

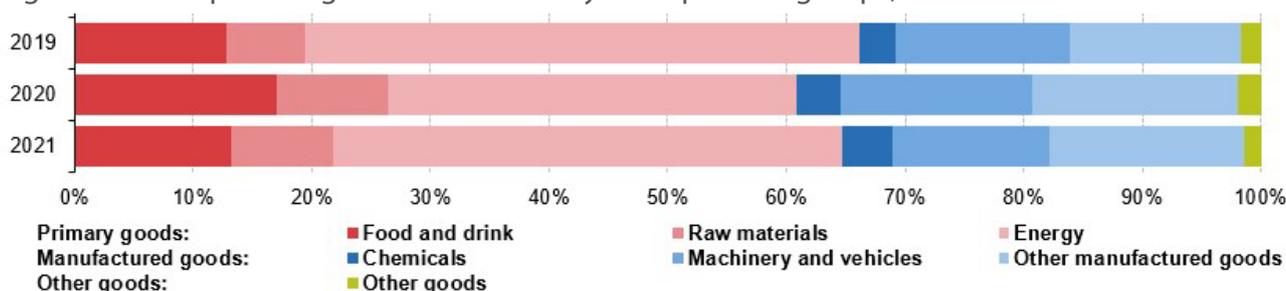
The future of EU-Africa trade relations

The European Parliament is due to discuss ways to foster ethical and sustainable trade relations with African countries during its June II plenary session, in a context of global challenges compounded by the coronavirus pandemic and Russia's war on Ukraine.

Background

In 2020, the EU Member States together were the [first trading partner](#) of Africa collectively, ahead of China. The EU represented a third of Africa's trade exchange with the world (33 % of Africa's exports and 31 % of its imports – intra-Africa trade excluded). Access to the EU market is facilitated by preferential arrangements ([GSP](#), generalised scheme of preferences), currently [being reviewed](#), and various [trade agreements](#): association agreements with North African countries, and economic partnership agreements with Sub-Saharan Africa's blocs of countries (in place or in an ongoing adoption/ratification [process](#)). [Trade exchange](#) between the EU and Africa is, however, imbalanced, in the sense that most EU goods exported to Africa are manufactured goods (68 % in 2021), while those represent only 34 % of African exports to the EU (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 - EU imports of goods from Africa by main product groups, 2021



Source: [Eurostat Comext DS-018995](#), accessed 10 June 2022.

European Parliament position

In the June II plenary session, Parliament is to discuss changes affecting EU-Africa trade relations, namely but non-exhaustively: increased competition with emerging countries, notably [China](#), on the African market; the ramping up of the African continental free trade area ([AfCFTA](#)) aimed at promoting Africa's industrialisation and better [integration in global trade](#); the EU's efforts to [promote](#) ethical and sustainable trade relations (better [compliance with the European Green Deal](#), better monitoring of [conflict minerals](#) and [deforestation-associated products](#), [due diligence recommendations](#)); and disruption or perturbations in global supply chains, first triggered by the [Covid-19 pandemic](#), then by [Russia's war on Ukraine](#), with a serious impact on Africa's [food security](#). Members will vote on a resolution, based on a [report](#) drafted by the Committee on International Trade (INTA), with opinions from the Committees on Agriculture (AGRI) and on Development (DEVE). This report considers that a full commitment to the EU-AU '[Joint Vision for 2030](#)' is key to achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It calls on the EU to help African countries deal with the impact of the pandemic and of the war on Ukraine, debt distress, illicit financial flows and tax evasion. It also calls for stronger EU support for Africa's integration into the global economy, with investments aimed at building robust industry and a sustainable and resilient economy.

Own initiative procedure: [2021/2178\(INI\)](#); Committee responsible: INTA; Rapporteur: Helmut Scholz (The Left, Germany).

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