



Commission staff working document

Addressing displacement and migration related to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation



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July 2022

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FOREWORD OF JANEZ LENARČIČ, EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR CRISIS MANAGEMENT, AND JUTTA URPIILAINEN, EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER FOR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation are increasing in frequency and intensity each year. Millions of people around the world are forced to leave their homes because of earthquakes, cyclones, floods, desertification, prolonged droughts, rising temperatures or coastal erosion. The profound and far-reaching impact of these phenomena on human mobility is evident and science is sounding the alarm on increasing trends. By 2050, 216 million people across six world regions could be forced to move within their countries due to the impact of climate change, according to the World Bank. No country is immune from disaster displacement. Some people are able to return home after a short time to recover and rebuild, others remain displaced for months or years, or never return home at all.

Displacement and migration prompted by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation expose affected individuals and societies to high levels of risk. They erode fragile livelihoods and ecosystems, aggravate existing vulnerabilities and undermine resilience. Many different aspects are concerned, which should be addressed collectively and in a holistic manner.

As the leading humanitarian assistance provider and the world's biggest donor of development assistance, the EU has stepped up its efforts to address this issue. We are translating our engagement into action. The EU carries out humanitarian and development actions in countries affected by disasters and climate change, but is also active on data, research and knowledge production.

The present Commission Staff Working Document, issued on the eve of the EU Presidency of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD), was jointly prepared by the Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations and the Directorate-General for International Partnerships. A wide range of Commission services and the EEAS have contributed. The document takes stock of the progress made so far and provides an overview and assessment of the policies, instruments and practices implemented and promoted by the EU.

Moreover, the document outlines the priority initiatives the Commission will pursue to complement ongoing efforts and collective work of countries, international and civil society organisations, and other stakeholders to address this truly global challenge.

It is clear that we need to act urgently. Working in partnership is crucial to strengthen timely and adequate assistance to those at risk of being or already displaced and promote resilient communities in an effective and sustainable manner. The EU plays a key role to protect and improve the lives of people hit by these phenomena with its wide array of policies, instruments and practices. Building on the lessons learnt from this Staff Working Document and capitalising on the EU Presidency of the PDD, we will join forces with our partners and redouble our efforts.

Jutta Urpilainen, European Commissioner for International Partnerships

Janez Lenarčič, European Commissioner for Crisis Management

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1. INTRODUCTION

Major development and humanitarian actors have long sounded the alarm about the scale of the impact of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation on human mobility. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has described climate change as ‘the defining crisis of our time’, and disaster displacement as ‘one of its most devastating consequences’¹, while the Director General of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) warned that the environmental crisis is having ‘profound implications for human mobility’². The European Commission, in its 2013 Commission Staff Working Document on ‘*Climate change, environmental degradation, and migration*’, acknowledged that these events were ‘likely to assume greater importance in influencing migration’ in the future, particularly within developing countries.

Over the almost 10 years that have passed since the publication of this document, the number of people displaced annually due to disasters has increased by nearly 40%³, and the trend shows an upward curve. Human mobility associated with disasters, climate change and environmental degradation has reached unprecedented levels. Each year, they displace even greater numbers of people than conflicts, with most persons remaining within the borders of their homelands.

This Staff Working Document provides an overview and assessment of existing EU policies, instruments and practices addressing displacement and migration of populations caused by disasters⁴, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. This document

underlines the increased exposure to disasters and the consequences of the current state of management of natural resources and weakened ecosystems. Furthermore, it highlights the actions taken by the EU in third countries to prevent and prepare for such displacement, to assist persons displaced or at risk of displacement, to strengthen their resilience and protection as well as to enhance the systems which provide support and services to them. It covers both internal and cross-border movements, including displacement related to disasters (such as those caused by floods, earthquakes and tropical cyclones) and mobility linked to the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation (such as desertification, coastal erosion, pollution, prolonged or frequent droughts). This document does not address the impact of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation on population movements within the EU.

This document builds on existing EU policies and documents that address the issue of disaster and climate-related displacement, including the Green Deal⁵ and the Pact on Migration and Asylum⁶. It aligns to internal policy and stems from the urgency for the European Union (EU) to give a comprehensive external response to this global challenge, which is growing in scale and impact, and affects more people around the world every year. This Staff Working Document is the result of extensive consultations with a number of international organisations, non-governmental organisations and United Nations (UN) entities engaged in addressing disaster and climate-related displacement globally.

¹ <https://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2020/11/5fbf73384/climate-change-defining-crisis-time-particularly-impacts-displaced.html>.

² Forced Migration Review, Issue 69, March 2022 ‘Climate Crisis and Displacement: from commitment to action’

³ In 2013, 22 million people are estimated to have been displaced by disasters (Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Estimates 2014: people displaced by disasters*).

⁴ For the purposes of this document, the term ‘disaster’ is meant to include disasters triggered by both sudden- and slow-onset natural hazards, such as earthquakes, tropical cyclones, floods, droughts, sea level rise or coastal erosion, whose occurrence and increasing frequency is closely linked to the effects of climate change. Other disasters such as conflict and violence or disease outbreaks and epidemics are not included in the term ‘disaster’ in the context of this document. See also related United Nations definitions <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/disaster> and <https://www.undrr.org/terminology/hazard>.

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: COM/2019/640 final.

⁶ Communication from the Commission: COM(2020)609 final.

2. THE GENERAL CONTEXT

2.1 Drivers and trends of displacement and migration caused by disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation

Disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation have a profound impact on human mobility. One of the most severe aspect of it is displacement, forcing the affected persons to flee their homes in the wake of destruction of their houses, assets, and livelihoods. Such displacement may occur both internally and across the borders. These crises are increasing in severity and frequency. Consequently, human exposure to these crises is likewise increasing. Disasters are becoming more frequent, more damaging and more costly. **In 2021 alone, 23.7 million people were internally displaced due to disasters in 141 countries** – accounting for over 60% of the 38 million people estimated to have been internally displaced that year around the world⁷. In its final report from September 2021⁸, the UN Secretary-General (SG) High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement identified disasters and the adverse effects of climate change as the source of the majority of new internal displacements each year. According to the World Bank, climate change could force 216 million people across six world regions to move within their countries due to slow-onset climate change impacts by 2050 unless decisive action is taken⁹. In its Sixth Assessment Report “Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability”, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recognized that in the mid- to long-term, displacement will increase with intensification of heavy precipitation and associated flooding, tropical cyclones, drought and, increasingly, sea level rise. In the report, the IPCC concluded that about 3.3 billion people are living in countries with high human vulnerability

to climate change, and that projections of the number of people at risk of future displacement by sea level rise range from tens of millions to hundreds of millions by the end of this century, depending on level of warming and assumptions about exposure¹⁰. While the adverse effects of climate change are experienced differently across regions, disaster and climate-related displacement is a global issue affecting every region of the world, albeit to starkly varying degrees. In 2021, the highest disaster displacement numbers were recorded in East Asia and the Pacific (58%), followed by South Asia (22%) and Sub-Saharan Africa (11%)¹¹.

Forced displacement and migration linked to disasters and climate change stem from both sudden-onset disasters such as earthquakes, tropical cyclones, floods or landslides, as well as **slow-onset disasters**, such as desertification, droughts, sea level rise, increasing temperatures or coastal erosion. Disasters triggered by sudden-onset hazards usually cause mass displacement, while those triggered by slow-onset hazards affect the environment, local ecosystem services and employment opportunities, exacerbating the conditions that may lead people to move. Climate-related mobility is in fact ultimately triggered by a combination of economic and social factors, such as resource availability, social networks and livelihood opportunities, linked to the mutually reinforcing climate, biodiversity and pollution crises. Illustrating that climate change acts as a threat multiplier, data from the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) shows that 95% of new internal displacements by conflict and violence in 2020 occurred in countries that have high or very high vulnerability to climate change. There is growing evidence that increasing levels of violence in the Sahel, for instance, are partly fuelled by climate change, which affects sources of livelihoods. On top of this, refugees and internally displaced persons affected by conflict

⁷ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022* (Geneva: Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, 2022), 8.

⁸ *Shining a Light on Internal Displacement: A Vision for the Future - Report of the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement*, September 2021.

⁹ 2021. *Groundswell Part 2: Acting on Internal Climate Migration*. World Bank. <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/36248>, p. 19.

¹⁰ IPCC, 2022: *Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability*. Contribution of Working Group II to the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

¹¹ Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre, *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2022*, 27.

and violence often reside in climate change ‘hotspots’, which trigger additional risks and vulnerabilities and often secondary displacement, as cohabitation in areas with scarce natural resources puts an additional strain on the often fragile social cohesion between displaced populations and host communities.

Most people displaced in the context of disasters and climate change are internally displaced¹². In addition, disaster displacement is not always short-term, but often becomes protracted. For example, while the data gaps surrounding disaster-related displacement mean that little is concretely known about how long people tend to remain displaced, the IDMC found that at the end of December

2020, 250,000 people in Japan, Mexico and Indonesia continued to live in displacement years or decades after being struck by devastating disasters¹³. While comprehensive and systematic data collection and analysis on cross-border displacement is lacking, instances of persons fleeing across borders have also been witnessed, mostly in Africa and Latin and Central America¹⁴.

Disaster and climate-related displacement has a severe impact on individuals. People displaced by disasters have not only immediate needs, but also lack access to adequate protection¹⁵, basic social services and durable solutions. Women displaced by disasters are particularly vulnerable and face increased protection risks,



Photo 1. Pakistan – Along a narrow path lined with temporary shelters, trucks from the EU’s partner Cesvi offload relief items. In 2022, more than 10 million persons were forced to leave their homes due to the floods in Pakistan.

¹² Ibid, 4.

¹³ Ibid, 15.

¹⁴ Nansen Protection Agenda, https://disasterdisplacement.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/EN_Protection_Agenda_Volume_I_-low_res.pdf.

¹⁵ No international legal protection framework specifically addresses climate-related displacement. People who are forced to cross a border in the context of a disaster and the effects of climate change have limited protection when they arrive in another country, as the UN Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol does not recognize disasters as a ground for refugee status. Similarly, the definition of ‘refugee’ under the EU Qualification Directive (Directive 2011/95/EU), which mirrors that of the 1951 Geneva Convention, does not address climate change as a reason for a well-founded fear of persecution.

such as sexual and gender-based violence, exploitation, trafficking and limited access to healthcare.

Disaster and climate-related displacement also has broader impact on economies and societies. In addition to exposing affected populations to higher levels of risk, disaster and climate-related displacement disrupts family, community and cultural life and erodes the resilience of communities, which in turn leads to increased levels of vulnerability and poverty.

Frequent disasters and environmental degradation undermine livelihoods, and can thus become a **reason for migratory movements.** This may entail temporary or permanent rural-rural, rural-urban or in some cases also cross-country migration. Climate change impacts such as crop failure, water stress or sea level rise, increase the probability of migration under distress, creating growing challenges for human development and planning.

2.2 International legal instruments

Displacement and migration prompted by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation have been increasingly acknowledged in discussions at all levels, especially since 2010. The following international legally binding agreements recognise the need for cross-sectoral, coordinated action.

- Migration issues were first included in the **United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change** (UNFCCC)¹⁶ in the **2010 Cancun Adaptation Framework**¹⁷, before being firmly anchored to the long-term work programme of the UNFCCC with the **2015 Paris Agreement**. The rights of migrants are referred to in the decision **adopting the Paris Agreement**¹⁸. This decision established a **Task Force**

on Displacement, under the **Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism for Loss and Damage Associated with Climate Change** (WIM), created in 2013.

- Several regional instruments, such as the African Union's **Kampala Convention**, which entered into force in 2012¹⁹ or the South American Conference on Migration's '**Lineamientos regionales en materia de protección y asistencia a personas desplazadas a través de fronteras y migrantes en países afectados por desastres de origen natural**'²⁰, also address the issue of displacement caused by disasters and climate change.

2.3 Other international processes and frameworks

The legally binding instruments are complemented by a number of international policy frameworks which also include references to displacement and migration prompted by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation:

- The **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030**²¹ aims to help countries preventing and reducing disaster risks and thus strengthening their resilience. Its objective is to minimise the destructive impact of natural and man-made disasters on people, the environment and economies, and to make societies more resilient. It calls for action in economic, social, and environmental policy areas. It was adopted by all UN Member States at the third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in 2015 in Sendai, Japan.
- Building on the New York Declaration **for Refugees and Migrants**²², the 2018 Global Compact for Safe,

¹⁶ The UNFCCC entered into force on 21 March 1994. Its main mission is to prevent dangerous human interference with the climate system. See their website: <https://unfccc.int/>.

¹⁷ The Cancun Adaptation Framework encourages parties to enhance action on adaptation through measures to enhance understanding, coordination and cooperation with regard to climate change induced displacement, migration and planned relocation [...] at the national, regional and international levels; (1.CP/16 para. 14(f)).

¹⁸ Decision 1/CP.21, paragraph 49: "Also requests the Executive Committee of the Warsaw International Mechanism to establish, [...] a task force [...] to develop recommendations for integrated approaches to avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change."

¹⁹ African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/36846-treaty-kampala_convention.pdf.

²⁰ South American Conference on Migration, 'Lineamientos regionales en materia de protección y asistencia a personas desplazadas a través de fronteras y migrantes en países afectados por desastres de origen natural', 2018

²¹ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 3 June 2015: A/RES/69/283.

²² See paragraphs 1, 43, 6, 18.

Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) represents a critical advance for the development of global governance on environmental migration. It includes specific actions to minimise the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to move in response to natural disasters, climate change, and environmental degradation. The GCM also recognizes the need to develop regular migration pathways as a necessary migration management tool in the context of climate change and that adaptation in countries of origin is a priority²³. The first progress declaration on the implementation of the GCM adopted in May 2022 also recognises that more efforts need to be spent on the issue, and reaffirms the need to strengthen efforts to offer safe routes to those affected by disasters and adverse effects of climate change. The Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)²⁴, which was adopted the same year, highlights the importance of addressing the potential environmental impact of refugee movements.

- **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development:** The adverse impacts of climate change and environmental degradation, and the fact that they feed and compound one another represent a serious threat to the achievement of the **Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs), especially for developing countries most vulnerable to climate change. The SDG process presents the opportunity to “leverage [...] investments into activities that drive action on both sustainable development and climate” and to ensure that “efforts to combat climate change, achieve sustainable development, provide humanitarian assistance, manage the flow of displaced people, and sustain peace”²⁵. The **Report of the United Nations Secretary General “Our Common Agenda”**²⁶ presents the Secretary-General’s vision on the future of global cooperation with a view to strengthening and accelerating multilateral agreements

– particularly the 2030 Agenda. The report contains recommendations across four broad areas for renewed solidarity between peoples and future generations, and suggests to build on the work of the PDD, the GCM and GCR in order to find ways to prevent, protect and resolve situations of environmental displacement.

- The **Nansen Initiative’s Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change** (“*Nansen Protection Agenda*”)²⁷, which addresses the need for a more coherent approach to the protection of people **displaced across borders** in the context of disasters and climate change (endorsed by 109 states and the EU in 2015). The successor of the Nansen Initiative is the **Platform on Disaster Displacement** (PDD) a state-led initiative that supports the implementation of the Nansen Protection Agenda, including the integration of effective practices by States and (sub-) regional actors into their own normative frameworks and in accordance with their specific context.
- The **Report of the United Nations Secretary General’s High Level Panel on Internal Displacement** (September 2021)²⁸ and the **United Nations Secretary General’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement** (June 2022)²⁹ intend to address internal displacement proactively and systematically as part of the UN’s work on climate change. The Action Agenda promotes a development-oriented approach to address IDPs situations through increased support at country-level in a selection of countries, engagement with International Financial Institutions (IFI) and improved global coordination. Supporting governments to ensure that climate risks and associated protection needs are integrated into policies, plans and investment decision-making, is among the key priorities of the Agenda.

²³ See Objective 2, Paragraph 18.

²⁴ Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 17 December 2018: A/RES/73/151.

²⁵ As stated by the President of the 71st Session of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, at the High Level SDG Action Event on Climate Change and the Sustainable Development Agenda (23 March 2017) <http://www.un.org/pga/71/2017/03/23/high-level-sdg-action-event-on-climate-change-and-the-sustainabledevelopment-agenda/>.

²⁶ “Our Common Agenda”, Report of the Secretary-General, United Nations https://www.un.org/en/content/common-agenda-report/assets/pdf/Common_Agenda_Report_English.pdf.

²⁷ Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change: October 2015, *International Journal of Refugee Law*.

²⁸ The Report “Shining a Light on Internal Displacement”, its Executive Summary a Listing of Recommendations are available on the following website: <https://www.un.org/internal-displacement-panel/>.

²⁹ The United Nations Secretary-General’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement is available on the following website: https://www.un.org/en/pdfs/Draft_SG’s_Action_Agenda_for_consultation_for_dissemination.pdf.

2.4 EU policies and tools

Building on the above-mentioned international instruments and frameworks, several EU policy and strategy documents have been put in place to address the issue of disaster and climate-related displacement and migration over the past decade from different angles. Due to the growing importance of the topic, much of the EU policy framework on the matter calls for more attention to be paid to displacement and migration related to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, with an emphasis on prevention, resilience and adaptation. Moreover, the EU policy framework attaches an increased importance to jointly addressing climate and environmental issues, and underlines the importance of mainstreaming climate and nature across all policy areas.

The EU has taken a growing interest in the issue since the European Parliament resolution on *'The Environment, Security and Foreign Policy'* of January 1999³⁰. The issue of climate-related displacement and migration has been addressed for the first time in 2013, through the **Commission Staff Working Document 'Climate change, environmental degradation, and migration'** accompanying the EU Strategy on adaptation to climate change³¹. This document provided an overview of research and data on the inter-linkages between migration, environmental degradation and climate change, initiatives already taken by the EU, and ongoing policy debates.

Since then, disaster and climate-related displacement and migration have been addressed in various policy frameworks linked to displacement and migration, climate change adaptation, as well as development and humanitarian aid.

- **Displacement and migration**

The 2016 **Commission Communication 'Lives in Dignity: from Aid Dependence to self-reliance'**³² takes a general approach to forced displacement, and

acknowledges climate and environmental factors without however elaborating on it: **'Elements of the new policy may also be applicable to displacement caused by natural disasters and climatic events, while recognising the different politics, contexts, needs and solutions.'** The accompanying **Staff Working Document (SWD/2016/0142)** draws the attention to the topic for future work: **'Climate change pointed as already impacting on migration in numerous ways and an issue that requires policy attention'**. It further notes that **'Greater attention is needed for addressing displacement in work on disaster risk reduction, resilience and climate change adaptation'**. The **Council conclusions on the EU approach to forced displacement and development**³³ also highlight that disasters and climate change represent challenges to tackle when addressing forced displacement.

The EU's **Pact on Migration and Asylum**³⁴ highlights the importance of the EU's relationship with third countries to *"address root causes of irregular migration"*, and that *"different policies such as development cooperation, security, visa, trade, agriculture, investment and employment, energy, environment and climate change, and education, should not be dealt with in isolation."*

- **Climate change adaptation**

The **Joint Communication 'A Strategic Approach to Resilience in the EU's External Action'**³⁵ (2017) underlines that the EU's resilience approach *'will place a greater emphasis on addressing protracted crises, the risks of violent conflict and other structural pressures including environmental degradation, climate change, migration and forced displacement.'* Importantly, a dedicated section on resilience, migration and forced displacement acknowledges that *'migration and flight can be a legitimate adaptation strategy to severe external stresses'*. The Strategy suggests that *'the EU should work to further develop the following key dimensions of a resilience approach to migration and forced displacement by*

³⁰ European Parliament resolution of 28 January 1999 (A4-0005/1999) on the environment, security and foreign policy

³¹ Commission Staff Working Document: SWD/2013/0138 final.

³² Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: COM(2016)234 final.

³³ Council conclusions on the EU approach to forced displacement and development, May 2016.

³⁴ Communication from the Commission: COM(2020)609 final.

³⁵ Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: JOIN(2017)21 final.

addressing root causes including climate change and environmental degradation, and the long-term consequences of forced displacement; fostering self-reliance, supporting host communities [...] and *'understanding the drivers and the interlinkages between pressures'*, thus providing the mandate for further work on this topic. Similar issues are mentioned in the follow-up **Concept for an Integrated Approach on Climate Change and Security** (2021)³⁶.

The **Commission Communication on the European Green Deal**³⁷ commits the EU to *'work with all partners to increase climate and environmental resilience to prevent these challenges from becoming sources of conflict, food insecurity, population displacement and forced migration, and support a just transition globally'*.

The 2021 **EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change 'Forging a climate-resilient Europe'**³⁸ calls for increasing support to international climate resilience and preparedness, scaling up international finance to build climate resilience, and strengthening global engagement and exchanges on adaptation. The strategy calls on the EU to promote the design and implementation of disaster risk finance strategies to increase macroeconomic climate resilience in partner countries. It considers that *"Adaptation strategies, programmes and projects should be designed in a conflict-sensitive way to avoid aggravating tensions. This is important to reduce the risks of climate-related displacement and better understand and manage the interconnections between climate change, security and mobility"*.

- **Development partnerships and humanitarian aid**

The **European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid** (2008) recognizes that, as humanitarian crises have led to large numbers of displaced people, reducing risk and vulnerability through enhanced preparedness is essential in zones vulnerable to natural disasters and climatic change.

In the **European Consensus on Development** (2017) *'Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future'*³⁹, the EU and Member States commit to address the root causes of migration and forced displacement such as environmental degradation and climate change (§71). It states: *"Environmental degradation, climate change, extreme weather, and natural or man-made disasters can offset development gains and economic progress, especially for the poor. This can increase vulnerabilities and needs, jeopardise peace and stability and cause large-scale migration. In addition to dedicated actions, environmental considerations need to be integrated across all sectors of development cooperation, including through preventive action."* (§43).

The **Communication on the EU's humanitarian action: new challenges, same principles** (2021)⁴⁰ also acknowledges climate and disasters among the root causes of displacement and brings in important elements on prevention, preparedness and responses. One of the stated objectives is *'mainstreaming climate change impacts and environmental factors into humanitarian aid policy and practice, and strengthen coordination with development, security and climate/environment actors to build resilience of vulnerable communities'*. It is suggested to build *'anticipatory approaches to bolster the resilience of the forcibly displaced in regions vulnerable to climate-related and other hazards'*; and build on *'more partnerships with climate and scientific communities to scale up action'*. Among the proposed key actions is also the *increase in the share of climate funds to enhance resilience and adaptation* in the most disaster-prone countries and regions, and as part of the humanitarian development-peace nexus approach.

The **Disaster Preparedness Guidance Note**⁴¹ published by the Commission Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) in May 2021 also includes recommendations on how to strengthen preparedness for displacement, including in

³⁶ European Union European External Action Service, Concept for an Integrated Approach on Climate Change and Security, September 2021, EEAS(2021)770.

³⁷ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: COM/2019/640 final.

³⁸ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: COM(2021)82 final.

³⁹ Joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission: 2017/C210/01

⁴⁰ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: COM(2021)110 final

⁴¹ DG ECHO's Disaster Preparedness Guidance Note on the following website: https://ec.europa.eu/echo/what/humanitarian-aid/disaster-preparedness_en



Photo 2. Nepal – Children getting ready for a new day in an area prone to regular landslides.

the context of disasters, and calls DG ECHO partners to advocate for policy and legislative frameworks on disaster preparedness that also integrate displacement concerns among other risks.

- **Security and defence**

The **Strategic Compass for Security and Defence**⁴² approved by the European Council on 21 March 2022 points out that climate change, environmental degradation and natural disasters are a threat-multiplier and proven drivers for instability and conflict, which in turn lead to severe humanitarian suffering and displacement.

- **External financing instruments**

The EU has also established financing instruments for its external action allowing it to support third countries in addressing among other priorities migration and displacement induced by disaster, climate change and

environmental degradation. In particular, two sets of instruments were made available:

For development partnerships, under its Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2014-20, the EU used in particular the European Development Fund (EDF), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) and the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). Several projects are ongoing as of June 2022.

Under the MFF 2021-27, the EU has established a comprehensive instrument, the **Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe** (NDICI-GE). The financial envelope of this instrument for the period 2021-2027 is EUR 79,462 billion. Climate-related displacement and migration are at the intersection of two key EU priorities of the NDICI-GE: fighting climate change and addressing migration and forced displacement challenges. In line with the regulation

⁴² Strategic Compass for Security and Defence, 21 March 2022 <https://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-7371-2022-INIT/en/pdf>

establishing the NDICI-GE⁴³, indicatively, 10% of the financial envelope for the Instrument should be dedicated to actions supporting the management and governance of migration and forced displacement. Actions addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement, when directly targeting these challenges, should also be counted as contributing to reach this target. Through the same NDICI-GE instrument, the EU is to allocate 30% of its overall budget to climate objectives, meaning a total of EUR 23.8 billion, and this was further increased to EUR 27.8 billion (bringing the target to the equivalent of 35%) after a proposal of an additional EUR 4 billion for climate finance by 2027 made by President von der Leyen in her 2021 State of the Union speech.

The **Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance** (IPA) is the means by which the EU has been supporting reforms in the enlargement region with financial and technical assistance since 2007. IPA funds build up the capacities of the beneficiaries throughout the accession process, resulting in progressive, positive developments in the region. For the new multiannual financial framework period 2021-27, the IPA III budgetary envelope is EUR 14.162 billion. The current beneficiaries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo*, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia and Turkey. Similarly to NDICI-GE, climate-related displacement and migration is at the intersection of two key EU

priorities of IPA III: fighting climate change and addressing migration. One of the thematic priorities mentioned in annex II of IPA III regulation is the strengthening of capacities to face migration challenges at regional and international level. IPA III should also contribute to the achievement of an overall target of 30 % of Union budget expenditure supporting climate objectives.

The EU **Humanitarian Aid Regulation**⁴⁴ mentions natural disasters among the situations requiring humanitarian action. On the basis of this regulation the Commission allocates the EU humanitarian budget and grants funding for humanitarian action through a yearly 'Worldwide Decision'⁴⁵, which covers all humanitarian aid actions that the Commission anticipates to fund during a given period. In the context of this decision, the Commission prepares and publishes 'Humanitarian Implementation Plans' (HIPs) which provide more detailed information on the operational priorities identified. The HIPs, which are divided along geographical areas or global thematic priorities, identify the region of implementation, the humanitarian crisis, the objectives, the available funds and potential partners for EU humanitarian assistance. The majority of the annual budget of the humanitarian aid managed by the Commission addresses situations affected by forced displacement, prompted by both conflicts and disasters.

⁴³ Regulation (EU) N°2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe.

⁴⁴ Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid.

⁴⁵ See Worldwide Decision 2022 https://ec.europa.eu/echo/document/download/45759f1d-1dbe-4f8e-8c58-e06d1a9d9903_en, the budget for 2022 was set at EUR 1,8 billion.

* 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.

3. THE CURRENT EU ACTION: OVERVIEW AND BEST PRACTICES

On the basis of its policies and instruments, the EU is addressing the issue of disaster, climate and environmental-related displacement and migration from multiple angles across all policy areas with the ‘do no harm’ principle as common thread. Several Commission’s services are actively engaged in addressing this topic, particularly through humanitarian and development actions in countries affected by disasters and climate change, as well as through research and knowledge production activities. The Commission’s response is evidence-based, policy driven and supported by dedicated resources.

The EU has increased the share of its external action, notably its development partnerships, devoted to climate-related challenges. The EU has been promoting science and supported disaster preparedness and system strengthening in partner countries to avert disaster and climate-related displacement where possible, minimise its impact and strengthen adaptation. The EU has also strengthened its operational response in providing emergency assistance as well as in the field of protection. In addition, the EU is ensuring policy and programming coherence, by linking humanitarian action, development partnerships and environmental policy in this area and by mainstreaming climate resilience and adaptation into migration and displacement programmes. Finally, the EU has been supporting multilateralism by engaging, supporting and actively contributing to the relevant international policy processes and instruments.

3.1 Expanding external cooperation and focussing it on climate-related challenges

The EU, which is the world’s biggest donor of development assistance and a leading humanitarian aid provider, has started in recent years to translate into action its attention to displacement induced by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation through

different interventions. These include both short-term humanitarian operations, providing relief to the affected populations, and medium/long term projects, aimed at building capacities, preventing or addressing the consequences of the challenge.

In parallel, the EU has taken a clear global lead to address climate change and its adverse effects, including through the overarching EU Green Deal. In this manner the EU has become one of the largest contributors of public climate finance for adaptation purposes to developing countries, in particular Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. **Today, one third of the world’s public climate finance comes from the EU and its Member States.** Between 2014 and 2020, the distribution of climate finance flows between mitigation and adaptation has been balanced, with a slight prevalence of adaptation over mitigation. A large part of this financing came in the form of grants⁴⁶.

Moreover, the EU is developing an inclusive and participatory political dialogue with partner countries and other stakeholders on all the above-mentioned challenges. It is another key tool which has been expanding and inspiring its external cooperation, and has proven its efficiency in fostering partnerships with third countries.

3.2 Averting, minimising and adapting to disaster and climate-related displacement

EU research and support to data collection on disaster and climate-related displacement

Research and data collection and analysis are key to understanding the scale and dynamics of displacement and migration caused by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. This is particularly important to feed into the development of relevant policies and

⁴⁶ This also includes EU funding for Disaster Risk Reduction, which rose from EUR 10 million in 2014 to EUR 845 million in 2020. For the 2014-2020 period, the EU has allocated EUR 12.139 billion to climate change action. For climate change adaptation, the EU provided EUR 401 million in 2014, which by 2020 had more than tripled to EUR 1,436 billion.

strategic frameworks, as well as the programming of actions and initiatives addressing disaster and climate-related displacement.

The EU has positioned itself as a major actor in the quest to advance knowledge on disaster and climate-related displacement and migration over the past years. Research in this area is an important pillar of the Commission's work towards a new policy framework on climate change and migration. Research funded under the Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe programmes, or conducted by the Commission's Knowledge Centre on Migration and Demography (KCMD) run by the Joint Research Centre (JRC)⁴⁷, are key elements of this effort.

The EU has been one of the first organisations to sponsor multi-country comparative research on climate change and human mobility, with the 'Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios' project in 2007⁴⁸. The EU (through the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research and Innovation) is currently funding several additional projects addressing the intersection of migration and climate change, such as the HABITABLE project⁴⁹ led by the Hugo Observatory for Environment, Migration and Politics at Liège University. This multidisciplinary project aims at improving our understanding of how climate change affects migration and displacement standards, including the role of social tipping points. In addition, in the context of the KCMD, the JRC has published important research in 2021 in the framework of the Climate-change Induced Migration (CLICIM) project.⁵⁰ The final report of this project provided high spatial resolution information on the nexus between slow-onset climate change and population projections in Africa, and called for strengthened joint efforts in migration, climate adaptation and development policies to protect exposed and vulnerable communities. Furthermore, the Commission's Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre (DRMKC) run by the JRC⁵¹ has recently developed the INFORM Climate Change Risk tool,

which includes climate and demographic projections considering different scenarios in order to better understand the impact of climate change on the risk of humanitarian crises and associated vulnerabilities⁵².

The EU is also funding research by the International Resource Panel to better understand the role that natural resource depletion plays in the nexus between human mobility, environmental degradation and climate change. In addition, the EU supports Member States and partner countries to collect data and assess climate risks, including through the Copernicus Climate Change Service, as well as the EU Civil Protection Knowledge Network, which was launched in December 2021.

Through its Enhanced Response Capacity Humanitarian Implementation Plan (ERC HIP), the EU has also supported projects linking data collection to climate-related displacement. For example, in the 2021 ERC HIP⁵³, a project will aim at bringing different predictive models together into a wider anticipatory toolbox. This toolbox aims to underpin a more efficient response to humanitarian needs arising from disasters and climate change, through a better understanding and anticipation of the impact of climate change on displacement. This will be achieved by developing data models, analysis and early action frameworks as tools for the benefit of the wider humanitarian system. In addition, a 2017 project with the IOM, IDMC and other partners aimed at improving the availability, quality, and effective use of data and analysis in relation to human mobility in the context of crises. The project supported, among others, the development of displacement risk models for better programming and intervention and a stronger understanding of ethical risks from increased availability of data and analysis.

Also, several EU-funded development cooperation projects include research activities aiming to provide evidence for the EU's programming, and to gather and

⁴⁷ The JRC is the European Commission's in-house science and knowledge service, providing scientific evidence throughout the whole policy cycle.

⁴⁸ Vag, Andras, 2010, Environmental Change and Forced Migration Scenarios Synthesis Report.

⁴⁹ HABITABLE. Linking Climate Change, Habitability and Social Tipping Points: Scenarios for Climate Migration. (2018). Liège université. The Hugo Observatory. <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/869395>

⁵⁰ McMahon, S., Tintori, G., Perez Fernandez, M., Alessandrini, A., Goujon, A., Ghio, D., Petroliagkis, T., Conte, A., Minora, U. and Kalantaryan, S., Population exposure and migrations linked to climate change in Africa, Migali, S. and Natale, F. editor(s), EUR 30881 EN, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2021, ISBN 978-92-76-43304-0, doi:10.2760/4151, JRC126594.

⁵¹ <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>.

⁵² <https://drmkc.jrc.ec.europa.eu/inform-index/Other-INFORM-Products/INFORM-Climate-Change-Tool-beta-version>.

⁵³ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding/hip2021/echo_erc_bud_2021_91000_v1.pdf.

facilitate dissemination and exchange of lessons learnt at global level. Data is also collected at grass-root level. An example of this approach was provided by the “South Asia Migration and Climate” project⁵⁴, implemented from July 2019 to March 2021 under the “Improving Migration Management” programme managed by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), and funded by the EU through the DCI. This project sought to understand and sensitise policymakers to the phenomenon of climate-induced migration in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

However, more efforts are needed on data collection and analysis in order to support the development of efficient strategies and operational responses. This should remain an integral part of the EU’s work on disaster and climate-related displacement, for instance by further strengthening work in the areas of forecasting and modelling of displacement risks. Similarly, links between different research strands and policymaking should be reinforced.

EU support to disaster preparedness and system strengthening in partner countries

The EU humanitarian budget allocated for disasters caused by natural hazards has steadily grown over the years, integrating both response and preparedness, as well as tools such as the Early Warning and Information Systems, the EU’s Earth Observation programme Copernicus, or the emergency toolbox, a funding tool designed to respond to unexpected emergencies. In addition, most of the EU’s humanitarian budget is allocated to projects that address the needs of forcibly displaced persons and their host communities, many of which are impacted by disasters and the effects of climate change⁵⁵.

Regarding preparedness actions, the dedicated budget line has grown from EUR 50 million to 76.5 million per year over the period 2019-2022. This budget line

supports actions to strengthen preparedness capacities of governments and communities for the early response to a hazard and/or threat (e.g. through the establishment of early warning systems, development of contingency plans and Standard Operating Procedures, emergency prepositioning of stock). Four priorities have been set for the period 2021-2024, one of which is climate resilience. This focuses on interventions which are intended to address challenges linked to climate-related disasters and displacement, and integrate solutions such as environment and nature-based solutions. In addition, it is estimated that 56% of all EU-funded humanitarian projects have included a disaster preparedness component over the past 5 years.

Through the DCI, the EU also supports partner countries in developing better policy responses and planning tools on disaster displacement, with the aim to leave no one behind and address inequalities exacerbated by climate change-related displacement. One such initiative, funded under the DCI and still ongoing, is the project “Pacific Response to Disaster Displacement”⁵⁶. Under this project, the EU has comprehensively supported island countries and regional organisations in the Pacific on data, research, and capacity development. The EU is currently considering to take inspiration from this project and develop more projects of a similar kind focussing on additional relevant geographic areas.

Finally, the new EU Mission on Adaptation to Climate Change anchored in Horizon Europe that will foster development and deployment of innovative solutions to adapt to climate change is also well placed to provide inspiration to third countries on how to accelerate progress in building their adaptive capacity. While the Mission’s focus is on Europe as it aims to support at least 150 European regions and communities towards becoming climate resilient by 2030, it will make its experiences available to other regions to learn from them and replicate the best practices.

⁵⁴ South Asia Migration and Climate (SAMAC). ICMPD Budapest Process. Secretariat. <https://www.budapestprocess.org/silkroutesfacility/projects-in-the-silk-routes-countries/183-samac>.

⁵⁵ Under the Multi-Annual Framework (MFF) 2014-2020, the final annual EU humanitarian assistance budget amounted to an average of EUR 1,6 billion. On average, under the same period, approximately EUR 1,3 billion was committed to addressing crises with a strong forced displacement dimension.

⁵⁶ https://www.internal-displacement.org/sites/default/files/brochure_prdd_final_260520_min_v2.pdf.

3.3 Strengthening operational responses

Providing a quick and effective response

Recalling that several factors interact in a complex way when it comes to disaster and climate-related displacement, the EU supports various programmes addressing basic needs as part of its emergency humanitarian assistance, including protection, socio-economic vulnerabilities and provision of basic social services and livelihood opportunities. The Commission promotes the mainstreaming of a risk informed approach in all its humanitarian assistance, in order to enable anticipatory actions and efficient responses in the event of displacement.

The EU's-funded project *'Immediate Humanitarian Assistance to Earthquake Affected Population in West Sulawesi & Cyclone and Flood Affected Population in Nusa Tenggara Barat & Nusa Tenggara Timur Provinces, Indonesia'*⁵⁷ offers a positive example in this regard. Combining a range of interventions targeting the most vulnerable who had lost their houses and livelihoods, the project provided training for 74 masons and local builders, as well as 146 verifiers/assessors as part of its Build Back Better component. The EU's long-standing support for the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' *Disaster Response Emergency Fund*⁵⁸ is key in this regard, with the fund having been mobilised to support 1,440 early action and immediate disaster response operations since 2009, including the above-mentioned project.



Photo 3. Ethiopia – The effects of the drought are visible on the remaining livestock. In 2022, the drought in the Horn of Africa forced hundreds of thousands to leave their homes in search for food, water and medical aid.

⁵⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding/hip2021/echo_drf_bud_2021_91000_v3.pdf.

⁵⁸ <https://www.ifrc.org/disaster-response-emergency-fund-dref>.

Strengthening localised action is another decisive factor for effective operational responses to disasters and disaster displacement. Local actors and communities are usually the first responders at the onset of a crisis. They also have a better understanding of local contexts and needs, and bring with them resilience and capacities, including indigenous knowledge and customary adaptive skills. The EU recognises the importance of local actors and capacities for humanitarian assistance, as illustrated by the fact that current projects implemented as part of the Disaster Preparedness Programme or rapid response mechanisms, such as the First Line Emergency Response, have been foundational in building local capacities. Through the *'REDE-EDUCAMA'*⁵⁹ project in Mozambique, for instance, the EU funds not only emergency education services, but also supports the strengthening and consolidating of national and local preparedness and first-response capacities to sudden-onset natural and man-made disasters in Cabo Delgado and Manica provinces.

Seeking complementarity and coordination between its humanitarian and development policies and budgets along the humanitarian–development–peace nexus is also crucial. The Commission has intensified its efforts in this regard. Nexus approaches have been mainstreamed as part of the humanitarian and development programming in a significant number of countries. Examples of these efforts are illustrated in section 3.4.

Addressing protection issues of migrants and persons displaced due to disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation

Disasters, climate change and environmental degradation tend to exacerbate pre-existing vulnerabilities and increase protection risks and violations of rights, threatening women and children in particular, as well as the elderly and people with disabilities. For example, disasters heighten the risk of physical and other forms of violence, including gender-based violence⁶⁰ and human trafficking. Disasters also increase the risk of family separation, issues relating to land, housing and property rights, as well as loss of personal documentation. The latter makes

it impossible for displaced persons to exercise their right to participate in political processes, or may hinder them from accessing support services. Additionally, disaster and climate-related displacement and migration tend to disrupt livelihoods, as well as children's access to education, and can lead to a range of psychosocial and physical health impacts.

The EU funds multiple projects addressing these risks and vulnerabilities. One such example is the IOM-led project *'Emergency Life-saving Assistance and Protection to Displacement Affected Populations in Ethiopia'*⁶¹, which aims at contributing to the protection of disaster displaced persons through a number of interventions. These include collecting and disseminating accurate displacement data, providing access to shelter, non-food items, and WASH assistance, as well as offering livelihood, site management support and post-arrival assistance. Similarly, the CARE-implemented project *'Expanded Education in Emergency Support to Disaster Affected Children In Somalia'*⁶² limits barriers to accessing learning opportunities for disaster displaced children and host communities.

Additional protection issues may arise due to the lack of a well-defined legal status and associated rights which makes it difficult for displaced persons and migrants to access assistance, basic services, and the labour market. This is not only the case for cross-border displacement and migration caused by disasters and climate change, which do not fall within the remit of international refugee law and the associated international protections, but also affects persons displaced internally, whose numbers are greater. In many countries, for example, persons displaced internally by disasters are not always defined as 'displaced' but as 'affected'. This puts them at an increased risk of 'being left out' of recovery programmes (e.g. cash-based assistance, livelihoods support, legal assistance, housing), which is especially the case for government-led programmes. As part of its action in this area, the EU should therefore seek to reflect further on the assistance and the protection needs of people displaced by disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation.

⁵⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding/hip2021/echo_-sf_bud_2021_91000_v2.pdf.

⁶⁰ The EU Gender Action Plan III (https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_2184) stresses the particular impact of disaster and climate-related displacement on individuals, and particularly on women, and proposes specific actions in this regard.

⁶¹ https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding/hip2021/echo_-hf_bud_2021_91000_v5.pdf.

⁶² https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/funding/hip2021/echo_-hf_bud_2021_91000_v5.pdf.

3.4 Promoting policy and programming coherence

Strengthening resilience and adaptation by linking humanitarian action, development cooperation and environmental policy

Given the multi-faceted nature of disaster and climate-related displacement and migration, effectively addressing this challenge and providing durable solutions for displaced persons and migrants requires a coordinated approach which involves both humanitarian and development as well as other stakeholders, such as civil society organisations, local communities, or research and climate actors. The EU continues to strengthen the collaboration between humanitarian and development actors on combatting the causes and negative impacts of disaster and climate-related displacement. Building synergies between the various Commission services which are engaged in addressing disaster and climate-related displacement and migration is essential to strengthen the response.

To this end, the EU is involved in several programmes with a nexus approach, aiming to strengthen resilience and adaptation of affected populations. Many of these projects target local and national capacities directly.

Through the *Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR)*⁶³, the EU is supporting African, Caribbean and Pacific national governments and regional institutions to implement disaster risk reduction (DRR) activities. Most of the more than 140 projects funded through the GFDRR touch directly or indirectly on climate-related displacement. The facility focusses on four priority areas: mainstreaming of DRR; risk identification and assessment; early warning systems and communication on DRR; and risk transfer and integration of DRR into post-disaster recovery.

Another best-practise example is the '*EU Global Climate Change Alliance Plus Initiative*'. Since its launch in 2008, more than 80 adaptation projects have been funded in Africa, Asia, the Caribbean and the Pacific. One of the disaster displacement projects funded through the

initiative is the '*Bangladesh Climate Change Resilience Fund*', which supported the Government of Bangladesh in the implementation of the '*Bangladesh Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan*' with EUR 130 million.

The NDICI-GE's programming promotes a comprehensive long-term development approach to mobility prompted by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. An example of this is the work carried out in Fiji, where the EU in cooperation with GIZ is relocating vulnerable households and schools that are impacted by sea level rise and flooding from inundations and heavy rainfall. On the same island, the EU works together with authorities to develop an Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the coastal area of Soasoa, used for sugar cane farming, to help alleviate the flooding. Scaling-up measures will not only help the farmers but also adjacent communities living and commuting along these zones and reinforces resilience. Another example is the EU's engagement in Bangladesh, where around 200,000 extremely vulnerable households in hard-to-reach areas had access to climate adaptation funds that allowed them to build small and climate-smart infrastructure and improve their livelihoods.

The EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change⁶⁴ is also instrumental in this regard, as it sets out how the EU can adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change and become climate resilient by 2050. As part of the EU Adaptation Strategy, which denounces the risks of climate-related displacement in partner countries, the EU pledged to increase its support to partner countries for climate resilience and preparedness through the provision of resources, scaling up international finance and stronger global engagement and exchanges on adaptation and management of natural resources and ecosystems so that they can provide local populations with the full range of services expected from them. In order to achieve these objectives, the strategy states that the EU will use instruments for external action, including innovative mechanisms, such as the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus. Moreover, the EU is committed to supporting efforts to scale up sustainability-related financial instruments in partner countries, including green bonds.

⁶³ <https://www.gfdr.org/en/feature-story/about-us>.

⁶⁴ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Forging a climate-resilient Europe - the new EU Strategy on Adaptation to Climate Change COM/2021/82 final.

The strategy also affirms that the EU will support partner countries in developing local, national and regional adaptation strategies for disaster risk reduction.

Mainstreaming climate resilience and adaptation into migration and displacement programmes and vice versa

As many of the most pressing displacement situations around the world occur in climate change ‘hotspots’, the Commission’s approach to help countries addressing the root causes of displacement and migration also contributes to effectively tackling climate change. In particular, through its development assistance, the Commission is implementing several initiatives, which, by targeting socio-economic opportunities, stability, security and climate action, including sound management of natural resources and ecosystems also contribute to strengthening resilience to disasters and the adverse effects of climate change in partner countries.

At the same time, the Commission has increased efforts to integrate climate and environmental considerations into its existing and new programmes on migration and displacement. One example is the DCI- funded “Lives in Dignity Grant Facility”⁶⁵, implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services, which promotes development-oriented approaches to new, recurrent and protracted displacement crises. One of its thematic areas aims at addressing disaster and climate-related human mobility through a number of pilot projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean.

3.5 Strengthening multilateralism

Participation in relevant international fora and processes is essential to consolidate the EU’s contribution to global efforts in addressing disaster and climate-related displacement. The EU has continued to take the lead in these multilateral processes in order to ensure coordinated, sustainable and comprehensive responses to this global challenge. In this respect, the EU Chairpersonship of the Platform on Disaster Displacement is an important milestone.

Participation and support to relevant international fora and processes

The Council Conclusions of 16 February 2022 on “EU Climate Diplomacy: accelerating the implementation of Glasgow outcomes” underlined the urgent need to increase international efforts and improved coherence and coordination between relevant international organisations and other partners, including through the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the United Nations Climate Change conferences. They also stated that climate diplomacy remains a core component of EU foreign and security policy and is an increasingly important, joint priority of the EU and its Member States’ dialogues and cooperation with third countries and regions and other bilateral and multilateral partnerships initiated by the EU as well as its Member States. In May 2022, the EU participated in the Seventh Session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction in Bali, Indonesia, where the issue of disaster and climate-related displacement was raised at a dedicated thematic session, constituency session, and side-event⁶⁶.

EU support to the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)

The EU actively contributes to the implementation processes of the Global Compact for Migration and Global Compact on Refugees, including through the International Migration Review Forum (2022, reviewing progress on the implementation of the GCM) or the Global Refugee Forum and High-Level Officials Meeting (2019 and 2021 respectively, linked to the GCR). The EU actively engages in such processes, highlighting the need to keep climate and disaster related issues high on the agenda in the implementation of the objectives contained in the compacts, both of which include considerations on climate and its impact on displacement and migration.

⁶⁵ https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/programmes/lives-dignity-grant-facility_en.

⁶⁶ See <https://globalplatform.undrr.org/conference-event/strengthening-governance-reduce-disaster-displacement-risks>, <https://globalplatform.undrr.org/conference-event/displacement-constituency-session>, <https://globalplatform.undrr.org/conference-event/when-conflict-climate-change-and-covid19-collapse-building-resilience-complex>.

Support to the implementation of the United Nations Secretary General's (UNSG) Action Agenda on Internal Displacement

The EU was among the nine donors which supported the work of the UNSG High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement, which released its report and recommendations in September 2021. In its report, the High-Level Panel on Internal Displacement identified disasters and the adverse effects of climate change as major drivers of internal displacement. This report was translated into the United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, which was launched in June 2022⁶⁷. The EU is planning to support the implementation of the Action Agenda.

EU Chairpersonship of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD)

The PDD was established in July 2016 as a state-led initiative working towards better protection for people displaced across borders in the context of disasters and climate change. The PDD builds partnerships between policymakers, practitioners and researchers and constitutes a multi-stakeholder forum for dialogue, information sharing as well as policy development. The PDD promotes a comprehensive approach to disaster displacement, including the adverse effects of climate change on human mobility. Its vision is a world in which 'no one will be left behind', in accordance with the aim of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The EU officially became Chair of the PDD on 1 July 2022 for a duration of 18 months. It intends to use the Chairpersonship to raise the issue of disaster and climate-related displacement higher on the international agenda, to promote a development and partnership approach and to strengthen and mobilise coordinated global efforts for more evidence based, policy driven and adequately resourced actions in this area. During its Chairpersonship,

the EU plans to financially support the activities and the secretariat of the PDD. This support will allow the EU to better protect those (at risk of being) displaced by disasters and the adverse effects of climate change through global advocacy, policy and normative development, exchange of best practices and capacity building in a selection of countries.



Photo 4. Mozambique - One year after cyclone Idai, a woman cooks bread outside her tent. Estimated figures indicate that around 33 million people have been affected by the floods and will most likely require humanitarian assistance for a long time. When a disaster strikes, prompt support is vital.

⁶⁷ June 2022, the United Nations Secretary-General's Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, <https://www.un.org/en/content/action-agenda-on-internal-displacement/>.

4. LOOKING AHEAD

Displacement and migration related to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation need to be addressed through a comprehensive and gender sensitive approach: to prevent, where possible, to prepare and anticipate such movements, and to help affected people by strengthening their resilience, adaptation capacity and protection. In the spirit of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, a response implies both an **immediate life-saving response** and a **system-strengthening approach**, enhancing long-term adaptation strategies, durable support and services to persons and communities displaced or migrating.

The EU addresses the issue of mobility of populations caused by disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation from multiple angles, involving various policy areas. Several of the Commission services are actively engaged, particularly through humanitarian and development actions in countries affected by disasters and climate change, as well as through research and knowledge production activities. Given the scale of the challenge, it is essential for the EU and its Member States to work together in a team Europe approach in order to ensure the maximizing of synergies and complementarity of actions.

However, **more efforts are needed to address these challenges** in an efficient and durable manner. Building on the lessons learned outlined in this document, **the Commission will focus on:**

- **Addressing the longer-term developmental challenges** that displacement and migration induced by disasters, climate change and environmental degradation pose, in line with the humanitarian-development-peace nexus. While the humanitarian community focuses its attention to the most immediate needs of the response, development actors will need to expand their work on prevention, resilience as well as managing and creating durable solutions for displaced communities. This includes capacity building of national systems in order to provide support and services to displaced persons and migrants.
- Strengthening resilience, disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation by **linking humanitarian action, development cooperation and environmental policy**, as part of the humanitarian development-peace nexus will remain essential to ensure a coherent approach to disaster and climate-related displacement and migration.
- Promoting **durable solutions to disaster and climate-related displacement**, by seeking synergies with the United Nations Secretary-General’s Action Agenda on Internal Displacement, as well as by strengthening its work in areas such as planned relocations.
- Regularly including the challenges of migration and displacement related to disaster, climate change and environmental degradation into the **dialogues and cooperation established by the EU with partner countries**, both at bilateral and regional level, and contribute to inspire the partnerships thus established, focusing on priority countries and promoting local ownership.
- Continuing **promotion of research, data collection and analysis as well as the exchange of knowledge** on disaster and climate-related displacement to allow a better understanding of the multifaceted nature of this phenomenon, including cross-border movements and threats, informing effective policy and operational responses. This includes strengthening the links between policy-making and research, and exploring further the opportunities offered by areas such as forecasting or modelling of displacement risks. Ethical issues and data responsibility should also be addressed in the future work.
- **Further strengthening support to disaster preparedness and anticipatory action** in order to avert and minimise disaster and climate-related displacement. New opportunities should be explored to enhance action in this field, including through anticipatory action, forecast-based financing and other innovative financing approaches, such as insurance schemes.

- **Continuing capacity building** in favour of partner countries to ensure that EU and international tools have the highest impact to better respond before, during and after displacement and migration. Strengthening localised action and local ownership will be a decisive factor for effective operational responses to disasters and climate-related displacement and migration. Local ownership will continue to be a key element of this approach.
- **Promoting good governance and renewing efforts to further involve local communities** in partner countries, having in mind in particular the tremendous role that **youth** can play as agents of change, as well as the specific importance of **women**, as a particularly affected category of persons and also in view of ensuring they are put in the condition to take part in the solutions to disaster and climate-related displacement and migration.
- Further **protecting persons displaced or trapped** by disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation and properly addressing **needs to ensure that no-one is left behind** in response and recovery programmes, and that governments take leadership in ensuring access to protection services. **Continued advocacy**, including at the multi-lateral and regional levels in ongoing processes will be key in this endeavour.
- Ensuring **policy and programming coherence** at all levels on issues of disaster and climate-related displacement.



Photo 5. Pakistan – A woman cooks bread outside her tent following the floods.

- Continuing to promote a **Team Europe approach to disaster and climate and environmental-related displacement and migration**, which could be achieved through additional **Team Europe initiatives**, if needed, and **regular engagement and dialogue with Member States** in this area. The commitment to support the development of climate resilient infrastructure under the Global Gateway strategy is key in this respect.
- At global level, continuing to **strengthen multilateralism and promoting an approach based on partnerships**, including through synergies and coordination with relevant international organisations, processes and policy frameworks. In this sense, the **EU Chairpersonship of the Platform on Disaster Displacement (PDD)** as of July 2022 until December 2023 constitutes an opportunity to raise the issue of disaster and climate-related displacement and migration higher on the international agenda, to mobilise coordinated global efforts in this area, and explore systemic solutions for the future of the Platform.

Getting in touch with the EU

IN PERSON

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Finding information about the EU

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