Nigeria and the EU

The Cotonou Agreement is the most comprehensive partnership agreement between developing countries and the EU. Since 2000, it has been the framework for EU relations with 79 countries from Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP), including Nigeria. It was first revised in 2005, then in 2010. This agreement constitutes the legal basis for the EU and Nigeria's partnership on political issues, development cooperation and trade.

Political relations

The political dimension of the relations between Nigeria and the EU is articulated in Articles 8 to 13 of the revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement. Article 8 in particular spells out the objectives and the key topics of the political dialogue.

Nigeria and the EU decided in 2008 to take their relationships to a new level through intensified dialogue and enhanced cooperation. Nigeria and the EU drew the main lines for a way forward to intensify their relations.

Nigeria – EU Joint way forward

In 2009, the EU and Nigeria formalized this commitment in the form of the Nigeria EU Joint Way Forward. They agreed to intensify their political dialogue and to hold at least a yearly senior officials' meeting and a Ministerial dialogue. The main areas of priorities identified for such dialogue are: Peace and security, good governance and human rights, economic development, including trade and regional integration, energy, environmental sustainability and climate change. Given the growing importance of Nigeria's influence in the region and in international fora, it was also agreed that the dialogue would cover regional and international cooperation, in addition to the domestic situation. The most recent meeting took place in in Brussels on 17th March 2016. Joint communique.

In parallel, the EU and Nigeria agreed to set up a local dialogue on migration and development, as per article 13 of the Cotonou agreement. The dialogue, supported by development cooperation and a Working arrangement with FRONTEX, aims at maximising the contribution of the very significant remittances and Diaspora to Nigeria's development and Transformation agenda, at preventing and reducing irregular migration and trafficking of human beings, and at organising and facilitating legal
migration and.

The dialogue allows exchanging information and identifying shared interests and practical measures of cooperation, to strengthen relations and build trust and commitment between Nigeria and the EU in this domain. The sixth session of the NG-EU dialogue on Migration Development took place on 20 March, 2013.

A local informal human rights dialogue was also established in 2009. It is held at least on a yearly basis. The latest and third session took place in 2013. It allowed the two parties to discuss a large range of issues, including death penalty, torture and extrajudicial killings, women's rights, children's rights and the protection of minorities. Cooperation in international fora, notably the UN Human Rights Council, was also discussed.

In addition to the local dialogue with the Nigerian authorities, the EU has decided to conduct at least a yearly consultation with human rights organisations. The first meeting was held on 10 February 2011. Civil society organisations are also able to benefit from financial support from the EU, including through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights. A new dialogue will be held in 2016.

At the Ministerial meeting, in January 2012, Nigeria and the EU agreed to set up a local dialogue on peace, stability and security. Although the dialogue still needs to be put in place, this subject was one of the priority points for the last ministerial dialogue in March 2016.

**Economic and Trade relations**

The EU constitutes the most significant trade partner for the whole ECOWAS region. It remains the top destination for Nigeria's oil and non-oil exports with trade volumes at €39.6 billion in 2014. Nigeria is also a key beneficiary of EU Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) with FDI stock growing from €25.3 billion in 2011 to €29.6 billion in 2013. Nigeria accounts for around half of the EU exports to the region and nearly 70 per cent of the imports. Of course, oil takes the biggest share but the EU also attracts more than 50 per cent of the Nigerian non-oil exports and is a key partner, through trade and investments, in the industrialisation of the country.

Nigeria's top exports to the EU are oil and gas, cocoa and preparations, skins and leather, fish and crustaceans, oil seeds, rubber, copper, wood and wood charcoal. In 2015, Nigeria's imports from Europe accounted for 13 per cent of its total imports for the year. Nigeria's imports were dominated by machinery and transport equipment, refined fuel, food and live animals.

The scope for improving trade relations with West Africa is significant and constitutes a driver for development that both parties recognise. This is why the EU and West Africa, and Nigeria within ECOWAS, are committed to the negotiations of a comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement.

Economic analysis and performances indicators show in fact that despite oil and raw materials currently dominating the Nigerian economy, sustainable development (i.e. increase in income and jobs for the for the long run) will mainly come from the non-oil sector (agriculture, of course, but also manufacturing and services). The EU constitutes a major opportunity for expanding Nigerian non-oil exports because of cultural and geographic ties as well as the respective competitive advantages.

In this context, the EU ECOWAS Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) constitutes a tool to transform West Africa into a global economic hub, with Nigeria at its centre. It thus represents an
extraordinary opportunity for Nigeria in its pursuit of Nigeria Transformation Agenda by attracting investment to the non-oil sector, through preferential access to international markets, economic governance and regional integration.

The benefits an EPA can bring are numerous:

- Duty free – Quota free exports to the EU = making West Africa a hub for global trade and investments;
- Stable regulatory framework for investors, reduced cost of doing business in West Africa and improved environment for Foreign and National Direct Investment;
- Job creation, especially in value added products and services benefiting to free access to Europe and regional market;
- Less imports dependence through the strengthening of value chains and manufacturing opportunities;
- Lower prices for West African consumers and industries;
- Safeguards for West African agriculture and infant industries;
- Simple and advantageous rules of origin (necessary to enjoy preferential treatment);
- Trade Facilitation and Co-operation in customs procedures, standards, sanitary and phyto-sanitary requirements;
- Co-ordination on major trade-related policies (competition, public contracts, investments, telecoms and services);
- An EPA Development programme (PAPED) focused on regional integration, trade infrastructure and competitiveness for which the EU has already committed €6.5 billion.

The conclusion of an EPA will be crucial in order to attain Nigeria’s ambition to become one of the 20 most developed counties by 2020 (Vision 20:2020).

The EU's commitment to Nigeria's trade development can already be seen in the privileged access to the EU for Nigerian goods under the Generalised System of Preferences and in its Aid For Trade initiatives targeted both to Nigeria and the West African region as a whole.

For more detailed statistics

- Nigeria statistics
- EU External trade statistics

On EPA

[ec.europa.eu/trade/wider-agenda/development/economic-partnerships/](ec.europa.eu/trade/wider-agenda/development/economic-partnerships/)

Video illustration -

Trade Helpdesk

The Trade Helpdesk is an online service, provided by the European Commission, to facilitate market
access in particular for developing countries to the European Union.

This free and user-friendly service provides relevant information required by exporters interested in supplying the EU market.

See video for more information -

**Market Access Data Base**

The [Market Access Database](#) (MADB), freely available to all economic operators throughout the EU and acceding/candidate countries via the Internet, was set up and has been progressively developed in order to meet the following needs:

- to provide basic information of interest to EU exporters (e.g. import duties, related taxes and documentary import requirements applicable in export markets, trade statistics, studies on market access related topics);
- to list all trade barriers affecting EU exports by country and by sector and to ensure systematic follow-up of the barrier identified and
- to provide an interactive means of communication between business and the European authorities, allowing an exchange of information on-line.

**Trade and development**

The European Commission adopts Communication on Trade, Growth & Development

**Cooperation**

Cooperation between the European Union and Nigeria aims to assist in the country's economic, political and social development. Such an ambitious goal calls for activity in a range of inter-related areas.

In the political arena, the EU and its member states play a prominent role in helping democratic rule in Nigeria to strengthen and flourish. Regular political dialogue with the Nigerian authorities ensures healthy and productive cooperation, covering regional as well as domestic issues.

On trade matters, regular dialogue with Nigeria, the region’s trading giant, is critical. Other issues of common concern, including such diverse issues as terrorism, migration, climate change, and vaccine-preventable diseases, are also subjects of regular discussion and cooperation with the relevant Nigerian bodies.

**Development Cooperation**

Development cooperation between the EU and Nigeria dates back to 1976 when Nigeria joined the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) group of states as a signatory to the Lomé Convention. However, this relationship was suspended in 1995 because of the execution of nine Ogoni rights activists, including playwright, Ken Saro-Wiwa, by the then military government.

With the return to democracy in 1999, relations between the EU and Nigeria were resumed. EU-Nigeria relations have since acquired a higher political profile through the holding of an EU Troika/Nigeria meeting at ministerial level in May 2004.
Regional Cooperation

The EU also supports the Economic Community of West Africa States (ECOWAS), with its headquarters in Abuja. This includes strengthening the efforts of ECOWAS to build a common market, based on a Custom Union and the principles of free movement of goods, people and services, as well as to foster democracy and to maintain peace and security in West Africa.

European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO)

ECHO supports international relief organisations operating in Nigeria. Since 2010, the European Union has funded humanitarian partners in providing emergency food assistance, health and protection to displaced people and victims of conflict, as well as in improving the community management of acute malnutrition.

Currently, the EU is focussed on providing the basic needs of those displaced in the north-eastern part of Nigeria. Furthermore, in order to increase delivery of coordinated assistance, the EU is advocating an increased presence of international humanitarian actors in Nigeria who are limited in number due to the volatile operating environment. Since the beginning of 2014, a total of €33 million has been allocated to humanitarian assistance in Nigeria.

Documents

Nigeria-EU Joint Way Forward
EU-Nigeria Ministerial Dialogue 2016 - Joint Communique
www.eeas.europa.eu

Source URL: