

Amid significant funding cuts, civil society calls on institutional and private donors to step up and work with civil society to ensure functioning asylum systems in Europe.

The implications of US funding cuts for humanitarian assistance and development support are severe and far-reaching, including in large displacement crises and for major refugee-hosting countries. It [is projected](#) that USAID programmes in Ethiopia, the DRC, Colombia, South Africa, Palestine, Bangladesh, Kenya, Afghanistan, and Tanzania have each been cut by over 200 million USD. The largest absolute cut is in Ukraine with 1.4 billion USD removed. In the cases of Afghanistan, Palestine and Somalia it is estimated US funding cuts represent a loss of over 1 percent of their gross national income (GNI). Compounding the impact, less dramatic but still [significant reductions in aid budgets](#) have taken place at major European donors, including the UK, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland, and will likely also occur in Germany.

The repercussions will be felt around the world: life-saving assistance will not be provided to millions of people in need and very difficult decisions about resource allocation need to be taken. People who are forcibly displaced within their home country or across borders [will feel the impact imminently](#). While the majority will be stuck in protracted displacement internally or in neighbouring countries, others will be forced to embark on dangerous journeys to access humanitarian assistance, including towards Europe.

The impact of the funding cuts will be significant, also on asylum systems in Europe. First, cuts to support for displaced people in countries such as Ukraine or Türkiye will likely lead to more people arriving in EU Member States in search of protection. Second, the European asylum sector, which in many countries is heavily dependent on funding from institutional or private donors, is directly affected. Many civil society organisations supporting asylum seekers and refugees through services, legal aid, and support to inclusion have been hit by the end of US funding either through direct cuts or because intermediary donors or partners, such as UNHCR, have ended or reduced their support. The significant reduction in UNHCR's budget will mean that the majority of civil society organisations working on asylum in Europe will be affected. This aggravates the already adverse funding environment for organisations work on refugee rights, many of which face national governments that refuse or severely limit funding to this sector.

At the time of writing, significant funding cuts have been reported in Belgium, Croatia, Czech Republic, Cyprus, Estonia, Georgia, Greece, Kosovo, Malta, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Sweden and Türkiye.

As a result, at a time of increased need due to rising displacement, civil society working on asylum and migration is under huge financial strain, facing significant reductions in staffing and activities. This will leave many people seeking protection in Europe unsupported, undermine the functioning of asylum systems, and jeopardise the implementation of the Pact on Migration and Asylum in which civil society has an important role to play.

Given this new reality, it is imperative that all relevant actors - the European Commission, Member States and private funders - reassess their priorities and address the shortfalls to prevent a crisis of asylum, reception and inclusion in Europe.

For this purpose, the undersigned organisations are calling on:

The European Commission to:

- use its mid-term review of Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the European Social Fund+ (ESF+) to ensure that funding channelled via Member States adequately supports civil society organisations working on asylum and migration.
- consider how to fund civil society directly, e.g. through resources from the AMIF thematic facility, in order to respond to the emerging needs for legal aid, counselling and other activities all of which have a high added value for the EU as they support the implementation of the Pact.
- review whether, given the changed context, Member States should be obliged to spend a certain percentage of their national programmes in support of civil society, a good practice established for EU funding for displacement from Ukraine.
- adapt national programmes under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA) to respond to the emerging needs in relation to asylum and migration.

Member States to:

- ensure that national programmes under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Border Management and Visa Instrument (BMVI) provide adequate resources for civil society organisations, that civil society are considered eligible under all relevant call for proposals and that activities include legal counselling and representation; calls should be issued promptly.
- convene consultations with affected NGOs to understand what the needs are and how they can be addressed in the short-, medium- and long-term.

Private funders to:

- re-assess funding needs for asylum in Europe, increase resources for this purpose and prioritise countries where neither national allocation of EU funds nor institutional funding reaches civil society.

Immediate action is needed now. In the medium term, the new funding reality should be reflected in the proposals and negotiations of the next Multi-annual Financial Framework which will start this year.

List of signatories:

#DiasporaVote!

Accem

aditus foundation

Afghanistan LGBTIQ+ Organisation (ALO)

Africa Solidarity Centre Ireland
Are You Syrious?
ARENE (Afghan Refugees Experts Network in Europe)
Association for Legal Intervention (Stowarzyszenie Interwencji Prawnej)
AsyLex
Belgrade Centre for Human Rights
Better Future
Bulgarian Helsinki Committee
Caritas Europa
Centre for Peace Studies
Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe CCME
Civil Rights Program Kosovo
CNCD-11.11.11
Conselho Português para os Refugiados / Portuguese Refugee Council (CPR)
Consiglio Italiano per i Rifugiati (Italian Council for Refugees)
Croatian Law Centre (hrvatski pravni centar)
Cyprus Refugee Council
Doras
ECRE
Equinox Initiative for Racial Justice
Estonian Refugee Council
EUCOMAR European Coalition of Migrants and Refugees
European Network Against Racism
European Network on Statelessness
FEANTSA - European Federation of National Organisations Working with the Homeless
Fondation pour la promotion des droits en Algérie
Forum réfugiés
France terre d'asile
Greek Council for Refugees (GCR)
Greek Forum of Refugees
Hakunila International Organization
The Swedish Network of Refugee Support Groups (FARR)
Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
HIAS Europe

HIAS Greece
Homo Faber Association
Human Rights Association (İnsan Hakları Derneği - İHD)
Hungarian Helsinki Committee
IRC - International Rescue Committee
Irish Refugee Council
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Europe
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Germany
Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) Belgium
JRS Portugal
JRS Romania
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
Médecins du Monde
Macedonian Young Lawyers Association
Migrant Info Point Foundation
Migrant Women Association Malta
Migration Consortium
Migration Policy Group (MPG)
Mosaico azioni per i rifugiati
NANSEN - The Belgian refugee Council
New Women Connectors
NOMADA Association
Ocalenie Foundation
OPU - Organisation for Aid to Refugees
organisation marocaine des droits humains
Organization for Aid to Refugees
Passerell
PIC - Legal Center for the Protection of Human Rights and the Environment
Polish Migration Forum Foundation
Quaker Council for European Affairs
Refugee Support Aegean (RSA)
Safe Passage International (Greece)
Safe Passage International in France
SEDA Voice

SOLIDAR

SolidarityNow

Terre des Hommes Germany

The Rule of Law Institute

UBUNTU-Initiative for Peace and Development

Ukrainian House Foundation (Warsaw)

WE organization NL

Xenion e.V.