

The state of play of advancing EU-Africa trade and investment relations

2026/2624(RSP) - 08/10/2026 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the state of play of advancing EU-Africa trade and investment relations.

The resolution highlighted that Africa is the EU's fourth-largest trading partner and export market, while the EU is Africa's largest foreign investor. Despite Africa's considerable economic, demographic and entrepreneurial potential, its participation in global trade and investment remains limited. Parliament stressed the opportunities for sustainable trade, investment and industrial development, particularly in the processing and refining of critical raw materials, including copper, manganese, cobalt and platinum group metals, to support the green transition and reduce EU dependencies. It emphasised that these relations must be based on fairness and mutual respect and encompass Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreements and Clean Trade and Investment Partnerships.

Parliament also highlighted the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) as a major milestone in regional integration and a driver of Africa's economic future. Signed by 54 African Union member states, it offers significant potential to strengthen intra-African trade, regional value chains and the continent's integration into global markets.

Sustainable and inclusive growth

Parliament stressed the need to develop sustainable infrastructure and industrial capacity in Africa to strengthen resilient value chains, diversify trade networks and promote local processing of raw materials, creating quality jobs and improving economic resilience. It deplored infrastructure gaps that continue to hamper regional integration and external trade.

It called on the Commission, Member States, sub-Saharan African countries, businesses, investors, the African Development Bank and the European Investment Bank to **mobilise EU financial instruments** to address these gaps. Priorities include upgrading infrastructure, developing integrated transport corridors, investing in clean energy and digitalisation, strengthening skills, reducing non-tariff trade costs, simplifying import and export procedures and diversifying trade partners. Parliament emphasised that African industrialisation should use modern, sustainable and, where possible, climate-neutral technologies and local materials, in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063, the UN 2030 Agenda and the Global Gateway strategy.

Parliament called for stronger institutional capacity and public- and private-sector development, including public-private partnerships, support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises and entrepreneurship, improved access to finance, enhanced digital skills, greater innovation, incentives to formalise trade and action to address infrastructure deficiencies.

Trade and investment relations

Parliament stressed that EU-Africa trade and investment relations should be stable, long-term and mutually beneficial, supporting both partners' green and digital transitions. It called for Africa to move towards innovation-driven processing and local value creation, particularly in critical raw materials, and for partnerships to strengthen EU resilience through diversified supply chains, responsible and traceable mining, local processing and skills development. It also called for the Global Gateway strategy to generate

local added value, decent jobs and social inclusion, reduce inequalities and prioritise high-impact projects in transport, connectivity, energy and the digital economy.

Members called for EU-Africa trade partnerships to promote **food sovereignty** by modernising the agricultural sector and mobilising public and private investment, including from African banks. It stressed that such partnerships should uphold sustainability and must not undermine food security, food safety or food quality, or contribute to deforestation and environmental degradation.

The Commission and the Member States are called on to improve coordination and speak with one voice in their engagement with African partners, while increasing the visibility of trade and investment cooperation, notably through Global Gateway and the Aid for Trade initiative, as part of a genuine Team Europe approach.

Governance of EU-Africa trade and investment policies

Parliament stressed the importance of people-to-people exchanges and multi-stakeholder cooperation in EU-Africa trade and investment relations, including education and research initiatives and the **participation of civil society organisations, trade unions, and the private sector**. It emphasised the importance of strengthening investment ties, encouraging the transition to clean energy, decarbonisation, and climate resilience, promoting skills and technology transfer, and creating a sustainable and strategic supply chain, as envisaged in the Clean Trade and Investment Partnership with South Africa.

The resolution stressed that the **clean trade and investment partnership** should enable sustainable and mutually beneficial industrialisation, with particular emphasis on promoting local SMEs, reducing inequalities through support for sustainable development, decent work, environmental standards and human rights.

Members underlined the importance of critical raw materials for sustainable energy technologies and called on the Commission to refrain from concluding memorandums of understanding with conflict-affected regions, and to suspend existing agreements where mineral extraction risks fuelling conflicts, including the agreement with Rwanda.

Lastly, Parliament called on the Commission to keep it regularly informed of progress towards the long-term objective of a continent-to-continent trade and cooperation agreement, including through the EU's various policy instruments relating to Africa.