Africa and the EU

Europe and Africa have close historical, cultural and geographical ties. EU-Africa relations are based on the 2000 Cotonou Agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries, which grew out of the 1975 Lomé Convention.

Africa-EU relations are framed by the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) adopted by 80 African and European Heads of State and Government at the Lisbon Summit in 2007. This Strategy encompasses the Africa-EU Partnership, the political framework which defines bilateral relations. Its goal is a partnership between equals that will jointly tackle issues of mutual concern. It was reaffirmed with a positive spin at the 4th EU-Africa Summit held in April 2014 in Brussels.

Annual College-to-College (C2C) meetings between the European Commission and African Union Commission provide political guidance to transform this partnership into concrete cooperation. More or less all possible areas of cooperation are covered.

In adopting its 2014-2017 roadmap, the Brussels summit focussed the cooperation on five strategic areas:

1. peace and security
2. democracy, good governance and human rights
3. human development
4. sustainable and inclusive development and growth and continental integration
5. global and emerging issues.

This agenda is supported by the first ever African programme with a continental dimension: the Pan-African Programme (845 million EUR 2014-2020 under the Development Cooperation Instrument).

The next Africa-EU summit is foreseen to take place in Africa in 2017.

Cooperation

April 2015 : 7th meeting between the European Commission and the African Union Commission

This meeting boosted relations under the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy. Its aims were to:

1. strengthen the strategic partnership between the EU and Africa - a priority for the European Commission
2. take stock of current cooperation and discuss the 2 Commissions' priorities
3. discuss future cooperation. Discussions in plenary covered the 5 priorities on the current road map for the Joint Africa-EU Strategy

April 2014 : 4th EU-Africa Summit (Brussels)

- Participants - African and EU leaders, leading representatives of EU and African Union institutions.
- Theme - 'Investing in People, Prosperity and Peace' (opportunities for cooperation and expanding political, economic, investment and trade ties).

This summit confirmed both sides' commitment to the objectives set out in the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy. Leaders agreed to improve implementation through a roadmap for EU-Africa relations (2014-2017) covering 5 areas for joint action:

1. Peace & security
2. Democracy, good governance & human rights
3. Human development
4. Sustainable & inclusive development & growth, continental integration
5. Global & emerging issues

Since the EU-Africa Summit, the EU has been able to reflect the new priorities in its programming process.

2013 : The Pan-African Programme was set up

- Financed by - Development Cooperation Instrument
- Budget - €845m (2014-2020)

The European Commission has approved its Multiannual Indicative Programme for 2014-2017 and the first 12 projects to be implemented (with total funding of €107m). These include:

- migration
- higher education & research
- public finance management
- developing essential statistics

Peace & security

The EU works together closely with the African Union in this area. One illustration is the joint visit to Mali in February 2015 by the African Union's Peace and Security Council and the EU's Political and Security Committee.

The EU's African Peace Facility, which has a budget of €750m for 2014 - 2016, has provided much of the funding for African-led peacekeeping operations, as well for operationalising the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), helping to improve African capacities and mechanisms to prevent and manage conflicts and crises.

Main beneficiaries - peace support operations, e.g. the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA).
Migration

The April 2015 meeting between the European Commission and the African Union Commission discussed migration against the backdrop of the tragic loss of life in the Mediterranean. Participants called for comprehensive measures to tackle illegal immigration and human trafficking. The European Commission has now presented an action plan on migration.

Development & mitigating climate change

Other key cross-cutting topics discussed at the April 2015 meeting included the post-2015 agenda (and finance for development). Particular emphasis was placed on the need for joint efforts to achieve a good outcome, global pandemics and climate change.

The meeting adopted a Joint Declaration and 3 stand-alone documents dealing with (i) infrastructure, (ii) space, and (iii) agriculture.

Visit the Africa-EU Partnership website for documents on the meeting's outcomes.

The Joint Africa-EU Strategy

The Strategic Partnership established in 2007 in Lisbon has moved the Africa-EU relationship to a new level. Both sides agreed to pursue common interests and strategic objectives together, beyond the focus of traditional development policy. The two continents started cooperating as equal partners.

Since 2007, the Partnership has considerably extended the Africa-EU political dialogue and cooperation. Tangible results have been achieved through innovative working arrangements, illustrated by the establishment of the EU Delegation to the African Union in Addis Ababa, the participation of actors such as the European and Pan-African parliaments, civil society or the private sector and the broadening of the scope of the African Peace Facility.

The Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) defines the long-term policy priorities between the two continents, based on a shared vision and common principles. It is the political framework defining the relations between Africa and the EU. Its four main objectives are:

1. Improving the Africa-EU political partnership
2. Promoting:
   - peace, security, democratic governance and human rights
   - basic freedoms, gender equality
   - sustainable economic development, including industrialisation
   - regional and continental integration
   - ensuring that all the Millennium Development Goals are met in all African countries by 2015
3. Effective multilateralism
4. A people-centred partnership
The Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) is being implemented on a day to day basis through Action Plans which have reinforced the intercontinental dialogue and led to concrete action in many areas. The two successive action plans are structured around eight thematic areas:

1. Peace and Security
2. Democratic Governance and Human Rights
3. Regional Economic Integration, Trade and Infrastructure
4. Millennium Development Goals
5. Climate Change
6. Energy
7. Migration, Mobility and Employment
8. Science, Information Society and Space

The 2nd Action Plan (2011-2013) was adopted at the Africa-EU Summit which took place in November 2010 in Libya. The Summit also adopted the Tripoli declaration. This plan builds up on experience gained from the 1st Action Plan (2008-2010).

Legal frameworks and financial instruments

While the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) is the overall political framework defining continent to continent relations, the EU also maintains sub-regional and bilateral relations with African countries. These are defined by different legal frameworks.

All North African countries are part of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) and benefit from its financial instrument, the ENPI. Political dialogue with North African partners takes place in the framework of the ENP. The regional approach with North Africa is defined in the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership.

Relations with Sub-Saharan African countries take place under the legal framework of the Partnership Agreement with the African, Caribbean and Pacific States (ACP), the so-called Cotonou Agreement, as revised for the second time in 2010. The Cotonou Agreement covers both political dialogue and financial cooperation at the national and sub-regional level. Its financial instrument is the European Development Fund (EDF) - except for South Africa which is covered by the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI).

The EU has also decided to hold specific political dialogues at ministerial level with key partners, either countries (Nigeria, Cap-Verde, South Africa) or regions (The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), East and Southern Africa and the Indian Ocean, Central Africa and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The EU has developed regional strategies to provide a holistic response to problems in the Sahel, Gulf of Guinea and in the Horn of Africa.
Central Africa and the EU

The Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) for Central Africa covers relations with three regional organisations: CEMAC, CEEAC and CEPGL.

EU political dialogue in the region focuses on matters related to peace and security, such as the establishment of the African Peace and Security Architecture, security and development issues in the gulf of Guinea, and the ECCAS mission in Central Africa Republic, financed through the African Peace Facility.

The negotiations of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) and, more broadly, the support to regional integration represent another pivotal aspect of relations. Sustainable management of protected areas and forests is also addressed, given the importance of the Congo basin and its role in the fight against climate change.

Under the 10th EDF (2007-2013), the Regional Strategy Programme/Regional Indicative Programme (RSP/RIP) for Central Africa globally allocates €165 million to the region. It focuses mainly on three domains:

1. Economic and trade integration and accompanying measure for the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA's), for which €97 million are earmarked;
2. Management of renewable natural resources (€30 million), and
3. Political integration (€15 million). €15 million are allocated to the CEPG, on top of the €30 million financed under the East African Regional Indicative Programme.

The EU Gulf of Guinea Strategy and Action Plan

The EU Strategy and Action Plan for the Gulf of Guinea (GoG) takes an integrated approach linking security, governance and development challenges both offshore and onshore, along the 6,000km coastline from Senegal to Angola, including Cape Verde and São Tomé and Príncipe. It is framed in support of the commitments taken in June 2013 during the Yaoundé Summit. This was the first time a joint-Summit between two African regions (West and Central Africa) had taken place to tackle the complex and wide ranging challenges of maritime insecurity and organised crime. It led to the adoption of a Maritime Code of Conduct, a Memorandum of Understanding on Maritime Safety and Security, and the decision to set up an Intra-Regional Coordination Centre (ICC), now in place in Yaoundé, Cameroon. This whole framework is often referred to as the "Yaoundé process". All Member States of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) signed up to the "Yaoundé process" to address maritime criminality.

The EU GoG Strategy was adopted by EU foreign ministers in March 2014 and has 4 overall strategic objectives:

1. Building a common understanding of the scale of the threat in the Gulf of Guinea and the need to address it among the countries in the region and the international community.
2. Helping governments of the region build robust institutions, maritime administrations and multiagency capabilities to ensure maritime awareness, security and the rule of law along the
3. Supporting prosperous economies in this region in line with national and regional development strategies, to create employment and assist vulnerable communities to build resilience and resist criminal or violent activities.

4. Strengthening cooperation between the countries of the region and the regional organisations to enable them to take the necessary actions to mitigate the threats at sea and on land.

A year later in March 2015, the **EU-Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020** was adopted. It identifies key priorities at the regional and national levels to contain the maritime security risks and address the underlying causes. The Action Plan is structured around the 4 strategic objectives of the GoG Strategy and sets out 67 actions to be carried out over five years, for implementation by the European External Action Service (EEAS), Commission, and EU Member States. In 2016, the **first implementation report of the EU-Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020** was published.

**The threat and ongoing work**

Threats are interlinked and contagious across the Gulf of Guinea region. Challenges include a constant, rather than diminishing, threat from piracy and armed robbery. In 2016 we saw 3 times more attacks reported than in 2015, and so far in 2017 the trend does not seem to be diminishing. The attacks are sometimes very violent, with seafarers (including Europeans) having lost their lives. There is also widespread organised crime in the forms of trafficking and smuggling (humans, drugs, arms), with related money-laundering; illegal dumping of waste at sea; and the depletion of fisheries by illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing (IUU) - accounting for a loss of coastal states revenue of around $1.3 billion per year and severely compromising the food security and livelihoods of coastal communities.

Countries of the region rely heavily on maritime trade with the EU as their primary export market. On average there is a minimum of 35 EU flagged or owned vessels at any one time in GoG waters. Potential sources of instability and regional contagion are not diminishing with terrorism, kidnappings, and illegal migration succeeding through exploiting gaps in governance. Demographic changes, unemployment across the region (estimated at around 40% with over 60% among those under 30), energy finds, growing markets for business, and climate change, present both risks and opportunities for the region and the EU's interests.

Sophisticated and highly adaptable criminal networks operate across regions, erode state capacity, and may establish closer financial links with extremists. This increases the importance of taking a preventative approach. Improved maritime security and the resulting decrease in criminal activity will reduce economic migration and increase trade, stability and prosperity in the region. Input and commitment to our EU objectives across a wide stakeholder group is essential including with international partners like the US, Norway, Brazil and others; as well as with multilateral programmes under the UN, AU and NGOs and through international platforms like the G7++ Friends of Gulf of Guinea Group.

The Extraordinary African Union Lomé Summit, which took place in October 2016, is an important framework for developing the maritime domain as a driver of growth and for taking an African integrated approach in line with the **African Union’s AIM (Africa Integrated Maritime) 2050 strategy**. The Lomé Charter, which is to become binding as soon as ratified by at least fifteen signatory parties, deals with issues related to maritime crime prevention, development of the Blue Economy, cooperation at sea and surveillance. We hope it will provide an impetus to focus on tangible results that can make a difference, and which build on the existing Yaoundé process agreements and structures.
The **G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea** aims at fostering information sharing and coordination among regional actors in the Gulf of Guinea on issues related to maritime security and ocean governance. The European Union has been an active participant in these meetings, held twice a year. The meetings enable G7 countries, African countries of the Gulf of Guinea, regional and international organisations, NGOs and private organisations, to discuss, share information and develop a common strategy to fight piracy, armed robbery at sea and illicit activities in the waters of the GoG. In 2016, the **Lisbon Declaration** was adopted. In June 2017, the G7++ meeting signed the **Rome Declaration**, reiterating its commitment to promoting maritime security.

On 19 June 2017, the Council adopted the **Council Conclusions on Global Maritime Security**, addressing maritime security priorities as well as further engagement of the EU for maritime security. In relation to the Gulf of Guinea, the Council noted with concern the persistent presence of piracy, armed robbery attacks and increased kidnapping for ransom events in the Gulf of Guinea. For this reason, it welcomed the strengthening of EU ongoing capacity-building efforts and the contribution of the G7++ Friends of the Gulf of Guinea Group.

**Documents**

- Consolidated text of the Cotonou Agreement
- EU Strategy for the Gulf of Guinea
- EU-Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020
- First implementation report on the EU-Gulf of Guinea Action Plan 2015-2020
- 19th EU-ECOWAS Political Dialogue Meeting at Ministerial Level
- Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel

**See also**

- Delegation to the African Union
- African Union
- The Africa-EU Partnership
- Factsheet on EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa
- Africa’s Integrated Maritime Strategy (AIM)
- Oceans Beyond Piracy website and Gulf of Guinea map
- Yaoundé process
- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD)
- EU-ACP Trade relations
- Advancing African agriculture
- European Investment Bank
- EU ISS - Africa
- EU research and innovation - Africa
- The African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP)
- www.eeas.europa.eu

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