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DRAFT REPORT

on the conclusion of the Partnership Agreement between the European Union,
of the one part, and the members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and
Pacific (OACPS) States, of the other part
(2021/2213(INI))

Committee on Development

Rapporteur: Tomas Tobé

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

**on the the conclusion of the Partnership Agreement between the European Union, of the one part, and the members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific (OACPS) States, of the other part
(2021/2213(INI))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Article 21 of the Treaty on European Union,
- having regard to the draft Council decision on the conclusion of the Partnership Agreement between the European Union and its Member States, of the one part and the Members of the Organisation of the African, Caribbean and Pacific States, of the other part, signed in Samoa on 15 November 2023 (the Samoa Agreement),
- having regard to the Georgetown Agreement as revised by Decision No 1/CX/19 of 7 December 2019,
- having regard to the ‘Joint Vision for 2030’ adopted at the 6th European Union-African Union Summit in February 2022,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 16 September 2021 entitled ‘The EU strategy for cooperation in the Indo-Pacific’ (JOIN(2021)0024),
- having regard to the outcome of the EU-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) summit held in July 2023,
- having regard to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),
- having regard to the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development of July 2015,
- having regard to the Agreement adopted at the 21st Conference of the Parties (COP21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris on 12 December 2015 (the Paris Agreement),
- having regard to the joint statement by the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission of 7 June 2017 entitled ‘The New European Consensus on Development – Our World, Our Dignity, Our Future’¹,
- having regard to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in 1994 in Cairo and its programme of action, as well as the conclusions of its

¹ [OJ C 210, 30.6.2017, p. 1.](#)

review conferences, and to the 2019 Nairobi Summit (ICPD+25) celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Cairo conference,

- having regard to Regulation (EU) 2021/947 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 June 2021 establishing the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe, amending and repealing Decision No 466/2014/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Regulation (EU) 2017/1601 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 480/2009²,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 1 December 2021 entitled ‘The Global Gateway’ (JOIN(2021)0030),
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 4 October 2022 entitled ‘Youth Action Plan (YAP) in EU external action for 2022-2027 – Promoting meaningful youth participation and empowerment in EU external action for sustainable development, equality and peace (JOIN(2022)0053),
- having regard to the Commission communication of 30 November 2022 entitled ‘EU Global Health Strategy – Better Health for All in a Changing World’ (COM(2022)0675),
- having regard to the 2023 Global Sustainable Development Report,
- having regard to the joint communication from the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 25 November 2020 entitled ‘EU Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – An ambitious agenda for gender equality and women’s empowerment in EU external action’ (JOIN(2020)0017), and to the joint mid-term report on its implementation published on 20 November 2023 (JOIN(2023)0036),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 20 May 2022 on the EU’s renewed partnership with Least Developed Countries,
- having regard to the statement adopted by the ACP-EU Follow-up committee on 9 November 2023,
- having regard to its resolutions of 4 October 2016 on the future of ACP-EU relations beyond 2020³, of 14 June 2018 on the upcoming negotiations for a new Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the African Caribbean and Pacific Group of States⁴, and of 28 November 2019 on the ongoing negotiations for a new Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States⁵,

² [OJ L 209, 14.6.2021, p. 1.](#)

³ [OJ C 215, 19.6.2018, p. 2.](#)

⁴ [OJ C 28, 27.1.2020, p. 101.](#)

⁵ [OJ C 232, 16.6.2021, P. 64.](#)

- having regard to its resolutions of 25 November 2020 on improving development effectiveness and the efficiency of aid⁶, of 15 June 2023 on the implementation and delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals⁷, and of 12 December 2023 on the implementation of the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument – Global Europe⁸,
 - having regard to the resolution on the strategic significance and dimension of the ACP-EU partnership adopted by the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly in Bucharest (Romania) on 20 March 2019,
 - having regard to Rule 54 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the opinion of the Committee on International Trade,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development (A9-0000/2024),
- A. whereas more than two and a half years have passed between the initialling in April 2021 of the new partnership agreement between the EU and the members of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) and the signature of the agreement in Samoa in November 2023;
- B. whereas the multiplication of crises such as the global consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine call for the forging of stronger alliances and more effective partnerships which deliver tangible results in order to better address emerging needs and global challenges;
- C. whereas the long-standing partnership between the EU and the ACP countries is of great importance given the number of countries it unites and the greater role it could play in the multilateral system, which is currently under strain;
- D. whereas the EU and ACP countries must pursue a strengthened partnership in order to generate mutually beneficial outcomes on common and intersecting interests and in a spirit of shared responsibility, solidarity, reciprocity, mutual respect and accountability;
- E. whereas the Global Gateway strategy aims to increase the EU's geopolitical influence in the global arena by providing a value-based offer to the partner countries, within the framework of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs;
- F. whereas Article 208 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union requires the EU to take into account development cooperation objectives in all internal and external policies that are likely to affect developing countries;

Objectives, principles and terms of cooperation

1. Strongly welcomes the long-awaited signature of the Samoa Agreement;

⁶ [OJ C 425, 20.10.2021, p. 73.](#)

⁷ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0250.

⁸ Texts adopted, P9_TA(2023)0458.

2. Stresses that the new agreement provides for a strengthened, modernised and more ambitious framework for cooperation; reiterates, further, the important political, economic and cultural bonds which have been built over the last few decades between the EU and the ACP states;
3. Call for the swift and comprehensive implementation of the agreement, as there is an urgent need to strengthen multilateral cooperation in the face of growing geopolitical instability and competition and unprecedented global challenges;
4. Welcomes the fact that the agreement builds on several international agreements and identifies the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change as overarching guiding frameworks;
5. Reiterates the importance of political dialogue as an integral part of the partnership;
6. Calls for the provisions for responding to violations of the essential elements of the agreement to be used effectively;
7. Welcomes the inclusion of a specific article dedicated to Policy Coherence in the agreement;
8. Calls for coherence and synergies to be built between the regional protocols of the Samoa Agreement and the other policy frameworks governing EU relations with Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific regions;

The strategic priorities

9. Believes that the six strategic joint priorities identified in the general part of the agreement remain extremely relevant despite the changing geopolitical context;
10. Welcomes the commitment to protect, promote and fulfil human rights, fundamental freedoms and democratic principles and to strengthen the rule of law and good governance; further welcomes the commitment to promote universal human rights without discrimination based on any grounds; regrets, however, the fact that the agreement fails to mention explicitly that discrimination could be based on sexual orientation;
11. Insists on the need to give greater prominence to the human and social development aspects of the agreement;
12. Calls for the swift operationalisation of the 'EU Global Health Strategy' in ACP countries;
13. Underlines that particular attention should be paid to the provisions on food security and improved nutrition, given the global rise in food insecurity, malnutrition and hunger;
14. Welcomes the inclusion of a specific article on youth and recalls that the active participation of young people in policies affecting them should be strongly encouraged;

15. Welcomes the fact that gender equality and women's economic empowerment are recognised as key drivers for sustainable development; supports the commitments to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR);
16. Supports the objective to mobilise investment, support trade and foster private sector development, with a view to achieving sustainable and inclusive growth and creating decent jobs for all; stresses, in this context, that a strong link will have to be established between the agreement and the Global Gateway initiative;
17. Is of the opinion that the Samoa Agreement can contribute to the trade and investment policy objectives of the EU and OCAPS countries;
18. Welcomes the commitment to cooperate in order to strengthen energy security and increase access to energy in ACP countries;
19. Stresses the urgency of tackling global environmental challenges and of focusing on the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change;
20. Recognises the need to enhance cooperation on migration and mobility, including addressing the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacements, as well as to facilitate legal pathways for migration;

Means of cooperation and implementation

21. Welcomes the budgetisation of the European Development Fund (EDF) in the Union's budget implemented as of 2021, which was a long-standing demand from the European Parliament;
22. Stresses the importance of ensuring development effectiveness and results; believes that the implementation of the agreement requires substantial and sustainable mobilisation of financial resources; welcomes, therefore, the recognition that the means of cooperation should be diversified, encompassing a range of policies and instruments from all available sources and actors;
23. Recalls that the mobilisation of domestic resources through taxation is one of the most important sources of revenue for financing sustainable development; urges the EU and the OACPS to show strong political will and determination in combating illicit financial flows, tax evasion and corruption;
24. Welcomes the commitment of the Parties to the Samoa Agreement to address debt and work towards debt sustainability, as this underpins the achievement of the SDGs;

Engagement of stakeholders, parliamentary dimension and multilateralism

25. Insists on the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in the strengthening of the political dialogue between the EU and the members of the OACPS;
26. Calls for democratic accountability to be ensured at all levels of the agreement;
27. Recognises the contribution that the OACPS-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) has played in the past and will continue to play in the future; recalls that the JPA

provides a platform for members to hold exchanges on policies and issues that are of mutual relevance to the EU and the OACPS;

28. Welcomes the setting up of the three Regional Assemblies that will further strengthen the parliamentary dimension and will allow for in-depth parliamentary debates on issues of a more regional nature;
29. Welcomes the commitment to promote a multi-stakeholder approach, enabling the active engagement of a wide variety of actors, including parliaments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector; calls for this commitment to be rapidly translated into practice, which will necessitate the creation of an open and transparent mechanism for structured consultation in order to ensure the effective participation of stakeholders;
30. Is concerned however, in view of the shrinking space for civil society, that the Parties have committed to increasing the participation of stakeholders only 'where appropriate', which might impose limitations on their effective participation;
31. Welcomes the provisions on global alliances and international cooperation included in the new agreement, with commitments to the rules-based international order and to promoting international dialogue and seeking multilateral solutions to drive global action forward;

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32. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the European Investment Bank, the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States Council of Ministers.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

The Rapporteur strongly welcomes the signature on 15 November 2023 of the Partnership Agreement between the European Union and the members of the Organisation for African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS) since it provides a strengthened and modernised framework for cooperation with ACP countries. In turbulent times of geopolitical multipolarity and instability, the EU needs to build even stronger ties with ACP countries, reinforcing partnerships to promote multilateralism. As such, the Rapporteur deeply regrets the repeated delays in the signature of the new Partnership Agreement, which has impacted the reputation of the EU as a credible partner.

The modernised agreement has the potential to enhance the political partnership between the EU and ACP countries, covering crucial issues such as sustainable economic growth and development, climate change, gender equality and women and girl's empowerment, food security and health, migration, human rights, democracy and governance, and peace and security. The Rapporteur stresses the importance to address these areas of challenges and opportunities in a joint approach. The Rapporteur welcomes that the new partnership sets a flexible framework built around a common Foundation applicable to all parties and tailor made regional protocols for Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific respectively, which takes into account the specificities of the regions.

Furthermore, the Rapporteur supports the fact that the new partnership builds on several international agreements and identifies the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change as overarching guiding frameworks. This is of crucial importance, particularly when considering that progress towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals is lagging behind, namely in least-developed countries, many of which are ACP countries.

The principles set down in the Foundation, notably that the parties shall pursue the objectives of the Agreement in a spirit of shared responsibility, solidarity, reciprocity, mutual respect and accountability, are strongly supported by the Rapporteur. This is well aligned with the EU's aim to create partnerships of equals that generate mutually beneficial outcomes on common and intersecting interests and in accordance with shared values.

The Rapporteur supports the integrated approach to cooperation, incorporating political, economic, social, environmental and cultural elements; the systematic promotion of the gender perspective, and the promotion of the multi-stakeholder approach enabling the engagement of a wide variety of actors in the partnership dialogue and cooperation processes, including parliaments, local authorities, civil society and the private sector. The Rapporteur is however concerned by the recurrent use of the term 'where appropriate' in parts of the Agreement in reference to the contribution of stakeholders. Such formulation might lead to a narrow interpretation of where it might be appropriate to involve civil society and private sector partners and local authorities. The Rapporteur stresses that the multi-stakeholder approach needs to be translated into practice, underlining that stakeholders shall be informed in a timely manner and be able to provide input into the broad process of dialogue.

Strategic priorities

The Rapporteur is of the opinion that the six strategic joint priorities identified in the Agreement (that go beyond development) are extremely relevant, despite the dramatic change of geopolitical context. The Rapporteur underlines that the Samoa Agreement offers an enhanced space for dialogue to deal jointly with the immediate and long term consequences of the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, which have greatly impacted some ACP States.

On human rights, democracy and governance, the Rapporteur welcomes that the Samoa Agreement reaffirms the determination of the Parties to protect, promote, and fulfil human rights, fundamental freedoms and democratic principles and to strengthen the rule of law and good governance. This becomes even more important when considering the declining trend for democracy and governance in the world and the persistent threats to human rights globally. The Rapporteur welcomes the commitment to promote universal human rights without discrimination based on any ground, but regrets that the Agreement fails to mention explicitly that discrimination could be based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

On peace and security, the Rapporteur welcomes that cooperation is expected to be scaled up under the new Agreement as it is clearly an area of mutual interest. The Rapporteur insists on the importance of implementing properly the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach across all crisis affected and fragile countries. In this context, the Rapporteur would like to recall the need for clear policy orientations in order to bridge the gaps between the individual policy areas, while ensuring that the distinct legal character and principles of humanitarian aid are respected. In addition, the Rapporteur reiterates that there cannot be sustainable development without peace and security, and without inclusive development there cannot be sustainable peace and security.

On human and social development, the Rapporteur strongly supports that the Agreement reaffirms that gender equality and women and girls' empowerment are an essential requirement to achieving inclusive and sustainable development. In particular, the Rapporteur welcomes that the Parties agree that they shall adopt and strengthen enforceable legislation, legal frameworks and sound policies, programmes and mechanisms to ensure girl's and women's equal access to, equal opportunities in, equal control over, and full and equal participation in, all spheres of life. Furthermore, the Rapporteur supports the commitment to sexual and reproductive health and rights. The active participation of young people in society, including in the development, implementation, and follow-up of policies affecting them should be strongly encouraged. On food security, the Rapporteur calls for the relevant provisions in the Agreement to be given particular attention, given the deterioration of global food security, due to rising costs of food and agricultural inputs, Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and severe weather events. The Rapporteur would like EU programmes to prioritise the focus on building of resilient sustainable agri-food systems and on small-scale farmers as they play a crucial role in food security in many ACP countries. On health, the Rapporteur stresses that efforts should be geared towards supporting ACP countries in building sustainable health systems and strengthening resilience, which is crucial to help partner countries to face future pandemics. The COVID-19 Pandemic has demonstrated that multilateral cooperation is key to overcoming global health challenges, which is why the Rapporteur is pleased to see that the Parties will cooperate to address public health emergencies and strengthen international cooperation to mitigate the impact of global public health emergencies.

On inclusive sustainable economic growth and development, the Rapporteur welcomes that

the Agreement recognises the importance to strengthen the economic relations between the parties in their mutual interest and for mutual benefit, in line with the SDGs. The Agreement recognises the importance of private sector development for economic transformation and job creation with the Parties committing to the promotion of public-private dialogue and paying special attention to the growth and improved competitiveness of micro, small and medium-size enterprises. Furthermore, the agreement stipulates that the Parties shall support policies for the development of entrepreneurship among youth and women in the context of their economic empowerment and the promotion of inclusive development. The Rapporteur strongly supports these parts, as cooperation in these areas will be crucial in order to bolster economic growth, job creation and competitiveness in ACP countries, which is a critical element for reducing poverty and creating prosperity.

On environmental sustainability and climate change, the Rapporteur welcomes that the Samoa Agreement, in contrast to the Cotonou Agreement, includes much more detailed provisions on the matter. Provisions on environmental sustainability, oceans, seas and marine resources, as well as climate change and natural disasters, are covered both in the Foundation part and the three regional protocols. The Rapporteur supports this, as well as the fact that the Parties commit to the implementation of the Paris Agreement and to track progress towards their Nationally Determined Contributions, while taking into account their common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities in light of different national circumstances. The Rapporteur agrees that it is indeed vital to focus on the effective implementation of the Paris Agreement and to deliver substantive progress.

On migration, the Rapporteur stresses the need to strengthen cooperation between Europe and ACP countries, underlining the need to address the root causes of irregular migration and forced displacements, such as political instability, poverty, lack of security, lack of economic opportunities, food safety, violence and the negative effects of climate change. At the same time, the Rapporteur underlines the need to facilitate legal pathways for migration, as mentioned in the Agreement.

Means of cooperation

Regarding the means of cooperation and implementation of the Agreement, the Rapporteur stresses the importance of ensuring development effectiveness and results and welcomes the Agreement acknowledging that means of cooperation should be diversified, encompassing a range of policies and instruments, from all available sources and actors.

Since 2021, funding for ACP countries comes from the NDICI-Global Europe regulation. The Rapporteur calls on the Commission to take the opportunity of the mid-term review to check the coherence between the regulation and the strategic priorities of the Samoa Agreement. The implementation of the Agreement should be accompanied by an appropriate level of funding in order for the EU to live up to its commitments. A strong link also needs to be ensured between the Agreement and the Global Gateway initiative, which was launched after the closure of the negotiations.

Multilateralism and parliamentary diplomacy

In addition to the abovementioned areas of cooperation, the Rapporteur welcomes the provisions on global alliances and international cooperation, with both parties stressing their commitment to the rules-based international order and to promoting international dialogue and seeking multilateral solutions to drive global action forward. The Samoa Agreement can

and should help forge global alliances in all the areas covered by the Agreement. The Rapporteur also insists on the importance of parliamentary diplomacy in the strengthening of the political dialogue between the EU and the OACPS. The Rapporteur believes that it is of utmost importance to ensure democratic accountability at all levels of the Agreement. Throughout the years, the OACPS-EU JPA has created a framework for parliamentary debate on a large scale, allowing for consistent parliamentary dialogue between MEPs and ACP Members of Parliaments. The JPA has been a champion of multilateralism and it is expected that it will bring years of experience to the Samoa Agreement.