EU-South Africa Summit -100 years after the birth of Nelson Mandela

Exactly 100 years after the birth of Nelson Mandela, the 15th of November saw the EU-South Africa summit taking place in Brussels. South Africa is one of the European Union's ten Strategic Partners. Hence the summit represented a unique opportunity to build on Mandela's legacy and to assess the state of play of the whole range of issues under the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership.

During the summit, Leaders reinforced bilateral and regional relations, including the implementation of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership and the Economic Partnership Agreements. They discussed a number of foreign and security policy issues, including building peace and security in the African continent and at multilateral level, as well as opportunities for investment and job creation which are in mutual interest.

Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission and Donald Tusk, President of the European Council, represented the European Union at the Summit. South Africa was represented by its President, Cyril Ramaphosa. EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the European Commission, Federica Mogherini, Vice-President for Jobs, Growth, Investment and Competitiveness Jyrki Katainen and Commissioner for trade Cecilia Malmström also participated, alongside several Ministers from South Africa.
Advance multilateralism and rules based governance

Leaders recommitted to work together to support multilateralism, democracy and the rules-based global order, in particular at the United Nations and global trade fora. South Africa's upcoming term as an elected member of the United Nations Security Council in 2019-2020 was recognised as an opportunity to enhance cooperation on peace and security. As part of their commitment to stronger global governance, they stressed their support to the process of UN reform, including efforts on the comprehensive reform of the UN Security Council and the revitalisation of the work of the General Assembly. Leaders reiterated their determination to promote free, fair and inclusive trade and the rules-based multilateral trading system with the World Trade Organisation at its core and serving the interest of all its Members.

Bilateral cooperation

The Leaders agreed to step up collaboration in key areas such as climate change, natural resources, science and technology, research and innovation, employment, education and training including digital skills, health, energy, macro-economic policies, human rights and peace and security. The EU and South Africa will, amongst others, explore the opportunities provided by the External Investment Plan. They committed to exploring opportunities for investment, technical assistance including project preparation, and the improvement of business and investment climates to promote sustainable development. Leaders welcomed the conclusion and provisional implementation in 2016 of the EU-Southern African Development Community (SADC) - Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).

They also committed to find mutually acceptable solutions to impediments to trade in agriculture, agri-food and manufactured goods. They agreed to work towards a prompt resolution of these impediments.

Regional cooperation

The Leaders welcomed the new Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs put forward by the European Commission. They exchanged views on foreign and security policy issues, addressed a number of pressing situations in the neighbourhoods of both the EU and South Africa, and welcomed each other's contribution to fostering peace and security in their respective regions. They agreed to explore opportunities to enhance cooperation on peace and security, conflict prevention and mediation.

The Leaders confirmed common resolve to reform the future relationship between the EU and the countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States. To this end they are looking forward to the successful conclusion of negotiations for a post-Cotonou Partnership Agreement, that will contribute to attaining the goals of both the United Nations 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the long-term vision for African continent - Agenda 2063.

See also

EU-South Africa summit on the Council website
EU-South Africa Strategic Partners - factsheet (EEAS)
EU-South Africa trade (European Commission)