

## POLICY BRIEF

# Rethinking EU Partnerships with the Global South

Partnerships between the EU and the Global South are essential for navigating increasingly complex climate geopolitics. For partner countries, these collaborations offer opportunities to drive economic growth, access clean technologies, and establish sustainable industrial sectors. For the EU, strong global partnerships are crucial to enhancing economic resilience and competitiveness, ensuring access to critical materials, and reinforcing its role in a multipolar world. Importantly, these partnerships are indispensable for achieving global climate targets. The EU cannot achieve a fair and 1.5°C-compatible pathway without extending substantial support to other countries.<sup>1</sup>

However, the EU's approach to partnerships currently lacks a clear strategy, coherence, and the capacities to be able to fulfil its potential. In light of the new European Commission being set up, it is a crucial time for the EU to address the shortcomings of its approach and make partnerships a strategic instrument aligned with the interests of its partners and itself. Partnerships are described as a key pillar of the new economic foreign policy the Commission wants to establish – next to economic security and trade. Partnerships are, however, essential for both of the other pillars. Without them, the EU will be unable to achieve economic security and foster stable and mutually beneficial trade relationships. It is crucial that the EU enhances its partnership offer to ensure that it not only advances its own geopolitical and economic interests, but also those of its partners. As a prerequisite, the EU has to adapt to changes in the geopolitical landscape and establish governance mechanisms that allow for a coherent and strategic partnership approach.

In this policy brief, we outline the EU's current approach to climate-related partnerships, examine the portfolios of the relevant Commissioners, and make recommendations on how the EU can turn its partnerships into a strategic tool and make them more attractive to partners.<sup>2</sup>

## EU's current approach to partnerships

Launched in 2021, the Global Gateway is presented as the EU's flagship initiative for infrastructure development in partner countries, designed as the overarching framework for its external partnerships. With the goal of mobilising EUR 300 billion by 2027, the initiative promises investment across key sectors like digital infrastructure, transport, health, and climate and energy. The EU implements this initiative through its 'Team Europe' approach, which is a combination of EU instruments, its Member States, and key financial institutions such as the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and the European Investment Bank (EIB). The EU launched this approach during the Covid-19 crisis to make its 'joint external action more than the sum of its parts'<sup>3</sup> through increased co-ordination and policy coherence.

Initially touted as the EU's answer to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), the Global Gateway carries the weight of high expectations, both as a geopolitical tool and a development strategy, and is currently unable

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<sup>1</sup> ESABCC, 2023, [Scientific Advice for the Determination of an EU-wide 2040 Climate Target and a Greenhouse Gas Budget for 2030–2050](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

<sup>2</sup> This policy brief is informed by a workshop held in September with representatives from the European Commission, the European Parliament, Member States, and experts from partner countries.

<sup>3</sup> European Commission, n.d., [Team Europe Initiatives](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

to meet them. The initiative is often criticised as merely a re-branding strategy of the EU and existing instruments, without creating actual new financial flows.<sup>4</sup> The main budget which accounts for the Global Gateway is the European development budget, namely the European Fund for Sustainable Development Plus (EFSD+).<sup>5</sup> Within its first three years (2021–2023), the EU Commission reported mobilising EUR 179 billion across 225 flagship projects.<sup>6</sup> Based on Commission communication, the European Commission provided EUR 50 billion in support, while EU Member States, the EIB, and the EBRD mobilised a further EUR 129 billion.<sup>7</sup> While climate and energy are highlighted as priority areas of the Global Gateway, it is unclear how much of its investment went into these sectors.<sup>8</sup> For an initiative of this scale and scope, greater clarity is essential - not only to demonstrate to global partners that the EU is a trustworthy partner that delivers on its promises, but also to be accountable to European citizens.

Just Energy Transition Partnerships (JETPs) are among the best-known initiatives that are encompassed by the Global Gateway. In these plurilateral partnerships, the EU and Member States are part of the International Partners Group (IPG) – mostly made up of G7 countries - and are involved in each partnership to a varying degree. Usually, two of the IPG countries, or the EU, lead on each partnership. The formal main objective of JETPs is to support the decarbonisation of the partner countries' power sector in a just manner. The first JETP was launched with South Africa in 2021,<sup>9</sup> and other JETPs with Indonesia,<sup>10</sup> Vietnam,<sup>11</sup> and Senegal followed. In South Africa specifically, the scale and focus of export-oriented green hydrogen projects have raised concerns about whether they genuinely contribute to local development or merely serve European needs and benefits. Moreover, all JETPs lag behind when it comes to finance provision, clearly supporting the 'just' aspect of the transition, and lacking co-ordination and properly allocating responsibilities.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to the Global Gateway, the EU also engages in *Green Partnerships* and *Green Alliances* with selected partner countries. Instead of a focus on infrastructure investment, these partnerships and alliances are more focused on policy dialogues and exchanges to align policy frameworks with each other.<sup>13</sup> The EU has Green Alliances with Japan, Canada, and Norway – all industrialised countries. The goal of Green Alliances is to accelerate climate neutrality in both countries, and is promoted as the 'most comprehensive form of bilateral engagement' under the European Green Deal.<sup>14</sup> The EU has established Green Partnerships with Morocco and South Korea. These partnerships lack well-defined policy goals and instead emphasise broad, intensified co-operation. One distinction between Green Partnerships and Green Alliances is that Green Alliances include a shared commitment to achieving net-zero emissions. Beyond this, however, the differences between the two remain unclear.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Furness, M., Keijzer, N., 2022, [Europe's Global Gateway: A New Geostrategic Framework for Development Policy?](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>5</sup> Eurodad, 2024, [Who Profits from the Global Gateway? The EU's New Strategy for Development Cooperation](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>6</sup> European Commission, 2024, [Commission Takes Stock of International Partnerships' Strategy to Enhance Resilience at Home and Abroad](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Tagesspiegel Background – Energie & Klima, 2024, [EU mobilisiert 179 Milliarden Euro mit Global Gateway](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

<sup>9</sup> Wemanya, A., Adow, M., 2022, [Implementation of the Just Energy Transition Partnership in South Africa](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>10</sup> Imelda, H., et al., 2024, [The Role of the Just Energy Transition Partnership \(JETP\) in Indonesia in Making Finance Flows Consistent with Low Greenhouse Gas Emissions and Climate-Resilient Development](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>11</sup> European Commission, 2022, [Political Declaration on Establishing the Just Energy Transition Partnership with Viet Nam](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>12</sup> Cassel, C., et al., 2024, [Just Energy Transition Partnerships: What Donors Must Do to Drive Progress](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>13</sup> See e.g. European Commission, 2023, [EU and Canada Establish a Green Alliance to Deepen Cooperation on Domestic and International Policies](#) (accessed 14 October 2025).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Jackson, S., et al., 2024, [EU Climate Partnerships – Fit for Purpose? A Snapshot of EU International Engagement in Selected Climate Partnerships](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

Given its goal to increase diversification of supply of raw materials as laid out with the Critical Raw Materials Act (CRMA), the EU also engages in *strategic partnerships* with Namibia, Chile, Argentina, and Serbia among others.<sup>16</sup> The CRMA highlights that these partnerships should be in mutual interest and create value addition in partner countries. However, what exactly value addition means differs widely.<sup>17</sup> Moreover, the CRMA only has weak provisions to ensure human rights and environmental standards.<sup>18</sup> As a result, the benefits of these partnerships for partner countries are limited, their potential for achieving development goals remains low, and the risk of these partnerships being mainly extractive activities remains high. This approach, particularly in African partnerships,<sup>19</sup> often positions these countries primarily as raw material suppliers rather than as equal collaborators in green transition efforts. Such perceptions risk reinforcing fears of ‘green colonialism’, where the EU’s green agenda is seen as disproportionately advancing European interests at the expense of local economies and communities. This dynamic could undermine trust and reduce the effectiveness of EU engagement.

Alongside EU-wide climate-focused partnerships, individual Member States maintain extensive and diverse networks of bilateral partnerships, often with differing scopes, objectives, and country priorities. This fragmented approach creates a complex and unco-ordinated landscape that can hinder the overall effectiveness and create duplication of partnerships, and on the side of the partner countries absorb enormous amounts of capacities. Germany alone has over 50 partnerships, many targeting specific climate, energy, or developmental priorities in a wide range of countries. Through initiatives such as Core Climate Embassies, Germany aims to establish targeted hubs to drive climate action through diplomacy on the ground. However, without stronger alignment with European partners, these Member State partnerships risk duplicating efforts or pursuing conflicting aims.

Many nations with which the EU has climate-focused partnerships are also significant trading partners, yet the EU’s environmental policies, such as the Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) and the EU Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), often proceed without thorough assessments of their impact on these partners. Global South countries are increasingly unwilling to accept one-sided terms and seek mutually beneficial relationships that reflect their growing economic and political power. Failure to engage early with partners risks undermining trust and creating friction beyond trade, affecting the broader basis of EU partnerships.

This overview shows that the EU Commission and its Member States are engaged in a wide range of climate-related partnerships with a large number of countries that have various goals. External stakeholders often describe the EU’s partnership offer as overly complex, lacking clarity, or requiring excessive time for development and implementation.<sup>20</sup> In internal documents, the Commission itself confirms that it is currently doing ‘everything everywhere all at once’.<sup>21</sup> A clear and unified European partnership strategy is urgently needed. Global South countries have numerous co-operation offers to choose from and are increasingly engaging in a strategy of multi-alignment,<sup>22</sup> making it essential for the EU to clearly articulate its value proposition and implement it effectively.

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<sup>16</sup> As of July 2024, partnerships with the following countries exist: Argentina, Australia, Canada, Chile, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Greenland, Kazakhstan, Namibia, Norway, Rwanda, Ukraine, and Zambia, and the EU has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Serbia.

<sup>17</sup> Pickles, S., 2023, [Value Addition in the Context of Mineral Processing](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>18</sup> Jäger, A., Reckordt, M., 2024, [Zivilgesellschaftliche Anforderungen an Strategische Projekte in der Critical Raw Materials Regulation \(CRMA\)](#) (accessed 15 October 2024); Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 2024, [The Raw Materials Situation in Neighboring European Countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Georgia, Armenia](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>19</sup> Opfer, K., 2024, [EU–Africa Energy Co-operation: Opportunities for Reshaping the EU’s Energy Partnership Offer](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>20</sup> Based on the workshop discussion.

<sup>21</sup> European Commission, 2024, [Briefing Book – International Partnerships](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>22</sup> Ishmael, L., 2024, [The New South: Breaking with the Past: West-South Engagement in a Changing World](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

# Partnerships within the new European Commission

In September 2024, Ursula von der Leyen published the new portfolios and suggested new Commissioners for each of them. At the beginning of November, these designated Commissioners are undergoing a hearing in the Parliament in which they will be confirmed or rejected. With regard to climate-related partnerships, six portfolios are particularly important to observe:<sup>23</sup>

- *Commissioner for International Partnerships*
  - Supported by the Directorate-General for International Partnerships (DG INTPA)
  - Under the guidance of High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
- *High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR/VP)*
  - Supported by the European External Action Services (EEAS)
- *Commissioner for Climate, Net-Zero and Clean Growth*
  - Supported by the Directorate General for Climate Action (DG CLIMA)
  - Under the guidance of the Executive Vice President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition
- *Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security*
  - Supported by the Directorate General for Trade and Economic Security (DG TRADE)
  - Under the guidance of the Executive Vice President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy
- *Commissioner for Energy and Housing*
  - Supported by the Directorate General for Energy (DG ENER)
  - Under the guidance of the Executive Vice President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition
- *Commissioner for the Mediterranean*
  - Supported by the Directorate General for the Mediterranean (newly established)
  - Under the guidance of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

The Commissioner for International Partnerships holds the primary responsibility for managing EU partnerships, including the Global Gateway and JETPs. The current priorities for the Commissioner for International Partnerships include scaling up the Global Gateway, increasing funding, co-ordinating Member State efforts, leveraging their resources, and tracking and reporting on investments to measure impact. While the portfolio emphasises the need to develop the Global Gateway in synergy with the new Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships (CTIPs), and the importance of an integrated approach to partnerships, it lacks clarity on how climate goals will be incorporated into these efforts.

Similarly, the High Representative's portfolio offers little guidance on aligning the EU's partnerships with climate goals. It only mentions the need to better link internal and external policies, including those on climate and energy. While this is crucial, a comprehensive integration of climate considerations into European partnerships and an alignment with climate goals is lacking in the portfolios primarily responsible for partnerships – the Commissioner for International Partnerships and the EU's foreign policy chief. This fragmented approach risks perpetuating unco-ordinated partnerships with potentially conflicting objectives within the EU Commission.

The new Commissioner for Climate's portfolio – on the other side – does not address partnerships, beyond the new CTIPs. Similarly, the Commissioner for Energy has no mandate to work on the EU's partnerships,

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<sup>23</sup> Some of the Commissioners are supported by more than one DG.

including CTIPs, but is responsible for the EU's energy diplomacy. In addition, neither of the two key people responsible for the Clean Industrial Deal – the Executive Vice President for Prosperity and Industrial Strategy and the Executive Vice President for a Clean, Just and Competitive Transition – have received a direct mandate to be involved in the EU's work on partnerships.

The responsibility for the CTIPs is shared between the Commissioner for Trade and Economic Security and the Commissioner for International Partnerships, with support from the Commissioner for Climate, Net-Zero, and Clean Growth. Spreading the CTIPs across multiple portfolios has the potential to break down silos and create a more cohesive partnership strategy compared to previous efforts. However, through which mechanism these partnerships will be co-ordinated and how they will align with other co-operation formats and partnerships remains unclear. Another portfolio that should deal with partnerships is that of the Commissioner for the Mediterranean. The mandate includes partnerships and investments for economic stability, job creation, energy, security and other areas of mutual interest. There is no mention of CTIPs or the integration of climate objectives into these partnerships.

The new European Commission set-up poses a risk that climate considerations will not be effectively integrated into the EU's partnership approach, as these considerations are notably absent from key partnership portfolios. Commissioners responsible for international partnerships, trade, and foreign policy lack clear directives to prioritize or mainstream climate goals within their areas, raising concerns about the consistency and coherence of the EU's climate objectives in its external relations. On the other side, the Commissioners directly responsible for climate and energy, such as those mainly responsible for the European Industrial Deal have not received explicit mandates to engage on partnerships. This separation between climate and partnership portfolios could lead to a fragmented approach, where climate priorities are addressed in isolation rather than woven into the broader framework of EU's external relations.

## European Parliament

The Parliament currently encounters significant barriers in its ability to monitor and shape the EU's partnerships, particularly when compared to its more established role in overseeing trade agreements and development funding. While the EP has well-defined mechanisms for engagement and review in trade agreements, and for the EU's Neighbourhood, Development, and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI – Global Europe), its capacity to influence partnerships, including under the Global Gateway remains underdeveloped. In NDICI, the EP has direct influence over the legal basis and its budget and can effectively monitor and evaluate NDICI's implementation, which includes overseeing how funds are allocated. In contrast, for Global Gateway the possibilities for the Parliament are restricted. The EP can monitor the funds from NDICI to Global Gateway but currently lacks full transparency on Global Gateway projects. This discrepancy underscores a key challenge in ensuring robust parliamentary oversight and accountability in the EU's partnership activities. Additionally, the EP's effectiveness in this area is hindered by its own internal fragmentation: committees often work in silos (e.g. DEVE, AFET, ENVI, INTA), focusing on their specific mandates without sufficient co-ordination across other relevant committees.

# Recommendations

## On co-operation with partners

### 1. Create inclusive partnerships based on co-design

Effective partnerships need to be mutually developed and closely aligned with both the EU's and partner countries' long-term development pathways and climate goals. Establishing partnerships that are based on an equal footing maximizes shared ownership and increases the potential for a successful co-operation. Central to these partnerships are knowledge exchange and technology transfer, which create substantial value within partner countries by fostering skills, innovation, and economic diversification. Co-designing partnerships enables partner countries to shape the agenda in ways that address their needs, allowing the EU and its partners to leverage and strengthen regional comparative and competitive advantages effectively. Moreover, partnerships concluded between heads of state and government add weight and long-term commitment.<sup>24</sup> High-level endorsement not only strengthens the legitimacy of the partnership but also aligns political priorities, fostering a framework that goes beyond individual programs and projects to create long-term and broad-based co-operation.<sup>25</sup>

In addition, for partnerships to be truly effective, it is crucial to involve a broad range of stakeholders from the earliest stages of development and ensure transparent and inclusive communication of the EU's offers. Engaging with local communities, civil society organisations, and those directly impacted by partnership initiatives fosters trust, identifies important issues to address and strengthens the ownership. This inclusive approach can help ensure that partnerships are viewed as genuine partnerships rather than as transactional agreements, which may otherwise be perceived as imposing power imbalances or serving extractivist agendas.

### 2. Integrate social and environmental safeguards

Robust social and environmental safeguards must be an integral part of partnership frameworks to ensure that co-operation brings genuine benefits to local communities and ecosystems. These safeguards are essential for preventing potential negative impacts such as displacement, resource depletion, environmental degradation, and exploitation of local labour. To be effective, safeguards should include mandatory standards for labour rights, community consultation, environmental protection, and fair benefit-sharing. By embedding these standards, partnerships can mitigate risks and ensure that projects align with the social and environmental priorities of partner countries. For partnerships focusing on green hydrogen<sup>26</sup> or critical raw materials<sup>27</sup> these safeguards are especially important, but should be included in all types of partnerships.

Additionally, a clear accountability mechanism is necessary to monitor compliance with these safeguards. Regular assessments, transparency in reporting, and local stakeholder engagement are vital to verify that partnerships meet social and environmental commitments. By prioritising these protections, the EU can

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<sup>24</sup> Arroniz Velasco, I., et al., 2024, [EU Clean Transition Partnerships with Emerging Economies: An EU Foreign Policy Tool to Navigate New Climate Geopolitics](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

<sup>25</sup> Weischer, L., et al., 2021, [Paris-Partnerschaften – Ein Beitrag zur Neuausrichtung der deutschen Klimaaußenpolitik an den Zielen des Pariser Klima-Abkommens](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

<sup>26</sup> Beaucamp, L., Nforngwa, E., 2022, [Green Hydrogen in Africa: Risks and benefits](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

<sup>27</sup> Lobacheva, M., Sedova, T., 2024, [The Kazakhstan–EU Partnership on Critical Raw Materials: A Call for Transparency and Accountability](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

foster partnerships that not only contribute to sustainable development but also build trust, ensuring that collaborations are genuinely beneficial and respectful of local needs.

### **3. Acknowledge policy variations**

The EU must recognize and build on the achievements and progress made by partner countries in areas of shared interest, even when these efforts diverge from European approaches. For example, Brazil's focus on advancing a bio-economy is central to its climate strategy, which may not align directly with European approaches. Acknowledging these contributions is critical, as it affirms the value of each partner's unique expertise and reinforces a foundation of mutual respect. Recognizing and supporting diverse progress broadens the EU's own perspective, allowing for partnerships where each side contributes from its strengths and advances solutions that are more tailored and sustainable in their local contexts.

By focusing on collaboration rather than imposing one-size-fits-all policies, the EU can encourage partners to pursue goals that are meaningful and feasible within their frameworks. This approach not only strengthens the foundation of co-operation but also builds trust, encouraging countries to see the EU as a partner invested in their success rather than a prescriptive force. This mutual appreciation of each other's achievements fosters more resilient, adaptable partnerships, ultimately paving the way for a more collaborative and successful engagement in global climate and development goals.

### **4. Engage early with partners**

The EU needs to consider the impact of its policies in order to build trustworthy partnerships. Therefore, it should adopt a more proactive approach in engaging with its partners well in advance of introducing new policies that may negatively affect their market access or economic prospects. Early engagement allows for ex ante dialogue, integration of concerns, and provides an opportunity for partners to adapt to new regulations in a manner that minimises disruption. Key areas of concern include the effects of EU Green Deal initiatives, such as the CBAM and EUDR. While these measures are central to achieve the EU's climate goals and level the playing field for EU industries, they can inadvertently impose economic costs on trade partners,<sup>28</sup> particularly in developing economies.<sup>29</sup> For many of these countries, the additional compliance costs and adjustments required for market access can be seen as trade barriers or unfair regulatory impositions. Such perceptions risk fostering discontent and could lead to diplomatic or economic pushback, threatening the EU's ability to build strong partnerships and broad-based support for its climate agenda. By actively and systematically involving partners in the policy development process, the EU can ensure that their concerns and perspectives are taken into account, building trust and fostering stronger, more resilient relationships.

### **5. Improve communication**

International partnerships are crucial to the EU's core interests. The benefits to the EU, in particular through the new CTIPs, are reflected in Ursula von der Leyen's policy guidelines for 2024–2029 and in the various portfolios of the Commissioners-designate. However, there is a worrying trend that partnerships are increasingly being communicated primarily as tools for enhancing EU competitiveness and diversifying supply chains. While it is important to emphasise within the EU that partnerships are not just a 'nice to have'

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<sup>28</sup> Gläser, A., et al., 2023, [Impacts of the EU Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism on the Western Balkans and Ukraine](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

<sup>29</sup> African Climate Foundation and The London School of Economics and Political Science, 2023, [Implications for African Countries of a Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism in the EU](#) (accessed 15 October 2024).

but central to the EU's interests, the EU's sole focus on the European perspective risks undermining genuine co-operation and promoting a transactional approach that prioritises European interests over those of partner countries. To cultivate truly reciprocal partnerships, the EU must actively communicate that these partnerships should be based on mutual benefit and aligned with the development and climate goals of both partners. The EU needs to effectively communicate the benefits of partnership with the EU, highlighting how these partnerships differ from those offered by other global powers. The communicated benefits then need to translate to the partnership itself.

## On co-ordination within the EU

### 1. Create a European Climate Foreign Policy

The EU's approach to partnerships should be anchored in a robust climate foreign policy that sets out a clear mandate, specific goals, and coherent strategies for guiding external climate actions, including partnerships. A unified climate foreign policy would allow the EU to better integrate its climate objectives with foreign policy priorities, ensuring consistency and effectiveness across its external engagements. Germany has taken the lead among EU Member States by establishing a Climate Foreign Policy Strategy.<sup>30</sup> This Strategy outlines the need for a climate foreign policy and how climate is integrated within the different foreign policy areas, and sets out priorities for each area. Additionally, it includes new co-ordination mechanisms for the different German ministries regarding climate foreign policy and partnerships. Creating a strategy for the EU's climate foreign policy and its co-ordination among different EU institutions would be instrumental for a more strategic and co-ordinated approach. The European Climate Foreign Policy should foster close co-ordination among key EU institutions, such as the EEAS, EIB, and the EBRD, as well as Member States, to establish a cohesive strategy for climate foreign policy. Embassies and EU Delegations can play a crucial role in co-ordinating efforts and monitoring developments in partner countries, providing a direct flow of information to the EU and its Member States and ensuring a coherent and effective approach. Expanding the use of climate focal points within these representations, for example, could also help to align bilateral country engagement with EU climate objectives and the UN climate negotiations.

### 2. Establish co-ordination mechanisms

To facilitate the effectiveness of EU partnerships, improved co-ordination between EU institutions, in particular between the different DGs and the EEAS, is essential. An inter-service taskforce on EU partnerships could be instrumental in promoting cohesion, transparency and strategic alignment across the many partnerships. This taskforce would serve as a centralised body to break down the current siloed approach that often leads to fragmentation. Overcoming this disconnect is crucial as the current set-up risks perpetuating a lack of coherence between climate goals and partnership strategies (see section 2). In particular, the new CTIPs can play a crucial role as they are spread across different portfolios (trade, international partnerships and climate). By placing the CTIPs alongside the EU's Global Gateway, co-ordination will be crucial to create a coherent European approach to partnerships that partner countries can easily understand. The Commissioner for International Partnerships is responsible for both the CTIPs and the Global Gateway and is therefore in a position to establish co-ordination mechanisms such as a possible taskforce.

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<sup>30</sup> Government of the Federal Republic of Germany, 2023, [Strategy on Climate Foreign Policy](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).



### 3. Align with member states' bilateral partnerships

To maximise the effectiveness of EU partnerships, stronger integration of Member State bilateral partnerships within the EU's overarching partnership approach is essential. This integration would help to eliminate duplicative efforts by EU institutions and Member States, enabling a more unified approach that builds on each Member State's strengths while filling existing gaps at a European level.

The EU already has several mechanisms that could support a more streamlined approach. For example, the Green Diplomacy Network<sup>31</sup> and the announced Green Diplomacy Hubs<sup>32</sup> can provide valuable platforms for co-ordinating Member State and EU diplomatic climate-related activities, facilitating information sharing, best practice exchanges, and co-ordinated responses. EU Foreign Ministers have already agreed to explore the idea of 'informal Green Diplomacy Hubs' back in March 2024 in order to create closer co-ordination and co-operation between Member States' Embassies and EU Delegations. This could enhance the impact of the EU engagement with partner countries. Germany's Climate Core Embassies and similar structures in other representations, as well as the JETPs Focal Points in embassies, are also valuable tools that should be further explored for co-ordination purposes. They allow for a country-specific engagement and provide a basis for greater alignment of partnerships between EU and Member State in partner countries.

To be able to better align partnerships between Member States and the EU, transparency on existing partnerships and their results is needed. Germany is currently evaluating its many bilateral partnerships in order to increase the coherence of its bilateral efforts, a step that other Member States could also consider to improve alignment with European priorities. Such evaluations could serve as a stocktaking exercise to bring transparency to the many partnerships and identify synergies and overlaps. It should also be a starting point for developing a more harmonised EU-wide vision and strategy for climate-related partnerships.<sup>33</sup>

### 4. Enhance the European Parliament's role

To strengthen the European Parliament's role in EU partnership initiatives, it is essential that it is more actively engaged at key stages of these partnerships. Establishing a new inter-institutional agreement between the European Parliament and the European Commission would enhance the Parliament's capacity for oversight. Regular exchanges between relevant parliamentary committees – particularly those focused on climate-related partnerships – and the European Commission and EEAS should be instituted to improve co-ordination. A potential co-ordination mechanism among EU institutions, such as the inter-service taskforce, could also provide a valuable platform for co-operation with the Parliament. A first step in this direction would be to invite the chairs of relevant committees to task force meetings. Committees central to EU partnerships, such as ENVI, DEVE, and INTA, should be enabled to co-ordinate more closely and move beyond a siloed approach. Without a systematic approach, the Parliament's ability to monitor EU partnership work effectively will remain limited. To play a more active role in the development and implementation of partnerships, the European Parliament must have access to comprehensive information. Full transparency regarding partnership agreements and funding is essential for the Parliament to fulfil this expanded role.

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<sup>31</sup> This is an informal network brings together diplomats and officials from EU Member States and EU institutions to coordinate and enhance the EU's global climate and environmental diplomacy efforts.

<sup>32</sup> See EU Foreign Affairs Council, 2024, [Council Conclusions on Green Diplomacy](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

<sup>33</sup> Goritz, A., Jäckel, A., 2024, [It's Time for Germany and the EU to Embed Green Partnerships in Geostrategy](#) (accessed 4 October 2024).

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