# EU/South Africa relations: strategic partnership

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The Council adopted the following conclusions on the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership.

Firstly, it recalled the agreement reached at the EU-South Africa Joint Cooperation Council in 2005 to take new steps to ensure that the relations between the EU and South Africa develop into a truly strategic partnership. The Council reaffirmed the EU's commitment to working towards this goal. The Council stressed that the strategic partnership between the EU and South Africa shall be complementary to and fully consistent with the EU Strategy for Africa.

According to the Council, the process of developing an EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership should be based on an open, concrete and transparent dialogue between the two parties and be pursued on the basis of mutual understanding and ownership of the process. The Council welcomed the Commission's communication "Towards an EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership" as a good basis from which to begin the negotiations that should seek to bring the Member States, the Community and South Africa together to agree on a single and coherent framework. The framework should have clearly and jointly defined objectives, cover all areas of cooperation and ensure the participation of all stakeholders.

The Council underlined that the strategic partnership shall be built on the existing relations between the EU and South Africa with the objective of strengthening and bringing added value to these relations, while being fully consistent with international human rights obligations as well as with the EU Strategy for Africa and the EU consensus on development. Coherence needs to be assured between the Strategic Partnership, the TDCA, the EPA negotiations with the SADC group, the CSP and South Africa's national, regional and African priorities and commitments to its regional partners.

In this context, the existing cooperation between the EU and South Africa will be enhanced by moving from political dialogue to shared objectives and strategic political cooperation on regional, African and global issues including conflict prevention and resolution in Africa. It is also envisaged that the Strategic Partnership will develop stronger and sustainable economic cooperation, fully implement the TDCA provisions on trade related areas and extend cooperation to the social, cultural and environmental fields.

The Council further welcomed the intention to draw up an operational, results-oriented and measurable action plan for the implementation of the strategic partnership in cooperation with the Member States, the Community and South Africa . On the EU side, the implementation of the Action Plan should be a joint exercise to which both the Member States and the Community will make a valuable contribution based on their respective spheres of competence.

Lastly, the Council reaffirmed its commitment to continuing dialogue with South Africa with a view to reaching a common understanding on the strategic partnership in the Joint Cooperation Council in November 2006.