

# actalliance eu



# Annual Report 2019

**actalliance eu**

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**Front cover images**

*This land outside Maputo provides a snapshot of Africa's agricultural choices: industrial or small scale. The photo was taken for the 2013 report 'The next breadbasket'. (National Geographic / Robin Hammond)*

*ACT/Christian Aid prayer vigil at COP25. (Simon Chambers)*

*Waiting for a boat to take them away, African workers line up at the dock in Misrata, the besieged Libyan city where civilians and rebel forces are surrounded on three sides by forces loyal to Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi. The migrant workers are fleeing the war, most returning to their home in Niger. (ACT/Paul Jeffrey)*

# Annual Report 2019

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# Letter from the ACT Alliance EU representative

*Dear Reader*

2019 was a year of two distinct halves for our policy and advocacy work towards the European Union. The first half, before the May EP elections, involved intense work to finish debates and resulted in some key successes for our advocacy team. The second half, following the setup of the new Parliament and Commission, was characterised by relationship building and reconnecting with established contacts in the Institutions. Within the new political landscape of the Parliament, issue-based coalitions continue to form and cross-party negotiations on different policy areas are ongoing. From our perspective, there is scope to influence these ever-changing coalitions and focused mapping is required to understand the member parties of the new parliamentary groupings. This new political context calls for strong coordination on advocacy at a national and EU level between ACT Alliance EU's members and secretariat.

Internally, 2019 was a year focused on our integration with ACT Alliance. Our recently adopted strategy builds on our cooperation and complementarity, our shared membership and vision and captures the priorities of ACT Alliance's strategy as they speak to our members' priorities vis-à-vis the European Union.

On topics where agendas overlap such as development policy & practice and migration and displacement, our policy officers are in close contact with each other when developing policy positions. This provides a strong, common voice towards the EU Institutions and at the UN, and a solid platform for members on the national level.

This year we were joined by two new policy officers, Leia Achampong who came in April to work on our climate justice program and Ruth Watson who arrived in August to start up our humanitarian policy and practice work. Our office is busy and influential as you can read in greater depth in the sections on our different policy fields. Let me highlight just a few key achievements from 2019:

- ▶ At our May General Assembly, we launched the joint ACT Alliance report on the link between civic space and the SDGs sparking renewed interest amongst EC and EP officials and Civil Society members.
- ▶ Our Climate Justice officer was nominated to attend the Executive Committee of the UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage meeting where we shared policy recommendations for the EU.

- ▶ Direct advocacy with parliamentarians allowed us to give significant input to the EU's mandate for its border guards.
- ▶ The EU launched a formal investigation into land rights violation in Cambodia. This is a result of consistently highlighting human and land rights violations in the EU Trade Expert Group meetings as well as building CSO coalition for over a decade.
- ▶ We facilitated successful exposure to the situation in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian territories to European policy makers.
- ▶ Together with other faith-based NGO networks in Brussels, we held our first EDD (European Development Days) event which was well attended. The topic was religion and inequality and was influential in fostering understanding of the role of religion in development by, amongst others, senior Commission officials.

While it is difficult to measure or attribute advocacy, in 2019 we were proud to get key points across to key decision-makers. This included influencing the language of the co-legislators on the future external action instrument. This is vital because it impacts the development allocations of the next budget. Whilst we are still in the early days of doing humanitarian advocacy, we have already managed to establish ourselves in the debate on localisation, including co-organising side events with IFRC and ECHO at the Grand Bargain localisation regional conference in Brussels.

Our alignment with ACT Alliance and our continued focus on the power of advocacy will be of benefit to the people we serve and for and with whom we try to affect change: the marginalised, the outcast, the forgotten, those living in poverty and need.

Please allow me to encourage you to read on.

**Floris Faber**  
ACT Alliance EU Representative

# in 2019

actalliance eu

...had  
**1034**   
direct advocacy  
communications  
with policymakers

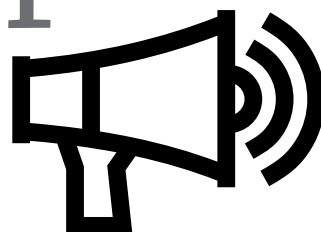
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 met  
them  
**177** times

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contributed to  
**48** POLICY  
MAKING  
PROCESSES

published



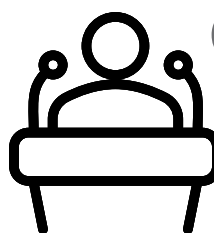
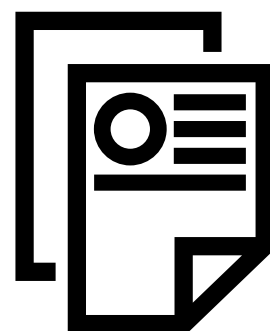
**63**

policy papers,  
briefings etc.

**275**

media  
products

(TWEETS BLOGS  
PRESS RELEASES)



ORGANISED  
CO-HOSTED  
SPOKE AT  
CONTRIBUTED TO

**61** events

# 2019 monthly timeline

Jan	Feb	Mar
<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>  Global Forum for Food and Agriculture, Berlin & ‘Wir haben es satt’ manifestations calling for paradigm shift of food system	<b>GENERAL</b>  Global ACT staff week of meetings in Philippines	<b>GENERAL</b>  PAG meeting in Geneva which finalised the 2019-2022 Strategy
		<b>DEVELOPMENT POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  <b>MIGRATION &amp; DISPLACEMENT</b>  EP vote on NDICI
	<b>DEVELOPMENT POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  Meeting with EC/EEAS task force on post-Cotonou	<b>MIGRATION &amp; DISPLACEMENT</b>  EU/UN Syria conference
<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>  ACT Alliance EU helped a local partner human rights organisation organise an exhibition together with side events in Brussels		<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>  Joint NGO submission: Guidance Note for Standard 10 on Stakeholder Engagement in EIB (including request for exit strategies of investing companies)
	<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>  Official Journal 12/02/2019 Note on the EU initiative of the procedure for temporary withdrawal of trade preferences provided to Cambodia (2019/C 55/07)  IPES Food report launch ‘Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU’	<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>  Middle East Working Group meeting in Brussels
Jan	Feb	Mar

Apr	May	Jun
<b>GENERAL</b>  CONCORD Board meeting	<b>GENERAL</b>  General Assembly & ACT Europe Forum in Brussels	<b>GENERAL</b>  Joint EDD stand and lab debate on Religion & Development
<b>DEVELOPMENT POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  CONCORD Hub3 and MFF meeting including a session on EU-Africa alliance for jobs and growth with the EPSC (EC think tank)	<b>DEVELOPMENT POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  Launch of the ACT Alliance civic space and SDGs report at ACT EU GA	<b>CLIMATE JUSTICE</b>  Joint NGO meeting with the European Commissioner on Climate Action & Energy  Attended and spoke at UNFCCC Bonn intersessionals  Attended and spoke at the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund board meeting  Attended and spoke at EU Conference on International Carbon Markets  Panellist on a press panel
<b>CLIMATE JUSTICE</b>  New Climate Justice Policy Officer represents ACT EU at the Climate Action Network (CAN Europe) General Assembly	<b>HUMANITARIAN POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  ACT EU speakers at VOICE event on localisation	<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>  Joint NGO letter to EU-AU Agricultural Ministers meeting in Rome by European and African CSO and Farmers Organisation  Food Security working group meeting in Berlin
<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>  CONCORD Open letter on vote on CAP reform in European Parliament	<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>  Contribution to EEAS consultation on Myanmar enhanced monitoring under EBA	
Apr	May	Jun

continued...



# 2019 monthly timeline continued

Jul	Aug	Sep
<b>DEVELOPMENT POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  Seminar on CS space and mechanisms in future EU-ACP agreement	<b>HUMANITARIAN POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  New post of Humanitarian Policy and Practice Officer starts	<b>CLIMATE JUSTICE</b>  Joint NGO meeting with the European Commissioner on Climate Action & Energy  Climate Justice policy officer appointed co-coordinator of the ACT Alliance gender and climate working group
<b>MIGRATION &amp; DISPLACEMENT</b>  Search and Rescue letter sent to Justice & Home Affairs ministers		<b>MIGRATION &amp; DISPLACEMENT</b>  Meeting parliamentary advisors working on asylum and migration
<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>  Joint letter to (new) Members of the EP Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development on CAP		<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>  SDG Watch 2019 'Who is Paying the Bill?' launch with CAP Externalities chapter written by ACT EU
		<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>  Middle East Working Group meeting in Brussels
Jul	Aug	Sep

Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>GENERAL</b>  Staff teambuilding and writing training  ACT advocacy strategy meetings in Geneva	<b>GENERAL</b>  PAG & Board meetings in Brussels	<b>DEVELOPMENT POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  EU NGO Human Rights Forum on Environment and Human Rights  Letter to heads of state re MFF numbers and structure
<b>DEVELOPMENT POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  CONCORD MFF seminar and Hub 3 meeting included a session with EEAS negotiator on EU-ACP agreement	<b>DEVELOPMENT POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  Participated in ACT Community of practice on rights and development in Geneva  Launch of CONCORD paper on inequalities	<b>HUMANITARIAN POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  Attended Charter 4 Change meeting in Copenhagen  Hosted first face-to-face Humanitarian Working Group meeting
<b>HUMANITARIAN POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  Co-organisation of Grand Bargain Conference side event on localisation	<b>HUMANITARIAN POLICY &amp; PRACTICE</b>  Visit to ICCO & Kerk in Actie	<b>CLIMATE JUSTICE</b>  Attended COP25 in Madrid  Panellist at UNFCCC Climate Action Studio  Panellist at WFF side-event on loss and damage
<b>CLIMATE JUSTICE</b>  Spoke at 10th meeting of Executive Committee on Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss & Damage  ACT Alliance workshop on climate justice in Geneva  Attended the EU Green Growth Summit	<b>CLIMATE JUSTICE</b>  Published the COP25 Expectations paper  European Investment Bank dinner on climate and energy  Joint NGO meeting with the EU Head of Delegation to the UNFCCC  Panellist on a climate-induced displacement event	<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>  Round table with (INTA) MEPs on Trade & Sustainable Development Chapters in EU Trade Agreements
<b>MIGRATION &amp; DISPLACEMENT</b>  Speaker in UNDP expert session	<b>MIGRATION &amp; DISPLACEMENT</b>  Panellist on a climate-induced displacement event	<b>MIDDLE EAST</b>  EAPPI advocacy visit to Brussels
<b>FOOD SECURITY</b>  Committee on Food Security 46, FAO, Rome, and Civil Society Mechanism		
Oct	Nov	Dec

# Development policy and practice



A nursing union rally in Nhamatanda, Mozambique  
(Gregg Brekke/ACT)



## 2019 key achievements

Following months of intense advocacy, the European Parliament adopted its Report on the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, which aligned with the majority of our recommendations.

We raised the importance of meaningful civil society participation in the future EU-ACP Partnership. We mobilised and encouraged ACP civil society organisations, giving them more visibility in a future partnership agreement between the EU and ACP states.

We disseminated the joint ACT Alliance report *Development Needs Civil Society* amongst key decision-makers, highlighting the importance of civil society space.

2019 was an important year for Development Policy and Practice characterised by influencing those involved in shaping EU's post 2020 international partnership agreements, budgets, instruments and modalities of cooperation.

We found unique opportunities to ensure EU alignment with Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement both during the legislative process to establish a new development cooperation instrument and the negotiations on a new partnership agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries.

As well as opportunities, these changes in process also brought the risk that the EU could distance itself from its Treaty's values, principles and obligations in pursuit of more immediate interests of the Member States. For example, in the areas of migration, security, trade and investments.

In response, our advocacy work concentrated on six key issues that are essential for a fair and inclusive development process but are not at the forefront of the current EU strategic agenda.

We focused on:

- ▶ adherence to a human rights-based approach
- ▶ upgrading the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development
- ▶ fighting all forms of inequalities
- ▶ accountable and responsible partnering with the private sector
- ▶ a people and development centred approach on migration (in collaboration with our Migration and Displacement pillar of work)
- ▶ the protection and promotion of civic space and civil society's role in development

A highlight was the dissemination of The ACT Alliance Report<sup>1</sup> on the importance of civil society space in reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). We publicised amongst EU institutions and received very positive feedback and the interest of several key decision-makers.

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## **Future EU cooperation instruments and budgets**

A major achievement in 2019, where we saw the influence of ACT Alliance EU's work was the adoption of the NDICI report by the former European Parliament in March. We were pleased to see that the NDICI (Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument) report aligned with the majority of our recommendations reflecting the dedicated work of our team. The report was adopted by the former EP and was endorsed by the new parliamentarians as the EP mandate for the negotiations with the Council. This success was the outcome of months of advocacy directed at the development and foreign affairs committees of the European Parliament.

The NDICI regulation is a key piece of legislation which will determine how the almost 90 billion EU budget for neighbourhood, development and international co-operation will be spent in the period 2021 to 2027. Its adoption is a contentious, slow, and far-reaching process. It is part of an overarching legislative process aiming at adopting the 2021 to 2027 EU budget and its implementation tools, the Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF). The European Commission (EC) proposed a draft NDICI

regulation in spring 2018 expecting that the two co-legislators, the EP and the Council, would adopt it before the end of 2019. The regulation integrates 10 pre-existing instruments and includes several new modalities for its governance and implementation.

Our advocacy work on the six key areas above started in spring 2018 and was directed at both co-legislators. Advocacy towards member states was conducted in coordination with ACT Alliance EU members who have direct access to their national decision makers. Both the EP report of March 2019 and the Council's mandate adopted at the end of the year represent a real improvement compared to the original EC proposal on the general objectives, the principles and some of the development targets. The Council's position, however, contains several problematic elements that will need further monitoring and advocacy during the negotiations. The Council is in favour of increasing the scope of action and spending on controversial issues such as migration management or military capacity building. The Council also prefers a flexible approach to respond to new EU priorities and interests which we fear may be detrimental to long-term sustainable development objectives.

The alignment of the EP position with our recommendations and red lines is a positive result of ACT Alliance EU's concerted longstanding advocacy efforts. It is based on common positions developed with the CONCORD MFF leading group and other civil society networks such as CAN Europe, HRDN and VOICE. ACT Alliance EU is a founding member of the CONCORD group and a main resource for policy and process analysis.

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1 [https://actalliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ACT\\_SynthesisReport\\_CivicSpace\\_2019\\_Final\\_WEB.pdf](https://actalliance.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/ACT_SynthesisReport_CivicSpace_2019_Final_WEB.pdf)

ACT Alliance EU is leading the policy and advocacy work on migration and development within CONCORD and together with its members is a strong contributor in influencing policy makers. Apart from migration, the main focus of our advocacy is on the two-track approach on human rights through mainstreaming the Rights Based Approach (RBA) and maintaining an effective human rights and democracy programme. Other areas include improving the accountability and transparency of programming and spending decisions, increasing the spending target for climate action, promoting the role of civil society and the democratic ownership of the development process and keeping the right balance between different modalities of cooperation. We contributed significantly to the EP position on the objectives, conditions and safeguards underpinning the future blending of loans and grants and guarantee fund for private investments (EFSD+).

Independently from the NDICI legislative process, ACT Alliance EU contributed to a letter to the new Commissioner for International Partnerships at an early stage in her tenure on a key component of EU development approaches. The letter summarises our main recommendations on supporting the private sector, leveraging private finance for development and ensuring that civil society is consulted on these matters.

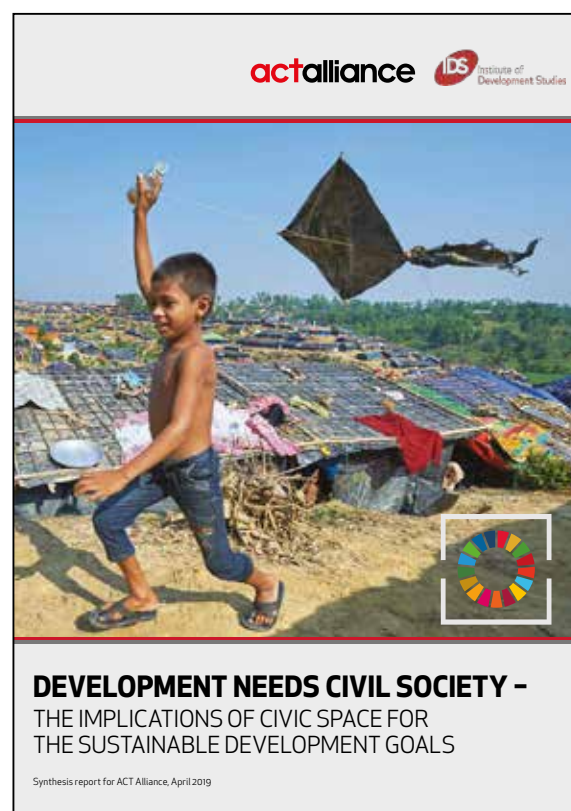
The negotiations between the Parliament and the Council started at the end of October 2019 and will be finalised in the course of 2020. At a higher political level, member states will have to agree on the EU's external action budget as part of the new MFF. ACT Alliance EU will continue to closely monitor and influence these negotiations to make sure that our red lines, supported by the EP, are maintained throughout

the process. We will work to ensure that the outcome provides the tools and budget needed to implement the European Consensus on Development.

## Negotiations on a post-2020 EU-ACP agreement

We succeeded in giving more importance to meaningful CS participation in the future partnership agreement between the EU and the ACP states. ACT Alliance EU made concrete and actionable recommendations on the issue to the EU. Part of our work involved mobilising ACP civil society organisations thus giving them more visibility.

ACT Alliance EU is chairing the CONCORD working group on EU-ACP relations and was responsible for moderating part of a seminar



in July. The seminar allowed us to discuss the recommendations on CS participation and implementation details with DG Development. Based on our inputs, DG Development developed proposals for CS dialogue at regional level and we expect that CSOs will be consulted on these proposals in the beginning of 2020.

Our recommendations also hit their target at Parliament level and received strong support from the new European co-chair of the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly and the new chair of the EP Development Committee. Both parliamentarians included the issue in their questions, resolutions and statements on the future EU-ACP partnership.

In preparation for the commissioners' hearings, we suggested questions on the EU-Africa partnership and shared with interested MEPs more detailed policy recommendations on human development, migration and economic development. We discussed these recommendations with the EC and EEAS negotiators and a number of MS officials based in Brussels. We were able to convince the majority of our EU interlocutors of the necessity to secure and better institutionalise the role of civil society in the EU-ACP and EU-Africa partnerships. Transforming these good intentions into legally binding provisions of the future agreement remains to be secured. There is a risk that late compromises may jeopardise civic space and other issues that matter to us in order to facilitate an agreement on migration cooperation. Together with mainstreaming human rights and democratic accountability and upholding the social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development in all aspects of the agreement, civil society space and role will remain a crucial advocacy issue until the end of the negotiations.

On the ACP side, we were able to encourage CS partners to engage with the ACP negotiators and we established a CONCORD-hosted on-line platform to share information on the EU-ACP negotiation process with ACP partners. The platform's use expanded in 2019 and became a tool for exchange amongst ACP civil society organisations across the African, Caribbean and Pacific regions.

The ACT Alliance EU secretariat worked with the ACT Alliance Nairobi-based secretariat for Africa so that African ACT Alliance members are informed of the process and can contribute in line with their own advocacy objectives. Our collaboration will intensify in 2020 for the last phase of the EU-ACP negotiations and in preparation of the EU-Africa summit.

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## **Civic space, the SDGs and fighting inequalities**

We disseminated the joint ACT Alliance report on the link between civic space and the SDGs amongst EU institutions and the Brussels based CS community. This succeeded in generating renewed interest and priority for the issue amongst EC and EP officials as well as among CONCORD members.

Shrinking civic space in a growing number of countries, including inside the EU, is an issue of concern for many state and non-state actors involved in development. Three ACT Alliance EU members commissioned the study from the Institute for Development Studies of the University of Sussex (IDS). It is the first study to analyse the issue of shrinking civic space through the lens of sustainable development. It establishes the link between civic space and the potential of realising a number of SDGs in

different political and geographical contexts. The evidence provided by the country cases is a powerful advocacy tool to unwrap the issue and convince policy makers from aid donor and recipient countries of the value of an independent civil society.

We presented the report to the head of the Civil Society Unit in DG Development, at the May ACT Alliance EU General Assembly in Brussels. She showed great interest in the approach and in the case studies. Her unit commissioned a good practice report on the enabling environment for Civil Society, and we liaised and shared materials with the consultant preparing the report. ACT Alliance EU also shared the report with the Human Rights unit of DG Development which will take the findings into account when mapping issues and actors and when preparing a call for proposals in support of civil society space

in 2020. The sponsoring members and IDS also presented the report to different national audiences and at a side event of the high-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in New York.

ACT Alliance EU used the IDS study and other members' studies on inequality and social protection when contributing to the CONCORD paper on inequalities; Inequalities unwrapped, an urgent call for systemic change which was presented to EU officials in November 2019. This paper will inform future CONCORD work on inequalities and a sustainable economy.

More general discussions and inputs based on the joint ACT Alliance-IDS report will take place early 2020 with the new leadership in both the EC and the EP.

## Development policy and practice

# 2019 publications and external references

### MFF

*Joint letter from the main EU NGO networks to the EU heads of state on the occasion of the European Council of December 2019*

<https://bit.ly/2x4eM36>

*Joint letter to Commissioner Urpilainen: Private Sector in Development: an input from civil society (November 2019)*

<https://bit.ly/3dbT2Th>

*CONCORD's views and recommendations for the NDICI Trilogue (October 2019)*

<https://bit.ly/3919nai>

*CONCORD press release: European Parliament vote is a win for sustainable development (March 2019)*

<https://bit.ly/2xQGeBT>

### EU-ACP/Africa

*CONCORD thematic briefings on the EU-Africa pillar of the future EU-ACP agreement, on:*

*migration and mobility*

<https://bit.ly/2TZRHrm>

*inclusive sustainable economic development*

<https://bit.ly/2Qm0Ub6>

*human development and dignity*

<https://bit.ly/3a3k3q0>

*Joint briefing from CONCORD and the EU CS Committee on the JAES on mechanisms for Civil Society in the EU-Africa partnership*

<https://bit.ly/2IY324W>

### Civic space

*New ACT Alliance - IDS report on the implications of civic space for the SDGs (May 2019)*

<https://bit.ly/39Y1Nyw>

*CONCORD paper: Inequalities Unwrapped: An urgent call for systemic change (November 2019)*

<https://bit.ly/2TYUv85>



# Humanitarian policy and practice



Destroyed homes remain underwater in Tica, Mozambique following the devastation of Cyclone Idai  
(Gregg Brekke/ACT)

## 2019 key achievements

Our new humanitarian advocacy programme was established in August 2019 with a new staff member to lead on this important area.

We are proud to have developed our first humanitarian multi-year strategy focusing on the often-neglected areas of localisation and the role of faith actors in humanitarian aid.

We have raised Act Alliance EU's profile through the co-organisation and participation in events such as the Grand Bargain conference in Brussels.

2019 has been a year of catalysing efforts to bring together several strands of our Humanitarian Policy and Practice remit. In August, we established our humanitarian advocacy programme with a new staff member to drive the agenda. Central to this agenda is to build on the prominent role of ACT Alliance EU members in the sector. We are using this leverage to call for policy changes that address the global balance of actors in humanitarian response and to raise awareness of our approach to localisation and survivor-and-community-led-response. ACT Alliance EU members' extensive expertise and approaches to aid delivery provide the foundation for our 2019-2022 Humanitarian Policy and Practice strategy.

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### Multi-year strategy

In May, we adopted our first humanitarian multi-year strategy. The strategy focuses on key areas of the global ACT Alliance strategy which are not strongly picked up by other

humanitarian advocacy actors in Brussels, namely: localisation, including Survivor-and-Community-Led-Crisis-Response, diversity of the humanitarian eco-system, the role of faith actors in humanitarian aid.

With the formal creation of the humanitarian policy and practice group and the recruitment in August of a Brussels-based Policy Officer we have translated the strategy into a work plan and concrete actions for each of the three strategic areas.

The ACT Alliance EU office has been leading the process of developing specific positions on localisation in line with current EU developments with the new Commission and Parliament. We have drawn on the existing wealth of evidence and research gathered through ECHO-funded localisation pilots and member studies carried out with the ACT Alliance.

Key areas for development moving forward include the role of local faith and non-faith actors in operationalising the links between

humanitarian-development-peace programming, gender, and effective and equitable partnership principles.

In this vein, the Policy Officer and members have engaged with MEP staff and established regular contact with ECHO's localisation focal point with the aim of exploring strategies and positions for ACT Alliance EU engagement.

ACT Alliance EU is coordinating responses to the current ECHO Framework Partnership Agreement process and has been mapping suitable ways to address the impact of counter terrorism measures. This means engaging with NGO coalitions in Brussels and Geneva to coordinate our response and establishing priorities and challenges with compliance and advocacy focal points of working group organisations.

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## Profile-raising

Our work has given visibility to ACT Alliance EU within NGO membership networks VOICE and ICVA as well as the Charter 4 Change and Grand Bargain localisation workstream fora. This presence has come about through the efforts of the secretariat and members signalling and explaining the value and work of the network to policy makers. We have raised our profile through active engagement and participation at localisation fora conferences. In addition, we co-organised side events with IFRC and ECHO for the Grand Bargain final localisation regional conference in Brussels. The events saw ACT Alliance EU members and our field partners present on different panels alongside civil society allies for locally-led response, raising the profile of ACT Alliance EU and giving visibility to the localisation agenda.

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## Looking ahead to 2020

The ACT Alliance EU secretariat and members have made significant in-roads into identifying cross-cutting policy issues. The Humanitarian Policy and Practice group brings enormous potential in this regard, advocating for the role of local actors in climate change adaptation and resilience, and evidencing the impact of shrinking civil society space.

2020 will be a year to leverage the progress made in the four short months of 2019. Based on this valuable groundwork we will prioritise mainstreaming localisation efforts into specific policy areas and bring the discussion to country level. ACT Alliance EU will seek to crystallise our added value, as a network and utilise our experience of working with local faith actors in faith sensitive humanitarian action.

## Humanitarian policy and practice

# 2019 publications and external references

### Localisation

*Accelerating Localisation Through Partnerships documentation, led by Christian Aid:*

*Pathways to Localisation: Locally-led Humanitarian Response*

<https://bit.ly/3a6eK9C>

*Accelerating localisation research summary — Global*

<https://bit.ly/393QnHX>

*Communique from the Charter For Change annual meeting, 10–11 December 2019*

<https://bit.ly/3daSkG7>

### Triple nexus and the role of local faith actors

*ALNAP reporting on building flexibility into the triple nexus*

<https://bit.ly/2Wonvb2>

*DanChurchAid, JLI and ACT Alliance report on the triple nexus and local faith actors in South Sudan*

<https://bit.ly/2WoGuC4>





Assumane Agy, a survivor of Cyclone Idai  
(Simon Chambers/ACT)

# Climate justice



Prayer vigil at COP25  
(Simon Chambers/ACT)



## 2019 key achievements

We published a COP25 expectations paper which increased engagement including being nominated to speak at the UNFCCC Climate Action Studio.

We helped to secure strong language on finance to address loss and damage and human rights in the European Parliament resolution for COP25.

We were nominated by our peers to attend the Executive Committee of the UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss and Damage meeting where we shared policy recommendations for the EU.

ACT Alliance EU has had a successful working year on climate justice, specifically on climate resilience and climate finance. In 2019, the climate justice work focused on strengthening the EU's climate policy positions and the role that it plays in international climate processes, such as the UNFCCC climate negotiations and the UN Secretary General's climate summit. This was done through policy, advocacy and media activities, as well as through joint work with members of the ACT Alliance EU climate justice working group. Key successes include the publication of a COP25 expectations paper which helped to further advocacy goals, increased engagement in relevant international climate fora, and scaled-up communication, media and outreach work, including being nominated to speak at the UNFCCC Climate Action Studio.

### Advocacy at UNCCC

The most important annual event on climate change policy is the UN Climate Change Conference, known as COP ('Conference of the Parties' [to the UNFCCC]). This is a priority for ACT Alliance EU. During COP, we advocate for sustainable, community-led solutions as part of the global ACT Alliance delegation, alongside members of the ACT Alliance EU network. Accordingly, ahead of a COP, both the Council of the EU and the European Parliament develop and publish their positions.

ACT Alliance EU shared recommendations with members of all these institutions with a view to ensuring that the EU actively pursued climate justice during the 2019 COP (COP25) negotiations. In particular, ensuring that the needs of developing countries were being addressed through finance and capacity as well as ensuring that human rights and gender-responsive approaches were mainstreamed across all on-going negotiations at COP25.



ACT, the Lutheran World Federation, and the World Council of Churches led a stunt at COP25 showing the imbalance between climate change financing for mitigation, adaptation, and loss & damage. (Simon Chambers/ACT)

Outreach and engagement with new and returning Members of European Parliament and the European Parliament political group advisors on the European Parliament COP25 Resolution,<sup>1</sup> helped to secure strong language on finance to address loss and damage, language on upholding human rights, and on the UNFCCC Gender Action Plan, among other points. We received positive feedback from European Parliament on this engagement and were drawn into subsequent work with European Parliament on climate justice.

We were less successful when engaging with the Council of the EU. Whilst not significantly weakened, the original text did not have many references to climate justice. In response, we advocated for a stronger EU position on loss and damage and climate finance within this text. At the time, many EU Member States were focused on debating what the EU's new long-term goal should be and there was little space given to debating climate justice elements. It will be important for ACT Alliance EU to strengthen its outreach to the bodies relevant for the Council of the EU in 2020 and to drive climate justice up the policy agenda.

Overall, ACT Alliance EU was pleased to see that the EU delegation to the UNFCCC actively promoted the need for human rights and gender-responsive language to underpin the negotiations at COP25.

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## Specialists in our field

ACT Alliance EU attended several UN meetings in 2019 by train as part of the ACT Alliance delegation. These include the 2019 UN climate change conference (COP25), the mid-year climate change meeting (UNFCCC inter-sessional) and the Adaptation Fund board meeting.

Our main goal was to use these opportunities to ensure that the EU was upholding climate justice. Chiefly, to persuade the EU to ally itself with developing countries' positions, and to encourage the EU to engage in climate diplomacy with other G20 countries.

Significantly, in October 2019 ACT Alliance EU was nominated to attend the Executive Committee of the UNFCCC Warsaw International Mechanism on Loss &

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<sup>1</sup> European Parliament COP Resolutions are not binding on the EU delegation to the UNFCCC's negotiating team. They are an expression of European Parliament's position.

Damage (WIM) meeting. This was a valuable opportunity for ACT Alliance EU to share policy recommendations for the EU on loss and damage, in an expert international space, alongside ACT Alliance and ACT Alliance EU members. This nomination represented recognition of ACT Alliance EU's work by peers. It was also an opportunity to engage with the WIM's Taskforce on Displacement, which works to address climate induced displacement and migration.

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## Communications, media and outreach

2019 saw a substantial rise in media coverage of climate change.<sup>2</sup> We were asked to provide media briefings, and spoke on press panels on issues that are typically less well covered e.g. loss and damage, liability and compensation of climate change, technical expert meetings etc. This led to ACT Alliance EU being quoted by the media.

ACT Alliance EU was also fortunate to receive a nomination to speak at the UNFCCC Climate Action Studio during COP25; as well as being invited to speak on a panel during COP25 that included country negotiators and other esteemed experts. This was a significant opportunity for ACT Alliance EU to share its position with a crowd of influencers, including negotiators, and increased the potential for ACT's messages to be amplified by members of different constituencies. It also helped establish new working relationships with other policy experts and negotiators.

ACT Alliance EU published a series of blogs and press releases, all of which contributed to strengthening our presence within the EU media and to spread our messages more widely within the EU policy sphere.

2019 was a year when the organisation established useful working relationships with new and returning members of the EU institutions and contributed successfully to the EU policy agenda. We successfully strengthened our reputation as a faith-based organisation, with expertise on climate justice.

Going into 2020, the successes of 2019 should help to further goals on scaling-up efforts to address loss and damage, boosting climate finance contributions and enhancing the quality of EU-supported activities tasked with tackling climate change in developing countries.

ACT stunt at COP25  
(Simon Chambers/ACT)




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<sup>2</sup> Media Matters, 2020. Climate coverage is improving, but challenges abound heading into 2020. Available at: <https://www.mediamatters.org/broadcast-networks/climate-journalism-had-breakout-year-2019-what-will-2020-bring>

# 2019 publications and external references

## Publications

*COP25 Expectations Paper: How can the EU ensure that COP25 results in Climate Just outcomes?*

<https://bit.ly/2wgtq7f>

## Letters

*Letter to EU ministers on climate and environmental action in development funding*

<https://bit.ly/3dj8zB0>

*European stakeholders call for immediate action in face of climate emergency*

<https://bit.ly/2UKW1QG>

## Documents we signed up to

*Fossil free politics statement*

<https://bit.ly/2IXxZ96>

*Green New Deal for Europe*

<https://bit.ly/33t1o4L>

## Press releases

*UN Climate Talks miss the Call to Action and end without Climate Justice*

<https://bit.ly/3a2d80e>

*COP25 Press Release: How Can the EU Ensure that COP25 Results in Climate Just Outcomes?*

<https://bit.ly/3a0iCZD>

*EU takes a step toward taking bold action on climate change*

<https://bit.ly/2xIxZYg>

*Vulnerable, developing countries need the European Green Deal to outline bold action, to help reduce the risks of loss and damage*

<https://bit.ly/33tCKB2>

*Press Release: Ambition & Equity must frame European Summit*

<https://bit.ly/2w9cLTc>

*UN Climate Action Summit: We need a faster pace of Action in Europe*

<https://bit.ly/2Qne2Nm>

*SB50: A missed opportunity to protect the most vulnerable from climate-induced loss and damage*

<https://bit.ly/2Wu5ND3>

*UN climate talks conclude*

<https://bit.ly/2QoNoUg>

*Our new European Parliament must care for Creation*

<https://bit.ly/2QrUY0h>

*Civil society stands in solidarity with 'Fridays For Future' global student strikes*

<https://bit.ly/2WmzaXH>

## Media quotes

*Climate Liability News: UN Climate Talks Must Tackle Issues of Climate Justice, Damage to Poorer Countries, Experts Say*

<https://bit.ly/33t2DRt>

*La Ruta: Nations square off on loss and damage at COP25*

<https://bit.ly/2TWNjJv>

*Youth Press Agency*

<https://bit.ly/3905u5x>

*Al Wihda: People promise to take to the streets as world leaders leave UN climate talks with no plan for climate crisis*

<https://bit.ly/2U0edAn>

*EU Today: COP25 : a profound disconnect between people and politicians on the climate emergency*

<https://bit.ly/2TYbaIG>

## Blogs

*COP25: How can the WIM be made fit for purpose?*

<https://bit.ly/2QoOsre>

*The urgent need for finance for climate-induced loss and damage*

<https://bit.ly/33z2c8c>

## UNFCCC Climate Action Studio

*COP25, Ms. Leia Achampong, ACT Alliance EU*

<https://bit.ly/2vtO2bF>

## Press panel

*Updates from week one of the Bonn climate meeting: uneven progress on technical issues — Readout*

<https://bit.ly/2x1XMun>







# Migration and displacement



Migrant caravan  
(Sean Hawkey)

## 2019 key achievements

We improved the migration language of the NDICI of the future MFF.

Our advocacy work was effective in changing the EBCGA (Frontex) Regulation for the better.

We have built strong relationships with key development NGOs and became a leading actor in the EU-ACP migration discussion.

2019 was an eventful and successful year for influencing policy processes related to migration and displacement. Despite the generally negative narrative, the topic still receives much attention with member states putting significant pressure on the EU to reform its respective internal and external policies.

ACT Alliance EU had successes, among others, in improving the migration language of key policy making processes. The European Parliament's and Council's negotiating mandates on the NDICI, the proposed external action instrument of the 2021-2027 EU budget, the MFF. The NDICI will most likely have 10% of its budget allocated to migration related activities making it an important focus of our attention.

We became the leading agency guiding civil society's advocacy around the EU-ACP (post Cotonou) negotiations related to migration.

Our advocacy work was also effective in changing the recently adopted recast European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA — formerly Frontex) regulation for the better.

ACT Alliance EU engaged deeply in the search and rescue (SAR) debate. Thanks to effective cooperation and coordinated advocacy with members, we influenced policy makers on the issue of saving lives at sea.

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### Influencing language

On NDICI, from a human rights and sustainable development perspective, we significantly improved the language included in the final report of the European Parliament compared to the original proposal of the European Commission (EC). We achieved this by writing amendments and proposing alternative text as well as meeting with rapporteurs and other decision makers in the EP. ACT Alliance EU had a direct, positive impact on the final report which was adopted before the spring elections. We built solid connections in the permanent staff of the EP to ensure continuity for our messaging and managed to keep a close eye on the file post-EP elections. The text of the Council, although problematic, found a compromise



around migration that takes human rights as a baseline. Our content-driven, coordinated lobby work with members and colleagues towards permanent representations and the Presidency proved effective.

Due to our special focus on the external dimensions of EU migration policy, our close cooperation with ACT Alliance's Nairobi office and Geneva secretariat, we became the voice of development NGOs in Brussels on migration in the post-Cotonou, EU-ACP Agreement. Early in the process, we wrote a paper to guide advocacy and proposed recommendations for the agreement. Following on from that, numerous

meetings made it possible for civil society to influence the negotiators. Although the text is not yet final and there are controversial proposals on the table, ACT Alliance EU is strong and visible among the institutions and CSOs, with access and information that contributes positively to the conversation. We are also one of few actors in Brussels focusing on the Migration and Mobility strategic priority of the future EU-ACP Agreement. This is one of the most important topics for the European Union.

We worked hard before and during the negotiations on removing dangerous and legally questionable elements from the future EBCGA Regulation. The EBCGA is the EU's agency working at the borders and assisting among others with the returns of third country nationals. EBCGA's proposed mandate would have potentially put people on the move at further risk of facing human rights violations. Thanks to our close relationship with MEPs and their offices, and due to the time pressure to finalize the negotiations before the elections, ACT Alliance EU together with other organisations successfully kept the mandate of the new Frontex limited to avoid the possibility of human rights violations extraterritorially. This work is crucial to avoid a dangerous precedent that can lead to expanded mandates of EU agencies without the proper framework for complaints.

We worked closely with the legal service of the European Parliament and some like-minded Member States in getting proper impact assessments to accompany other proposals of the Common European Asylum System and beyond. Our aim was to make sure that no proposal reached the trialogue phase (see glossary) that would lower the standards for



protection and treatment of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. With that, we slowed down the policy making process on controversial proposals like the recast Returns Directive or the proposed Asylum Procedures Regulation.

ACT Alliance EU's effective advocacy related to search and rescue put pressure on decision makers to solve the crisis of the Central Mediterranean and contributed to the Valletta Declaration on temporary arrangements for search and rescue and relocation of boat refugees. We drafted a letter to the ministers of interior (Justice and Home Affairs Council) in the summer, signed by other Christian NGOs and organisations which also reached the European Commission and Parliament. We contributed to parliamentary hearings, met the Commission (DG HOME) on the issue and spoke to Member States numerous times before and after the 2019 Valletta Declaration. The crisis is not yet solved and civic space for NGOs showing solidarity with refugees is shrinking, but there is a lot of attention and initiatives to tackle the deadly route of the Central Mediterranean.

## Building relationships

2019 meant coalition building and cooperation for ACT Alliance EU's migration and displacement work. The work on NDICI and the ACP both draw a group of development NGOs together via CONCORD where we bring among others the migration expertise and gain access, visibility and high credibility with institutions and partners. The work on the asylum-related files also means relationship building with members of the European Platform on Asylum and Migration (EPAM) where we are regarded as a valuable expert on the external dimensions of EU asylum and migration, and externalization policy.

The number of personal meetings and invitations to events is testament to our work building relationships with new MEPs and the new Commission following the elections. Thanks to this, ACT Alliance EU is regarded as a credible organisation in the migration discussion, allowing us to inform our members and bring evidence and the importance of human rights into the policy making processes of the EU.

## Migration and displacement

# 2019 publications and external references

*Recommendations on the NDICI migration spending target*

<https://bit.ly/3b4Fd7j>

*CONCORD briefing on migration and mobility*

<https://bit.ly/2U9wHwU>

*Civil Society demands support for Search & Rescue operations on the Mediterranean*

<https://bit.ly/2Qo2s4m>

*Letter to Ministers of Justice and Home Affairs on European search and rescue mission*

<https://bit.ly/2WpxaOq>

*Comments on the European Commission's proposal for a recast of the Return Directive*

<https://bit.ly/33t4xl5>

*ACT Alliance statement to Brussels III, Syria conference*

<https://actalliance.eu/news-post/act-issues-statement-to-brussels-iii-conference/>

# Food security



NAAS – 1st National Agroecology Actors' Symposium,  
Kampala, 30-31 May 2019, report posted by PELUM Uganda



## 2019 key achievements

The EU launched a formal investigation into land rights violation and restitution under its trade regime 'Everything But Arms' in Cambodia. This is a result of consistently highlighting human and land rights violations and building CSO coalition over a decade.

Joint efforts by the global food justice movement and our EU advocacy resulted in the new work stream on Agroecology endorsed by the FAO. This includes a new pillar on agency, i.e. the empowerment and the dignity of woman farmers and rural communities at the centre of the food systems agenda.

Our article on CAP externalities, published in SDG Watch 2019, 'Who is paying the bill?', was received positively in New York and Brussels. It highlighted how the mix of EU agricultural and trade policies impacts on food security and local markets in developing countries.

It was a busy year for the Food Security pillar of ACT Alliance EU. We were successful in influencing the area of human rights and trade and highlighting the gaps in human rights safeguards within Development Financing. The EU's support for the start of the policy convergence process for the FAO on agroecology was a key success for ACT Alliance EU this year and is the result of many years of advocacy. We continued to use our expertise regarding the CAP externalities featured in the SDG Watch launched in New York and Brussels. This highlighted how the mix of EU agricultural and trade policies impacts on food security and local markets of smallholders in developing countries.

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### Formal investigation

In early 2019, the EU launched a formal investigation into serious and systematic human rights violations. This involved land rights violations and land restitution in the sugar sector under the EU trade regime 'Everything but Arms' and affected communities and their land titles in four different provinces in Cambodia. The investigation was the result of a concerted campaign of European and Cambodian CSOs including ACT Alliance EU agencies and their partners. We joined forces in a coalition that called for the investigation of perverse incentives under EU trade deals and the use of EU leverage to redress the situation. A final decision on trade measures is due in early 2020.

The issue of human rights and trade is gaining increasing momentum and is subject to EP resolutions and discussions in the EP international trade committee. Significantly, ACT Alliance EU were invited to be an active member of the EU Trade Expert Group, building on member agency trade work and putting human and land rights more firmly on the agenda of EU Trade Commission. Our invitation to participate is a result of consistently building expertise and relationships in this space over several years.

ACT Alliance EU was instrumental in convening a space for CSOs and academics to exchange ideas on the functioning of Domestic Advisory Groups in EU trade agreements. A critical assessment of the EU's approaches is now available on the Warwick University website<sup>1</sup> and was presented in a meeting with MEPs from EP Trade Committee and EP Human Rights Committee. Securing land rights are key to current EU trade negotiations with Indonesia and Mercosur as well as to the revision of unilateral EU trade preferences schemes — the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) in 2020 and 2021. Importantly, this has been put on the agenda of MEPs and member states by the GSP Platform, a joint NGO group which advocates for the review of GSP and of which ACT Alliance EU is a founding member.

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## **Development finance institutions**

ACT Alliance EU advocacy efforts on safeguarding land rights is ongoing towards the European Investment Bank and Development

Finance Institutions. We are concerned with promoting free prior and informed consent for local rural communities' and women's land rights. A specific ACT Alliance EU advocacy angle is to provide evidence on the lack of and need for an exit strategy that must be in place by an investor company before it decides to leave a country. This is important, particularly in conflict affected countries, to ensure that companies do not leave a country with devastated local communities and a polluted landscape.

NGOs have joined forces to call for effective safeguards and binding due diligence on human rights and business in EU development finance. We are highlighting the shortcomings of current instruments within development finance institutions and focusing on increasing the effectiveness of standards to protect human and land rights that currently fall short. Their joint request is for a dedicated session to discuss the need for comprehensive human rights approach at the next annual EIB meeting in February 2020. This is of importance given the EIB's qualification to become the future EU development bank.

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## **Agroecology and the FAO**

An important milestone of the EU28 in 2019 was endorsing the start of the policy convergence process on the findings of the report produced by the High-Level Panel of Experts for Food Security and Nutrition. This report proposes the human 'agency' of people and farmers as a new pillar of work which is a significant milestone for ACT Alliance EU and our members by putting

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<sup>1</sup> <https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/law/research/centres/chrp/governance/resources>

empowerment and dignity of women farmers and rural communities back on the agenda.

The ACT Alliance EU working group was an active participant at the October 2019 FAO Committee on Food Security where the international Civil Society Mechanism met. Together with CONCORD members, we used working structures to set up focused NGO groups. ACT Alliance EU, together with a small number of development NGOs, met on a regular basis with DG DEVCO to discuss agroecological approaches in the European African partnership on agriculture. The strong support for this approach in the Civil Society Mechanism at UN FAO level is boosting and reinforcing this EU advocacy, opening up new pathways for support and engagement.

## Africa-Europe partnership on agriculture

ACT Alliance EU together with European and African CSO and Farmers Organisations, wrote an open letter to EU and AU agricultural ministers to account for and include agroecological approaches in the Action Agenda of the African European partnership on agriculture, adopted by the EU-AU Agricultural Ministerial Declaration in June 2019.

The letter refers to the final report of the Task Force on Rural Africa led by DG Agriculture and DG Development. Our ongoing advocacy builds on 'Knowledge Hubs' set up under the bilateral German cooperation that can become key stepping-stones to further EU support on agroecology in development finance. ACT Alliance EU facilitated an African partner at the EU Agricultural Outlook Conference to present the EOA-I — the Ecological Organic Agriculture

Initiative — endorsed by the African Union Commission — as key actor in the agricultural partnership.

## CAP legislation and policy coherence for development

In February 2019, the EP Development Committee adopted three reports on CAP legislation. The three Opinions elaborate on the EU's international responsibility of CAP and affirm the 'do-no-harm' approach. They make the case for:

- ▶ binding provisions on policy coherence for development
- ▶ systematic monitoring of CAP impact on small-scale farmers in developing countries
- ▶ support to increase EU leguminous cultivation and reduce EU protein import
- ▶ eliminating trade distorting Voluntary Coupled Support

These reports suggest amendments which ACT Alliance EU supports to be tabled as legal provisions in CAP legislation in the EP Committee on Agriculture or plenary vote. The latter is now expected in spring or early summer 2020.

ACT Alliance EU provided its expertise on the CAP impact on developing countries to these reports and has been leading on the Concord positioning on CAP matters. ACT Alliance EU published an article on CAP externalities in the first SDG Watch 2019 entitled 'Who is paying the bill?' which focused on EU policies. The article was launched in New York in June and in September in Brussels. It highlighted how

the mix of EU agricultural and trade policies impacts on food security and local markets of smallholders in developing countries. Interested parties received the article positively.

## EU Food Policy Coalition

This is a new large CSO coalition at a Brussels EU level which focuses on sustainable food systems. It aims to have a major impact on the new Green Deal (2020) and the EU Common Agricultural

Policy to undergo a shift towards a common food policy which addresses food systems. Our specific contribution was around agricultural trade chapters in the IPES (International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems) Common Food Policy 2019 report. ACT Alliance EU is providing active contributions to the EU Food Policy Coalition work on trade and is an active member of the task force on agroecology and follows the task force on farm-to-fork. Farm-to-Fork is an initiative under the Green Deal looking at sustainable food throughout the whole value chain.

## Food security

# 2019 publications and external references

### Publications

ACT EU Article on CAP externalities, "Putting small-scale farmers in the Global South at risk" in SDG Watch (2019) Who is paying the bill?

<https://bit.ly/2R9KpPF>

IPES FOOD Towards a Common Food Policy for the EU

<https://bit.ly/2yAHMAc>

### Letters

Letter to MEPs on CAP reform, March 2019

<https://bit.ly/2RdlwCT>

Letter to new MEPs on CAP reform, July 2019

<https://bit.ly/2UKqAAX>

Letter to Commission President on integrated EU food policy, July 2019

<https://bit.ly/2Xa9cXR>

Letter to VP Timmermans on Farm to Fork Strategy, December 2019

<https://bit.ly/34ck2hk>

Reaction to Report by Task Force Rural Africa, June 2019

<https://bit.ly/2V7ePDH>

Joint letter, 100 Days of Bolsonaro, April 2019

<https://bit.ly/2V43VhN>

340+, Joint call on EU trade negotiations with Brazil, June, October 2019

<https://bit.ly/2UHKFwr>

### Advisory functions

Group of Experts on EU Trade Agreements

<https://bit.ly/2RsGKgn>

EU-CARIFORUM EPA Consultative Committee

<https://bit.ly/2yBaktn>

Technical Platform on Organics, Steering Group on Agricultural Research (SRIA 2019)

<https://bit.ly/2VgMxXt>

Civil Society Group on International aspects of agriculture

<https://bit.ly/39IovtA>

### Co-hosting initiatives

The GSP Platform

<https://bit.ly/2JLphLv>

Trade and Sustainable Development Group

<https://bit.ly/2UliirwD>

### Other

Interview on EU and global sustainable food systems, "Gott und die Welt", rbb Kultur

<https://bit.ly/34aKzfb>

Concord Talking Development Podcast Ep. 6: The world is interconnected, so are EU policies

<https://bit.ly/2JEKJCb>





**This land outside Maputo provides a snapshot of Africa's agricultural choices: industrial or small scale. The photograph was taken for the 2013 report 'The next breadbasket'.  
(National Geographic / Robin Hammond)**



# Middle East



Demolition of Palestinian structures in the Southern Hebron Hills  
(BTselem)

## 2019 key achievements

We facilitated successful exposure to the situation on the ground in Israel and Palestine with European policy makers and established strong relations with the new European Parliament.

We contributed to reviving a policy discussion on issues such as the destruction of humanitarian aid in the West Bank and the impact of US policy change.

Together with our member agencies we secured a letter signed by 30 parliamentarians in support of Issa Amro, a prominent Palestinian human rights defender.

2019 was a difficult and demanding year for ACT Alliance EU's policy work regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the situation on the ground has been deteriorating the EU has been idle in moving ahead with concrete steps. However, the conflict remains on the agenda in Brussels and EU member states, which provides opportunities to advance EU policy response.

2019 was a year of European elections. While this resulted in the loss of many former ACT Alliance EU allies, it also presented an opportunity to build new relations and work towards common goals. In this regard, ACT Alliance EU put substantial effort into mapping and navigating the new European Parliament, and actively engaged in the process of the European Parliament's scrutiny of the Commissioners-designate.

Based on the mapping of the new EP, ACT Alliance EU successfully exposed new parliamentarians and advisors to the human rights and IHL situation in Israel-Palestine

through on the ground experience and the facilitation of meetings with Israeli and Palestinian human rights defenders. Overall, more than 80 MEPs, advisors and EU decision makers were engaged.

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### Preventing forcible transfers and annexation

ACT Alliance EU continued to follow the situation of the communities in Area C — in particular Khan al-Ahmar and other communities in the East Jerusalem periphery. We updated EU decision-makers on developments and the increasingly worsening situation on the ground.

In terms of resulting policy-linked opportunities, we were able to bring new impetus to a conversation in several EU institutions regarding humanitarian aid in the West Bank and its destruction/confiscation by the Israeli



Palestinians waiting at Qalandiya checkpoint (EAPPI)

authorities. Protection of humanitarian access to Area C is vital especially in the face of increasing steps towards annexation by the Israeli authorities which has raised concerns in the EU.

ACT Alliance EU assessed EU policy and the EU response to the destruction and confiscation of humanitarian aid. We regularly shared updates and recommendations with key EU officials and will continue to monitor developments in the next year.

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## **Strengthening support for international law**

ACT Alliance EU contributed to the agenda-setting on the situation in the Occupied

Palestinian territories and the Middle East Peace Process — not least in light of US policy — and equipped MEPs to engage in constructive discussion on the matter. This resulted in the development of key principled positions including on the issue of destruction of humanitarian aid in the West Bank, EU's trade with Israeli settlements considered illegal under international law and the impact of US policy change on the ground. In the upcoming year, ACT Alliance EU will continue monitoring emerging policy options.

Together with our Working Group members we have shaped the EU and Member States' understanding of detrimental US policy shifts regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through a number of meetings with decision makers.



In effect, such work has helped consolidate the EU's common position — both privately and in public — on the conflict. Strengthening the EU's support for international law is an important achievement particularly in view of the Middle East Plan of the current US Administration and the US policy shifts away from international law and key UN resolutions.

## Countering shrinking space

In order to counter shrinking space for civil society and to protect the work of human rights defenders and civil society, ACT Alliance EU focused on gaining public support and recognition of their work amongst EU policymakers. In this regard, ACT Alliance EU together with its member agencies have secured a letter signed by 30 parliamentarians from the European and national parliaments supporting Issa Amro, a prominent Palestinian human rights defender. Amro was facing charges by the Palestinian Authority for his activism, which was a manifestation of the Authority's deteriorating human rights track record. In order

to strengthen democratic legitimacy in Palestine, ACT Alliance EU strongly supports holding Palestinian elections in the nearest future.

In addition, ACT Alliance EU helped a local partner human rights organisation organise an exhibition together with side events in Brussels, which led to significant outreach with key messaging and support from key policymakers. The event attracted over 500 MEPs, advisors, EU policy makers and general public, and contributed significantly to promoting the legitimacy of local human rights defenders as well as to raising awareness in the EP of the situation in the Occupied Palestinian territories.

2019 witnessed increasing pressure on Israeli and Palestinian civil society organisations as well as their European donors. This pressure included defamation and legal action.

In light of this, the work of ACT Alliance EU and its agencies on gaining public support for and recognition of local partners' human rights work contributes to their protection. This will continue to be an essential element in the coming year.

## Middle East

# 2019 publications and external references

### Internal

*Joint letter to HR/VP Mogherini and the EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs on the US plan for the Middle East*

<https://bit.ly/3atyaop>

### External

*Europe must stand by the two-state solution for Israel and Palestine*

<https://bit.ly/2xehK59>

*Declaration by the High Representative on behalf of the EU on the Golan Heights*

<https://bit.ly/39qAJHR>

<https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/newsroom/news/kofler-israel-human-rights-watch-director/2265044>

<https://bit.ly/2VQkLTI>

*Court of Justice of EU Judgement on Labeling of Foodstuffs from Settlements*

<https://bit.ly/2wsCXYC>

*Speech by Federica Mogherini at the European Parliament plenary debate on the situation in Israel and Palestine, including the settlements*

<https://bit.ly/39r7apC>

# 2019 finances

Membership contributions are our main source of income. We are most grateful to all our members for their continued financial support which is both generous and sustained.

The 2019 accounts were audited by DGST and partners, Reviseurs d'entreprise of Brussels, Belgium.

	2019 €	2018 €
<b>Income</b>		
Member contributions	837 806	742 231
Other income	7 200	7 204
Unspent funds deferred from previous year		20 189
<b>Total income</b>	<b>845 006</b>	<b>769 624</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Human resources	598 433	640 954
Office costs	81 508	74 517
Communications	5 740	7 705
Travel & meetings costs	33 943	45 549
Advocacy activities	10 842	15 975
Administrative & other costs	27 684	34 354
<b>Total expenses</b>	<b>758 150</b>	<b>819 054</b>
<b>Net surplus/(loss) for the year</b>	<b>86 856</b>	<b>(49 430)</b>
Reserves at 1 January	332 657	382 087
Reserves at 31 December	<b>419 513</b>	<b>332 657</b>

# Board, secretariat and advisory groups

## Board and general assembly

### *Board membership from June 2019*

**Bread for the World** represented by Cornelia Füllkrug-Weitzel, Chair

**Diakonie Austria** represented by Michael Bubik, Treasurer

**Bread for All** represented by Bernard DuPasquier, member

**Finn Church Aid** represented by Katri Suomi, member

**ACT Alliance** represented by Thorsten Göbel, observer

### *Departures from the Board*

**DanChurchAid** represented by Birgitte Qvist-Sørensen — mandate ended May 2019

### *Observers*

Permanent observer organisations to ACT Alliance EU are the **World Council of Churches**, the **Lutheran World Federation**, and the **ACT Alliance**.

## Advisory groups

Policy and Advocacy Group (PAG) met online in February 2019 and in person in March 2019 (Geneva) and November 2019 (Brussels).

Miges Baumann (BfA) and Dennis Kjeldsen (DCA) were the co-chairs.

## Secretariat and staff

At the end of 2019, the secretariat was composed of the following staff:

**Floris Faber** Act Alliance EU Representative

**Susie Wilkinson** Office Manager

**Karine Sohet** Senior Policy Officer — EU Development Policy & Practice

**Ruth Watson** Policy Officer — EU Humanitarian Policy & Practice

**Leia Achampong** Policy Officer — Climate Justice

**Karin Ulmer** Senior Policy Officer — Food Security

**Alexandra Gerasimčíková** Adviser — Middle East

**Fanni Bihari** Policy Officer — Migration & Displacement

## Abbreviations

<b>ACP</b>	Africa, Caribbean and Pacific
<b>CAN</b>	Climate Action Network
<b>CAP</b>	Common Agricultural Policy
<b>CONCORD</b>	European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development
<b>CS</b>	Civil Society
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organisations
<b>EBA</b>	Everything but Arms
<b>EC</b>	European Commission
<b>EFSD</b>	European Fund for Sustainable Development
<b>EIB</b>	European Investment Bank
<b>EOI-I</b>	Ecological Organic Agriculture Initiative
<b>EP</b>	European Parliament
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organisation
<b>FPC</b>	Food Policy Coalition
<b>GSP</b>	Generalised System of Preferences
<b>HRDN</b>	Human Rights and Democracy Network
<b>IDS</b>	Institute for Development Studies
<b>IPES</b>	International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems
<b>ICVA</b>	International Council of Voluntary Agencies
<b>MFF</b>	Multi-annual Financial Framework
<b>NDICI</b>	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
<b>RBA</b>	Rights Based Approach
<b>SDGs</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>UNFCCC</b>	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
<b>VOICE</b>	Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies



# Glossary of terms

## European Fund for Sustainable Development

A €4.6 billion European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD) was established for the period 2018-2020 to make use of a new generation of financial instruments, such as guarantees, risk sharing instruments, as well as the blending of grants and loans for sustainable development projects. By offering an EFSD guarantee, the EC aims at encouraging investors to engage in Africa and the EU Neighbourhood, where they would not usually go.

## Trialogue (or *trilogue* in the French spelling)

The EU's policy making process is the so-called co-legislation or co-decision process, where the European Commission makes a proposal and the two co-legislators, the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union ('the Council') adopt their own position and then negotiate. These negotiations with the co-legislators and the EC present are called trialogues. The European Commission is represented by the Commissioner and the drafting team, the Parliament sends chairs of the respective committees and the rapporteurs (parliamentarians responsible for the file) while the Council is represented by the Presidency.

## Farm to Fork

Strategy under the European Green Deal on sustainable agriculture along the whole value chain

## GSP

Generalised System of Preferences, an EU unilateral non-reciprocal market access offer to developing countries (includes GSP, GSP plus, and EBA)

## VOICE

VOICE stands for Voluntary Organisations in Cooperation in Emergencies. It is an NGO network headquartered in Brussels promoting effective humanitarian aid. VOICE is the main NGO interlocutor with the European Union on emergency aid and disaster risk reduction, and it promotes the values of its 85 member organisations. ACT Alliance EU are active members.

## ICVA

ICVA stands for International Council of Voluntary Agencies. It is a global network of NGOs headquartered in Geneva. Their mission is to make humanitarian action more principled and effective by working collectively and independently to influence policy and practice. ACT Alliance are active members.

## CONCORD

CONCORD is the European NGO Confederation for Relief and Development and Advocacy Network. ACT Alliance EU are founding members.



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