

Future partnership between the EU and the African, Caribbean and Pacific states ('post-Cotonou')

OVERVIEW

The Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries expires in February 2020. The main challenge for the EU is to maintain its relations in the region while remaining faithful to the values set out in the European Treaties. The renegotiation of the Cotonou Agreement provides an opportunity to streamline relations between the ACP countries and the Union, taking into account the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the redefining of Europe's strategies in the regions concerned, the new ambitions of the ACP countries and changes in the balance of power at a global level. The question of financing is also on the table.

The EU sees promoting prosperity, stability and good governance in the ACP countries as a way of helping to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement.

The ACP Group adopted its negotiating mandate in May 2018. The European Union adopted its negotiating mandate in June 2018, proposing a common 'Foundation' supplemented by specific protocols with the three subregions. The negotiations began in September 2018.



New Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States

Committee responsible: Development (DEVE)

Rapporteur: To be appointed

Introduction

Relations between the Member States of the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries are managed under the Partnership Agreement signed on 23 June 2000 by the then 15 Member States and 77 ACP countries; the agreement was revised in 2005 and again in 2010. Commonly known as the [Cotonou Agreement](#), it is now binding on the 28 EU Member States – Cotonou was part of the Community acquis incorporated by the new Member States – and [78 ACP countries](#)¹. The Cotonou Agreement will expire on 29 February 2020 in accordance with Article 95 thereof. After that date the parties will no longer be bound by its provisions and therefore a new partnership will need to be drawn up. Since 2000, the relationship has faced important new challenges, such as increased [migration flows](#), [climate change](#) and [terrorism](#), while EU preferential trade treatment for ACP countries has been challenged by the WTO.

The increase in economic and political power of the middle-income countries, especially China, has changed the equation as far as [development cooperation](#) is concerned. According to some analysts, the EU has lost some of its influence because the [African](#), [Caribbean](#) and [Pacific](#) countries can seek funding from donors that are less demanding in terms of human rights and democratic governance². Nevertheless, the ACP countries remain committed to the partnership with the EU and to the European Development Fund (EDF), which provides predictable resources on a multiannual basis.

Existing situation

The ACP-EU partnership, which covers a fifth of the world's population, is unique in many respects:

- It is based on a treaty between the 28 EU Member States and 78 ACP countries and is therefore legally binding;
- It covers all aspects of the relationship with the primary objective of 'reducing and eventually eradicating poverty' (Article 1): development cooperation, political dimension and economic and trade cooperation, implementation of which is now largely devolved to [economic partnership agreements](#) (see box below);
- It refers explicitly to 'all human rights and fundamental freedoms' and to democratic principles based on the rule of law, and sets out penalties for non-compliance with those principles (Article 9). The dispute settlement mechanism is more elaborate and binding than in other international agreements (Article 96);
- Its institutional architecture consists of a Council of Ministers, a Committee of Ambassadors and a [Joint Parliamentary Assembly](#) (JPA) (Articles 14 to 17);
- It receives funding through the [European Development Fund](#) which is set out in advance on a multiannual basis and is separate from the EU budget. The EDF is funded by direct contributions from EU Member States and has a total budget of EUR 30.5 billion for the period 2014-2020 (11th EDF). The Member States' contribution to the EDF is not proportional to their contribution to the EU budget.

The revision of the partnership was the subject of a [public consultation](#) between October and December 2015. On the basis of the results of that consultation, targeted interviews and contributions from the relevant European services, the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) issued a [joint evaluation](#) in July 2016. The key findings³ of that analysis are as follows:

- Financial support under the development assistance part of the agreement has contributed to poverty reduction. Budget support has had a positive impact on access to basic health and education services, but the quality of those services needs further improvement. In some African sub-regions, the evaluation found a quality gap in education.

- The various forms of [political dialogue](#) (Articles 8 and 9) at national or regional level to assess the partners' priorities and develop cooperation strategies have not been used effectively to promote common interests in international fora, despite some successes, such as the [common positions](#) on the implementation of the global climate agreement. The Commission and the EEAS recognise that political dialogue has not always managed to bring about improvements in [human rights](#) and democracy.
- Economic and trade cooperation has boosted trade, although its precise impact is difficult to quantify. The evaluation found that regional integration has been promoted through the negotiation of regional economic partnership agreements (see box below).

Economic Partnership Agreements: the focus on regionalisation

Under the previous agreement (Lomé IV, 1990-1999), the ACP countries benefited from preferential tariff arrangements on trade with the Member States of the European Community. That 'geographical' preference was in fact a derogation from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade: under the 'most favoured nation' principle, the preferential treatment granted to the ACP states should also have benefited other countries with a similar level of development. This is why the Cotonou Agreement included a provision on the negotiation of [Economic Partnership Agreements](#) (EPAs) in accordance with World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.

Negotiated at sub-regional level (Caribbean, Pacific and five groupings of African countries), the EPAs each have different trade clauses⁴ and are not all in force. Several analysts consider that the Cotonou Agreement, by providing for such differentiated trade agreements, laid the foundations for the [fragmentation of the ACP-EU partnership](#). Moreover, the ACP countries have not been able to fulfil their commitment to [negotiate collectively](#) on issues of mutual interest relating to the EPAs. The ACP Group was unable to conclude a framework agreement and the EU's willingness to negotiate directly with the regional sub-entities prevailed.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa believes that the African EPAs could have a negative impact on [intra-African trade](#). This impact could however be mitigated by the implementation of the [African Continental Free Trade Agreement](#), which was signed by 44 countries in March 2018. In his 2018 State of the Union address, the President of the European Commission expressed the wish to 'develop the [EPAs] into a [continent-to-continent free trade](#) agreement'.

- Although Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement provides for cooperation in the area of migration, the joint evaluation notes that other initiatives, going beyond the ACP-EU framework⁵, are more appropriate fora for addressing the root causes of migration.
- The EU approach towards the three ACP sub-regions is clearly differentiated. For instance,
 - in terms of security, the EU is a leading player in Africa, where there is more political violence, but not in the Caribbean or the Pacific. The EDF is used to finance projects that clearly do not concern the countries of the Caribbean or the Pacific, through instruments such as the [African Peace Facility](#);
 - Africa also benefits from the [EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa](#) set up in 2015 to respond to the migration crisis.

EU negotiation objectives

European Commission and EEAS

On the basis of the evaluation of the Cotonou Agreement, the European Commission and the EEAS published a [joint communication](#) at the end of 2016 outlining their vision for the future partnership. The envisaged scenario, which was included in the December 2017 [recommendation for a Council decision](#) authorising the opening of negotiations, recommends a general agreement ('Foundation') between the EU and all the ACP countries, with specific protocols with Africa, the Caribbean and the

Pacific, respectively. The regional protocols would take into account the differing interests of each of the three components and the EU's strategic interests in each of them. The 'Foundation' concerns issues of common interest or for which geographical differentiation is not relevant, such as climate change, human rights, respect for democratic principles and the rule of law.

The Commission and the EEAS argue that it is in the EU's interest to foster stability, resilience and prosperity in its partners in order to avoid 'negative spill-over effects on the security and economic prosperity of the EU and its citizens' and to address the root causes of irregular and forced migration. The EU's objectives are based on six priorities:

1. Promoting peaceful and democratic societies;
2. Spurring sustainable and inclusive growth and decent jobs;
3. Managing migration and mobility in order to turn them into opportunities;
4. Fostering human development and dignity;
5. Protecting the environment and fighting climate change;
6. Upholding common interests in global fora.

Member States and the Council of the EU

Development cooperation is a [shared competence](#) of the EU and its Member States. For the 13 Member States that joined the EU after 2000, the discussion on the post-Cotonou era is their first opportunity to have a say on the future of ACP-EU relations. However, these new members do not have such strong ties with these regions as the 15 Member States that ratified the agreement in 2000, 10 of which had had colonies in the current ACP countries. The [future withdrawal of the United Kingdom](#) from the EU ('Brexit') could also have an impact on the balance of powers and the level of funding, given that many ACP countries have close ties with the United Kingdom, particular in the area of trade.

The Member States have endorsed the principle of a legally binding and comprehensive partnership. The EU mandate proposes extending the partnership beyond the ACP countries to Latin America and North Africa, but the practical arrangements would still need to be defined. The main point of disagreement between the Member States concerns migration policy. Discussions on this subject [delayed the adoption](#) of the negotiating mandate. The Member States are also [split](#) on incorporating the European Development Fund in the EU budget, in particular because this 'budgetisation' would affect them financially in different ways. This aspect of the partnership is not part of the formal negotiation of the new agreement but will certainly be addressed in the discussions (see 'Negotiation process' below).

The European Parliament's position

Parliament pays close attention to the development of [ACP-EU cooperation](#) through its Committee on Development (DEVE). It also plays a key role in the institutional framework of the agreement, through the 78 MEPs participating in the JPA, alongside 78 parliamentarians from the ACP countries. The entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009 changed the rules of the negotiating process: the European Parliament will have a [bigger role](#) in preparing the next ACP-EU partnership as its approval will be required before the texts setting out the new partnership are concluded.

On 14 June 2018, Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) on the upcoming negotiations on a new partnership agreement between the EU and the ACP countries. In line with its previous positions, Parliament endorsed the main aspects of the Commission proposal, including the legally binding nature of the common foundation and the regional protocols. Parliament adopted the following recommendations:

- The partnership should focus on the UN's 2030 Agenda and on combating poverty. It should support sustainable agricultural development in the face of climate change;
- The chapter on human rights should explicitly list the types of discrimination to be tackled (sexual, ethnic, religious, etc.) and include sexual and reproductive rights;

- Political dialogue should be strengthened and have a strong monitoring mechanism;
- The points on the management of legal migration should be more ambitious in order to compensate for the importance placed on tackling illegal migration;
- National parliaments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector should be more involved in the programming, monitoring and assessment of the partnership's priorities.
- The parliamentary dimension should be strengthened. The Joint Parliamentary Assembly should be 'closely associated with the implementation of the agreement', and the regional protocols should provide for annual meetings between MEPs and parliamentarians from the countries concerned, with a strong role for the Pan-African Parliament in the EU-Africa protocol.

In a [resolution](#) of October 2016, Parliament also called for:

- The Economic Partnership Agreements to be fully integrated into the new partnership and subject to scrutiny as regards respect for human rights and social and environmental standards;
- The European Development Fund to be included in the EU budget. Parliament also wanted the African Peace Facility to be financed outside the EDF and new migration-related projects not to be financed from development funding.

Preparation of the agreement

On the EU side

Included in the Commission's annual work programme since 2015, the revision of the partnership was the subject of a [joint communication](#) by the Commission and the EEAS in November 2016, based on their evaluation of July 2016 (see above: 'Situation at present').

The Commission and the EEAS proposed a new partnership based on a common foundation and three regional protocols, in order to take into account EU's new strategic interests and the differentiated evolution of the three components of the ACP Group (see table below). The [impact assessment](#) accompanying the joint communication ruled out the idea of having a single agreement or of not having a common foundation. The ACP countries had previously been informed of this approach through the [high-level facilitators](#) appointed by the European Commissioner for Development.

The Foreign Affairs Council discussed the Commission's recommendation at its meeting on [22 January 2018](#) and endorsed the principle of a common foundation combined with three regional protocols. It adopted its [negotiating directives](#) on 21 June 2018.

Table 1 – Outline of the new partnership proposed by the European Union

Nature and scope
<p>Main objectives</p> <p>The proposed agreement will seek to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'build peaceful ... and resilient states and societies'; 'bolster investment, support private sector development'; 'enhancing regional integration'; 'supporting the transition to low greenhouse gas emissions'; 'eradicating poverty'; 'effectively combating terrorism'; 'reaping the benefits of well-managed migration'; 'stemming irregular migration'; respecting 'in full' international agreements on 'human rights, fundamental freedoms and democratic principles'; facilitating 'common positions on the world stage'. <p>The form proposed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'a [common] foundation and three regional partnerships'; 'the Agreement will be open to [...] third countries' and 'will take into account the specific concerns of the EU's Outermost regions and Overseas Countries and Territories'; 'the Agreement will build on and strengthen the core values and principles of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement'. <p>Institutional architecture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 'adapted, effective, lighter and flexible'; 'a clearer division of labour between national, regional and sub-regional actors'; 'the role of parliaments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector' will be strengthened.
Foundation
<p>Common provisions</p> <p>The common provisions ('an integral part of the priorities of each regional partnership') set out the objectives detailed above. These objectives will be 'underpinned by a legally binding system' and will be subject to a 'regular political dialogue'.</p> <p>Strategic priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title I – Human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, the rule of law and good governance; Title II – Human development and dignity (social services, gender equality, food security, resilience, scientific and cultural cooperation); Title III – Sustainable and inclusive economic development (including development of private investment); Title IV – Environmental sustainability, climate change and sustainable management of natural resources; Title V – Peace, security and justice (integrated cooperation against causes and effects; cooperation with the International Criminal Court); Title VI – Migration and mobility ('to achieve measurable results in terms of stemming irregular migration' and to 'commit to adopting effective integration policies'). <p>International cooperation</p> <p>This part sets out the agreement 'to use or to establish appropriate coordination mechanisms to best cooperate in the context of the United Nations, the World Trade Organisation and other international settings'. In this context, association with other partners is envisaged.</p>

Regional partnerships (protocols)		
EU-Africa	EU-Caribbean	EU-Pacific
<p>Building on the Africa-EU Strategy, it gives a stronger role to dialogue with the African Union and takes account of relations with the countries of North Africa, the EU's outermost regions (ORs) and the overseas countries and territories (OCTs).</p> <p>Priority areas: peace and stability; human rights, democracy and good governance; human development; sustainable and inclusive economic development; mobility and migration; climate action and sustainable management of resources and urbanisation.</p>	<p>Replaces the EU-Caribbean Strategy and takes into account the ORs and OCTs, which may be given an observer role in the partnership. The situation of Haiti, which is the only 'least developed country' in the region, is highlighted.</p> <p>Priority areas: climate action, biodiversity and action to prevent natural disasters and mitigate their effects; combating crime (including financial crime); good governance and social cohesion.</p>	<p>It systematises existing relations and also takes into account the region's OCTs, which may be given an observer role in the partnership.</p> <p>Priority areas: climate action and biodiversity; the sustainable economy linked to the sea (fisheries, aquaculture), energy and trade; maritime safety; measures on tax havens; gender equality, human development and social cohesion.</p>
Diversified cooperation		
<p>The agreement will encourage the mobilisation of 'financing and other means of implementation from all available sources (public/private, domestic/international)' and will ensure the effectiveness of development aid.</p> <p>The EU will resolve to 'focus its financial assistance where it is most needed and can have most impact, particularly the LDCs and countries in situations of fragility and conflict'.</p> <p>ACP countries will need to undertake to 'increase the efficiency and effectiveness of their public expenditure [and] improve on revenue collection', tackle corruption, fraud, tax evasion and illicit financial flows, 'including in tax havens'.</p>		
Institutional framework		
<p>The management of each regional partnership will be entrusted to a regional ministerial council. The strategic guidelines will be determined by summits of Heads of State or Government. Each partnership will have a parliamentary dimension and mechanisms for dialogue with local authorities, civil society and the private sector. The regional organisations will be assigned a 'prominent role' in governing the regional partnerships.</p> <p>The governance of the Foundation will be entrusted to an 'EU-ACP Ministerial Council', meeting 'in principle every three years'; the secretariat of the ACP Group and the Joint Parliamentary Assembly are not explicitly mentioned.</p> <p>Provision is made for a dispute settlement mechanism.</p> <p>Third countries may accede to the agreement; for the EU-Africa Partnership, the countries of North Africa (non-ACP) will be able to be involved in the decisions.</p>		

Source of information and quotes: Council of the European Union, [negotiating directives](#).

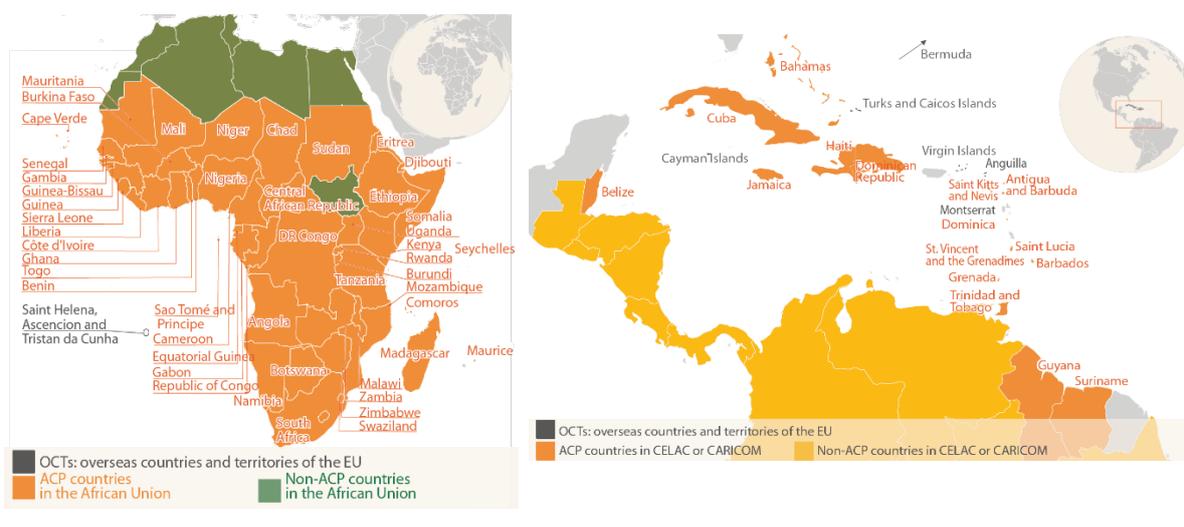
On the ACP Group's side

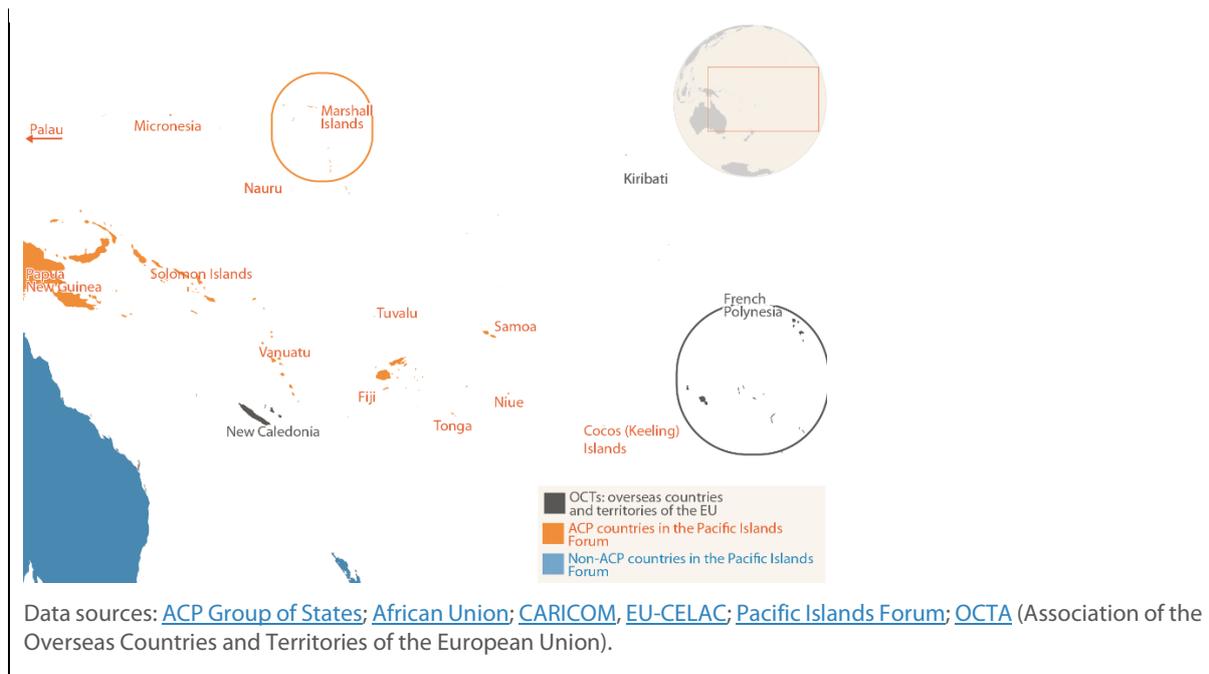
As part of a reflection process begun at the Sipopo meeting (Equatorial Guinea, 2012), the Heads of State or Government of the ACP countries have reaffirmed their commitment to remaining [united as a Group](#) and to developing South-South relations. The ACP Heads of State or Government wish to strengthen the [financial autonomy](#) of the ACP Group by establishing an endowment fund and other forms of development financing.

The ACP Group adopted its [negotiating mandate](#) in May 2018. The Group has expressed its attachment to having dedicated funding, with multiannual allocations, i.e. a mechanism similar to the current EDF. On many points, the negotiating mandate of the ACP Group coincides with the Commission proposals. However, there are two aspects where it takes a very different line from the Commission:

- on the form, it does not propose a 'framework agreement' with regional protocols, but a **single agreement**⁶ with three pillars: (i) trade, investment and services; (ii) development cooperation, science and technology, research and innovation; (iii) political dialogue and defence of rights;
- on the substance, as far as migration management is concerned, the ACP Group's negotiating mandate calls for a greater focus on intra-ACP migration, a stipulation in the future agreement that return to the country of origin should be on a **voluntary basis** and the use of development aid as a means of negotiating border control to be precluded⁷.

Maps – Membership of the ACP Group does not overlap with membership of other regional groupings





Negotiation process

The negotiations are being led by [Robert Dussey](#), Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration of Togo, for the ACP Group, and by [Neven Mimica](#), European Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, for the EU. They were officially launched on [28 September 2018](#).

Several 'technical' negotiation sessions have been held. Details on the points of agreement and the challenges of the negotiations are not public, but the chief negotiators provided a communication on the results agreed at political level on [14 December 2018](#), [4 April](#) and [23 May 2019](#).

- A first round of negotiations which began in October 2018 saw agreement reached on the methodology of the negotiations, the status of the future agreement and its general structure: the principle of a Foundation and regional protocols has been agreed by both parties.
- A second round of technical negotiations was launched on 25 January 2019, which focuses on the content of the Foundation and on some of the strategic priorities. Negotiations at the level of the three regional components were officially launched on 4 April 2019. High-level dialogue between negotiators for the EU and the [Pacific](#) (on 26 February 2019), the [Caribbean](#) (on 15 April 2019) and Africa (on 3 May 2019) respectively had previously addressed the possible priorities of each regional protocol.

The negotiation of separate regional agreements should provide for consistency with the strategies established following the Cotonou Agreement (EU-Africa, EU-Caribbean, EU-Pacific Partnership). These strategies could have been an appropriate framework for discussing the future regional protocols. In particular, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy has proved useful as a platform for political dialogue on security, migration and sustainable development. However, these strategies include countries which are not members of the ACP Group and which are not directly involved in the ongoing negotiations. Although the EU has proposed to put more focus on relations with the countries of North Africa, the overseas countries and territories and the outermost regions in the context of the future ACP-EU partnership, the organisations representing them (see maps) have only a technical support and observer role in the ongoing negotiations.

Negotiations should continue at least until October 2019. The negotiators expect that a new agreement will not be ready before the Cotonou Agreement expires at the end of February 2020, and have provided for [transitional arrangements](#) to extend it. The [signing ceremony](#) for the new agreement will take place in Samoa.

The changes the agreement would bring

At this stage in the negotiations, the form of the new partnership has not yet been determined. The considerations set out below are speculative⁸.

As regards the definition of **common values**, some ACP countries might be reluctant for the Foundation agreement to mention recognition of the role of the [International Criminal Court](#) or [LGBTI rights](#). On the latter point there are also [differing views](#) among EU Member States.

The issue of migration is [clearly reinforced](#) in the current EU proposal. The negotiating mandate states that the future agreement will need to reflect international commitments on refugee protection, and that the parties will 'commit to adopting effective integration policies' for those who reside legally on their territories. On the subject of irregular migration, the EU is seeking to strengthen cooperation on border management and on the fight against the trafficking of migrants, and wants a more binding legal obligation to readmit irregular migrants. The ACP negotiating mandate, on the other hand, proposes that the 'return and readmission processes to the country of origin should be on a voluntary basis'.

The ACP chief negotiator has said that the [migration issue](#) should not overshadow other topics of discussion, such as industrial development in ACP countries.

Both negotiating mandates state explicitly that the future ACP-EU agreement must enable the UN's **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** to be achieved. The aim will be to maintain the [features](#) of the current agreement that already reflect the spirit of the SDGs, such as the focus on human development and the fight against climate change. Other aspects need to be improved. As the main donor, the EU has greater [negotiating power](#) than the ACP countries on the Cotonou priorities to be implemented. In the spirit of [SDG 17](#), a better balance must be struck between the partners – in particular by identifying the ACP countries' own funding resources. The same goal calls for greater involvement of civil society and local authorities. Making this participation more effective will, in many countries, require overcoming a reluctance on the part of central government, tackling weaknesses in the administrative apparatus and improving the training of civil society organisations on negotiating technical issues.

The respective roles of the existing institutions – the joint EU-ACP institutions, the institutions of the ACP Group, or regional institutions such as the African Union – [remain to be determined](#). In their November 2016 Communication, the Commission and the EEAS described the joint ACP-EU institutional framework as having been 'useful to share experiences', but 'too heavy and cumbersome', and the Council's negotiating mandate clearly favours decision-making and implementation at regional level. The ACP could be reluctant to delegate powers to African, Caribbean or Pacific regional authorities; nor would those authorities necessarily be willing to join the ACP coordination bodies. The [African Union](#) has made known its wish for the agreement with Africa to be 'separate from the ACP context'. The Commission has suggested that EU relations with the ACP countries and the various regional organisations to which they belong should be based on the 'principles of [subsidiarity and complementarity](#)'. These third parties could be granted observer status in the bodies of the new partnership.

Finally, while it is not part of the negotiations on the future partnership, the future of the **European Development Fund**, the 11th cycle of which ends in 2020 at the same time as the Cotonou Agreement, is also on the table. Discussions on the forms its renewal might take, its particular place in relation to the external policy financing instruments integrated into the EU budget and the means of control will also help to shape the forms of the new partnership⁹. Significantly, the Commission's

proposal for the [2021-2027 multiannual financial framework](#) envisages the integration of the EDF into the general budget of the EU, with derogations from the budget annuality rules to reflect one of the specific features of the EDF, which is that unspent funds can be rolled over from one year to the next instead of being repaid to the general budget. However, the ACP Group and [some EU Member States](#) have expressed reservations about this model, which they believe would run the risk of removing the 'ring-fencing' of funding earmarked for the ACP countries.

Stakeholders' views¹⁰

ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly

In its [December 2015 resolution](#) on the forty years of partnership, and in declarations in [2016](#) and [2018](#), the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) welcomed the ACP-EU framework as an essential tool for mutual understanding, while calling for it to be adapted to the SDGs. The JPA approves the regional differentiation and treatment of Africa as a 'single entity', as proposed by the EU. The Assembly defends the specific features of the European Development Fund – cooperation in drafting programming documents and predictability of resources – but also highlights the need for better management of public resources and the need to find alternative sources of financing, particularly from the private sector. The JPA wants the national parliaments and civil society to be better involved in preparing and implementing the future partnership. The Assembly foresees a 'strengthened JPA in a post-2020 ACP-EU partnership' and 'regrets' that the Commission and the EEAS did not mention it in their communication of November 2016.

Civil society

Concord, a [consortium of development NGOs](#), has stressed the need to include clear references to other international commitments, including the SDGs, in the Foundation. Key elements relating to human rights, conflict prevention and combating climate change should be explicit, with clear accountability mechanisms also applying to the economic partnership agreements. The organisations also called for specific and binding provisions on the involvement of civil society, as the positions of principle on this subject contained in the Cotonou Agreement produced nothing meaningful. On the issue of regional partnerships, the NGOs agree with the broad thrust but are concerned about the Commission's overly prescriptive position concerning the content, when this is something that should be defined by all stakeholders during the negotiations.

The European Trade Union Confederation and the International Trade Union Confederation have published a [common position](#): they want the new partnership to promote decent work, freedom of association and a reduction in pay inequalities. The two confederations believe these principles should be at the core of the chapters on trade and investment. They are calling for the economic partnership agreements to be renegotiated, in particular to introduce binding provisions on labour law, based on the ratification and effective implementation of the International Labour Organisation [conventions](#).

BusinessEurope, which brings together [European business and employers' associations](#), considered the current Cotonou Agreement to be incapable of ensuring the economic development of the ACP countries and strengthening the presence of European companies in their markets. The association wants to see [more private sector involvement](#) in the future partnership and greater use of EU funds for direct support to the private sector, rather than for budget support.

EP SUPPORTING ANALYSIS

Legislative Train Schedule: [Post-Cotonou: towards a renewed partnership with the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific](#), EPRS, European Parliament, updated monthly.

Kononenko V., [A renewed partnership with the countries of Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific](#), Initial appraisal of an impact assessment, EPRS, European Parliament, April 2018.

Other documents published by Parliament on [ACP-EU relations](#) and on the [economic partnership agreements](#) are available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/thinktank>.

OTHER SOURCES

[Timeline: steps towards a new EU-ACP partnership after 2020](#), main documents from the Council, the European Commission and the European External Action Service.

Council of the European Union, [Negotiating directives for a Partnership Agreement between the European Union and its Member States of the one part, and with countries of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the other part](#), 21 June 2018.

[ACP Negotiating Mandate for a post-Cotonou partnership agreement with the European Union](#), adopted on 30 May 2018 by the 107th session of the ACP Council of Ministers, held in Lomé (Togo).

NOTES

- ¹ See maps. East Timor joined the ACP Group and the partnership when it became independent in 2002; the process for South Sudan to accede to the ACP Group, which started in 2012, has not yet been finalised. Two members of the ACP Group are not bound by the Cotonou Agreement: Cuba, which has not signed the agreement, and [Sudan](#), which has not ratified the 2010 revision. However, both countries are taking part in the negotiations on the future agreement.
- ² Case studies show this analysis needs to be nuanced: see A. Were, [Debt trap? Chinese loans and Africa's development options](#), SAIIA, 2019 and the notes [in the second edition of this briefing](#).
- ³ See a more detailed summary in the [first edition of this briefing](#) or the evaluation itself ([Joint staff working document – Evaluation of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement](#), 15 July 2016).
- ⁴ See the European Parliamentary Research Service [studies](#) on the various Economic Partnership Agreements.
- ⁵ Such as the EU Global Approach to Migration and Mobility ([GAMM](#)), the [European Agenda on Migration](#) and the [EU-Africa Valletta Action Plan](#). Policy consultations and strategy coordination take place in the framework of the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (the [Rabat Process](#)) and the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (the [Khartoum Process](#)), which brings together EU Member States, African countries – including in North Africa – and third countries.
- ⁶ [ACP Group negotiating mandate](#), May 2018, parts II and III.
- ⁷ [Ibid.](#), points 156 to 159.
- ⁸ This briefing will be revised as the negotiations progress.
- ⁹ On the discussions on the European Development Fund, see: D'Alfonso A., [European Development Fund: Joint development cooperation and the EU budget: out or in?](#), EPRS, European Parliament, November 2014, and more recently [External Evaluation of the 11th European Development Fund \(EDF\)](#), European Commission, June 2017 and [The next Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\) and the Unity of EU budget](#) European Parliament, November 2017.
- ¹⁰ This section aims to provide a flavour of the debate and is not intended to be an exhaustive account of all different views expressed. Additional information can be found in related publications listed under 'EP supporting analysis'.

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Third edition. The briefings on 'International Agreements in Progress' are updated at key stages in the ratification procedure.

For previous versions of this briefing, see [PE 630.280](#), November 2018.