
Sahel, West Africa and the Horn of Africa: a new EU approach is necessary

- EU and Africa relations must be based on solidarity and mutual respect
- EU should invest in conflict prevention
- Call for the European Peace Facility to be swiftly adopted

The EU's security strategy should aim at addressing the root causes of the conflicts in the region, as poverty eradication is key to achieving sustainable peace, say MEPs.

In the resolution adopted during the plenary session on Tuesday, by 427 votes in favour, 128 against and 140 abstentions, MEPs express their strong belief that the EU should invest as much as possible in processes aimed at conflict prevention, for example by triggering a multitude of very concrete mediation, dialogue and reconciliation processes, in parallel to other security measures.

A security strategy for the Sahel, West Africa and the Horn of Africa regions must first and foremost address the root causes of the conflicts in these regions, as poverty eradication is key to achieving sustainable peace, say MEPs.

Strengthen the EU missions and operations

The EU should also pay particular attention to the spread of armed terrorist groups in the regions of Sahel, West Africa and the Horn of Africa, warn MEPs, which requires the EU's [Common Security and Defence Policy](#) (CSDP) missions and operations to be reinforced. Members point out that better EU coordination with the countries in North Africa is needed, as well as a more effective contribution to lay the ground for peace and reconciliation in Libya. Otherwise, warn MEPs, the area could become a hotspot for the spread of jihadism and terrorist groups, as well as for the trafficking of arms and humans.

MEPs finally call for the [European Peace Facility](#) to be swiftly adopted and implemented, which would make the EU's missions more effective and strengthen the EU partners' capacity building in the security sector.

Parliament's rapporteur [Javier Nart \(Renew, ES\)](#) said: "This is a necessary resolution that has received the recognition and support of those on the ground who are confronted with jihadist barbarism and terrorism: our military missions, [EEAS](#) and the countries of the Sahel. Politics is responsibility and giving the necessary answer, not utopia. It is not good that if ideas do not fit reality, so much the worse for reality".

Background

Climate change, population growth, food insecurity and uncontrolled exploitation of natural resources are just some of the challenges that many African countries struggle to cope with. All this also leads to the destabilisation of the traditional agro-pastoral economy, which, combined with weak institutions and a lack of trust in the governments, results in religious extremism.

The European Union has conducted several [military and civilian missions](#) in these regions, but after years of being involved there, the general situation continues to worsen. MEPs are calling for a new and comprehensive strategy, as the EU missions have been hampered due to restrictions on their mandate, training programmes, and a lack of basic equipment, including weapons and ammunition.

Further information

[Adopted text can be found here \(15.09.2020\)](#)

[EPRS: Understanding the EU Strategy for the Sahel \(September 2020\)](#)

[EPRS: Mali: The coup and its consequences \(September 2020\)](#)

[EPRS: Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument](#)

[The African Peace Facility](#)

[Procedure File](#)

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