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**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND
THE COUNCIL**

2020 Annual Report

**On the implementation of the European Union's instruments for financing external
action in 2019**

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Delivering on global commitments

In 2019, geopolitical instability persisted, but the European Union continued to work to ensure a more peaceful, just and prosperous world. Our planet and its peoples are undergoing rapid change and experiencing environmental, political and technological disruption.

In this increasingly unsettled world, the EU has responded comprehensively, using the entire breadth of its policies and tools, be they diplomatic or financial, security or trade-related, sustainable development actions or humanitarian aid. During 2019, the EU continued its work to reform the multilateral system and maintain global leadership for present and future challenges, and it increased its cooperation and partnering with regional organisations that are essential for ensuring global sustainable development, respect for human rights and effective international cooperation.

This report outlines key aspects of the EU's financial support for international cooperation and development, humanitarian aid, foreign policy and enlargement during 2019¹. It demonstrates how the world's largest trading bloc and biggest source of official development assistance helps to improve the lives of millions of people in over 120 countries worldwide, fights inequality, embraces human development, enables young people to fulfil their potential and supports just and sustainable growth and societies around the world.

During 2019, the EU and its Member States invested EUR 75.2 billion in official development assistance - 55.2% of total global assistance².

The EU: a strong global actor

The EU global strategy on foreign and security policy³ enables the EU to act collectively to tackle complex global challenges. While pursuing the five original priorities of the strategy⁴, in 2019 the EU continued to promote a global order based on international law, with the United Nations at its core, in partnership with regional organisations. The ground-breaking trilateral partnership between the African Union, the EU and the UN paved the way for closer cooperation on the wider peace and security agenda, while support for the G5 Sahel Joint Force has shown the importance of investing in regional security partnerships.

In 2019, the EU maintained a comprehensive approach to conflicts and security crises through interventions under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace⁵ and through common foreign and security policy actions across the world. These actions covered major crises in countries such as Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Mali, Nigeria, Pakistan, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Turkey, Ukraine, Venezuela and Yemen.

The EU is one of the few actors with a global presence and a comprehensive policy toolbox and is taking greater responsibility for its defence and for assisting partners with peace and security.

¹ See the SWD accompanying this Annual Report Part I, Introduction for details.

² https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_674

³ https://eeas.europa.eu/topics/eu-global-strategy/17304/global-strategy-european-unions-foreign-and-security-policy_en

⁴ Security and defence; resilience; an integrated approach; an internal/external nexus; and regional and thematic strategies.

⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/news/eu%E2%80%99s-instrument-contributing-stability-and-peace-icsp_en

Advances on a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence⁶, the Military Planning and Conduct Capability⁷, the European Defence Industrial Development programme, the EU–NATO Joint Declaration⁸ and the Permanent Structured Cooperation⁹ are significant and historic achievements. Within the EU foreign policy toolbox, the institution-building efforts, including the Technical Assistance and Information Exchange and Twinning tools, have continued to foster reform and advance EU strategic policies in partner countries.

As the world's largest trading bloc and source of foreign direct investment, the EU continues to work with international partners to promote a free and fair international trading system, including through reform of the World Trade Organization.

Humanitarian aid

In 2019, humanitarian needs remained at a record high due to complex crises, often leading to mass displacement of people, natural disasters and epidemics. The EU remained a leading humanitarian donor, mobilising EUR 2.4 billion to provide relief to millions of people in more than 80 countries.

A significant proportion of EU aid assisted crisis-affected people in Syria and neighbouring countries. The Commission continued to implement the humanitarian component of the EU Facility for Refugees in Turkey¹⁰, notably through the Emergency Social Safety Net¹¹.

In 2019, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism¹² was activated 20 times for disasters in and outside the EU, including for devastating forest fires in Bolivia, Guatemala, Israel and Lebanon.

Implementing the 2030 Agenda

During 2019 and in line with the European Consensus for Development, the EU continued to support implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing for development, and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change globally, in direct cooperation with partner countries.

Rising inequalities, growing hunger, global warming, biodiversity loss, social unrest, conflicts and migration are worsening trends and reflect across the entire 2030 Agenda. The 2019 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Summit reviewed progress and underlined the need for a shift in development pathways and speed to meet the 2030 deadline. An EU-ACP (African, Caribbean and Pacific) Joint Declaration on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs was adopted on the margins of the Summit reaffirming commitment to the 2030 Agenda and looking to strengthen cooperation to accelerate SDG implementation to leave no one behind.

At the UN High Level Political Forum in New York in July, the EU presented progress on the 2030 Agenda and SDGs in the Union and through EU international cooperation. Key initiatives presented

⁶ [https://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/our-current-priorities/coordinated-annual-review-on-defence-\(card\)](https://www.eda.europa.eu/what-we-do/our-current-priorities/coordinated-annual-review-on-defence-(card))

⁷ <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8798-2019-INIT/en/pdf>

⁸ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2018/07/10/eu-nato-joint-declaration/>

⁹ Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2315 of 11 December 2017 establishing permanent structured cooperation (PESCO) and determining the list of participating Member States OJ L 331, 14.12.2017, p. 57

¹⁰ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/migration_en

¹¹ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/essn_en

¹² https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/civil-protection/mechanism_en

at this event included the EU reflection paper ‘Towards a Sustainable Europe by 2030’¹³, the 2019 Eurostat Monitoring Report on SDG progress, the first Joint Synthesis Report on the 2017 European Consensus on Development, and the 2019 EU report on Policy Coherence for Development.

Joint programming, the joint results frameworks and joint implementation are increasing the impact of European funds in achieving the SDGs. During 2019, joint programming documents were launched in the Central African Republic, Honduras and Mali, while Cambodia’s European development cooperation strategy was extended. By December, there were 20 joint programming documents in place.

The reach of institution-building activities was extended to countries covered by EU development policies worldwide. The aim was to support EU policy priorities and help countries implement their national development strategies in line with EU standards, thus contributing to the achievement of the United Nations’ 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Global priorities

At the end of 2019, the President of the new European Commission further anchored the Sustainable Development Goals in EU policymaking and action, underlining the EU’s continuing commitment to sustainability.

Green Deal

The European Green Deal¹⁴ presented at the end of 2019 is an integral part of the Commission’s strategy to implement the 2030 Agenda and SDGs and to steer the European economy and society towards a more sustainable path. **Climate change** is one of the prime challenges facing the world, a priority for the EU’s external action, and a central theme of the Green Deal.

During 2019, the EU reinforced its approach on climate action through programmes such as the Global Climate Change Alliance+¹⁵ to build climate resilience in partner countries, in particular in least developed countries and small island developing states, funding over 80 projects.

The Local Climate Adaptive Living Facility¹⁶ channelled climate finance to over 240 local governments representing 6 million people in 14 countries. A scaled-up second phase was launched at the end of 2019.

Sustainable energy is key to tackling climate change and is at the heart of the Green Deal. In 2019, the EU continued to support access to sustainable energy across the world as well as actions towards energy efficiency. In December, the European Council endorsed the EU’s goal to become the first climate-neutral continent by 2050.

Access to water and sanitation is a universal human right. In 2019, the EU continued to support access to water and sanitation, sustainable and integrated water management and capacity building.

¹³ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/publications/reflection-paper-towards-sustainable-europe-2030_en

¹⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

¹⁵ <https://www.gcca.eu/>

¹⁶ <https://www.uncdf.org/local/homepage>

Jordan suffers severe water scarcity. EUR 21.5 million from the EU Regional Trust Fund in response to the Syrian crisis has improved water and wastewater services for over 1 million people in the Irbid Governorate.

The EU promotes **green business development** in key value chains and supports finance for the global circular economy transition. ‘SWITCH to Green’ is the EU’s flagship initiative in this area.

Loss of biodiversity and degradation of many ecosystems is a significant challenge. The 2019 Communication ‘Stepping up EU action to protect and restore the world’s forests’¹⁷ offers an integrated framework to fight deforestation and forest degradation.

In 2019 the Commission renewed its funding of the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund - the leading actor for financing key biodiversity areas around the globe.

Alliances for sustainable growth

Working together is key to deliver the SDGs. Global prosperity can only be achieved by **decent employment and sustainable economic growth** for all. In 2019, the EU supported actions such as the ‘Sustainable investment climate and value chains programme II’ to fund global and European initiatives promoting key aspects of investment climate, trade and private sector development.

At the heart of the Commission’s External Investment Plan (EIP) is the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD), which combines a new guarantee instrument with two regional investment platforms, the Africa Investment Platform and the Neighbourhood Investment Platform, to support private investments in less developed and more risky business environments. By the end of 2019, the EFSD had mobilised around EUR 4.6 billion of EU funds that should generate EUR 47 billion in investment.

Through the Partnership Instrument (PI)¹⁸, a EUR 5.7 million contract was signed at the end of 2019 in a new EU-OECD partnership to help shape business models for sustainable, inclusive, and fairer growth.

During 2019, two trust funds were created in cooperation with the World Bank Group addressing business friendly investment climates: one to assist countries and regional economic communities in the ACP region (EUR 12 million) and the other to support Sub-Saharan Africa (EUR 10 million).

In the Eastern Partnership over 40 regional and bilateral programmes under the ‘EU4Business’ initiative delivered substantive support for the development of SMEs, complementing national reform plans.

Eradicating poverty in all its dimensions, tackling discrimination and inequality and leaving no one behind are at the heart of the European Consensus on Development.

Over half of the world’s population is not covered by social protection benefits. The EU supports social protection programmes in 26 countries, representing a total investment of EUR 1 billion.

¹⁷ COM(2019) 352 final of 23 July 2019

¹⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/fpi/what-we-do/partnership-instrument-advancing-eus-core-interests_en

According to the 2019 Global Report on Food Crises, more than 113 million people across 53 countries experienced **acute hunger** requiring urgent assistance in 2018. The EU works with partners to address hunger and child and maternal malnutrition, including by promoting sustainable and resilient agriculture.

The EU-funded initiative ‘Development of Smart Innovation through Research in Agriculture’ (DeSIRA) has mobilised some EUR 95 million to build national, regional and global capacities for innovation.

Human development

Good health is an essential basis for sustainable development. The EU supports partner countries in pursuing a ‘health in all policies’ approach to sustainably improve the quality, coverage and affordability of healthcare and enhance health systems.

Half of EU health aid (EUR 2.6 billion between 2014 and 2020) goes to global initiatives such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation, the Vaccine Alliance; the Universal Health Coverage Partnership of the World Health Organization; and the UN Population Fund.

During 2019, the Commission pledged EUR 550 million to the Global Fund for 2020–2022.

Education is key to shaping future generations and an essential enabler for sustainable growth, quality employment and equality.

The EU supports education in some 100 countries and through partnerships such as the Global Partnership for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait.

Through its support for the GPE, the EU has contributed to the enrolment of 77 million children in primary school.

Partnering on migration

The EU continued to apply a **balanced approach to migration**. In 2019, the number of international migrants worldwide reached nearly 272 million, almost 70.8 million people are forcibly displaced worldwide, and the global refugee population stands at 25.9 million. Most refugees continued to be hosted in developing regions.

Migration can also **increase inequality**, and the EU has boosted its efforts to ensure that migration leads to inclusive growth and sustainable development in origin, transit and destination countries so that all communities benefit. In June, the Commission published a staff working document on ‘Addressing inequality in partner countries’¹⁹ and in November, the Council adopted conclusions calling on the EU and Member States to accelerate their efforts²⁰.

In 2019 the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa approved an additional 36 programmes and 16 ‘top-ups’ across its three regions (Sahel and Lake Chad, Horn of Africa and North of Africa) totalling EUR 851 million.

¹⁹ SWD(2019) 280 final of 16 June 2019.

²⁰ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/11/25/addressing-inequality-in-partner-countries-council-adopts-conclusions/>

Peace and security

Throughout 2019, the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace remained a key tool for EU diplomacy in crisis contexts and in its quest for stability, conflict prevention and resolution, and peacebuilding. All 46 adopted crisis response actions responded directly to EU political priorities and complemented the work of common security and defence policy missions.

In 2019, the use of capacity building in support of security and development was further strengthened with new actions launched in Burkina Faso, Niger, Somalia and Tajikistan.

A global action was also launched to support regional training centres in West Africa, East Africa and the Middle East to train military actors in the areas of health, demining and civil protection.

Work to coordinate international efforts in conflict and post-conflict settings continued with the UN and other international organisations, notably the World Bank and the African Development Bank, to support access to financing and reflect the EU's strong commitment to multilateralism.

In 2019, the first EU contribution to the UN Peacebuilding Fund was made through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace.

In July the Chernobyl nuclear site was handed back to the Ukrainian authorities following the completion of the largest international cooperation effort on nuclear safety. The EU provided EUR 431.6 million through its Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation and Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States programme.

The EU continued to promote the **rule of law, access to justice, and the strengthening of the capacities of justice institutions** in partner countries across the world.

Human rights, democracy, fundamental values

2019 marked the final phase of implementation of the **EU action plan on human rights and democracy** (2015-2019) supporting fundamental human rights including freedoms of expression, assembly and association, non-discrimination and the rights of minorities. In 2019 the EU used the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights to fund some 268 projects worth EUR 119.5 million.

EU human rights defenders' mechanisms were renewed for another 3 years at the end of 2019.

Against a backdrop of continuing challenges to global democracy, the EU reaffirmed its **commitment to democratic processes** with programmes totalling over EUR 47.2 million across 30 countries.

The EU deployed 8 election observation missions (EOMs), 6 electoral expert missions and 7 follow-up missions and developed a public database of recommendations issued by EOMs. The EU also supported local electoral observers in 11 countries.

Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls are core values of the EU and its international development policy. The EU gender action plan addresses three main priority areas: ensuring girls' and women's physical and psychological integrity; promoting women's and girls' socio-economic and cultural rights; and strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation in decision-making.

2019 saw continuing implementation of the Spotlight Initiative²¹, a transformative EU–UN partnership to eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls worldwide. The ‘Safe and Fair’ programme (EUR 25 million) is improving the working conditions of female migrants moving from 11 Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries to Gulf countries.

The EUR 22.5 million ‘WeEmpower’ programme increases the commitment of public and private sectors to gender equality and the empowerment of women at work.

The EU also launched a EUR 3.75 million programme to further strengthen regional and international networks of national human rights institutions and a call for projects on the protection of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, and/or Intersex human rights defenders. Actions were also undertaken to address growing challenges related to freedom of expression and media freedom. Several projects were funded under the technical assistance facility ‘Media4Democracy’.

Technology and innovation

A EUR 200 million contribution from the EU to the Western Balkans Enterprise Development and Innovation Facility helped leverage total investments of EUR 958 million to support some 4 700 companies, thus providing over 2 800 loans, creating almost 80 000 jobs, and facilitating 36 equity-type investments.

Connectivity plays a fundamental role in achieving the SDGs, with transport, energy and digitalisation being key sectors. Resilient infrastructure promotes inclusive and sustainable growth and fosters innovation.

The PI has promoted sustainable industrialisation in Brazil and Mexico to decouple economic growth from carbon emissions, in particular by promoting partnerships between EU and local companies.

In 2019, the Africa-Europe Alliance Digital Economy Task Force was created and contributed to the Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030) report published by the African Union.

The increased importance of science, new technologies and innovation for inclusive and sustainable development in the ACP regions was recognised with the launch of a EUR 60 million programme under the 11th European Development Fund to strengthen innovation ecosystems and capabilities.

Global reach

Throughout the world the EU has continued to work to reduce poverty, fight inequalities and support sustainable development and promote democracy, peace and security.

Africa

The negotiations for a renewed Partnership Agreement with the ACP States, to succeed the Cotonou Agreement and reshape political and economic relations with these partners, started in 2019.

The EU provided support to the democratic transition in Sudan and maintained its strong support both politically and financially for the Ethiopian transition. Together with the World Bank and the African Development Bank, the EU has spearheaded the ‘Horn of Africa Initiative for Regional Integration and Economic Development’ with Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia.

²¹ <https://www.spotlightinitiative.org/>

In 2019 the EU covered emergency humanitarian needs in seven countries that were involved in the Sahel crisis: Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali, Chad, Niger, Nigeria and Cameroon. The EU allocated over EUR 187 million (including more than EUR 141 million to the most vulnerable populations in the G5 countries) to support humanitarian interventions.

The EU supported the Africa-led Africa Renewable Energy initiative²² to achieve its goal of generating at least 10 GW of renewable energy by 2020. The EU has a strategic interest in supporting this initiative with objectives aligned to the EU Green Deal as identified in the Partnership for Green Transition and Energy Access included in the future comprehensive strategy with Africa.

In 2019, civilian common security and defence policy missions were active in Libya, Mali, Niger and Somalia with a new mission established in the Central African Republic to support the reform of the security forces with their gradual deployment throughout the country.

A key policy initiative, the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs saw good progress, with the EU supporting and de-risking investment through the EIP. The EU also facilitated structured public-private dialogue in 32 African countries, as part of the EIP's Sustainable Business for Africa platform.

Through the PI, the EU continues to deliver on the economic, trade and investment dimensions of its strategic partnership with South Africa with a focus on the implementation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the EU and the Southern African Development Community, the Paris Agreement, and WTO matters.

Asia, Central Asia and the Pacific

The Asia-Europe Meeting of Foreign Ministers was held in December in Madrid and focused on shared values and common challenges, especially rules-based effective multilateralism.

In January, the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Meeting agreed in principle to upgrade relations to a strategic partnership, and in June a Free Trade Agreement and Investment Protection Agreement with Vietnam was signed by the Council of the EU²³ followed by a Framework Participation Agreement in October.

In April, the Council prolonged the restrictive measures against Myanmar for an additional year, including targeted restrictive measures on individuals.

'Responsible Supply Chains in Asia' is a EUR 9.5 million PI-funded joint initiative to improve respect for human rights, labour and environmental standards in businesses with supply chains in China, Japan, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam.

During 2019, the IcSP focused on addressing hate-speech and preventing violent extremism across the region. In the wake of the Easter bombings in Sri Lanka, the IcSP was quickly mobilised to help strengthen counterterrorism and the prevention of violent extremism in Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

Enlargement region

The Commission continued to support enlargement countries to improve their readiness to join the EU and to promote regional cooperation within the Western Balkans and with the EU. The annual

²² <http://www.arei.org/>

²³ Ratification by the European Parliament followed in February 2020 with the entry into force of the Free Trade Agreement on 1 August 2020.

enlargement package was adopted on 29 May. Thanks to further progress by the Republic of Albania and the Republic of North Macedonia, the Commission maintained its recommendation to open accession negotiations. In October the European Council decided to revert to the issue of enlargement before the next EU-Western Balkans summit. Negotiations were officially opened in March 2020.

The EU has provided EUR 880.7 million for 39 transport and energy connectivity projects under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance; these projects should leverage investments of over EUR 3.2 billion.

In May, the Commission issued its Opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application for EU membership²⁴, indicating that negotiations for accession should start once Bosnia and Herzegovina has achieved the correct compliance with the membership criteria. In December, the Council adopted conclusions²⁵ on the Commission's Opinion, which it welcomed.

In relation to Turkey in November the Council introduced restrictive measures due to Turkey's unauthorised drilling activities in the eastern Mediterranean²⁶, and decided to reduce bilateral assistance under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance and lower lending by the European Investment Bank. The EU continued to support civil society and people-to-people contacts while cooperation on supporting Syrian refugees and migration management continued; the full operational budget of the facility for refugees in Turkey was allocated by the end of 2019.

European Neighbourhood

In 2019, the EU continued to implement its revised European Neighbourhood policy, mobilising significant support for its four refocused priorities²⁷ and fully integrating the principles of differentiation, shared ownership and an incentive-based approach.

In the Eastern Neighbourhood, the implementation of the Eastern Partnership's '20 Deliverables for 2020' progressed well, in particular for the economy, connectivity, people-to-people contacts and good governance.

In 2019, the Eastern Partnership celebrated its 10th anniversary, with a high-level event underlining significant achievements in boosting economies and trade, energy efficiency, the role of civil society and visa liberalisation. A comprehensive consultation on the future of the Eastern Partnership launched in 2019²⁸ received over 200 contributions from a wide range of stakeholders.

With the finalisation of negotiations on the visa facilitation and readmission agreement for Belarus in 2019, all Eastern Partnership countries now benefit from easier travel to the EU.

²⁴ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/de/COUNTRY_19_2778

²⁵ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/12/10/council-conclusions-on-commission-opinion-on-bosnia-and-herzegovina-s-application-for-membership-of-the-european-union/>

²⁶ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2019/11/11/turkey-s-illegal-drilling-activities-in-the-eastern-mediterranean-council-adopts-framework-for-sanctions/>

²⁷ The European Neighbourhood policy's priority areas are good governance, democracy, human rights and the rule of law; economic development for stabilisation; security; and migration and mobility.

²⁸ https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/news_corner/news/european-union-opens-structured-consultation-future-eastern-partnership_en

In response to the conflict in the east of Ukraine, the EU continued to provide humanitarian support and assistance for stabilisation and early recovery. In addition, the EU mobilised and deployed specific support to the Sea of Azov region.

The EU's Covenant of Mayors initiative helps almost 400 municipalities in Eastern Partnership countries to implement their sustainable energy and climate commitments.

In the Southern Neighbourhood, mitigating the impact of the protracted Syrian crisis remained a priority throughout 2019. The Brussels III Conference in April on supporting the future of Syria and the region reaffirmed the EU's engagement.

A joint political declaration was adopted with Morocco in June and the EU–Morocco action plan and the single support framework were extended to the end of 2020. In January, both the EU-Israel and EU-Palestinian authority action plans were extended for a period of 3 years.

The EU supported the presidential and parliamentary elections in Tunisia in September and October respectively, which further consolidated its democratic transition, and continued to support Libya's transition towards a stable and secure country despite the security situation in the country.

Common security and defence policy missions were active in Ukraine, Kosovo* and Georgia.

Latin America and the Caribbean

In April, the EU adopted a new strategy towards Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) - 'EU-LAC – Joining forces for a common future'²⁹ - based on partnerships in prosperity, democracy, resilience and effective global governance.

Progress was made in implementing EU partnerships in LAC through political and trade agreements. An agreement in principle was reached in July on the trade part of the EU-Mercosur Association Agreement (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay). Negotiations with Mexico for a modernised Global Agreement were completed except for the list of public procurement entities at sub-central level rules.

PI actions included a project to strengthen protection of intellectual property in the region, in line with WTO and relevant EU free trade agreements. A EUR 9.5 million project supports responsible business practices in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Peru.

In Venezuela, the protracted political and humanitarian crisis had a substantial impact on the region, mainly due to unprecedented migration flows. The EU increased pressure on the regime via targeted restrictive measures in view of the continuing deterioration of democracy, the rule of law and human rights, while increasing assistance to the population and Venezuelan migrants.

During 2019, the EU continued to support the implementation of the peace agreement in Colombia, including providing support to the Commission for the Clarification of Truth, Coexistence and Non-repetition.

²⁹ JOIN(2019) 6 final of 16 April 2019

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

In Mexico, the IcSP supported communities along the northern border to assist asylum seekers and refugees by improving access to public services.

The EU and the Pacific Alliance signed a joint declaration in September to further strengthen cooperation and dialogue.

Middle East Gulf region

Working closely with the European External Action Service, EU delegations and Commission departments, the PI has delivered substantive achievements in the Gulf region in areas such as clean energy technologies, energy efficiency, climate change and economic diversification. Most of the projects cover the six countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and include the EU-GCC Clean Energy Network, the EU GCC Economic Diversification Dialogue, the EU Policy and Outreach Partnership, and a project to prepare a regional radiological warning and data-exchange system.

In Iraq, the EU continued to work on stabilisation, post-conflict reform, accountability and inclusive reconciliation processes. The IcSP supported the UN in digitising evidence of crimes committed by Da'esh and helped improve border management on the Iraqi-Jordanian border.

In Yemen, the EU continues to support stabilisation efforts and the peace process. In response to the Stockholm agreement at the end of 2018, support was provided for mediation efforts, the UN's peace building fund and for specific initiatives such as the agreement on the port at Hodeidah.