

## Former EU leaders call for more global ambition on MFF

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Ahead of the European Council on 18–19 June, 30 former leaders, Commissioners and Ministers are highlighting the importance of a strong Global Europe budget in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028–2034):



A dose of the pentavalent vaccine which protects against various diseases including Diphtheria, Tetanus and Pertussis (whooping cough). Gavi funded Kyumbi Health Centre, Machakos, Kenya. 23rd October, 2025.

*Article sponsored by The One Campaign together with Aidsfonds, Global Citizen, Resilience Action Network International*

Dear EU Leaders,

The current situation in the Strait of Hormuz illustrates how quickly supply chains, food security and economic stability can be affected by geopolitical shocks. The latest outbreaks of the Hantavirus and Ebola also underscore that new health threats risk outpacing investments in prevention, making us all less protected. These are not distant crises. They are reminders that Europe's security, prosperity and resilience are directly shaped by what happens beyond our borders – and by the strength of our partnerships.

We share a hope for a future where Europe continues to lead globally, acting as a principled, stabilising force for good. The European Commission has already set the level of ambition with a €200 billion proposal for the Global Europe budget. The whole MFF should be supported by a robust own resources decision covering at least €60 billion per year.

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**A more modern, strategic budget means recognising that external action can be an engine for Europe's competitiveness, delivering economic and strategic returns.**

Development investments are key for human and social development, but they go far beyond that. At a time when global competition for markets, resources, infrastructure, influence and alliances is intensifying, Europe cannot afford to retreat. Investing in partner countries helps build the stable markets, healthy and skilled workforces, resilient supply chains and trusted alliances that European businesses and citizens depend on. Research shows that these investments create mutual value: for every €1 invested in EU ODA, a €1 in increased EU exports is delivered.<sup>1</sup>

**European security also depends on sustained long-term investments in peace and development.** The stability of the Sahel matters not only for the region itself but is a direct concern for every EU Member State. Instability drives displacement and creates the conditions in which hostile actors increase their influence. These issues cannot be tackled through defence budgets alone. Effectively countering them requires predictable, long-term investment in human development, economic resilience and governance. A stronger Global Europe budget is therefore not separate from Europe's security agenda; it is one of its foundations.

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The negotiation of the next long-term budget will leave its mark on European history, determining whether the EU is properly equipped to navigate a more complex and unpredictable world. The question we must ask ourselves is not how much the EU can afford to spend overseas, but whether we can afford to fail to act. Defending an ambitious Global Europe budget and prioritizing investments in global partners is essential to reimagine a different future: one defined by peace, stability and shared prosperity.

Yours sincerely,

**Jean-Marc Ayrault**, former Prime Minister of France

**Jan Peter Balkenende**, former Prime Minister of the Netherlands; Club de Madrid Member

**José Manuel Barroso**, former Prime Minister of Portugal; former President of the European Commission

**Valdis Birkavs**, former Prime Minister of Latvia; Club de Madrid Member

**Simon Coveney**, former Tánaiste; former Foreign Affairs and Defense Minister of Ireland

**Corina Cretu**, former European Commissioner for Cohesion and Reforms; former Vice-President of the European Parliament

**Philip Dimitrov**, former Prime Minister of Bulgaria; Club de Madrid Member

**Philippe Douste-Blazy**, former Minister of Health of France; former Minister of Foreign affairs of France

**Benita Ferrero-Waldner**, former European Commissioner for Trade and Neighbourhood policy; former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria

**Paolo Gentiloni**, former Prime Minister of Italy; former European Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs

**Dalia Grybauskaitė**, former President of Lithuania; former European Commissioner for Financial Programming and the Budget; Club de Madrid Member

**Alfred Gusenbauer**, former Chancellor of Austria; Club de Madrid Member

**Eduard Heger**, former Prime Minister of Slovakia

**Ivo Josipovic**, former President of Croatia; Club de Madrid Member

**Pascal Lamy**, former European Commissioner for Trade

**Stefan Löfven**, former Prime Minister of Sweden; Club de Madrid Member

**Neven Mimica**, former European Commissioner for International Development and Cooperation; former Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia

**George Papandreou**, former Prime Minister of Greece; Club de Madrid Member

**Andris Piebalgs**, former European Commissioner for Energy, Housing and Development; former Deputy Prime Minister of Latvia

**Georgi Pirinski**, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria

**Iveta Radičová**, former Prime Minister of Slovakia; Club de Madrid Member

**Maria João Rodrigues**, former Minister of Employment of Portugal

**Petre Roman**, former Prime Minister of Romania; Club de Madrid Member

**Michel Sapin**, former Minister of Economy and Finances of France

**Marisol Touraine**, former Minister of Health and Social Affairs of France

**Jutta Urpilainen**, former European Commissioner for International Partnerships; former Deputy Prime Minister of Finland

**Adina-Ioana Vălean**, former European Commissioner for Transport; former Vice-President of the European Parliament

**Leo Varadkar**, former Taoiseach; former Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment of Ireland; Club de Madrid Member

**Heidemarie Wiecek-Zeul**, former Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany

**Valdis Zatlers**, former President of Latvia

<https://odi.org/en/publications/the-economic-impact-of-eu-aid-on-eu-economies/>

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*The political advertisement relates to the EU's proposed Global Europe budget and advocates for increased investment in international development, partnerships and external action, arguing that stronger funding for global cooperation supports Europe's economic competitiveness, security, supply-chain resilience and long-term stability.*