Attentive, assertive, supportive

EU support to nonviolent movements

PAX — Berghof Foundation

Colophon

PAX

PAX means peace. Together with people in conflict areas and concerned citizens, PAX works to build just and peaceful societies all over the world. PAX brings people together who have the courage to stand for peace. Everyone who believes in peace can contribute. We believe that all these steps, whether small or large, truly matter and will contribute to a just and peaceful world. Our peace building work in conflict areas is based on values of human dignity and solidarity with peace activists and victims of war violence. In our peace work, the protection and security of civilians leads our responses to conflicts.

Berghof Foundation Operations gGmbH

The Berghof Foundation is an independent, non-governmental organisation supporting people in conflict in their efforts to achieve sustainable peace through conflict transformation. For 50 years, we have worked to bring key people in conflict together to enable them to resolve their conflicts through dialogue and negotiations and find ways to live peacefully. Through a combination of research, education and practical peace support, we enable and support learning processes that inspire the development of new perspectives, relationships and behaviour, thus opening possibilities for conflict transformation.

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Preface

Recent years have seen a dramatic increase of mass nonviolent movements around the globe, taking the street and the online space to demand radical reforms towards greater democracy, justice, peace or equal rights. As leading European peacebuilding organisations, PAX and Berghof Foundation firmly believe that organised collective action by engaged citizens can be a potent force for peaceful change. External support to nonviolent movements can help prevent violent escalation, mitigate repression, protect civic space, facilitate conflict transformation and foster sustainable peace. We are convinced that the European Union (EU) has a duty and a mandate to provide such support as part of its foreign policy objectives, in line with European values.

Over a decade ago, in 2009, the European Parliament commissioned a study to review the range of EU instruments available to support nonviolent civic movements. The study, called 'Nonviolent Civic Action in Support of Human Rights and Democracy', advocated for EU policies and instruments to become less state-centric and to improve their 'toolbox' for promoting 'democratisation from below'. Since then, much has happened in the field of nonviolent action, both as a field of research and its practical application by grassroots social movements worldwide - from the Arab revolutions and other pro-democracy uprisings to transnational mobilisations for gender equity or climate justice. On the other hand, the institutional and policy architecture of the EU had also evolved, opening new windows of opportunities for diplomatic, technical and financial assistance to civil society actors in third countries. Therefore, both organisations commissioned this report to take stock of these developments and start a policy dialogue process on effective ways for the EU to engage with and support nonviolent movements.

We look forward to a rich and constructive exchange among policymakers, civil society activists and INGOs on the content and conclusions of this report, hoping it will encourage concrete steps towards more attentive, assertive and supportive EU engagement.

Nico Plooijer   Dr. Véronique Dudouet

Policy Advisor   Senior Advisor

PAX   Berghof Foundation

Executive summary

In a global context where the shrinking of civic space is coupled with the proliferation of protests, the European Union needs to develop a strategy to deal with nonviolent movements consistently and effectively. This doesn't necessarily entail direct support, as this sort of decision will have to be taken on an ad hoc basis after carefully weighing all the factors at play in each peaceful struggle, but it certainly implies broadening its current approach towards supporting civil society to include nonviolent movements, either as potential drivers of policy change, as development actors in their own right or as a field of intervention per se.

Peaceful protests remain one of civil society's most powerful instruments to influence the political agenda, raising awareness around uncomfortable truths and broadening the base of support for the kind of policies that the EU itself is championing through its own priority areas. Indeed, the situation seems ripe for the EU to take a more assertive stance with regard to nonviolent movements. With the EEAS increasingly acting as a true Pan-European diplomatic service, with former DevCo having transformed into INTPA under the explicit mandate "to have a dedicated focus on supporting civil society around the world", and with the NDICI-Global Europe bringing together previously scattered instruments into a single one of unprecedented flexibility, the EU has equipped itself to leverage peaceful civic action into constructive change. Therefore, it is not for lack of entry points that nonviolent movements are not receiving EU support, but rather because they seem to fall in an institutional no man's land where different key institutional players need to coordinate two strands of support that usually run in parallel: diplomatic or political or symbolic support vs financial or technical or operational support.

This paper explores the role that different institutional actors can play in supporting nonviolent movements and puts forward some basic recommendations to develop a more coherent conceptual framework and factor peaceful protests into the EU's external action.

1. Seizing the potential of nonviolent movements

In the spring of 2018, Nikol Pashinyan, an Armenian journalist turned politician, challenged the incumbent President by peacefully walking across the country, garnering huge swaths of popular support along his way and finally "taking over" the capital. Scrupulously nonviolent, protest tactics included blocking crosswalks, building human chains, banging pots and pans, or using car horns to express dissent. Unashamed of brandishing the terms "love" and "solidarity", the Velvet Revolution managed to build cohesion through inclusion and positive thinking, turning political unrest into a social catharsis that sought to cure the country from decades of entrenched corruption. Ever cautious, the EU diplomatic service apparently watched events unfold from the sidelines, but the truth was that, in different forms, it had been supporting many of those reformist and progressive CSOs and independent media outlets that conformed the movement's infrastructure and political network. Once Pashinyan reasserted his popular legitimacy through landslide elections, the EU stepped up its engagement to become one of his staunchest supporters, including through difficult times like the war in Nagorno Karabakh.

In the summer of that same year, a student named Greta Thunberg stood outside of the Swedish Riksdag calling for a "School strike for the climate", eventually unleashing a wave of climate protests with hundreds of thousands of demonstrators across 150 countries. Far from naive, the young organisers of the Global Climate Strike scheduled their protest to coincide with the 2019 election campaign for the European Parliament and even got a plea from the outgoing President of the European Commission, Jean Claude-Juncker, to dramatically increase the EU budget devoted to climate-change mitigation. As a result, 30% of the EU's long-term budget (MFF 2021-2027) was allocated to fighting climate change, a priority that has also been streamlined into the EU's external action and is giving way to what is increasingly known as green diplomacy.

When hearing or thinking about nonviolent movements, what most people visualise is the first example: massive protests leading to regime change. These Gandhi-type popular revolts are unsettling by definition, which may partly explain the prevalent defensive stance by foreign services towards any such movements, as illustrated by the first reactions to the Jasmin Revolution in Tunisia or the hesitancy in the face of what was going on in Tahrir Square in Egypt. It's hard to deny that such complex and volatile scenarios require a lot of diplomacy in the best sense of the term. To begin with, supporting protests that challenge the *status quo* in a third country can be interpreted as a willful violation of the principle of non-intervention in domestic affairs. This is certainly what most strongmen will claim, shielding themselves behind international law to freely crush internal

dissent. But the difficulties don't stop there. Protests seeking regime change are ultimately struggles for power so, despite the best of intentions, intervening is always risky and can easily backfire, either by breaking the movement's unity of purpose or by eroding the credibility of domestic leaders once they become associated with foreign powers.

However impressive these peaceful revolutions may be, the bulk of nonviolent movements are of the second kind: lower-intensity protests fueled by specific policy demands that seek to advance their cause without completely overhauling the basic political settlement of those societies where they take place. Epitomised by the US movement for civil rights, their effects are often more far-reaching than what their organisers initially planned, usually by means of co-opting former adversaries and by building advocacy coalitions that shift the public agenda and open a new Overton window, giving way to paradigm changes with long-lasting political effects. More importantly, as the example of Greta Thunberg's *Fridays for Future* shows, nonviolent movements are surpassing national borders to address global challenges in need of urgent response.

In any case, what both examples and types of protest have in common is their refusal to make use of violence, however desperate the situation may get. Watching nonviolent movements take shape, one cannot but marvel at their tenacity in resisting provocation and their skillfulness in avoiding being dragged into a fight that would eventually make them lose their moral high ground. After all, nonviolent movements are, despite their peaceful means, the result of some sort of conflict, which is what makes it so difficult to support them without being perceived as taking sides.

This is arguably what makes the EU so reluctant to take a firmer stance in their regard, or even to acknowledge their key role in bringing about the kind of reforms that are needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals or to revert the worrisome trend towards democratic backsliding and shrinking civic space. Conflict is always difficult to navigate, especially for cautious organisations like some of those that integrate the EU external action system, but failing to pay due attention to uncomfortable realities doesn't mean that they will disappear. On the contrary, societal tensions are likely to become increasingly virulent and explode into rabid forms of unrest if they aren't duly channelled towards constructive ends, which is what nonviolent movements are known to achieve with remarkable success.

Such huge potential explains why the EU has been discretely exploring ways to prop up Nonviolent Civic Action in Support of Human Rights and Democracy, with the European Parliament entrusting two leading experts in the field of nonviolence with a study to assess the existing instruments and policies for EU supportive action and to propose improvements and operational recommendations. Considering that the study saw the light in 2009, right before the Lisbon Treaty entered into force, this paper seeks to make those key findings –which remain relevant to this date– fit into the institutional set-up that has been progressively taking shape ever since.

Indeed, the situation seems ripe for the EU to take a more assertive stance with regard to nonviolent movements. With the EEAS increasingly acting as a true Pan-European diplomatic service, with former DevCo having transformed into INTPA under the explicit mandate "to have a dedicated focus on supporting civil society around the world", and with the NDICI-Global Europe bringing together previously scattered instruments into a single one of unprecedented flexibility, the EU has equipped itself to leverage peaceful civic action into constructive change.

Nonviolent movements as drivers of policy change

Nonviolent movements are widely heterogeneous but have one point in common: the rejection of violence to achieve social or political change. Bound by this refusal to cause harm to others, activists devise other means to advance their claims and garner support from the rest of society, gaining momentum until they tip the balance to their cause and deliver political outcomes that would have otherwise been unthinkable.

If we expand their scope beyond what specialised literature calls a "maximalist approach" – i.e.: aiming at regime change– to also include what some authors call the "reformist" or "gradualist" approach –i.e.: aiming at sectoral reforms–, their potential to deliver substantive change could be harnessed to the advantage of a progressive agenda that conceives of human rights and democracy as the key drivers of the SDGs.

As a matter of fact, putting the emphasis on their nonviolent nature as their main source of legitimacy could give way to an understanding of "demonstrations" or "protests" as catalysts for social change, instead of just preludes to further unrest. Nonviolence would thus become a *conditio sine qua non* to qualify for any sort of external support, be it moral, political, technical, or financial. Therefore, one of the crucial aspects is to know where the boundaries between violent and nonviolent campaigns lay, and with protests being volatile by their own nature this is not an easy line to draw.

However, what cannot be denied is their ability to trigger policy change by exerting pressure on policymakers and attracting public attention to a given topic. Peaceful protests remain one of civil society's most powerful instruments to influence the political agenda, raising awareness around uncomfortable truths and broadening the base of support for the kind of policies that the EU itself is championing through its own priority areas.

Indeed, it's the first time that the Commission's **priorities** for the EU coincide with its external ones, a bold political move that can be interpreted not only as a move toward greater policy coherence, but also as an acknowledgement of the growing interdependencies on a planetary scale. The fight against **climate change** is a good case in point: however far the EU can go in its pledge to reduce carbon emissions and convert its economy, its efforts would be undermined if other countries outside of the EU act as free-riders and keep polluting at will. Therefore, it is in the EU's interest to connect partner countries' public opinion to movements such as *Extinction Rebellion*, as only through citizens' demands will partner governments feel enough pressure to engage meaningfully into the new development framework proposed by the EU in its Green alliances and partnerships.

Something similar happens with **inequalities**, one of the most common triggers of protests worldwide. In many countries, the widening gap between Haves and Have nots is tearing apart the social fabric, fueling populism and political polarisation and challenging democratic institutions. Citizens across the world keep struggling with the effects of the 2008 financial meltdown, recently compounded by a worldwide pandemic and a war among two of the world's top food baskets. Against such a backdrop, a mere increase in the subway fare can spark massive protests like the ones that swept Chile in October and November 2019 and that remained relatively peaceful despite many incidents of police brutality (as well as episodes of looting and vandalism).

Be it to improve labour conditions, denounce corporate influence on public affairs –whether in the form of deregulation or privatisation–, claim for fiscal justice and better living standards or request

the lowering of housing or food prices, what these protests have in common is the perception by middle and lower classes that policy decisions are taken to the advantage of elite instead of the majority of the population, very much in line with the slogan popularised by the Occupy movement: "We are the 99%".

Needless to say, many of these grievances are closely related to corruption and are led by outraged citizens denouncing backroom deals and revolving doors between private companies and politicians. Small wonder that **democracy** is losing hold in many countries and has been backsliding for the last decade, with the credibility of its institutions eroded by the role of money in politics. Dissatisfaction becomes indignation when incumbents seek to remain in power through rigged elections, prompting protests like the ones in Belarus, Bolivia, Indonesia, or Kyrgyzstan and reaffirming the popular feeling that democracy has been captured by elites and interest groups.

Even new hybrid forms of protest like the #Metoo movement or the controversial "cancel culture" in the digital realm are essential to understanding the driving forces behind **digitalisation**, another EU priority that will hardly pick up steam if governments don't feel enough pressure from the demand-side and if citizens lack proper institutional channels to voice their demands. The promises behind the adoption of new technologies will hardly materialise if the digital gap keeps widening and people's rights remain unprotected. Even more worrisome is the increasing use of technology to keep dissent in check and better control crowds, which may well be among the factors that explain the declining rate of success of nonviolent movements in recent years.[1]

The examples above show the extent to which peaceful protests can become drivers of all of the EC priorities besides **peace and security**, which is where most policy-makers still believe that nonviolent movements belong. There's no doubt about the key role that they play in conflict transformation,[2] but their potential goes well beyond a single field of international cooperation and should be wisely harnessed to bolster the kind of reforms that would otherwise take decades to materialise, if they ever do.

What seems sure is that all these priorities won't gain much traction in partner countries unless EU Delegations embrace the power of nonviolent movements and factor them into their support mechanisms. This doesn't mean necessarily to support them directly, a very sensitive step that could turn the alleged holy grail into a poisoned chalice, but rather to recognize them as developmental actors in their own right.

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1 Erica Chenoweth, 'The Future of Nonviolent Resistance', Journal of Democracy, volume 31, July 2020

2 Véronique Dudouet, 'Nonviolent Resistance and Conflict Transformation in Power Asymmetries', Berghof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management, September 2008.

Nonviolent movements as development actors

In the last two decades, the EU has significantly enlarged the repertoire of actors recognized as development actors and potential partners for its cooperation, a key acknowledgement that determines not only their eligibility to receive funds, but also their right to be consulted in the programming of EU support or to partake in policy fora such as the Policy Forum on Development. This progressive shift, in the making since the European Consensus on Development, was somewhat consecrated in 2011, when the International Community agreed in Busan to add the adjective "country" to the principle of ownership enshrined six years earlier in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, an apparently innocent nuance that nonetheless marked a tipping point in the way of understanding the relationship between donors and aid recipients. Ever since, development agendas are to be owned not just by the incumbent government but by the country as a whole, including its parliament, local authorities and civil society organisations (CSOs), a catch-all term that comprises trade unions, cooperatives or even business associations –as a means to also bring on board the private sector.

This new state of affairs took shape in EU development policy through two key communications, one regarding Europe's engagement with Civil Society in external relations, tellingly titled "The roots of democracy and sustainable development" (2012), and another oriented towards "Empowering Local Authorities in partner countries for enhanced governance and more effective development outcomes" (2013). In a matter of months and coinciding with the negotiation of the impending Multiannual Financial Framework for the period 2014-2020, what previously used to be called Non-State actors –obvious proof of the State-centric approach that used to characterise most development cooperation– were finally admitted as full-fledged partners and key contributors to the definition and implementation of the global development agenda.

It must be noted, however, that prior to that official consecration the EU had already devised a means to engage with civil society in partner countries without government consent. Championed by the European Parliament, the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights sought to assist activists and human rights defenders operating in hostile environments and despite being intended as a "niche" instrument, it became an important flagship of EU foreign policy and a best practice of inter-institutional cooperation between the European Commission, the European External Action Service and the European Parliament.

Besides the EIDHR, the growing importance of CSOs was reflected in the launching of a dedicated thematic programme (named NSA-LA from 2007 to 2014 and CSO-LA from 2014 to 2020), as well as the signing in 2015 of a series of Framework Partnership Agreements between DEVCO and 25 global and regional networks of CSOs, including political foundations and women's, faith-based and farmers' organisations.

This diversity is acknowledged in INTPAs most recent definition of civil society, coined in the Multiannual Indicative Programme (MIP) of the new thematic programme for the period 2020 to 2027, which is now devoted exclusively to civil society –while local authorities are, in turn, to be streamlined in the design of all the interventions at country-level, in line with the internal reform known as "geographisation" that has devolved a sizable share of the budget to EU Delegations. Finally severed from what always was, to some extent, an odd couple, civil society organisations "*embrace a wide range of actors with multiple roles and mandates which includes all non-State, not-for-profit independent and non-violent structures, through which people organise to pursue shared*

objectives and ideals, whether political, cultural, religious, environmental, social or economic or related to health."[3]

Although an indicative list is then provided in a footnote[4], what strikes the eye is the explicit inclusion of non-violence to the usual criteria of independence and absence of profit and the use of the term "structures", a conscious choice that seems to open the door to movements and other –more fluid– incarnations of civil society. Aware of the rigidities imposed by the imperative to work exclusively with organisations, INTPA seems willing to adapt its rules and procedures to the reality in the field and not the other way around.

This implicit opening towards working with social movements –as long as they are nonviolent– couldn't be timelier. Not only because of the alarming pace at which civic space has been shrinking in the last decade, but also because protests are mushrooming all over the world and are rapidly becoming the most effective driver for policy change.[5]

Their common denominator may well be a volatile nature that precludes the kind of direct support that agencies usually provide to their partners in the field. But this doesn't mean that nonviolent movements cannot be helped, nurtured, and even protected. This requires learning to work with provisory structures or even individuals that can act as proxies, as well as investing time and money into weaving networks that may dissolve once they have fulfilled their role. After all, the kind of structure that best defines social and nonviolent movements is that of a network: decentralised, inclusive and diverse, very much in line with the collaborative and multifaceted approach that characterises Multi-stakeholder Partnerships (MSP).

Considered instrumental to achieve the SDGs, MSPs resemble nonviolent movements in that they are more than the sum of their parts, which means that any sort of support cannot be conceived or designed on an individual basis but as parts of a wider whole. The increased attention that MSPs are receiving from international cooperation shows the extent to which donors are adapting their modus operandi to factor into their programming these cooperative and flexible settings where the agendas of multiple actors coalesce to deliver joint results that would otherwise be unthinkable, very much in line with the hybrid and protean nature of nonviolent movements.

3 Thematic Programme for Civil Society Organisations, Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027

4 They include, but are not limited to: Nongovernmental organisations, organisations representing indigenous peoples, women's and youth organisations, diaspora organisations, migrants' organisations, local traders' associations and citizens' groups, cooperatives, employers' associations and trade unions (social partners), organisations representing economic and social interests, organisations fighting corruption and fraud and promoting good governance, civil rights organisations and organisations combating discrimination, local organisations (including networks) involved in decentralised regional cooperation and integration, consumer organisations, environmental, teaching, cultural, research and scientific organisations, universities, churches and religious associations and communities, philosophical and non-confessional organisations, the not-for-profit media and any non-governmental associations and independent foundations, including independent political foundations.

5 Richard Youngs, ed. 'After Protest: Pathways Beyond Mass Mobilization', Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2019.

Nonviolent movements as a field of intervention

Unsurprisingly, nonviolent movements have been the subject of intense scholarly attention, giving way to a whole field of research that seeks to explain their internal dynamics, common factors, and keys to success. Given their almost intrinsic unpredictability, most of this research is done *ex post* –i.e.: once the dust has settled and apparently spontaneous actions find their place into a plausible causal chain–, but in the last few years an increasing number of organisations has started to focus on these complex phenomena on a real-time basis, grappling to understand their causes and potential implications while events are still unfolding and the outcomes remain uncertain.

The successive datasets of the Nonviolent and Violent Campaigns and Outcomes (NAVCO) project, hosted at Harvard, provide information on hundreds of campaigns in multiple countries and have paved the ground for similar initiatives. Since 2017 the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace keeps a Global Protest Tracker to follow "crucial trends in the most significant antigovernment protests worldwide", while the Global Nonviolent Database provides information on nonviolent campaigns in all continents and most countries. The Peace Research Institute Oslo, on its side, has recently developed the Anatomy of Resistance Campaigns (ARC) dataset, which records information on almost 1.500 organisations that participated in events of maximalist violent and nonviolent contention in Africa from 1990 to 2015.

These are just some examples of an ebullient field of research that is rapidly evolving into a field of intervention. Organisations like USIP, PATRIR, Nonviolent Peaceforce, Berghof Foundation or PAX have been orienting their activities towards supporting nonviolent movements within their peacebuilding efforts. As is often the case, past patterns help to anticipate what the future could look like, so given the sound evidence of the potential of nonviolent movements to avert violent clashes and even civil war, it seems all-too-natural that finding ways to support them has become a staple activity in the field of peacebuilding and conflict transformation.

Nevertheless, circumscribing nonviolent movements to just one field of intervention doesn't do justice either to their plurality and versatility, or to the diversity and scope of their goals. Once a protest is not aimed at regime change but at advancing political, environmental, or socio-economic rights within the existing constitutional order, it should not be just seen through the lens of conflict, but rather through that of policy change, which is what the EU is constantly promoting in its development cooperation with partner countries. Whether through policy dialogue, capacity development or budget support, the ultimate objective of INTPA's support remains to deliver change at policy level, an ambition that is seldom achieved if it isn't coupled with citizen demand. This is, after all, the *raison d'être* for the many awareness-raising programs that the EU has been consistently funding on issues ranging from gender to environmental protection.

On the other hand, most of these initiatives have been channelled through like-minded CSOs, which have seen their room for manoeuvre drastically reduced in the last years and are struggling to contain the alarming shrinking of civic space. Much in the same way as media are said to be the canary in the coal mine when it comes to freedom of expression, State responses to peaceful protests reveal the extent to which a partner country's government is averse to dissent and prone to autocratisation.

To put it bluntly, nonviolent movements are central to democracy and instrumental for development, so failing to factor them into these two fields of intervention turns them into a blind spot that can

jeopardise INTPA's efforts to deliver change in key policy areas (environment, inequalities, digitalisation or human rights) or to create a more enabling environment for civil society.

The good news is that in many aspects, as the example of Armenia illustrates, the EU is already supporting nonviolent movements, albeit indirectly and without a clear logic of intervention or conceptual framework. One just needs to browse through specialised literature to realise that most of the external assistance that is considered to contribute positively to the success of peaceful campaigns is already part of the EUs' external action toolkit. From technical assistance, capacity development and peer advice to international networking, grants or scholarships, most means of support are already being deployed in the fields of development, peacebuilding and democracy support.

FIGURE 1

NONVIOLENT MOVEMENTS AT THE INTERFACE BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT, DEMOCRACY AND PEACEBUILDING
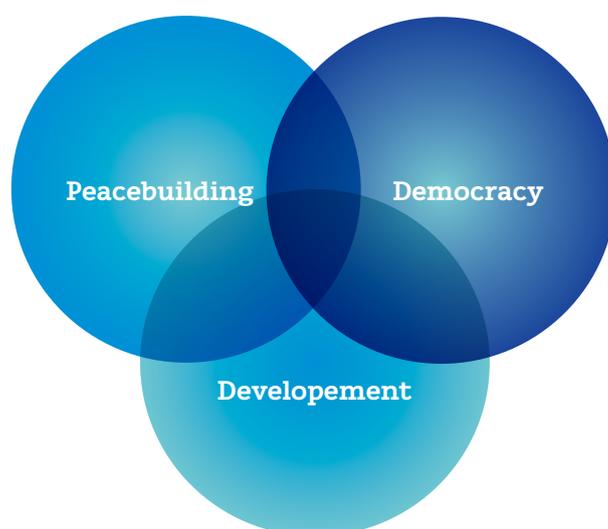
This shows the extent to which external assistance to nonviolent movements falls somewhere in between these three fields, but still plays a marginal role in each of them –a situation that is compounded by the still rather weak integration between "traditional" development cooperation and other forms of political support. Indeed, a defining feature of support to nonviolent movements is the importance of diplomacy when it comes to promoting and protecting activists (e.g.: provision of shelter, visas and safe spaces or the granting of safe passage to defectors) or the promotion of their cause (e.g.: by inviting dissidents to events such as press conferences, visiting them in jail or issuing declarations and statements), not to speak of exerting pressure on the government through carrot-and-stick policies like sanctions or international prosecution.

What all these means of support have in common is their mutual dependency and the need to coordinate them following a comprehensive approach that combines diplomacy and operations to yield results in the short, medium, and long terms. This is, of course, more easily said than done, although it doesn't only concern nonviolent movements but also the fields of peacebuilding, democracy support, and –increasingly– development cooperation. In other words, it points in the

direction of greater integration between the EEAS and INTPA, a trend that has been progressively taking shape since the Treaty of Lisbon and that could hopefully become the "new normal" thanks to Team Europe.

2. Factoring nonviolent movements into the EU external action system

Although nonviolent movements are domestic by definition and for activists it is crucial "*to frame their campaigns as an indigenous, internally led struggle*",[6] most protests appeal to other countries' approval and even support, whether just in moral terms or in more material forms. Left to their own devices, most movements perish or give way to violence out of frustration or despair. If something, they are in need of help.

Do peaceful protesters have a right to be helped? Views differ depending on the place that one holds in the power struggle, but a growing number of scholars and policymakers are reframing the question by switching the subject and the predicate and asking in reverse: Do foreign actors have the right to help? The answer is far from clear-cut and will always depend on the context, but some go as far as to claim that there is Right to Assist nonviolent democratic movements, especially in the light of the authoritarian pushback that is shrinking civic space worldwide.[7]

This makes sense if one is willing to accept that democracy is a public good and that the development community should do something about it, instead of turning a blind eye on counterfeit democrats and authoritarians in disguise. Never before have there been so many elections around the world and never before has democracy been in such dire straits.[8] This apparent paradox, coupled with the remarkable degree of sophistication attained by the new tools and techniques of citizen control, calls for more assertive action to protect democratic institutions and promote a more enabling environment for civic space.

6 Véronique Dudouet: 'Sources, Functions, and Dilemmas of External Assistance to Civil Resistance Movements', in Kurt Schock (ed.), Comparative Perspectives on Civil Resistance, University of Minnesota Press, 2015.

7 The sixth principle of the 'Declaration of Principles for Freedom, Prosperity, and Peace' by the Atlantic Council links the principle of self-determination to that of democracy and affirms the right of all citizens to "*receive assistance from others to advance these principles, including, in non-free societies, support to nonviolent groups, political parties, and individuals aiming to foster democracy or human rights*." https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/declaration/

8 Nic Cheeseman & Brian Klaas: 'How to rig an election', Yale University Press, 2019

Against such a backdrop, it has become imperative for the EU to adopt a more assertive stance in defence of democracy worldwide. Article 21.1 of the Treaty of the European Union (TEU) states that "*the Union's action on the international scene shall be guided by the principles which have inspired its own creation, development and enlargement, and which it seeks to advance in the wider world: democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for human dignity, the principles of equality and solidarity, and respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law*."

Adherence to the EU's foundational principles is especially relevant when it comes to nonviolent movements, as most Member States that joined the Union in the 2004 and 2007 enlargements had a recent history of nonviolent resistance to totalitarian regimes. Without *Solidarność*, *Charta 77* or the *Pan-European Picnic* held on the Austro-Hungarian border weeks before the fall of the Berlin Wall, the EU wouldn't have its actual shape, so instead of becoming paralyzed by diplomatic concerns its external action needs to acknowledge and embrace the potential of nonviolent movements for political change.[9]

Indeed, civic resistance and civil disobedience to illegitimate decisions and governments is central to Europe's recent history, with Germany standing at the forefront of this doctrine as a result of its own experience during the Nazi regime. The ensuing right to resistance against those who might wish to overthrow the constitutional order or undermine its values and fundamental rights, as enshrined in Article 20.4 of the German Basic Law, is based upon the assumption that a healthy society is one that protests, whether for peace or against political decisions that may impact their lives and those of future generations. Shouldn't this principle also apply to other peoples' struggles to advance or defend their own human rights?

Nature and scope of third-party support to nonviolent movements

As it turns out, governments, international organisations and even corporations have been providing different forms of support to a wide array of nonviolent movements, with mixed results. Far from being a "holy grail", support can easily become a "poisoned chalice", as cautioned by those who have closely studied The Role of External Support in Nonviolent Campaigns.[10] Drawing examples from eight campaigns aiming at regime change –from Serbia, Ukraine or Belarus to Tunisia or Egypt– and relying on the AidData platform to measure the frequency of different forms of external support, the study concludes that "*few nonviolent uprisings in the past twenty years existed without significant international attention and involvement*", albeit "*external support is always secondary to local actors*". In other words, although Maduro, Putin and the likes may keep blaming domestic dissent on foreign conspiracy plots, the true drivers of protest are always local citizens themselves –who also happen to be the most at risk because, needless to say, those who do receive plenty of support from fellow repressive regimes are the governments seeking to crush dissent.

Another interesting finding is that while training support is consistently impactful –especially when delivered by peer activists–, the effects of direct financial assistance are far from clear and very much

9 Maciej Bartkowski. 'Do Civil Resistance Movements Advance Democratization?' Minds of the Movement (blog). September 17, 2017.

10 Erica Chenoweth & Maria J. Stephan. 'The Role of External Support in Nonviolent Campaigns: Poisoned Chalice or Holy Grail?' ICNC Press, 2021.

depend on the ways in which it is delivered. It may decrease participation by undermining the feeling of ownership by the general population, while also creating jealousies towards civic leaders that receive donor funding and somewhat become professional protesters. On the other hand, fast and flexible support, including small grants and digital equipment, can become particularly helpful if it's not hampered by heavy bureaucratic requirements and procedures.

Amid such sobering findings, what appears to be the safest bet to support an enabling environment for nonviolent movements is the long-term investment in civil society and democratic institutions through sustained technical and financial assistance to the key democratic actors such as political parties, youth movements, civic organisations, or independent media. However, the study is also clear about another key aspect: the importance of donor alignment and coordination, which is crucial for the positive impact of foreign support and can strongly contribute to the success of nonviolent campaigns.

This last finding is especially relevant for the EU, which is at the forefront of donor efforts to protect civic space and can rely on a wide array of trade and diplomatic tools to exert pressure on those partner governments that may not be honouring their Responsibility to Protect. As explained in the next section, most of the means of supporting nonviolent movements boil down to a combination of symbolic, technical, and financial aid and thus require a high degree of coordination between the EU and its Member States, as well as with like-minded allies among the international community.

More importantly, their effectiveness depends on the ability of public diplomacy to remain relevant along the lifespan of the campaign, adapting to its evolving needs and playing different roles at different moments, be it by granting diplomatic immunity to individuals and groups, by bestowing legitimacy on their claims through public endorsement, by sharing with activists key information or by providing safe spaces for dialogue.[11] In other words, Member States' embassies could play a crucial role in ensuring that nonviolent protests remain peaceful and that citizens' grievances are channelled in constructive ways.

Indeed, by embracing nonviolent movements as an opportunity to deliver positive policy change by peaceful means, the EU external action can mitigate the risk of protests degenerating into violent clashes while creating the conditions for the parties involved to reach a negotiated settlement. Such a key contribution should be the result of a concerted effort that would bring together MS embassies, EU Delegations and other donors operating in the country under a common support framework that conceives of peaceful protests as a driving force towards democratic reform. Under such a scheme, nonviolent movements would present the EU and its Member States with a common ground to improve their coordination and a shared vision upon which to base their joint programming and, eventually, work better together through Team Europe Initiatives.

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11 Jeremy Kinsman & Kurt Bassuener, 'A Diplomats Handbook for Democracy Development Support', McGill-Queen's University Press, 2013.

Roles that the EU can take with regards to nonviolent movements

There have been several attempts at categorising the different types of support that external actors can provide to nonviolent movements, but for our purposes the most relevant is the systematisation effort carried by Véronique Dudouet, who divides third-party nonviolent intervention (TPNI) into six categories: promoting, capacity building, connecting, protecting, monitoring and pressuring.[12] By merging some of these categories into broader ones, the following are the key dispositions and levels of engagement that the EU can take with regards to nonviolent movements: being attentive, being assertive and being supportive.

A. BEING ATTENTIVE

Needless to say, the first task for someone willing to intervene in an ongoing conflict is to carefully observe what's going on in order to understand what is at stake for each of the parties involved. In that sense, the EU already conducts different types of research –context analysis, stakeholder analysis, risk and/or impact assessments, etc.– that can shed light on the motives behind protests and contribute to an informed appraisal of the driving forces behind the movement. This information can be captured either by witnessing events on-site, by analysing reports from different sources or by organising *ad hoc* observation missions (in a similar vein to Electoral Observation Missions). Other monitoring practices include conducting fact-finding missions or attending trials of opposition leaders and civic activists, with the latter being also a form of protection, much in line with other practices such as lobbying on behalf of detained activists or visiting them in jail.

B. BEING ASSERTIVE

Other practices clearly seek to either exert pressure on governments or to actively promote the cause being championed by nonviolent activists. Some of the activities mentioned above –jail visits and diplomatic lobbying– can also fall under this category, depending on the degree of assertiveness displayed by the EU. Pressure on duty-bearers can be administered by issuing declarations and resolutions or by writing petitions, while right-holders' causes can be promoted by awarding prizes or by attending events and press conferences. The effects of this kind of moral and symbolic support should not be neglected, especially when bolstered by off-site mobilisation campaigns, but their impact is much deeper when combined with carrot-and-stick policies, including sanctions against the regime, the trying of war criminals or blocking military aid shipments.

C. BEING SUPPORTIVE

Besides providing shelter to dissidents, granting them visas or establishing safe houses, another level of engagement is to offer them other forms of direct support such as technical assistance and capacity development. These may take different forms, but training on nonviolent methods and organisational techniques remains one of the most effective ways of contributing to the kind of internal discipline that prevents movements from being drawn into violence by police brutality or the undercover workings of *agents provocateurs*. Another form of support that is strongly appreciated is peer advice from fellow activists with experience in other peaceful struggles, as well as the organisation of strategic workshops or the upskilling of activists in areas such as public communication, negotiation techniques, policy work and mental health/well-being. A blend of direct assistance and "on-the-

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12 Véronique Dudouet (2015).

job" training often proves useful for the development of communication strategies and advocacy campaigns. Moreover, capacity building on digital aspects has become imperative, with training on IT security and the safe use of digital tools being high on the list of needs, as well as crucial for networking and for running the sort of decentralised structures that determine the resilience and adaptability of social movements. And last but not least, the EU can provide funding to some of the key nodes that conform the underlying political network behind every nonviolent campaign.

Anybody familiar with the EU's external action will have realised that most of these activities are already part of INTPA and the EEAS respective playbooks, as well as those of some Member States or International NGOs. Actually, many of these forms of support are currently being deployed in contexts as diverse as Myanmar, Armenia or Kyrgyzstan, although rarely framed as support to nonviolent movements. Providing technical assistance, conducting background research, or delivering capacity development to CSOs and activists constitute the usual *modus operandi* of development agencies, while issuing statements and resolutions, pleading for human rights activists or gathering information on the motives and forces behind protests constitute the daily work of the EU and MS diplomatic services. So, after all, supporting nonviolent movements is nothing new: it has been done for a long time and under many guises, but seldom in a consistent and systematic way, which is actually what the conceptual framework of nonviolent movements can provide.

Nonviolent movements as a means of working better together

As a matter of fact, nonviolent movements present the EU with an opportunity to coordinate its different strands of support to civil society while ensuring the complementarity of the actions to be undertaken by each institutional actor. While most of the support modalities at country level fall under the remit of the EEAS or MS Embassies, such as inviting activists to receptions or organising conferences, attending demonstrations, visiting activists in jail, providing shelter or visas or issuing public declarations of support, there are other institutional actors such as the European Parliament that can play a key role in monitoring and promoting peaceful campaigns at international level. Other instruments such as sanctions depend on the Foreign Affairs Council and are subject to unanimity, with the complexities that this entails recently illustrated by the latest rounds of sanctions on Russia for the invasion of Ukraine. Nevertheless, the bulk of the technical and financial support resonates with what INTPA is already doing in many countries to promote a more enabling environment for civil society, often in cooperation with International NGOs, whose implementing role is being strengthened through Financial Support to Third Party (FSTP) schemes aimed at increasing the outreach of EU funding to encompass smaller CSOs out of the capital and grassroots organisations.

TABLE 1

	MS	EEAS	INTPA	EP	INGO
BEING ATTENTIVE					
Monitoring, on-site witness, observation missions, background research				X	X
Protecting, including safe passage for defectors, visa, shelter, jail visits, safe spaces for the exchange of experience, "civilian peacekeeping", "protective accompaniment" and "nonviolent interposition"	X	X			X
BEING ASSERTIVE					
Promoting, including moral and symbolic support, such as petition writing, granting of awards, declarations and resolutions, attending events and press conferences, inviting to receptions, jail visits	X	X		X	
Pressuring, carrot-and-stick policies, including sanctions against the regime, intelligence sharing, trying war criminals, blocking military aid shipments	X	X			
BEING SUPPORTIVE					
Capacity Development, including technical support and training (legal, policy, organisation, nonviolent methods), strategic workshops, peer advice, scholarship			X		X
Connecting, including networking, training on IT systems, development of communication strategies, public relations, advocacy campaigns			X		X
FUNDING					
Funding: grants, scholarships, loans, legal funds, debt relief, food, provision of equipment and digital tools			X		X

As illustrated in the table above, the wide array of activities in support of nonviolent movements allows for the engagement of different institutional actors at different stages and with different purposes, based on their mandate and comparative advantage. Actually, many of these measures are already being deployed in a range of countries around the world, with varying degrees of success depending on the level of coordination among the various actors at play. It is precisely this lack of coherence that the EU could address by seizing nonviolent movements as a conceptual framework to systematise its many forms of support.

Movements are, by definition, moving targets. Once set in motion, they don't lend themselves to quick or easy categorizations, much less to the kind of results-oriented interventions that constitute the bulk of development aid. However, they present the EU with a unique window of opportunity to engage in dialogue with partner countries or open safe spaces for dialogue between the government and those voicing their dissent. Such a mediation role is very especially needed when protests risk turning violent or when governments are weighing the pros and cons of using force. It can also be helpful to lessen tensions if violence escalates due to the radicalization of some of the many factions that usually are part of civic resistance campaigns.

This is very much in line with the new EU Concept of Peace Mediation, which is explicitly grounded on the need to engage civil society actors: "*As an actor that systematically consults civil society as part of its approach to external action and as a promoter and supporter of multi-track approaches, the EU favours all-of-society approaches to sustaining peace that focuses on giving voice to all groups and leaving no-one behind. Women and youth draw particular attention from the perspective of meaningful participation....*"

All this boils down to a key assumption: Taking a firm stance doesn't necessarily mean taking sides. On the contrary, by engaging in parallel with governments and nonviolent movements, the EU can keep open the kind of negotiation channels that can turn the rhetoric of confrontation into avenues for compromise. More importantly, by facilitating dialogue between duty-bearers and right-holders, the EU can better grasp the issues at stake and provide tailored support to all the parties involved.

This is after all the role that some EU Delegations have already started to play through their policy dialogue with partner countries, whether in the framework of budget support programs or during the implementation of sector reforms.[13] By making their policy dialogue with partner governments more inclusive and participatory, opening it to other actors such as civil society organisations, local authorities, trade unions or business associations, EU Delegations are already assuming the political duties implicit in the recent reform known as "geographization".

Indeed, besides improving the EU's operational flexibility, the NDICI Global Europe has also brought a significant increase in the funds to be managed through EU Delegations, who are expected to engage proactively with a wide variety of domestic stakeholders besides the partner government. With the EU Roadmaps for engagement with Civil Society already entering their third generation, EU Delegations have acquired the habit of regularly consulting with other political actors besides their usual counterparts in the line ministries.

Even more importantly, when it comes to supporting nonviolent movements, most EU Delegations have established regular communication and cooperation mechanisms with those Member States embassies and cooperation agencies present in the country. Thanks to the Team Europe approach, some longstanding practices of donor coordination in the field are becoming institutionalised to improve joint programming and thus "work better together".[14] Whether this new institutional setting will work remains to be seen. Still, nonviolent movements can provide MS and the EU with a common framework to design and implement their respective support measures in a consistent and coordinated manner.

13 Segio Rodriguez Prieto & Leon Hemkemeyer, 'Sense and sensibility: the role of policy dialogue in the EU's new global agenda', European Partnership for Democracy, 2021.

14 Working Better Together as Team Europe through joint programming and joint implementation, Tools and Methods Series Guidelines N°10, European Commission International Partnerships, January 2021.

What seems clear is that whenever a protest or nonviolent movement may emerge in a policy area or sector that is receiving EU support, it should be factored into the EU Delegation's ongoing policy dialogue with that partner country. Failing to do so would not only be a missed opportunity to better understand the political economy of that given policy area; it could also be interpreted as giving free rein to the government and endorsing the status quo which, at the end of the day, is a form of taking sides.

Besides all the forms of on-site support that have been mentioned above are those taking place beyond the country borders, which are nevertheless often essential for the success of the campaign. One of the advantages that globalisation has brought to peaceful struggle was already captured decades ago in the notion of the "Great Chain of Nonviolence", a process of indirect influence by which third parties can exert pressure upon duty-bearers that would otherwise ignore right-holders' claims.[15] Originally conceived as a psychological process, it can also be "*conceptualized as a communication chain: if direct communication is blocked for whatever reason (physical barriers, language, meaning systems), intermediaries can constitute a communication channel that carries the message.*"[16] In other words, bringing international attention to domestic struggle can be an effective way of levelling the playing field and getting around the power inequalities that allow the oppressor to oppress.

More recently and in a similar vein, the concept of "boomerang effect" explains how groups in one country appeal to citizens of another through transnational advocacy networks.[17] Bringing together social movements, research groups, churches, media, unions and other local actors, these networks manage to overcome national boundaries and influence the policy agenda through a variety of means, putting pressure on their own governments to take a firmer stance against the misdeeds of oppressive regimes.

By and large, this is what civil society umbrella organisations bring into the equation, a sense of awareness among global citizens and public opinion in democratic states that can result in international pressure upon duty-bearers to honour their responsibility to protect.[18] Within the EU's institutional structure, this sort of pressure is most often channelled through the European Parliament, where individual MEPs sensitive to a given peaceful struggle can place the topic on the political agenda and garner political support from colleagues and political groups. The European Parliament has weaved a remarkable web of political contacts across all regions through its inter-parliamentary delegations and joint parliamentary committees. It has progressively adopted a rather prominent role on the global scene as a champion of human rights. One only needs to take a glance at the list of recipients of the Sakharov prize to see the extent to which the European Parliament has been lending its soft power to nonviolent activists as standard-bearers of larger civic resistance movements.

However, the ultimate decision to take concrete action, whether in the form of aid or sanctions, falls upon the Member States gathered in the Foreign Affairs Council, which is chaired by the EU High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and assisted by the European External Action Service (EEAS). Despite being burdened by the need for unanimity in all affairs related to common foreign and security policy, the Council has recently taken a firmer stance with regard to government repression of peaceful protests in Belarus and Myanmar.

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15 Johan Galtung, 'Nonviolence and Israel/Palestine', University of Hawaii Institute for Peace, 1989.

16 Brian Martin & Wendy Varney, 'Nonviolence and Communication', Journal of Peace Research, March 2003.

17 Margaret E. Keck & Kathryn Sikkink. 'Activists beyond borders', Cornell University Press, 1998.

18 Peter Ackerman & Hardy Merriman, 'Preventing Mass Atrocities: From a Responsibility to Protect to a Right to Assist, Campaigns of Civil Resistance', International Center on Nonviolent Conflict, May 2019.

3. Institutional proposals and possible ways forward

No one says that supporting nonviolent movements would be easy, but can the EU afford to look sideways? In a global context where the shrinking of civic space is coupled with the proliferation of protests, the EU external action needs to develop a strategy to deal with nonviolent movements consistently and effectively. This doesn't necessarily entail direct support, as this sort of decision will have to be taken on an ad hoc basis after carefully weighing all the factors at play in each peaceful struggle, but it certainly implies broadening its current approach towards supporting civil society to include nonviolent movements, either as potential drivers of policy change, as development actors in their own right or as a field of intervention per se.

In all three forms, nonviolent movements can become key partners in advancing the priorities of Global Europe and the capacity to harness this potential could determine the success or failure of the EU's fight against the shrinking of civic space. Despite being one of the key pillars of the 2012 EC Communication ("the roots of democracy"), it's only now that the Enabling Environment for civil society has become a key priority and is receiving stand-alone focus from INTPA at Headquarters. The message to EU Delegations is clear, but the difficulties of engaging with opponents to the government, however peaceful they may be, remains likely the main stumbling block. This is why Brussels put at their disposal a specific facility to support them in developing and implementing their Roadmaps for Engagement with Civil Society.

A similar approach could be envisioned for nonviolent movements: A global facility that could swiftly mobilise the most relevant expertise to support nonviolent movements in different countries and policy areas could be of great help when EU Delegations are seeking to engage with peaceful protests but remain wary of the political consequences that this may entail. Another complementary option could be to mainstream the topic of nonviolent movements into the new round of INTPA's Financial Framework Partnership Agreements (Global Civil Society Partnerships) so as to ensure that global CSO networks can play their role in the "Great Chain of Nonviolence", whether through awareness-raising and advocacy campaigns, by channelling technical assistance from peer activists or by providing financial assistance through FSTP schemes. In order to promote the exchange of best practices and jointly appraise common challenges, nonviolent movements should find their way into the Policy Forum on Development, the EU's structured dialogue at global level between the EU and CSOs (and LAs).

In operational terms, nonviolent movements can still be supported through the existing thematic programs, namely those on Human Rights and Democracy, Civil Society Organisations and Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention. Among the challenges to democratic institutions and processes identified by the Multi-Annual Indicative Program on Human Rights and Democracy, there is an explicit mention of peaceful pro-democracy protests being banned and the rights to freedom of association and peaceful assembly being eroded in many countries.[19] Several priorities can have an impact on –or be impacted by– nonviolent movements, from upholding human rights to supporting human rights defenders, reversing the shrinking space for civil society or strengthening the rule of law and closing the accountability gap. Similarly, nonviolent movements are an expression of active citizenship –often resulting from repression– and constitute a key means of fostering the role of civil society in oversight and accountability mechanisms or in enhancing the inclusiveness of political systems.

More importantly, the Programme for Human Rights and Democracy has "inherited" a number of key features from its predecessor, such as independence of action from the consent of partner countries' governments, its global remit –including upper-middle and high-income countries– and the pivotal role awarded to CSOs, including non-registered organisations and natural persons. In the context of "geographisation" –i.e.: increased devolution of competences and decision-making power to EU Delegations– a substantial part of the thematic programme is to be implemented at country level, where "*punctual actions shall be considered to respond to immediate and unforeseen circumstances*". It seems clear that nonviolent movements and peaceful protests should be considered as such.

The programme reserves a subsidiary role for HQ whenever issues to be addressed are (i) global or regional, (ii) politically sensitive or (iii) emerging. Given that nonviolent movements often qualify as ii and iii, it would be important to set up some kind of Coordination Unit at HQ level, bringing together the specific units operating in each of the institutions (EP, INTPA and the Council, as already suggested in the EP Study of 2009), as well as ECHO and the EU INTCEN. Within such an institutional setting, support to nonviolent movements could even fit into the Rapid Response Pillar, albeit those cases could also fall under the Thematic Programme for Peace, Stability and Conflict Prevention, which has as its specific objective 4 to "*promote peace values and a culture of non-violence, including through cultural and peace education initiatives, especially among children and youth, as an efficient tool for peacebuilding and conflict prevention.*"

Therefore, it is not for lack of entry points that nonviolent movements are not receiving EU support, but rather because they seem to fall in an institutional no man's land where different key institutional players need to coordinate two strands of support that usually run in parallel: diplomatic or political or symbolic support vs financial or technical or operational support. The ideal means to bring both together would be to create an ad hoc instrument in the form of Trust Fund, with its enhanced flexibility and high-level political profile. By pooling resources from a wide array of Member States, such an instrument could also mobilise their diplomatic resources in a coordinated fashion that would improve the effectiveness of the various strands of support. Nevertheless, experience shows that Trust Funds are usually created in response to specific situations (migration crises, war in Libya, refugees from Syria, etc.) and that the European Parliament is not fond of them because they don't fall sufficiently under its budgetary scrutiny.

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19 European Commission, Thematic Programme on Human Rights and Democracy Multi-Annual Indicative Programming 2021-2027, page 6.

Therefore, another option could consist of bringing together the European Parliament, the EEAS, INTPA and interested Member States to develop a Team Europe Initiative at the global level that would have as its main objective to scale up and coordinate EU support to nonviolent movements inspired by universal values and pursuing the SDGs. Such an initiative could be easily merged with the proposal to set up a facility to assist EU Delegations through a central Secretariat or Coordination Unit that would also engage with CSO international networks and ensure the swift delivery of support wherever and whenever needed.

Under such a setting, the EU could fulfil three missions that would grossly correspond to the three dimensions described above (being attentive, being assertive & being supportive): (1) To monitor State response to nonviolent movements and to protect activists' civil rights; (2) to level the playing field by putting pressure on duty bearers and promoting the cause of right holders; and (3) to develop civil society capacities and connect nonviolent movements to Transnational Advocacy Networks.

These are just some preliminary and very basic proposals to anchor nonviolent movements into the EU external action, which ever since 2009 has evolved towards a more politically aware approach to development policy and relations with third countries. What seems clear in the light of the increasing trend towards autocratisation worldwide is that nonviolent movements cannot be neglected anymore and should become part and parcel of the EU's policy and political dialogue with partner countries. A different consideration is if they should receive direct support –not only for diplomatic concerns but also out of caution regarding the perceived legitimacy and internal cohesion of the movement itself. Ultimately, this is a decision that should be informed by specific evidence, but this kind of knowledge can only be attained by developing a conceptual framework for nonviolent movements that recognizes not only their importance in mitigating the risk of violent outbreaks further down the line, but also their potential to bring about positive change and protect human rights and civic freedoms from a true bottom-up approach.

Action points

♦ To develop a coherent conceptual framework to factor nonviolent movements into the EU's external action (following a multi-institutional approach).

♦ To provide support to nonviolent movements through already existing instruments such as the global thematic programmes for Civil Society, Human Rights and Democracy, Peace and Security and Global Challenges.

♦ To set up a facility to provide urgent and specialised assistance to EU Delegations whenever nonviolent movements emerge in their countries.

♦ To mainstream nonviolent movements into INTPA's Global Society Partnerships so that civil society umbrella organisations and transnational advocacy networks can play their role in supporting local peaceful protests.

♦ To open the debate on the operational implications of supporting nonviolent movements in the Policy Forum on Development.

♦ To set-up a Team Europe Initiative on peaceful civic action or to explore the possibility of setting up a dedicated Trust Fund to support nonviolent movements.

♦ To support ongoing efforts to monitor nonviolent movements and gather evidence on their key features and modus operandi.

♦ To investigate the linkages between the repression of peaceful protests and the shrinking of civic space in order to include support to nonviolent movements as a means towards a more enabling environment for civil society.

List of acronyms

CSO	Civil Society Organisation
EEAS	European External Action Service
EC	European Commission
ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
EU INTCEN	EU Intelligence and Situation Centre
FSTP	Financial Support to Third Parties
INGO	International nongovernmental organization
INTPA	Directorate-General for International Partnerships
LA	Local Authorities
MEP	Member of European Parliament
MIP	Multiannual Indicative Programme
MMF	Multiannual Financial Framework
MSP	Multi-stakeholder Partnerships
NDICI – Global Europe	Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals