

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001005/25
to the Commission**

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(7 March 2025)

Subject: Impact of the Commission's plan to consolidate development offices in EU delegations in 18 hubs and close 80 offices

Euronews reports that the Directorate-General for International Partnerships is planning to cut more than 80% of its hubs worldwide, closing 80 offices.

Such a change will impact the EU's development cooperation, foreign policy and partnerships long-term, considering that the EU is a major donor globally. This plan would diminish the EU's global role and leave a vacuum for China and Russia to fill, which is counterproductive to the aims of the Global Gateway initiative.

A reduced presence means diminished local connections and less knowledge and understanding of local contexts, priorities and opportunities. It erodes the trust of communities and partner countries. All these elements are vital for ensuring the efficiency, effectiveness and positive impact of both development work and trade as well as the promotion of business.

1. In what ways is the current set-up in EU delegations not fit to deliver on the Global Gateway?
2. What parameters were used to determine that the plan will increase efficiency, serve the objectives of the Global Gateway initiative, ensure delivery on the ultimate objective of EU development aid, to eradicate poverty, and what other options were considered?
3. How were the hubs selected and clustered to ensure that a centralised approach does not undermine the quality and efficiency of EU development aid in the partner countries covered by each hub?

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Answer given by Mr Sikela on behalf of the European Commission
(15 May 2025)

Maintaining a network of EU Delegations around the world is an obligation ⁽¹⁾ and a political necessity. The network (the largest among EU diplomatic services with 145 EU Delegations) is vital for articulating and executing the EU's priorities, both for external and internal policies.

More EU is needed in the world, as a normative, geopolitical and economic power. The Delegations project the EU's values and policies on the ground, pursue strategic partnerships to reinforce the EU competitiveness and the economic security of third countries through the implementation of Global Gateway and the external dimension of key EU priorities ⁽²⁾. They also enable the EU to deliver on key political commitments, undertaken in multilateral fora, such as the implementation of Agenda 2030 and its sustainable development goals.

Therefore, it is critical that EU Delegations are fit for the future and are equipped with the right mix of staff profiles and tools to respond to the rapidly shifting geopolitical situation, evolving policy priorities, and budget constraints.

As of today, there is no specific 'plan' nor decision for changing the EU Delegations' structure or closing down any of them. The Commission and the European External Action Service are looking into options for their modernisation on the basis of a set of budgetary, legal and staff parameters to increase their effectiveness. This is a collective endeavour and ambition to have an EU network fit for the future to protect EU interests in the world.

⁽¹⁾ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A12016E221>.

⁽²⁾ Among others enlargement, trade and investments, energy, climate, environment, digital, migration, disinformation.