
- **Develop specific local, national and regional funds for diaspora organisations in Europe**, paired with capacity development in fundraising and project proposal drafting. In the short-term, map existing funding schemes for diaspora organisations in Europe.
- **Support the development of strong diaspora networks and/or umbrella organisations** to facilitate inter-diaspora cooperation in Europe and pool resources.
- **Promote peer-to-peer exchanges between diaspora organisations to enhance learning opportunities** through sharing of best practices and lessons learnt (e.g. study visits).
- **Encourage and support structured and sustained multi-stakeholder dialogue between diaspora and various actors in countries of heritage and residence** (including private sector actors), as a key element to build trust, align priorities and develop partnerships. In this view, it is important to identify national focal points on diaspora issues.
- **Raise awareness of diaspora contributions to development.** Local level networking in both countries of residence and heritage can support integration, raise awareness of diaspora as development actors and help identify strategic allies.
- **Maintain flexibility in programming at national and European level** to keep up with changing needs and realities at local level in both country of residence and heritage.
- **Involve diaspora in migration-related and peacebuilding dialogues** to tap into their knowledge of local realities and enable diaspora engagement.
- **Foster realistic diaspora policy frameworks in countries of heritage** as well as good governance to enable diaspora engagement for development.





4. Conclusions and way forward

This diaspora consultation corroborated the trends and findings identified during the first and second diaspora consultation held in November 2019 and May 2020 respectively. The 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.

Compared with the previous consultations, this event put a much stronger emphasis on network building, co-ordination among various stakeholders and better enabling environment to improve diaspora engagement for development. Additionally, participants underlined recurrent themes and challenges of sustainability and the need for capacity development support to enhance overall organisational capacities of diaspora organisations.

All diaspora consultation reports, including this one, are publicly available in the EUDiF website's [library](#). The report will also feed into the regional thematic meetings with partner countries to discuss interests and challenges of partner countries in the field of diaspora engagement. Understanding both the interests and needs of diaspora organisations and countries of heritage will help the EUDiF team, as well as other relevant actors, to match potential initiatives.

Furthermore, the consultation 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 and destination and to the EU. These recommendations will also help identify themes and issues for the Annual EU Global Diaspora Forums. In 2021 and 2022, key recommendations will be operationalised through EUDiF's Capacity Development Lab and Diaspora Professionals for Development Mechanism based on requests from diaspora organisations and partner countries.



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 of 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.

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