

One year after Lisbon: the EU-Africa partnership at work

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The European Parliament adopted by 588 votes to 38, with 13 abstentions, a resolution in response to the Commission Communication entitled 'One year after Lisbon: The Africa-EU partnership at work'.

Setting up of EU-Africa architecture: the Parliament welcomes the fact that, one year after the adoption of the Joint Strategy, the main components of the institutional architecture for its implementation are finally in place and have started to function. It regrets, however, that, by the end of the first year of implementation, some partnerships are still in the process of defining working methods and have not yet established deliverables, timetables and budget allocations.

The EU and African Union (AU) Commissions and the Member States of the EU and the AU are called upon to complete as a matter of priority this institutional architecture by developing the parliamentary, civil society and local authorities components that should drive and sustain the process by giving it transparency, ownership and democratic legitimacy.

Role of parliaments: MEPs reiterate their request to the EU and AU Commissions to take active steps to involve the European and Pan-African Parliaments in implementing, monitoring and providing political guidance for the Joint Strategy. They propose that the Presidents of the Pan-African Parliament and the European Parliament address EU-Africa Summits to present Parliaments' conclusions on the implementation of the Action Plan and suggestions for the future orientations of the Joint Strategy.

MEPs welcome the fact that the European Commission has established a **EUR 55 million** support programme in the 9th European Development Fund (EDF) for strengthening the capacities of the AU institutions. They insist once again that part of this budget must be made available for strengthening the administrative and operational capacity of the Pan-African Parliament.

Civil society and non-state actors: MEPs regret that, whereas the Action Plan indicates that each of the Africa-EU Partnerships is open for a wide range of actions, overwhelming emphasis is placed on state actions. The European Commission is called upon to develop appropriate capacity building tools for African civil society organisations.

Partnerships: the resolution notes that the Joint Strategy should also address issues which have a profound influence on the future of Africa and which shape the relationship between the two continents, such as the economic partnership agreements (EPAs) and the relationship between the EPA regional groupings and other existing regional groupings in Africa, the second revision of the Cotonou Agreement, the Euro-Mediterranean Strategy, the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership, and Africa's relationship with new global players such as China and Brazil.

Peace and security: the Parliament calls for due priority to be assigned to implementing the African peace and security architecture. It stresses once again that the EDF is not an adequate financing source for future replenishment of the African Peace Facility and is of the view that EDF spending should comply with the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD/DAC) criteria for official development assistance. The Parliament reiterates its call for a definitive solution for African Peace Facility financing.

Governance and human rights: the Parliament stresses the importance of sustainable democracy and that governance must be improved on both sides: it is not only a priority in Africa but also on the European side which must improve governance and accountability as regards aid commitments and better donor coordination.

MEPs express serious concern that the "**governance profiles**" developed by the Commission for each ACP country, which will guide programming for development assistance in relation to the EUR 2.7 billion additional funds under the 10th EDF, have been prepared without any participatory element. They note that eligibility for additional funds of beneficiary countries has been judged according to a set of criteria only one of which is directly linked to the MDGs. The European Commission is called upon to consult and inform the European Parliament and the Council on the follow-up and the implementation of these funds in order to make sure they are allocated to governance initiatives to support the AU governance agenda and the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) process.

MEPs call for the dialogue under the governance and human rights partnership to address impunity for human rights abuses.

Trade, economic development and regional integration: MEPs believe that the EU should help African states to ensure that their agriculture is self-sufficient and to foster essential services and vulnerable domestic industries. They insist that the final EPAs signed with African states must be first and foremost tools for development which respect the various beneficiaries' different capacities and levels of development.

The European Commission and the Member States are called upon to honour their commitment to provide by 2010 at least EUR 2 billion a year in genuine 'aid for trade', the largest share of which must be for Africa. These funds should be additional resources and not be merely repackaging of EDF funding.

Key development issues: the Parliament insists, as regards the partnership on the MDGs, that even with more and better aid it will be difficult to meet these goals. MEPs therefore urge EU Member States to uphold their commitments, particularly as regards the volume of their aid, policy coherence, ownership, transparency and division of labour between donors. They encourage the African countries to make basic **health** and **primary and secondary education** one of the main priorities of their poverty reduction strategies and call on the partnership to promote such a development. They also call on the Member States of the EU and the AU to attach greater importance to African **food security and food sovereignty** and to support actions to increase the productivity and competitiveness of African agriculture.

Other aspects of the strategy: the resolution insists that fresh funds are necessary if African states are to avoid being forced to pay a disproportionate price for adaptation to **climate change** and mitigation of its effects. MEPs call for a fair and workable solution to the '**brain drain**' and call on the Commission to use the EU-Africa partnership to help African countries apply the flexibilities provided for in the Doha Declaration on Trade-Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) and public health, in order to facilitate access to affordable essential medicines in Africa.

Lastly, the European Institutions are called upon to create a **specific financial instrument** for implementing the Joint Strategy, centralising all existing sources of funding, in a clear, predictable and programmable way.