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European Commission proposal - Council conclusions

As announced in the Commission's 2020 work programme, on 9 March 2020, the Commission and the High Representative published a joint communication, 'Towards a comprehensive strategy with Africa'. It proposes five thematic partnerships: (1) a partnership for green transition and energy access; (2) a partnership for digital transformation; (3) a partnership for sustainable growth and jobs; (4) a partnership for peace and governance; and (5) a partnership 'to ensure a balanced, coherent, and comprehensive approach to migration and mobility'. The proposed strategy also features a transversal action to strengthen multilateralism in deepening the EU-Africa alliance in international fora. In its 30 June 2020 conclusions, the Council approved the joint communication as 'an excellent basis on which to initiate a new ambitious partnership with Africa'.

AU-EU meetings

The European Commission initially presented its proposals during the 10th AU-EU Commission-to-Commission meeting held on 27 February 2020 in Ethiopia.

The 6th AU-EU Summit took place on 17 and 18 February 2022 in Brussels. Usually triennial, this summit was initially scheduled for autumn 2020 in Brussels but was postponed notably due to the coronavirus context. It closed with a joint declaration 'A joint Vision for 2030' and an EU pledge of €150 billion for the period 2021-2027, delivered notably through the 'Team Europe' (EU and Member States) 'Global Gateway' scheme. The EU also committed to support the delivery and production of COVID-19 vaccines in Africa. The joint declaration reads that the 'renewed Partnership addresses both the immediate opportunities and challenges (such as the current pandemic, debt, and combatting illicit financial flows), as well as the long-term possibilities. The joint declaration also highlights:

- A renewed and enhanced cooperation for peace and security'
- An enhanced and reciprocal partnership for migration and mobility
- A commitment to multilateralism
- A support to Africa's energy transition through 'just and sustainable pathways towards climate neutrality'.

On 28 November 2022, the AU-EU Commission-to-Commission meeting took stock of progress in four key areas:

1. Enhancing connectivity through economic integration: Digital, Energy, Transport, value chains and implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.
2. Boosting human development: Health, Education, Science, Technology, Innovation, Migration and Mobility.
3. Building resilience for people through sustainable Food systems, tackling Climate and Environmental crises, and Humanitarian action.
4. Peace, Security and Governance

The AU and EU Commissioners agreed to launch a €750 million program in support of infrastructure investments in Africa – in particular to finance the creation of 11 strategic corridors in Africa, to ease people and goods mobility in a sustainable and secure way to support the implementation of the African Continental Free Trade Area.

European Parliament's position

The European Parliament adopted on 25 March 2021 a resolution on the sustainable and inclusive development aspects of the proposed strategy. The resolution highlights the need to adapt the partnership in the light of coronavirus impacts, which risk widening inequalities, increasing food insecurity and poverty, and aggravating insecurity in Africa. It calls for closer cooperation on key areas such as security, agriculture, and health, to better anticipate future health crises. It insists that the future relationship must move away from a donor-recipient dynamic, and give African countries the means to achieve sustainable development, including through fair and ethical trade. It calls for the partnership to prioritise human development and human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, with a particular attention to youth, especially to children in conflict areas.

The resolution regrets that EU-Africa relations have been dominated by the migration issue. It suggests that a renewed partnership help devise a fair migration policy, really tackling the root causes of migration and better delivering on an effective visa and legal migration policy. The partnership should support increased mobilisation of domestic resources in Africa, notably through the fight against corruption and against tax evasion. The resolution highlights the need for the new budgetary instrument for external action (Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument, NDICI - Global Europe) to dedicate adequate resources, notably to climate objectives. It points out that many Member States have not reached the 0.7 % gross national income (GNI) target for official development assistance (ODA) and that some have even decreased their ODA.

State of play

The implementation of the strategy makes progress at a slow pace. This is notably because a number of differences on the Russian aggression on Ukraine, and on its impact in the management of migrants and asylum seekers and on the EU support to African peace operations, analysts also point out a lack of AU strategy as regards African countries' relations with the EU. Following the succession of coups in the Sahel and West Africa, European Commission President von der Leyen made it clear, in her **State of the Union**

address on 13 September 2023, that the EU does not intend to withdraw from the field, but to rethink its strategic presence in the region, and in Africa at large: 'we need to show the same unity of purpose towards Africa as we have shown for Ukraine. We need to focus on cooperation with legitimate governments and regional organisations. And we need to develop a mutually beneficial partnership which focuses on common issues for Europe and Africa. This is why, together with High Representative Borrell, we will work on a new strategic approach to take forward at the next EU-AU Summit.'

- European Parliament, [Resolution of 25 March 2021 on a new EU-Africa Strategy – a partnership for sustainable and inclusive development](#) (2020/2041(INI))
- European Parliament, Debate of 15 February 2022 on [EU-Africa relations](#), 2022/2533(RSP)
- European Parliament, The new comprehensive EU-Africa strategy: [Question for oral answer to the Commission](#), 23 January 2020; [answer in plenary and debate](#), 11 February 2020
- European Parliament, [Statement by Tomas Tobé, Chair of Parliament's Committee on Development, following the publication of the EU-Africa strategy](#) 9 March 2020
- European Commission and High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, [Joint communication on Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa](#), JOIN(2020) 4
- 6th European Union - African Union summit, [A Joint Vision for 2030](#), 18 February 2022
- Council, [Council conclusions on Africa](#), 30 June 2020

Further reading:

- European Parliament, EPRS, [Question time: EU Africa strategy](#), July 2023
- European Parliament, EPRS, [Understanding the EU's approach to a new partnership with Africa](#), Briefing, February 2022
- European Parliament, EXPO, [A comprehensive EU strategy for Africa](#), Briefing, June 2020

As of 15 December 2024.