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On International Women's Day of 2025,

WIDE+ stands in solidarity with feminist human and environmental rights defenders in the Global South that witness the Official Development Assistance (ODA) drastically and rapidly being cut by European governments.

As a European feminist network of feminist activists and organizations, women's rights advocates, gender specialists, migrant women associations, as well as other NGOs that promote intersectional feminism as part of promoting human rights and sustainable development, WIDE+ opposes these recent cuts. They are a huge setback to achieving a sustainable world without the deep unequal patterns of, among others, racism, neo-colonialism and sexism, threatening lives and global progress.

Drastic cuts will not only have severe detrimental consequences for people and communities in the Global South, but they also disrupt global alliances and collaboration between organizations in which important social infrastructure has been built across people in Europe and the Global South. For instance, the cuts on ODA in the Netherlands, specifically on gender equality and women's rights, encourage a rollback of safe civil society spaces for women's rights defenders and those women and girls whose rights are being defended. The political choices signal to other countries and people in the Netherlands that protecting such spaces is no longer a priority.

These political choices are made in a context where ODA has already been manipulated, inflated and diverted for causes not strictly made for the purpose of the aid, as reported by CONCORD in its 2024 AidWatch Report. For instance, a widespread trend has been to register in-donor refugee costs as ODA or utilize the funds to support Ukraine.

On February 20th, the Dutch government announced structural spending cuts of 2.4 billion on development aid in 2027. The plans include significant cuts to projects focused on gender equality, education, climate, and other areas. Other European countries have followed suit. In Germany, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) will slash its budget again by a billion in 2025 and cut by 50% humanitarian aid. This is the implementation of the previous government's plans, as those of the new government have not yet been made public. In Italy, the budget draft proposes a 50% cut in humanitarian assistance. In Sweden, which used to be a leader in ODA, practically the only foreign country that is still receiving aid is Ukraine. France and the UK are on the same page, with the first planning a 1.3 billion cut in ODA this year, and the latter cutting its foreign aid budget to increase its annual defense spending.

These dangerous cuts in development cooperation and humanitarian aid have coincided with the rise to power of (extreme-)right-wing parties across Europe. While it is less often discussed in public debate, ultra-conservative movements share among them this tendency towards development aid 'denialism'. It is part of

the backlash from ultra-conservative factions across Europe that impact women and other genders by attacking gender equality, women's (sexual and reproductive) rights, and the rights of LGBTQI*, at a national level as well as in partner countries.

WIDE+ calls on European countries' parliaments and governments to reverse the budget cuts on ODA. Slashing development aid is a reckless move that deepens inequality, undermines global stability, and, in the case of gender equality, ignores the proven link between women's empowerment and guaranteeing their human rights and stronger and more prosperous societies.

[Find the statement on our website.](#)

Sitography

<https://www.developmentaid.org/news-stream/post/186310/how-will-major-aid-cuts-by-the-u-k-and-germany-impact-development-experts-opinions>

<https://concordeurope.org/2024/10/22/aidwatch-2024-whose-interests-does-official-development-assistance-truly-serve/>

<https://devex.shorthandstories.com/looking-back-at-a-slash-and-burn-year-for-european-aid/>

<https://www.globalcitizen.org/en/content/the-global-safety-net-frays-european-countries-cut/>

<https://www.communicologists.today/insights/anticipated-aid-budget-cuts-from-european-governments-in-2025-a-closer-look-at-oda-changes>

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<https://nltimes.nl/2025/02/20/dutch-govt-taking-netherlands-first-approach-development-aid>

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Women's Month & UN Commission Status of Women initiatives by members

Collectif des Femmes is joining the [Feminist village and Women's March in Brussels on 8 March](#).

Collectif des Femmes is hosting [a Feminist afterwork for Women's Day in Ottignies-Louvain-la-Neuve on 14 March](#).

GADIP will host a **Beijing +30 conference in May**. More information to be shared.

KULU will be [participating at the CSW](#) in New York.

WIDE Austria will be [participating at the CSW](#) in New York.

Silke Steinhilber has written an analysis ahead of the CSW: **Some light, plenty of shadow**. Available [in German](#) and [in English](#).

WO=MEN is supporting a Forum Event on 17 March: [A must need: women's political participation & representation](#), hosted by Latinas en Poder and Política



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