Somalia and the EU

This page provides an outline of the relationship between the European Union (EU) and Somalia in areas such as political, economic and trade relations, peace, security and humanitarian aid.

The EU has been Somalia’s partner since 2008 and has throughout stood with the people of Somalia, also during its darkest days when hope was in short supply. The EU is engaged in Somalia through a comprehensive range of instruments consisting of active diplomacy and support to the political process, stabilization and security support, development assistance and humanitarian aid focused on re-establishing peace and stability. The "New Partnership for Somalia (NPS)"), endorsed during 2017 London Conference and the "2017-2020 Somalia National Development Plan", form the basis of the EU's engagement in the country. With an overall EUR 3,4 billions allocated from 2015 to 2020 (EU and Member States), these efforts make the EU the largest donor to Somalia. Half of this EU assistance focuses on development aid and more particularly on security, state and peace building, education and economic development.

Political relations

The EU is engaged in Somalia through a comprehensive approach based on active diplomacy, support for political change, improving security, development assistance and humanitarian aid.

Somalia undertook political reforms in line with the New Deal principles for fragile states, which were agreed in 2011. The New Deal (2013-2016) has guided relations between Somalia and the EU and other international partners.

At the 2013 EU-Somalia summit, both parties endorsed the Somali Compact. The agreement provided a strategy for collaboration between the EU and Somalia. It sets out the five most important peace and state-building goals (PSGs) for the country:

1. Building inclusive politics
2. Security
3. Justice
4. Economic foundations
5. Revenue and services

EU support and funding for these and other development goals are guided by the National Indicative Programme for Somalia (2014-2020).

A new National Development Plan, Somali led-Plan, was endorsed at the SDRF meeting in December 2016 by the international community and regional states.

The EU plays a significant role in supporting Somalia’s efforts to become a peaceful, stable and democratic country and to take progressive ownership over its own national security. In 2020, Somalia aims at holding a multi-party universal election and deliver legislation that will pave the way to holding a historic one-person-one-vote election. It does so, for instance by political parties registration and protecting inclusivity, particularly in terms of ensuring equal participation and representation of women, youth, minorities and disadvantage groups in decision-making.

**Economic relations**

The EU is committed to helping Somalia develop a strong, sustainable economy which can support the country’s state and peace-building processes. Relations in this area are guided by the Somali Compact, New Deal process and the National Indicative Programme.

Objectives, priorities and actions are also closely linked to the Somali government’s Economic Recovery Plan.

EU engagement therefore aims to revitalise and expand the Somali economy with a focus on:

- Improving livelihoods
- Generating employment, and
- Encouraging inclusive growth.

Special attention will be paid to improving economic opportunities for women and young people, ensuring they have greater access to profitable, income-generating activities.

**Trade relations**

The EU does not have a lot of formal or direct trade with Somalia. The country’s main trading partners are the Gulf States and Yemen.

The Somali Reconstruction and Development Programme seeks an expansion of trade through the growth of processing industries for livestock and fish – and for small-scale industry, producing goods such as aromatic gums and honey.

To help Somalia expand its trading horizons, the EU’s National Indicative Programme is being deployed to improve productivity in the agricultural, livestock and fisheries sector. Programme interventions also seek to support growth by nurturing Somalia’s private sector and business environment.

Efforts to improve the country’s ability to trade are complemented by the Somali Compact. The Compact’s key objective of building strong economic foundations calls for improvements in the
productivity of high-priority sectors like agriculture, along with the rehabilitation and expansion of infrastructure crucial to trade.

**Peace and security**

The EU’s objective is to help Somalia become a peaceful, stable and democratic country, while tackling piracy and other international crimes.

EU work in this area is guided by the principles of the New Deal process and the Somali Compact and by the EU’s Comprehensive Approach as part of the EU’s Horn of Africa Regional Action Plan. These seek to:

- Achieve a stable and peaceful federal Somalia through an inclusive political process, and
- Establish unified capable, accountable and rights-based Somali federal security institutions which provide basic safety and security for citizens.

To help achieve these goals, the National Indicative Programme is providing €100 million for state and peace-building initiatives between 2014 and 2020.

In addition, the EU is one of the main contributors to AMISOM, the African Union’s peace mission to Somalia. The EU also responds to the county’s security challenges through three security and defence missions:

- The Military Training Mission (EUTM), which supports Somali security forces.
- The EU Naval Force (EU NAVFOR), which fights piracy, and
- EUCAP, which aims to improve regional maritime security.

**Development cooperation**

The EU is one of Somalia’s key development partners. Between 2014 and 2020, the EU’s National Indicative Programme for Somalia provides €286 million to help the country achieve its development goals. The programme has been drawn up to reflect the priorities of the Somali Compact.

Funds from the indicative programme have therefore been allocated as follows:

- State-building and peace-building - €100 million
- Food security and building resilience - €86 million
- Education - €60 million
- Measure in favour of civil society - €14 million
- Support measures - €26 million.

This funding is complemented by other allocations from the EU budget, covering specific issues such as: democracy and human rights, boosting local government, training, food security, and energy and water supplies.

With the AAP 2016 amounting to €97 million the NIP 2014-2020 has been committed. Therefore, an additional €200 million allocation for Somalia is expected to be approved in February 2017.
Humanitarian aid

The EU has supported humanitarian aid operations in Somalia since 1994. The help is much needed as the country has struggled with internal conflict and natural disasters for decades.

In 2016, the EU spent €46.5 million to support aid operations in the country, helping more than two million people. Support covers issues such as emergency preparedness and response, improving food security and health, raising levels of nutrition, and providing shelter, sanitation and water.

For more information visit the EU’s humanitarian aid operations webpage for Somalia. See also, this factsheet on aid to the country.

Documents

EU Delegation to Somalia Strategy 2017-2020
National Indicative Programme for Federal Republic of Somalia 2014 to 2020
The Somali Compact
Civil Society Strategy for Somalia
ECHO FACTSHEET
European Union Supporting the Somali New Deal
A joint Africa-EU Strategy
www.eeas.europa.eu

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