EU-Africa strategy: a boost for development

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The European Parliament adopted by 419 votes to 97 with 85 abstentions, a resolution on the EU-Africa Strategy: a boost for development.

Given that the EU is Africa's main partner in the fields of economic activity and trade as well as development, humanitarian aid and security, Members called for a new vision for this partnership that reflects the evolution of the political, economic, environmental and social situations of both continents.

The Cotonou Agreement with the EU, to which 79 ACP States are parties, including 48 in sub-Saharan Africa, governs the main partnership between the EU and Africa. In financial terms, the 11th European Development Fund (EDF) has a budget of EUR 30.5 billion, of which EUR 900 million are reserved for the African Peace Facility, and EUR 1.4 billion of the EDF will be used for the EU Trust Fund for Africa.

Intensifying political dialogue: as a precondition for a renewed strategic partnership, Parliament invited the future partnership to focus, through an expanded dialogue, on the priority areas identified by both the AU and the EU, such as:

- economic development (via trade, Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs));
- good governance, including human rights;
- human development via public services covering basic needs, such as education, health, access to water and sanitation, gender equality, science, technology and innovation;
- security and the fight against terrorism;
- migration and mobility;
- environment – including climate change.

According to Members, **budget support is the best way to carry out appropriation**, providing governments with the means to determine their needs and priorities. They recalled:

- the importance of **maintaining a legally binding framework** on ACP-EU cooperation after 2020, while emphasising the **principle of policy coherence for development** in EU-Africa trade relations;
- the importance for Member States to respect the commitment to devote **0.7% of their GDP** to Official Development Assistance (ODA).

Building more resilient states and societies: Parliament considered it necessary to make resilience (political, security, environmental, economic and social) a major component of the new EU-Africa strategy.

In particular, Members called for efforts to be undertaken to:

- strengthen good governance, democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights by extending the conditionality of development aid to the strict observance of these values, as well as the fight against corruption on both continents;
- improve cooperation in the areas of security and justice with a view to adopting a comprehensive approach to better combat organized crime, human trafficking and smuggling of migrants, in particular minors, as well as terrorism;
- enhance cooperation within the EU-Africa Strategy aimed at preventing impunity, promoting the rule of law and the expansion of police and judicial capacities;

- develop a strategic approach to building **climate resilience** and to support African countries in their adaptation efforts and invest more in the areas of renewable energy;
- increase cooperation between the European and African private sectors and for the concentration of investment, particularly by means of **public-private partnerships**;
- create decent jobs by ensuring compliance with the standards of the International Labor Organization (ILO);
- **better coordinate their aid for trade programmes** and to boost synergies with their Africa investment policies;
- ensure **non-discrimination** against vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities and indigenous peoples and promote appropriate public policies and investments in the area of sexual and reproductive health and rights;
- strengthen Africa's national education systems by investing at least 20% of the national budget in these systems to ensure universal, inclusive, equitable and long-term access to quality education at all levels, from early childhood and early childhood. all, with a focus on girls and in emergency and crisis situations;
- break down the barriers faced by women and other vulnerable groups, including children, people with disabilities and LGBTI people;
- co-ordinate migration and mobility between Europe and Africa in co-operation with countries of origin, transit and destination and based on the principles of solidarity, shared responsibility, respect and of human dignity. Parliament renewed its invitation to promote legal immigration and invited Member States to offer their resettlement places to many refugees;
- step up their financial **contribution to trust funds** and other instruments aiming to foster inclusive and sustainable growth and stimulate job creation thus contributing to addressing the root causes of **migration**. In this regard, Parliament’s scrutiny role should be extended to ensure that migration partnerships and funding tools are compatible with EU legal basis, principles and commitments.