



2021PORTUGAL.EU
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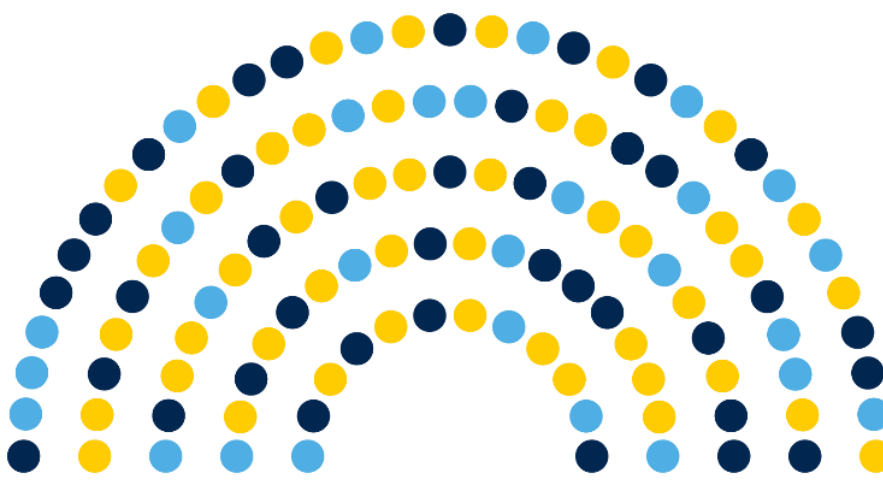
Background Note

An EU Global Strategy with Africa

**Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security
Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy**

3 - 4 March 2021, Lisbon

Portugal





BACKGROUND NOTE

An EU Global Strategy with Africa

[EU-Africa relations](#) are developed within the framework of agreements, including the [Cotonou Agreement](#) and the [Joint Africa-EU Strategy](#), and the European Council adopted three regional strategies for the [Horn of Africa](#), the [Gulf of Guinea](#) and the [Sahel](#), as well as within the framework of formal dialogues at various levels, namely through EU-Africa summits, ministerial-level meetings and meetings between the European Commission and the African Union.

The [Cotonou Agreement](#) is the overarching framework for EU relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries. It aims to eradicate poverty and to contribute to the inclusive and sustainable development of the ACP countries in the world economy. It is based on three pillars: development cooperation, [economic and trade cooperation](#) and a political dimension. The application of this Agreement has been extended to December 2020. The [Council adopted the negotiating mandate](#) for the [future agreement](#) between the EU and the [ACP countries](#). It covers priority areas such as democracy and human rights, economic growth and investment, climate change, poverty eradication, peace and security, migration and mobility.

The [joint Africa-EU strategy](#), which was adopted in 2007 as the formal channel for EU relations with African countries, is implemented through periodical action plans. In March 2020, the Joint Communication “[Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa](#)”, building on growing momentum and on deepening [cooperation](#) based around shared interests and values, proposes to work together on five trends: a partnership for the [green transition and energy access](#); a partnership for [digital transformation](#); a partnership for [sustainable growth and jobs](#); a partnership for [peace, security and governance](#); and a partnership on [migration and mobility](#).

In 2016, within the framework of Defence, “[A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy](#)” was launched. It identifies five priorities for EU foreign policy: the security of the Union; state and societal resilience to the East and South of the EU; an integrated approach to conflicts; cooperative regional orders; and global governance for the 21st century. To operationalise the Strategy's vision for defence and security issues, in 2016, an [implementation plan on Common Security and Defence](#)



[Policy](#) (CSDP) was presented, identifying three sets of priorities: responding to external conflicts and crises, building capacity for partners and protecting the Union and its citizens. The Plan sets out [13 proposals](#) for [security and defence](#). These include a Coordinated Annual Review on Defence (CARD), better EU rapid response capabilities, and a new single [Permanent Structured Cooperation](#) (PESCO) for those Member States willing to undertake greater commitments in security and defence. [Permanent Structured Cooperation](#) (PESCO) is an in-depth integration format in defence projects, based on the Treaty, established in 2017, with the participation of 25 Member States.

European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen has established as one of the six [Commission priorities for 2019-24](#) [a stronger Europe in the world](#), aiming at reinforcing a responsible global leadership, by championing multilateralism and a rules-based global order.

At the [10th European Union-African Union Commission-to-Commission Meeting](#)¹, held on 27 February 2020 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the [future cooperation](#) in the five key areas included in the Joint Communication “[Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa](#)” was debated, based on the commitments undertaken at the [5th African Union - EU Summit](#), as well as on the progress made since then, in particular with the launch of the [Africa - Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#) and the conclusion of the AU-EU Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance in 2018, contributing to deepen cooperation in the areas mentioned above. Therefore, the Communication proposes that the EU develop its partnership with Africa within the framework of the following actions:

- Maximise the benefits of the green transition and minimise threats to the environment in full compliance with the Paris Agreement;
- Boost the continent’s digital transformation;
- Substantially increase environmentally, socially and financially sustainable investments that are resilient to the impacts of climate change; promote investment opportunities by scaling up the use of innovative financing mechanisms; and boost regional and continental economic integration, particularly through the African Continental Free Trade Agreement;

¹ The meeting was expected to be held on 9 December 2020, via videoconference, but it was [postponed](#) indefinitely.



- Attract investors by supporting African states in adopting policies and regulatory reforms that improve the business environment and investment climate, including a level-playing field for business;
- Rapidly enhance learning, knowledge and skills, research and innovation capacities, particularly for women and youth, protecting and improving social rights, and eradicating child labour;
- Adapt and deepen the EU's support to African peace efforts through a more structured and strategic cooperation, with a particular focus on regions where vulnerabilities are the highest;
- Integrate good governance, democracy, human rights, the rule of law and gender equality in action and cooperation;
- Secure resilience by linking humanitarian, development, peace and security interventions at all stages of the cycle of conflicts and crises;
- Ensure balanced, coherent and comprehensive partnerships on migration and mobility;
- Strengthen the international rules-based order and the multilateral system, with the UN at its core.

The [next EU-AU Summit²](#), to be held in 2021, was identified as a pivotal moment for renewing a comprehensive joint strategic approach, particularly to set joint priorities for our common future.

On 30 June, the Council of the EU adopted its [Conclusions on Africa](#), which reaffirmed the importance of a stronger EU-Africa partnership, stressing that a prosperous, peaceful and resilient Africa is an essential EU foreign policy objective, which should focus in particular on multilateralism, peace, security and stability, sustainable and inclusive development, and sustainable economic growth. In addition, the European Parliament adopted a [resolution](#) in September 2020 calling for EU-Africa relations based on solidarity and mutual respect, with strong EU investment in conflict prevention (e.g. [Sahel](#)) and calling for the swift adoption of the [European Peace Facility](#).

² The Summit was scheduled for October 2020, but was postponed to 2021. A specific date is yet to be set.



As part of the Common Security and Defence Policy ([CSDP](#)), the EU launched several [military and civilian missions and operations](#) in Africa, namely in the Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, Niger and Somalia.

On 28 January, National Defence Minister João Gomes Cravinho presented the priorities of the [Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU](#) and informed the [Subcommittee on Security and Defence](#) that the Portuguese Presidency plans on continuing to promote [EU strategic autonomy](#) and work on developing the [common European Strategic Compass](#), with a special focus on [EU relations with Africa](#), [maritime security](#) in key areas such as the [Gulf of Guinea](#) and the Atlantic, [transatlantic relations](#), [military mobility](#) and [cybersecurity](#), as well as activating the [European Defence Fund](#).

The [COVID-19 pandemic](#) has shown the interdependence of the two continents facing a global challenge which requires global solutions, and the EU has developed plans to support partner countries' efforts in the fight against the pandemic, including through the "[Team Europe](#)" global response package of almost €36 billion.

Questions:

- In what other ways can cooperation between the EU and African countries be promoted? By intensifying sectoral dialogues, promoting trade, security and defence agreements and what is the role of interparliamentary cooperation?
- In what areas can cooperation between the EU and African countries be developed and/or deepened?
- What is the future of the EU – Africa Partnership? What are the new challenges for this partnership?