The African Union and the EU

Relations between the European Union (EU) and Africa cover areas such as peace and security, democracy, human rights, development and sustainable economic growth.

The 5th African Union – European Union Summit held in Abidjan in November 2017 defined four main areas of cooperation for the coming years:

1. Investing in People
2. Strengthening Resilience, Peace, Security and Governance
3. Migration and Mobility

Investing in People - education, science, technology and skills development

Science and Technology

EU-Africa cooperation in science, technology and innovation (STI) aims to encourage collaboration between European and African researchers — and to develop a long-term innovation partnership.

Investments in STI are also vital to promote growth and employment, improve competitiveness and address global societal challenges such as:

- climate change
- renewable energy and energy efficiency
- health
- food and nutrition security.

The EU-Africa High-Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on STI is a forum that defines and agrees on shared priorities. The HLPD has identified Food and Nutrition Security and Sustainable Agriculture (FNSSA) as the first shared priority.

These priorities will be addressed through various funding instruments, such as the EU’s Horizon 2020 programme for research and the African Union Research Grants programme.

Between 2007 and 2013, the EU’s 7th Framework Programme for Research (FP7) fostered EU-Africa
STI cooperation by funding around 600 collaborative research projects involving some 1,400 participants from 45 African countries. Examples are available online.

The EU also sponsors the Kwame Nkrumah Scientific Awards, which recognise leading African scientists.

**Higher Education**

Key objectives of Africa-EU cooperation in the area of higher education are:

- promoting the mobility of African and European students, scholars, researchers and staff;
- harmonisation of higher education in Africa;
- enhancing quality assurance and accreditation in African universities;
- the development of centres of excellence in Africa, particularly through the Pan-African University;
- Promoting young peoples' contribution to educational policies and innovative practices.

The EU supports mobility of students and staff from, to and within Africa through different programmes:

- the African Union Mwalimu Nyerere Scholarship Scheme;
- the Intra-Africa Academic Mobility Scheme;
- the Erasmus+ programme;
- the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions.

**Tuning Africa** is a joint EU-Africa project that aims at improving the quality and harmonization of African higher education and supporting students' employability and mobility across the continent through close collaboration in programme design for key subject areas among universities from different African countries.

The EU also partners with the AU in the implementation of the Harmonization, Quality Assurance and Accreditation (HAQAA) Programme to support the development of a harmonized quality assurance and accreditation system, as well as transparency and the recognition of qualifications at institutional, national, regional and Pan-African continental level.

**Strengthening Resilience, Peace, Security and Governance**

**Peace and Security**

The partnership between the African and European Union and their Member States aims at building a peaceful, safe, and secure environment, which fosters:

- human security
- political stability
- effective governance
- sustainable and inclusive growth.

The AU - EU summit in Abidjan of November 2017 confirmed that Africa and EU face common security threats, which have an impact on the stability of our two continents.
The African Union leads efforts across the continent to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. The EU is a key partner for the AU on peace and security issues. Work in these areas has strong political backing and financial support from the EU’s African Peace Facility (APF) as well as other financing instruments.

The EU also supports the ongoing AU reform efforts which will make the African Union a stronger and more effective organisation. The increased self-financing through the 0.2% levy and the revitalisation of the Peace Fund will enable both Unions to put more emphasis on a strategic partnership, focusing on political coordination and cooperation.

**Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Peace, Security and Governance**

An AU-EU Memorandum of Understanding was signed in May 2018 to provide a solid and structured basis for the two Unions' partnership on peace and security.

Through the MoU, the AU and the EU envisage to promote an integrated approach to conflicts and crises through the better use of joint strategies and of early warning systems, focusing on fragility, human security, human rights, and recognising the need for increased coherence and greater synergies between development, humanitarian, governance and peace-building activities.

Specifically, the MoU intends to:

- ensure the regular exchange of information
- foster closer cooperation and coordination of activities
- promote the development and implementation of joint activities
- facilitate coordination and enhance cooperation between the AU, EU and UN and its agencies, as well as other relevant international organizations.

As part of the implementation of the MoU, it is foreseen to hold yearly Ministerial meetings, and to hold regular consultations at Senior Officials level twice a year.

**EU PSC and AU PSC Cooperation**

Cooperation between the EU Political and Security Committee (EU PSC) and the AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) is a key element of AU-EU peace and security dialogue. The objective is to address international issues, reach common positions and implement joint approaches on challenges to peace and security of common interest to Africa and Europe.

The EU PSC and AU PSC meet on an annual basis in Brussels or in Addis Ababa. The Permanent Chair of the EU PSC and the monthly Chair of the AU PSC are in regular contact and their teams ensure the flow of information between the two organisations.

**African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)**

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) of the AU is a rules-based mechanism that provides the necessary political oversight, legitimacy and legal foundation for interventions in Peace and Security to take place. The EU is the leading supporter of APSA.

In response to a request by African leaders, the APF was created in 2004 as an innovative instrument which provides the main source of funding to support APSA. Substantial EU funding has been committed under the APF to support a range of actions including:

- peace support operations
• capacity building
• conflict prevention.

The EU provides assistance to African institutions in the area of crisis prevention and peace building through exchange of technical guidance, training and equipment.

The AU Continental Early Warning System is benefiting from the EU's support and cooperation. The EU also backs other flagship initiatives of the APSA such as the Panel of the Wise and the PanWise Network. All these actions work towards the AU objective of Silencing the Guns by 2020 in Africa.

**Counter Terrorism, Organised Crime, Drugs and Maritime Security**

Europe and Africa are increasing their cooperation to address issues of common concern, such as:

• terrorism and related threats;
• transnational organised crime including trafficking of human beings, drugs and weapons;
• the illegal trade in wildlife.

The EU, AU and their respective Member States are developing a coordinated approach to the issue of maritime security including counter-piracy efforts, and the fight against illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing. These actions are carried out under the African Integrated Maritime Strategy 2050 and the EU Integrated Maritime Policy.

The AU-EU Maritime Ministerial Meeting which took place in the Seychelles at the end of 2015 helped to raise awareness of threats posed by criminality at sea.

**Human Rights and Conflict**

The EU and the AU are committed to strengthening cooperation to improve human rights. The focus is on protecting civilians and on ending sexual violence, in particular with regard to women and children. The full and effective participation and representation of women in peace and security processes is a key priority.

The EU and its countries are among major providers of assistance to children affected by armed conflict. This means:

• offering substantial help to demobilise and reintegrate child soldiers;
• helping child victims through psycho-social and socio-economic reintegration;
• supporting transitional justice;
• involving children in prevention activities.

**EU-Africa cooperation on the fight against illicit proliferation of SALW**

In 2010, the EU launched a project which addresses the proliferation of firearms and explosive materials in Africa. The project aims to establish regional and continent-wide coordination on small arms and light weapons (SALW).

Results achieved so far include:

• development of action plans to reduce SALW;
• increased cooperation between law enforcement agencies;
• improvements in record keeping.
See also: EU strategy to combat proliferation of SALW

**Governance and Human Rights**

The Joint Africa-EU Strategy identifies Democratic Governance and Human Rights as a priority area for dialogue and joint action. Both parties believe that democracy can only be attained through the establishment of strong accountable institutions as well as an active and organized civil society.

The November 2017 Abidjan Declaration by African and European Heads of State and Government recognizes the need to increase confidence in democratic processes and to pursue cooperation on effective, inclusive and accountable governance at all levels as well as combatting corruption. It also recognizes that civil society, media and democratic institutions have an important role to play.

**African Governance Architecture**

The overall political and institutional framework for the promotion of democracy, governance and human rights in Africa is called the **African Governance Architecture** (AGA). The AGA is composed of three principal pillars:

- **AU legal commitments, treaties**, charters, protocols and other instruments.
- **AU organs and institutions** which have responsibilities and mandates on governance, democracy and human rights.
- The **African Governance Platform**, which is the coordinating arm of the AGA — established in 2012.

EU support to the AGA and the deployment of AU instruments are being provided via:

- the Programme on 'Strengthening the African Human Rights System' (€10 million of funding);
- the 'AU Support Programme' (with €4 million earmarked for the AGA);
- the 'Civil Society Programme' (€20 million).

**Africa’s Human Rights System**

The African Human Rights System is composed of the following elements:

- legal commitments and treaties;
- **state bodies** that administer different instruments;
- **supervisory bodies** that monitor, interpret, decide and offer recommendations regarding human rights violations;
- **non-governmental organisations** that bring cases, provide information, and make recommendations to the system.

The **African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights** (ACHPR) is mainly responsible for promoting and protecting human rights. The EU has supported the ACHPR’s special mechanisms in areas such as women’s rights and freedom of information.

The **African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights** is a judicial body that can adjudicate human rights complaints and issue binding decisions. The Court has become increasingly significant as the main African body to protect human rights.

The **African Committee of Experts on the Rights and Welfare of the Child** promotes and protects the rights and welfare of children. It also assesses specific country situations and regional/continental problems, makes field visits, and produces reports and general comments.
The Pan-African Parliament is the AU’s legislative body with advisory and consultative powers. The Parliament’s primary role is to promote the ratification and implementation of the AU treaties and legislative acts.

Civil society is the primary catalyst for the African human rights system. As civil society develops expertise on particular issues, it can play an advisory role and offer technical and legal expertise to AU institutions.

AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue

The AU-EU Human Rights Dialogue is an annual meeting dating back to 2008. The event is a high-level forum for sharing experiences and best practices on human rights issues with a view to enhancing AU-EU cooperation and coordination.

News from recent Dialogues:

- November 2013 — 10th Dialogue
- November 2015 — 11th Dialogue
- January 2017 - 12th Dialogue
- November 2017 - 13th Dialogue
- October 2018 - 14th Dialogue

Elections

The Abidjan Declaration highlights the integrity of elections, abiding by national constitutions as important democratic parameters and the need to pursue our significant cooperation on election observation.

The adoption of a number of legal instruments has confirmed the commitment of the AU to strengthening its role in promoting and protecting the integrity of elections at the regional level. In 2006, the African Union Council’s Democracy and Electoral Assistance Unit (DEAU) was established with a mandate to:

- coordinate and organise the AU’s observation of elections;
- implement the African Union Commission's (AUC) programme for the promotion of democracy and democratic elections in Africa;
- provide technical and capacity-building support to AU members.

The AU has a standing mandate to observe all elections in AU countries. Since 2013, and in addition to short term observers, the AU has also deployed several long-term observer missions as well as pre-election assessment missions.

Through the Pan African Programme, the EU has provided €6.5 million to support AU election observation.

Culture

The Abidjan Declaration recognizes culture as a powerful tool to build bridges between people, notably the young, and an engine for sustainable economic and social development. The AU and the EU will promote policies to support intercultural dialogue as well as emerging and innovative arts and cultural production, while promoting and preserving all art forms in their respective societies. We will support young people working in creative industries.
Environment and Climate Change

Identified as clear common interests in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, environmental sustainability and combatting climate change continue to be priorities for the AU and EU, and key factors in building resilience.

On the eve of the 2014 EU-Africa Summit, a Joint Ministerial EU-Africa Statement on Climate Change was adopted. In this Statement, African and EU leaders confirmed their resolve to seek common positions in negotiations taking place in forums like the Paris Climate Summit.

Climate for Development in Africa (ClimDev) is a joint initiative of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Development Bank (AfDB). ClimDev was established by the EU in 2007 to foster cooperation on climate change with developing countries.

Monitoring for Environment and Security in Africa (MESA) and Global Monitoring of Environment & Security (GMES) are EU-AU programmes funded through the European Development Fund, with the aim of increasing the information management, decision-making and planning capacity of the African institutions responsible for environment, climate and food security. Jointly implemented with the European Commission's Directorate-General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW), the Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), these programmes foster collaboration between European and African specialized centers to use the European Copernicus programme as a major source of data, information, and technological know-how for delivery of climate services across the entire African continent.

Building Disaster Resilience in Sub-Saharan Africa (DRR) is an EU initiative which aims to accelerate the effective implementation of the African Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy and the Sendai Framework Programme of Action for Africa.

Finally, the Action Against Desertification (AAD) Programme contributes to the implementation of the Great Green Wall Initiative, a flagship programme of the African Union to restore degraded African drylands. Implemented in six countries, the project aims to strengthen links between the resilience of the natural resource base and livelihoods.

Migration and Mobility

Migration, mobility and employment

The key objectives of Africa-EU cooperation in the area of mobility, migration and employment include fostering connections between migration and development.

This can be achieved by:

- reducing the cost of remittances;
- improving the organisation of labour mobility;
- enhancing cooperation to address people trafficking and irregular migration;
- collaborating on international protection and asylum.

The 5th AU-EU Summit built on the 2014 Joint EU-Africa Declaration on Migration and Mobility.
The collaboration between the EU and Africa is underpinned through several dialogues:

- The Migration and Mobility Dialogue (MMD) is steered by a core group of European and African countries and organisations that oversee the implementation of the Declaration’s Action Plan.
- The Rabat Process was established between the countries concerned by the 'West African migration route' including migration to Europe from northern, central and western Africa.
- The Khartoum Process was launched in November 2014 and aims to prevent and tackle human trafficking and the smuggling of migrants between the Horn of Africa and Europe.
- The African Union Horn of Africa Initiative (AU-HoAI) was launched in October 2014 with the adoption of the Khartoum Declaration on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants.

The Valletta Summit on Migration also reinforced existing dialogues and structures.

Furthermore, the AU and the EU are starting the AU-EU Structured Dialogue on Migration, to address the following cross-continental issues: Demographic trends in Europe and Africa relevant for migration; Data collection and analysis for policy development; Return, readmission and reintegration; Asylum and Protection (with specific focus on persons in vulnerable situations); Trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants; Diaspora and remittances; Mobility and legal pathways.

The EU has many migration relevant instruments:

- The EU Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) addresses the root causes of irregular migration and displaced people in Africa. It was formally launched at the Valletta Summit in order to support 23 African countries in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel Region, the Lake Chad Region and the North of Africa. The Fund currently stands at €1.9 billion. The June 2018 European Council announced the intention to replenish the EU Trust Fund with €1 billion, with €500M coming from the European Commission.

With support from the EU, the African Institute for Remittances (AIR) was formally launched in November 2014. It aims to ensure African remittances will be used as development tools for poverty reduction by making remittance transfers to and within Africa, cheaper, safer, faster and easier.

In January 2015 the AU Summit adopted the Joint Labour Migration Programme (JLMP) for Africa. The JLMP is a comprehensive programme on labour migration governance for Africa.

The 5th AU-EU Summit also established a Joint AU-EU-UN Taskforce, with the aim to save and protect lives of migrants and refugees along the Central Mediterranean route and in particular inside Libya. The three parties have since then met regularly, both at technical and political level, accelerating the assisted voluntary returns to countries of origin, and the resettlement of those in need of international protection. This action builds on, expands and accelerates the ongoing work done by countries of origin, and the IOM, with EU funding. The joint efforts have enabled the voluntary evacuation, to their countries of origin, of more than 15,000 stranded migrants in Libya. The work of the Task Force is closely coordinated with the Libyan authorities and will be part of the overall joint work that the AU, EU, and UN will intensify to dismantle traffickers and criminal networks, and to offer opportunities of development and stability to countries of origin and transit.

**Mobilizing Investments for African structural sustainable transformation**

Private Investment
The EU and Africa identified the private sector as a key partner in development and the promotion of continental integration and trade in their joint Roadmap 2014-2017 and reiterated the commitment to promote private sector investment in Africa during the 5th AU-EU Summit.

Representatives from European and African business communities use the EU-Africa Business Forum (EABF) to discuss challenges and propose ways to engage the private sector in sustainable and inclusive growth. The 6th EU-Africa Business Forum was held in 2017 and addressed a wide range of areas in which enhanced cooperation could further encourage the participation of the private sector.

EU initiatives such as the European External Investment Plan (EIP), as an integral financing mechanism, aim at crowding in investments from financial institutions and the private sector, complementing other similar de-risking instruments. This will focus on value-adding, human investment and skills sectors with the highest potential for sustainable job creation and low-emissions climate resilient and sustainable development, such as agriculture, agro-business, manufacturing, the ocean economy, the circular economy, infrastructure, sustainable energy and digitalization, thereby assisting African countries to implement their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) to the Paris Agreement. The EIP was adopted in September 2017 to help boost investment in partner countries in Africa and the European Neighbourhood. It supports investment in partner countries through an integrated approach by: 1) mobilizing finance - through the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD), including through a new guarantee to reduce risk (EFSD Guarantee) and through the blending of loans and grants by the mobilization of the Blending facilities (Africa Investment Platform and EU Neighbourhood Investment Platform); 2) providing technical assistance to help prepare investment projects and support implementation of both projects and reforms; and 3) improving investment climate and business environment.

Infrastructure and Continental Integration

According to the AUC Medium-Term Plan 2018-2023 "Delivering AU Reforms and Accelerating Agenda 2063", infrastructure is the cornerstone of the African economy. Investment in infrastructure accounts for over half of the recent improvement in economic growth in Africa and has the potential to achieve even more. Africa has undergone fundamental changes over the last decade, which in turn has fueled demand for infrastructure services including energy, transportation, ICT, water supply, growing agriculture and urban infrastructure. Infrastructure is a key ingredient for sustainable development. However, infrastructure continues to be rated as one of the most important constraints for Africa’s development.

Against this backdrop, the EU and Africa pursue intense dialogue to increase investment in infrastructure, services and regulatory reforms to develop efficient and sustainable regional infrastructure networks. During the 5th AU-EU Summit, both sides committed to "promote intra-African trade, advance greater economic integration and support the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) and the implementation of the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) to create the regional infrastructure necessary for continental interconnection".

The cooperation focuses on the four PIDA sectors: Energy, Transport, Water and Information and Communication technology (ICT).

It also addresses specific flagships such as the Africa Renewable Energy Initiative (AREI), the AU-EU Energy Partnership (AEEP), seizing the opportunities of technological development and the digital
economy, further developing sustainable connectivity, building on the PIDA, NEPAD programmes and the AU Agenda 2063 flagship projects, NEPAD Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative (PICI), promotion of the full implementation of the 1999 Yamoussoukro Decision with a view to establishing and strengthening a Single African Air Transport Market.

Within the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), major contributions have been made to infrastructure development, and significant results have been achieved in the four key infrastructure sectors. Under the framework of the JAES, the "Reference Group on Infrastructure (RGI)" brings together the European and African Union Commissions, AU and EU Member States, Financial Institutions, Regional Economic Communities and Sectoral/Thematic Institutions with the aim to provide strategic orientation to the infrastructure agenda of the Africa-EU Partnership.

**Trade**

The EU and Africa have identified inclusive development, growth and continental integration as a strategic priority for dialogue and joint actions during the period 2018-2020. Continental integration in Africa remains a major building block of the Africa-EU Partnership. The EU is the major international partner supporting the establishment of Africa's [Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)](https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/geo-regions/africa/cfta/).

During the 5th AU-EU Summit, both sides committed to "promote intra-African trade, advance greater economic integration and support the establishment of the African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)."

Africa and the EU are actively engaged in dialogue on their respective experiences in regional economic integration, the creation and governance of regional trade blocs, and Africa’s integration into the global economy.

The EU and a majority of African countries have agreed to engage in [Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs)](https://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/geo-regions/africa/epas/) opening a new era in EU-Africa trade relations. This era is marked by strong potential for job-creating growth and major opportunities to boost Africa’s regional economic integration.

North African countries also trade with the EU via their Association Agreements. They are engaging in expanding the scope of these agreements via the negotiation of Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreements (DCFTAs).

The AUC, African regional organizations and their respective member states are engaged in efforts to boost trade between African nations. The EU has been a key partner supporting initiatives on:

- customs cooperation and trade facilitation
- African quality infrastructure
- improving productive capacities and the investment climate
- providing economic statistics in Africa.

**Agriculture, Food Security and Food Safety**

EU-Africa cooperation in agriculture, food security and food safety takes place at different levels. Most of the financial support is provided at country and regional levels through cooperation between the EU and individual African countries and Regional Economic Communities (RECs). At continental level, cooperation is mainly framed around the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP).
Until 2015, the EU was the main contributor to the World Bank-managed CAADP Multi-Donor Trust Fund (MDTF). Since then our contribution is channeled to the African Union budget via the AU Support Programme.

The EU approach is evolving towards more direct support to the AUC and the New Partnership for African Development (NEPAD), in parallel with enhancing policy dialogue. In this regard, direct support is being provided to the AUC to facilitate CAADP coordination at continental level, as well as in areas such as:

- Sanitary and Phyto-sanitary Standards (SPS)
- Plant Health Issues
- Geographical Indications (GI)
- Organic Agriculture.

**Animal Resources** play a crucial role in agriculture, food security and food safety across Africa. Institutional support is therefore provided to the AUC and the technical offices which deal with the issue.

A **Contact Group on Sustainable Agriculture, Nutrition, Food Security and Safety** meets regularly to strengthen technical dialogue, enhance cooperation and inform political discussions.

**Land Policy and Nutrition**

Until 2017, the EU was the main supporter of the Land Policy Initiative (LPI), which contributes to improved efficiency, equity and environmental stewardship.

LPI is an initiative developed by the AUC, the African Development Bank and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA). The initiative has produced important policy documents including the African Union Guiding Principles on Large Scale Land Based Investments in Africa (LSLBI).

**EU-Africa cooperation on nutrition** aims at building capacity at different levels as well as reinforcing the AUC's role in the continental coordination and governance of nutrition.

**See also**

The Joint Africa-EU Strategy  
The EU-Africa Roadmap 2014-2017  
Joint Communiqué of the AU PSC and EU PSC  
www.eeas.europa.eu

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