



Ivory Coast and the EU

Since 1961, the European Union (EU) has had preferential political and economic relations with Ivory Coast.

The EU's political and economic relations with Ivory Coast come under the Cotonou Agreement. The aim of this agreement, which was reviewed in 2005 and 2010, is to promote a common strategic approach to reducing poverty and gradually integrating African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries into the global economy. It establishes a bilateral political dialogue with the purpose of exchanging information, promoting common understanding and establishing mutual commitments.

Political relations

The EU has maintained its commitment to Ivory Coast despite periods of crisis and changes of government. This partnership, which is a long-term project, is based on a respect for shared fundamental interests and values. The EU has therefore shown a strong commitment to peace and democracy, particularly during the crisis that followed the 2010 elections, when it took steps to ensure that the democratic choice made by the Ivorian people at the polls was respected.

The EU is working closely with the Ivorian government to restore the country's status as a regional centre for stability and growth. It is supporting the government's efforts to achieve national reconciliation, strengthen the rule of law and good governance, and stimulate the country's social and economic recovery.

At a regional level, the EU is supporting Ivory Coast in its desire to regain its rightful place in regional and sub-regional bodies.

Economic relations

The EU is Ivory Coast's main trading partner and its main private investor.

From an economic and trade point of view, Ivory Coast, known as cocoa country, is a driving force in [ECOWAS](#), the Economic Community of West African States. Along with Ghana, it is also one of the main protagonists in the West African Economic and Monetary Union ([WAEMU](#)).

Under the Cotonou Agreement, trade relations are developing from a unilateral preferential scheme to Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), which establish reciprocal free trade between the EU and ACP countries.

Trade

On 26 November 2008, Ivory Coast and the EU signed a [Stepping Stone Economic Partnership Agreement](#) in advance of negotiations for the [Regional Partnership Agreement](#) (EPA) between West Africa and the EU.

The regional EPA was concluded in 2014, after ten years of talks, between 15 member states of ECOWAS and Mauritania, the WAEMU and the EU. Ivory Coast's stepping stone EPA was ratified by the National Assembly on 12 August 2016 and entered into provisional application on 3 September 2016.

The entry into force of this Partnership Agreement will allow ECOWAS countries to benefit from trade advantages. The agreement also contains provisions for a development partnership (the EPA Development Programme — EPADP) to support and prepare countries in the region for a gradual partial opening of markets.

As part of its development, with the support of the EU, Ivory Coast's government has implemented an ambitious "Programme d'Appui au Commerce et à l'Intégration Régionale" (trade and regional integration support programme), known by its abbreviation PACIR. This programme is helping to improve the business climate, make Ivorian companies more competitive and facilitate trade with tangible results.

In addition, the EU and Ivory Coast entered into a [Fisheries partnership agreement](#) for the period 1 July 2007 to 30 June 2013.

Technical and financial cooperation

The EU has a solid partnership with the Ivorian government, which is intended to be fundamental and permanent, regardless of any political changes or uncertainties. In 2016, it remains a key partner for Ivory Coast, with a portfolio covering areas as diverse as infrastructure, good governance, gender, health, agriculture, energy and humanitarian aid.

The [National Indicative Programme](#) (NIP) for the period 2014–2020 provides a budget of

EUR 273 million for Ivory Coast, divided between three main sectors:

- Strengthening the State and Peace-Building (EUR 60 million)
- Agriculture and Food Security (EUR 60 million)
- Energy (EUR 139 million)

The programme also includes specific budgets for measures to support and strengthen civil society (EUR 14 million for the period in question).

In addition to the contribution from the [European Development Fund](#) (EDF), specific sums for [protecting human rights](#) (European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights — EIDHR) and supporting civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) complete the range of tools made available to Ivory Coast by the EU.

Decisions on how community funds provided to Ivory Coast should be directed are made in partnership with the Ivorian government as part of the [National Development Plan](#) (NDP 2016–2020).

Civil society dialogue

Civil society is a key stakeholder in a participatory democracy. A strong, rich and diverse civil society is essential for social cohesion and for protecting rights and freedoms.

The EU helps to empower civil society by supporting Non-State Actors (NSAs) and the Leadership et Initiatives des Acteurs Non Etatiques (LIANE) (non-state actors' leadership and initiatives) project. The EU wants to see conditions established that will allow these civil society organisations to be involved in the country's political, economic, social and environmental development and dialogue.

Civil society organisations also have a role to play in implementing the Union's programmes and projects. Working with civil society makes it possible to promote local ownership of development processes at all levels, thereby ensuring that projects are implemented and followed up more effectively.

The EU has therefore developed a framework for dialogue and discussion with non-governmental organisations in Ivory Coast about fundamental issues such as protecting human rights, assessing humanitarian needs and strengthening democracy and good governance. This dialogue has allowed non-governmental organisations to play a key role, particularly in election observations, during presidential and general elections, and currently in reconciliation projects and projects to strengthen democracy and the rule of law. In the future, their contribution will be vital when future planning for cooperation between the EU and Ivory Coast beyond 2013 is considered.

Humanitarian aid

The EU is one of the largest humanitarian aid donors in the world. The EU's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, [ECHO](#), undertakes to provide meaningful aid to the victims of conflict and natural disasters. Meeting victims' essential needs while preserving their dignity is a moral imperative for the EU.

As such, the EU provided emergency humanitarian aid to Ivory Coast from the start of the post-election crisis in December 2010. Almost XOF 40 billion (EUR 60 million) was released to help the Ivorian victims of the crisis in Ivory Coast and the main neighbouring countries. This aid made it possible to provide fast access to healthcare, food, safe drinking water and shelter for people made vulnerable by the conflict. As a result of ECHO's contribution, almost 1.8 million people were able to benefit from this humanitarian aid.

ECHO opened a permanent office within the EU delegation in 2011 to allow it to continue to respond to the most urgent humanitarian needs while developing a medium-term recovery strategy, thereby creating a link between the emergency and development: the Partnership for Transition. The priority areas for intervention are primary healthcare, food security and support for livelihoods, and helping populations to return home (through education and social cohesion actions).

Documents

[Côte d'Ivoire - Programme indicatif national 2014-2020](#)

[Accord de Partenariat économique Intérimaire entre la Côte d'Ivoire et la Communauté européenne et ses Etats Membres](#)

[Côte d'Ivoire - Feuille de route de l'UE pour l'engagement envers la société civile 2016-2020](#)

See also

L'Accord de Cotonou

CEDEAO (Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique de l'Ouest)

Union économique et monétaire ouest africaine

Fonds européen de Développement (FED)

Accord de partenariat dans le domaine de la pêche entre la Côte d'Ivoire et l'UE

L'Instrument Européen pour la Démocratie et les Droits de l'Homme (IEDDH)

Site du Gouvernement de la République de Côte d'Ivoire

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