

# The New EU Strategy for Africa

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In 2005, the EU launched a Strategy for Africa: an ambitious plan to support Africa's development, both south and north of the Sahara. The Strategy is focused around peace and security, good governance, economic growth and investing in people. In the coming years, our partner countries on the southern shores of the Mediterranean will benefit substantially from this new momentum in the Euro-African partnership.

### A new deal for Africa

In 2005, the world turned their eyes to Africa and to the need for more decisive action to end the poverty in which so many Africans live today. This continent, declared lost by many only some years ago, figures today on the front-page of many newspapers and is discussed in all important international fora. In recent years, Africa has also been showing new leadership for its own development: the African Union, with the support of New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which has given the continent a new vision of a continent strongly committed to breaking with the practices and habits of the past and taking a decisive new approach to economic development and peace and security.

### Africa matters to Europe

The European Union provides 60% of the aid to Africa and is its main trading partner. Europe therefore has a special responsibility towards this continent. Moreover, many EU Member States also have close

historical ties and cultural links with individual African countries, which reinforce the cultural links between the two continents. As the pace of globalisation and internationalisation of, for example, security threats, energy trading and migration flows accelerates, Africa has taken on an increasingly strategic importance for Europe.

But for too long, the EU's relations with Africa have been too fragmented, both in policy formulation and implementation. Neither Europe nor Africa can afford to sustain this situation and in December 2005, the European Union made a decisive effort to define a more strategic platform for its relations with Africa, aiming at a mutually beneficial partnership. The purpose of this strategy for Africa is therefore to give the EU a comprehensive, integrated and long-term framework for its relations with the African continent. It focuses on how EU Member States and the European Commission can best support Africa's own efforts to promote sustainable development and reach the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Strategy was endorsed at the highest political level by the European Council in the December 2005, and both the Commission and the EU Member States are now moving to action, and hopefully, the next ten years will be a watershed in relations between Europe and Africa.

### A comprehensive approach

As Kofi Annan put it, "*we will not enjoy development without security, we will not enjoy security without development, and we will not enjoy either without respect for human rights*". In this spirit, the EU Strategy for Africa relies on a three-pronged approach which sees governance, human rights, security, growth and the reduction of poverty and poverty-related disease as interlocking factors:

*First, promote peace, stability and good governance.* Africa has known more conflicts than any other continent in the world and wars have destroyed livelihoods, caused millions of deaths and stunted economic growth. In the Congo alone almost four million people died between 1998 and 2004 as a consequence of a murderous war involving most of former Zaire's neighbours. Peace and security are essential prerequisites for development and the EU will help its African partners to break the vicious conflict cycle through, for example, the EU Peace Facility for Africa, which funds current African Union missions in areas such as Darfur.

Good governance is a second central prerequisite for sustainable development. And for Africa's new leaders, good governance is no longer a vague concept imposed by some Western powers. Rather, the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) is proving to be both a just and effective tool for monitoring of Africans by Africans. A number of African states have also agreed to undergo regular monitoring in the framework of the APRM. The EU will soon launch a Governance Initiative providing support to African countries in the implementation of APRM-driven reforms and will in parallel launch a specific governance support facility for the northern Mediterranean countries.

*Second, boost economic growth and trade.* Although 2005 saw Africa's overall annual growth reach a record 5.2%, the continent's economies must grow 7% a year if poverty is to be halved by 2015. There are major problems to reach this goal: Africa's investment climate is the worst in world and Africa lacks the essential infrastructural hardware making any economic transaction a complex and costly enterprise. Shipping a car from Abidjan to Japan costs \$1,500. Shipping the same car from Abidjan to Addis costs \$5,000. No wonder that Africa's trade accounts for about 2% of world trade and that its share of global manufactured exports is almost negligible. Increased South-South trade and inter-African investments are key factors for economic growth and regional integration.

A number of parallel activities supported by the EU are under way to address these problems. Apart from supporting a development agenda in global trade negotiations, the EU is currently negotiating Regional Partnership Agreements with four sub-Saharan regions of Africa and aims to establish a Free Trade Area around the Mediterranean by 2010. To boost private sector development, there are plans for a Euro-

African Business Forum in 2006, which would develop an Action Plan to revitalise the private sector. The EU will also establish a comprehensive Partnership for Infrastructure, covering a broad range of areas such as energy, water, and information technology, to support and initiate programmes facilitating interconnectivity, at a continental level and for the promotion of regional integration. Finally, the importance of boosting agriculture, food security and promote sustainable fisheries is underlined in the Strategy within the cluster of promoting regional integration and economic development.

*Third, tackle poverty directly.* Eradicating poverty remains the basic objective of the EU's work with Africa. The EU will step up its efforts to contribute to making health, education and other basic services, such as access to drinking water, sanitation and energy, available to the poorest people in Africa. These measures will need to be adapted in view of a new challenge, namely Africa's demographic boom and rapid urbanisation. This requires action first and foremost at country level and the EU will channel funding to individual countries via bilateral cooperation and the Community funding instruments. At Pan-African level, measures include replenishing the Global Fund for the fight against infectious diseases, setting up a student exchange programme modelled on the successful Erasmus programme in Europe and support twinning arrangements between universities, schools, companies and parliaments in Europe and Africa. The Strategy also launches the idea of creating a European Voluntary Service, through which young Europeans can make their contribution to development.

### **More ODA for Africa**

The EU made important further commitments relating to aid in 2005, notably to provide an additional amount of money provided as Official Development Assistance (ODA). Compared to the volumes provided in 2005, this means an additional €20 billion of per year by 2010 and €45 billion extra per year by 2015. At least 50% of this increase shall go to the African continent and support the implementation of the new Strategy.

### **Migration**

The Strategy also addresses the topic of migration, a phenomenon which affects the whole of Africa,

## MAIN DOCUMENTS

*The EU and Africa: towards a strategic partnership*, doc. 15702/1/05 REV 1, adopted by the European Council on 15-16 December 2005  
[http://ue.eu.int/cms3\\_applications/applications/newsroom/loadDocument.ASP?cmsID=221&LANG=en&directory=en/er/&fileName=87673.pdf](http://ue.eu.int/cms3_applications/applications/newsroom/loadDocument.ASP?cmsID=221&LANG=en&directory=en/er/&fileName=87673.pdf)  
*EU Strategy for Africa: towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development*, doc. COM (2005) 489 final, adopted by the European Commission on 12 October 2005  
[www.eu.int/comm/development/body/communications/docs/eu\\_strategy\\_for\\_africa\\_12\\_10\\_2005\\_en.pdf](http://www.eu.int/comm/development/body/communications/docs/eu_strategy_for_africa_12_10_2005_en.pdf)

*Migration in an interconnected world: new directions for action*, Report of the Global Commission on International Migration, October 2005  
[www.gcim.org/attachements/gcim-complete-report-2005.pdf](http://www.gcim.org/attachements/gcim-complete-report-2005.pdf)  
*Migration and development: some concrete orientations*, doc. COM (2005) 390 final, adopted by the European Commission on 1st September 2005  
[www.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005\\_0390en01.pdf](http://www.eu.int/eur-lex/lex/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0390en01.pdf)

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where no single country can claim it is not a country of origin, transit or destination for the hundreds of thousands of refugees and economic migrants who choose or are forced to leave their homes every year. EU proposals, outlined in depth in another 2005 Commission Communication, for example include making it easier, cheaper and safer for migrants to send remittances to their countries of origin and allowing African countries to tap into the potential available in diaspora communities in Europe through, for example, various types of circular or temporary migration, which allow migrants to return to their countries of origin without, for instance, losing their right to the social security benefits or pension funds they have paid for years. Both these proposals are also included in the final report published last year by the Global Commission on International Migration, a panel of international experts sponsored by UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

Africa's 'brain drain', which sees the continent's highly qualified individuals fleeing to Europe in search of a brighter future, is taking a heavy toll on many African countries' budgets as specialists trained at great expense in Africa leave, and on African health and education systems. An oft-quoted statistic highlights how urgent it is to address brain drain and turn it into 'brain gain': every year over one hundred Malawian doctors register for work in the United Kingdom whilst there are only one hundred and twenty Malawian doctors actually working for their country's twelve million inhabitants. Brain gain can be achieved through, for example, the establishment of exchange programmes for students within Africa and between Africa and Europe. The Nyerere programme, one of the key proposals of the EU Africa Strategy's section on education, would facilitate exchanges of this kind and provide state of the art training and education for African students.

## A single African Continent

With the Strategy, Europe takes a decisive step towards viewing Africa as a single continent, whose problems, as well as hopes and aspirations, echo from Cape Town to Tunis. Europe will therefore engage with interlocutors at all levels: Pan-African institutions such as NEPAD and the African Union, regional organisations and national authorities, and is currently strengthening ties with its sister institution on the African continent, the African Union. October 2005 saw the first official meeting of all European Commissioners and their African Union counterparts, headed by the African Union Commission (AUC) President, Mr. Alpha Oumar Konaré. The two sides have decided to produce a joint matrix for the implementation of the Africa Strategy and will meet regularly in 2006. The African Union's fledgling structures need European support to bolster an ambitious strategy based on good governance and an end to human rights violations in Africa.

## Partners for the Future, not Recipients of Aid

Almost 50 years of development aid has taught us that good intentions are not enough. More aid, debt relief or trade has not necessarily led to economic development, let alone pro-poor growth. Today, Africa shows remarkable signs that the continent is changing and finally occupies the place it deserves on the international agenda. With its new Strategy, Europe has seized the opportunity to set an ambitious, but also concrete and realistic agenda for its relations with Africa. As a European, I am proud of these decisions and believe that Europe is setting an example for the world.