

Executive summary

The [European Union Global Diaspora Facility](#) (EUDiF) organised the fourth and final event in its series of Diaspora Consultations on 26-27 March 2021. Representatives from 27 organisations based in seven Southern, Central and Eastern European countries participated in the event, representing a wide range of countries and regions of heritage from different parts 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 Southern, Central and Eastern Europe; and to facilitate new connections between diaspora organisations.

Five main messages emerged from the consultation:



Sustainable sources of funding for diaspora should be made available. Quotas and/or specific opportunities for diaspora should be integrated in calls for projects and grant schemes.



Support for the development of inclusive and transparent diaspora networks is critical. There is a need to decrypt and share good practices in this respect.



Follow up on recommendations, continuity and sustainable dialogue should be ensured. Participants indicated that this was not the first time they were asked to identify recommendations. Efforts to follow up on diaspora recommendations are lacking, as well as sustainable multi-stakeholder dialogue and cooperation mechanisms with donors, implementing agencies and governments of countries of heritage and origin. Bilateral contacts are also critical and should be sought by all parties.



There is a need to analyse and promote the impact of diaspora actions and interventions, as well as to mainstream the contributions of diaspora as recognised partners in planning, designing and implementing co-development programmes (not only for core migration issues). The narrative on the added value of diaspora engagement should be further unpacked beyond general statements.



An enabling environment for diaspora engagement in the country of destination is as important as an enabling environment in the country of heritage. Frameworks and programmes (in terms of integration, diversity and anti-discrimination) devised by host countries should be tailored to take into account that diasporas originate from diverse countries and regions, and sometimes from non-democratic contexts. In this respect, special attention should be paid to unlocking **youth diaspora potential** through dedicated programmes and measures.

During the event, participants developed recommendations. EUDiF will carry these recommendations through its dialogue, Capacity Development Lab (CDL) and Diaspora Professionals for Development (DP4D) mechanism. Drawing on all the diaspora consultations, a consolidated set of recommendations will be presented to authorities in countries of heritage and residence, as well as 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 or region of heritage.



Introduction

Diaspora consultations are part of 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

Four diaspora consultations have been organised since the start of the project in order to cover all regions of Europe. The **Diaspora Consultation: Southern, Central and Eastern Europe**, which is the fourth and last in this series of events,³ gathered representatives from diaspora organisations based in **seven countries in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe**: Greece, Italy, Croatia, Czechia, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

The **Southern, Central and Eastern European regions** are home to many diaspora communities from various parts of the world. Each country in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe displays a unique composition of diaspora communities. However, similarities can be observed within the regions. Cyprus, Greece, Italy and Malta are all home to significant diasporas from Africa and the MENA region, while EU Member States in Central and Eastern Europe host significant diasporas from Eastern European countries, in particular Ukraine.

Diaspora diversity extends beyond countries of origin and destination, to culture, language, religion and socio-economic background and more. As the EU wishes to support development initiatives led by the diaspora, it is important to understand these organisation's interests, aspirations, needs and challenges as development actors.

The main objectives of the diaspora consultation 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; and to establish connections 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 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; the 3rd consultation – [Diaspora Consultation: Northern Europe](#) – took place online in September 2020.

1. Profile of the participating diaspora organisations

General overview

Representatives from **27 diaspora organisations** took part in the consultation. The most represented European country of residence was **Italy**, home to 17 of the participating organisations. A significant number of organisations (10 out of 27) were **umbrella organisations or networks of diaspora organisations**. In particular, five of the organisations present in the consultation were regional networks of diaspora organisations based in Italy, whose members had links to many countries and regions of heritage in several parts of the world. The majority of the representatives (19 out of 27) were acting as President, Chair or Director of their respective organisations.

In addition to the representatives based in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe, one representative of an Afghan diaspora organisation based in Sweden – the [Swedish Committee for Afghanistan](#) – took part in the event to ‘pass the baton’ and share highlights from the previous consultation in the series, the Diaspora Consultation: Northern Europe.

Participating organisations		
Country of residence	Country/region of heritage	Organisation
Croatia	Ukraine	Union of Ukrainian-Croatian Friendship
Czechia	Ukraine	European Congress of Ukrainians
Global	Ukraine	World Congress of Ukrainian Youth Organisations
Greece	Georgia	Greek-Georgian Cultural Association
Italy	Africa	Associazione Le Réseau
Italy	Africa	Associazione di volontariato Kariba
Italy	Africa	Panafricando
Italy	Albania	Dora e Pajtimit
Italy	Cote d'Ivoire	COGID - Coordinamento generale degli ivoriani della Diaspora
Italy	Ecuador	USEI APS (Unione di Solidarietà degli Ecuadoriani in Italia - APS)
Italy	Global	Regional diaspora network of Sardinia

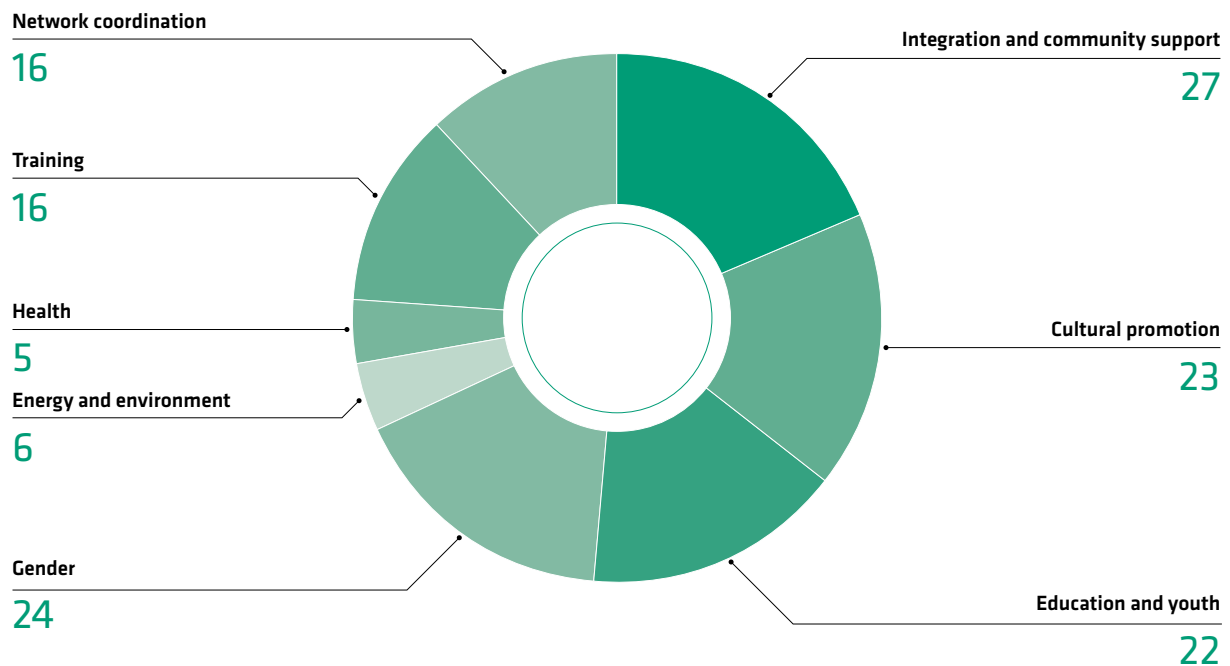


Italy	Global	Regional diaspora network of Piedmont
Italy	Global	Regional diaspora network of Lazio
Italy	Global	Regional diaspora network of Liguria
Italy	Global	Coordinamento Diaspore in Puglia ETS
Italy	Global	CONNGI (National Coordination of New Italian Generations)
Italy	Mali	Conseil des Maliens d'Italie
Italy	Philippines	Filipino Women's Council (FWC)
Italy	Rwanda	Associazione Menya di Parma
Italy	Senegal	Sunugal
Italy	Tunisia & MENA	Associazione PONTES
Poland	Ukraine	Foundation Our Choice
Poland	Ukraine	Ukraine Foundation
Romania	China	Romania-China House
Romania	Ukraine	Union of Ukrainians in Romania
Slovakia	Ukraine	Ukraine-Slovakia SOS
Sweden	Afghanistan	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan

Sectors of activity in Europe

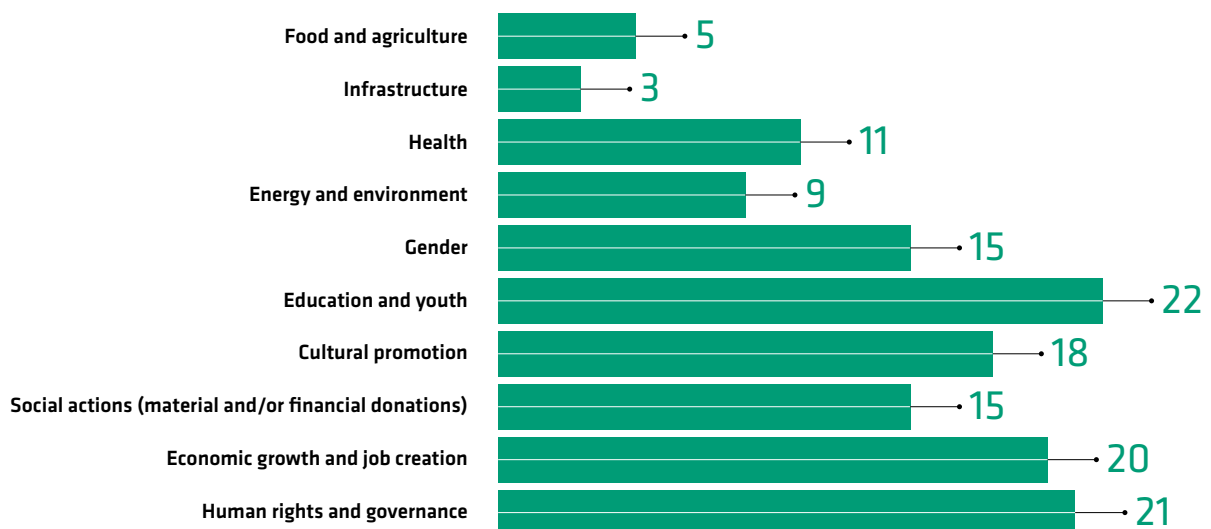
All the organisations that participated in the consultation are active on issues of **integration and community support** in their countries of residence, thereby illustrating the role played by diaspora organisations in the field of integration in Southern, Central and Eastern Europe. The majority of organisations indicated that they are also active in the fields of **cultural promotion, education and youth**, as well as on **gender issues**.

Several of the umbrella organisations and networks that took part in the event are focusing on network coordination activities, and also reported that they have put in place training activities for their member organisations.



Areas of activity in countries of heritage

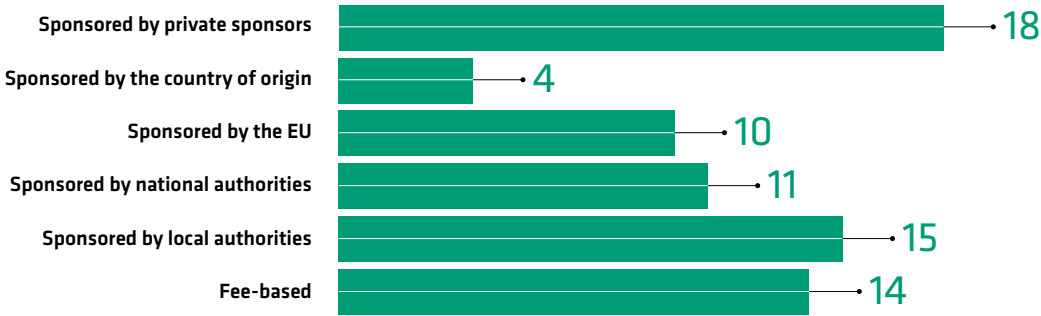
As illustrated in the diagram below, the participating organisations implement a wide variety of activities in countries and regions of heritage. The two main areas are human rights and governance, and education and youth. Other key areas of work include economic growth and job creation, as well cultural promotion. Finally, Ukrainian diaspora organisations based in Central and Eastern Europe indicated that social actions, including material donations in their country of heritage, are an important part of their activities.





Sources of funding

The main sources of funding of the participating organisations are donations from private sponsors. The vast majority of organisations also reported receiving funding from local authorities in their countr of residence, particularly in Italy. Finally, more than half of the organisations rely on membership fees as a source of funding.



2. Needs and challenges

Access to funding and professionalisation

The lack of flexible and sustainable funding for diaspora organisations emerged as the main challenge during the event, even though many diaspora organisations have demonstrated their ability to successfully develop and implement important development projects. Participants asked for diaspora-dedicated quotas and opportunities in calls for proposals and grant mechanisms at local, national and supra-national levels.

Participants also identified the limitations of diaspora volunteering as a major challenge, which affects the dimension and scope of their work, as well as the commitment of diaspora members, especially in terms of time availability.

Inclusive and sustainable networks

Participants stressed the need to build inclusive, democratic, transparent and sustainable diaspora networks in order to address fragmentation in diaspora engagement and to pool resources. However, they indicated there is a knowledge gap in terms of good practices in this regard.

In addition, participants called for the establishment of sustained multi-stakeholder networks and platforms that include diaspora, governments and non-governmental actors involved in development work. Follow up on dialogue outcomes is critical to make progress and achieve impact.

Communication and visibility

Diaspora representatives highlighted the importance of strengthening their communication channels with donors and governments, both in countries of residence and heritage, including at the local level. In this respect, participants mentioned the need for the diaspora to take a proactive role in reaching out to authorities and donors.

Increased dialogue should go hand in hand with the increased promotion of the impact of diaspora actions and interventions, both in Europe and in regions of heritage. Participants stressed the need to promote diaspora expertise beyond migration issues, and to unpack the potential of the diaspora to build bridges between countries of residence and heritage.

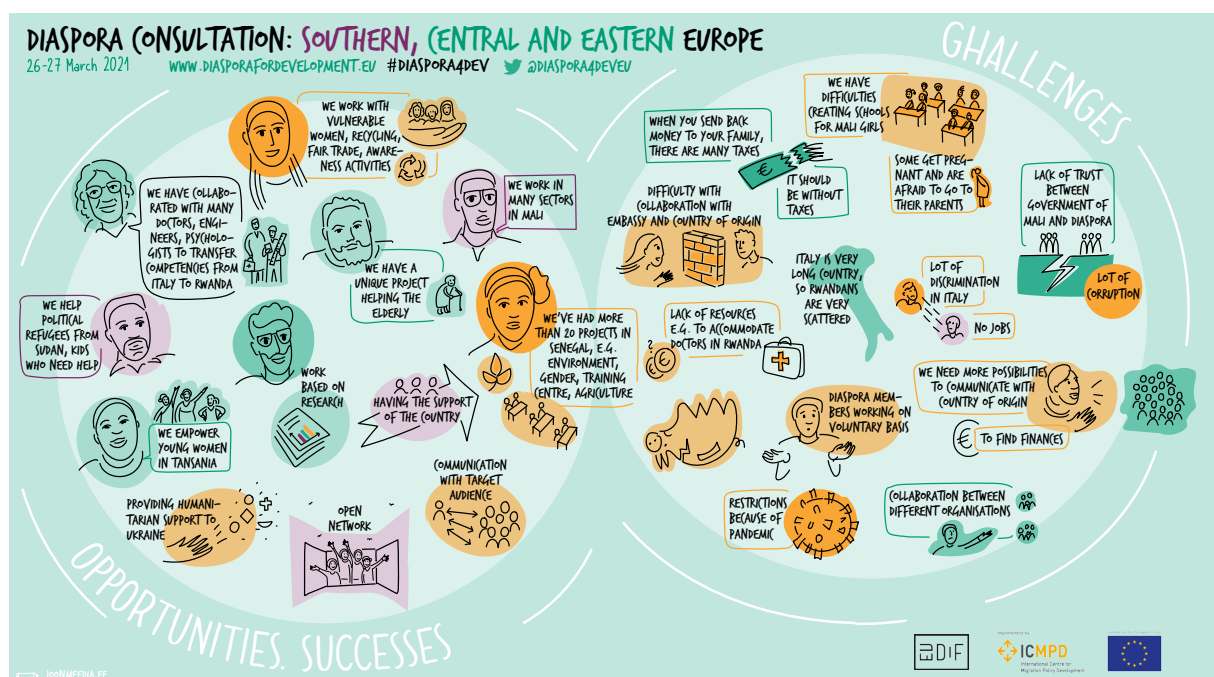
Enabling environments for diaspora engagement

Participants stressed the importance of holistically addressing barriers to diaspora engagement in countries of heritage (e.g. lack of trust, corruption, poor governance, limited access to loans) as much as in countries of destination (e.g. discrimination, lack of integration and diversity framework, lack of/limited access to civic and political rights).

In addition, representatives reported that the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic have created serious challenges for the continuation of development activities.

Engaging the second generation

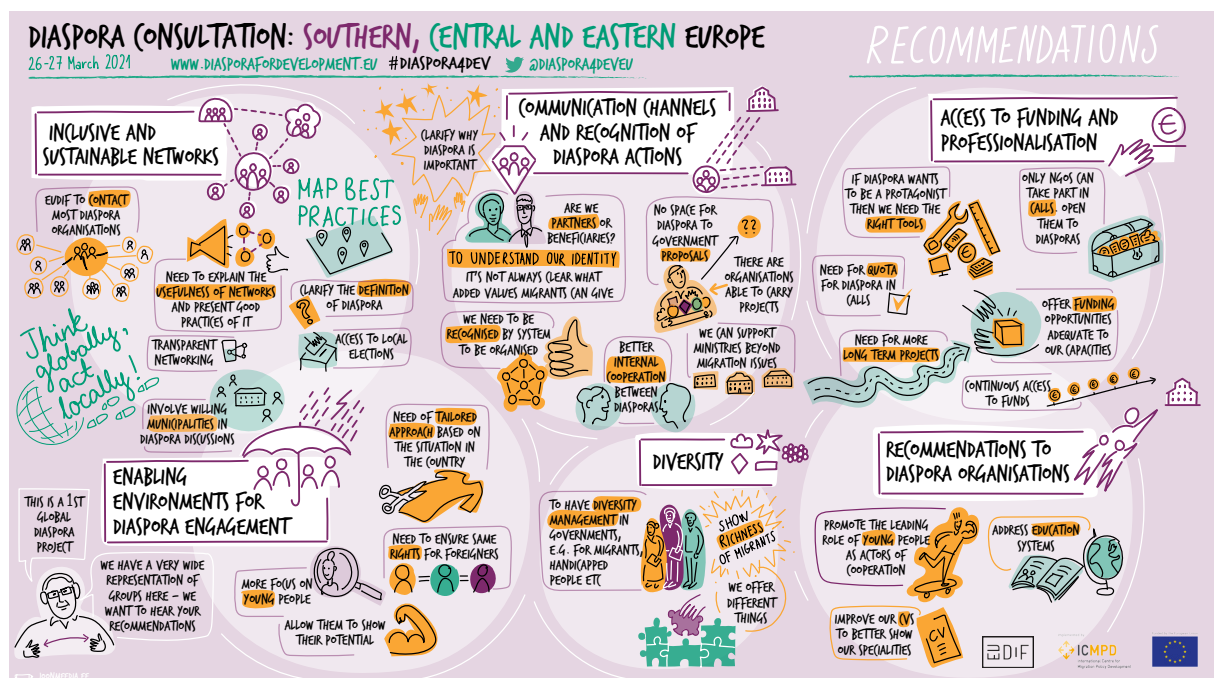
The issue of engaging youth diaspora emerged as a source of concern, particularly for participants based in Italy. Efforts are required to nurture the interests of youth diaspora and to leverage their potential of youth diaspora to engage in development work.



3. Recommendations

The participants generated the following recommendations:

- **Establish specific opportunities for diaspora organisations** within funds and calls for projects, in order to provide support that meets the specificities of diaspora organisations as actors of development and integration, and to acknowledge their ability to successfully build and implement projects;
- **Strengthen the sustainability of funding for diaspora organisations and make them financially autonomous**, by prioritising long-term funding programmes over short-term initiatives and one-off appeals;
- **Facilitate the professionalisation of diaspora organisations**, notably through capacity development activities in areas such as access to funding, communication and networking;
- **Support the development of inclusive and transparent diaspora networks**, drawing on an analysis of good practices in this area;
- **Strengthen opportunities for dialogue with governments of countries of residence and heritage**, particularly with **municipalities and local authorities**, in the countries of residence;
- **Analyse and widely promote the impact of diaspora actions**, including through a **well-articulated and positive narrative on migration and diaspora**;
- **Include the diaspora in the conceptualisation and planning of development actions** implemented by European governments and donors. In this sense, it is important to elevate **diaspora as co-development partners** and to **acknowledge their expertise and knowledge** beyond migration issues, including through the mapping of skills of diaspora individuals;
- **Support enabling environments for diaspora engagement in both countries of residence and heritage**, including by strengthening policies on inclusion, integration and respect for diversity in European countries of residence;
- **Create conditions that allow youth diaspora to engage and contribute**, for example by adapting the agendas of existing diaspora organisations to the needs of new generations and by designing engagement programmes that target youth diaspora.



4. Conclusions and way forward

This diaspora consultation corroborated trends and findings identified during the three previous diaspora consultations. 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.

As with previous consultations, access to sustainable funding, network consolidation, recognition of diaspora expertise, and professionalisation of organisations were identified as major concerns for the participants. However, during this event, representatives also stressed the importance of dialogue with local authorities, as well as inclusion and integration issues for diaspora engagement. They reflected on the future of diaspora engagement in their respective countries of residence by exchanging on the issue of engagement with youth diaspora.

All diaspora consultation reports, including this one, are publicly available in the EUDiF website's [library](#). Furthermore, the recommendations arising from this consultation will be used as a basis to develop concrete recommendations to be presented to authorities in countries of origin and destination, as well as to the EU. These recommendations will feed into the first EUDiF Future Forum, which will be held online in June 2021. Key recommendations will be operationalised in 2021 and 2022 through EUDiF's Capacity Development Lab (CDL) and Diaspora Professionals for Development (DP4D) 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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