



CONCORD Cotonou Working group  
Briefing paper

**JOINT EU-AFRICA STRATEGY**

**1. Joint EU-Africa Strategy**

For more than 30 years, the African states and the European Union (EU) have been working together to develop new and mutually accountable models for their relations. From Yaounde to Cotonou, the EU and Africa have jointly committed to cooperation and partnership through international treaties.

The European Union and the African Union have in the past years developed their relations since the first Euro-African Summit in Cairo in 2000. Since the Cairo Summit, both Africa and Europe have changed. Both continents are at a cross road: Europe turned 50 this year, and is still in search of its identity and its role in the world scene. Africa is building its own process of integration and cooperation with the creation of the African Union. "Emerging" powers such as China are increasingly playing a role in Africa.

The European Union and the African Union decided in 2007 to develop a co-owned 'joint strategy' which "reflects the needs and aspirations of the peoples of Africa and Europe." The purpose of this joint strategy was to develop a political vision and practical approaches for the future partnership between the EU and Africa, based on mutual respect, common interests and the principle of ownership. The EU stated that the official processes would be nourished and enriched with ideas from the public consultation, resulting in not just a strategy for officials, but also one to which civil society on both continents can relate, contribute and support in their own work.

**2. What is the EU doing?**

The "Africa-EU strategic partnership" (Joint strategy and Action Plan) was formally approved by the European and African head of states on 9 December in Lisbon.

The Action Plan includes **8 so-called EU-Africa partnerships**: on Peace and Security; on Democratic Governance and Human Rights; on Trade, Regional Integration and Infrastructure; on the MDGs (food security, health and education targets of MDGs) ; on Energy; on Climate change; on Migration, Mobility and Employment; on Science, Information Society and Space.

As stated in the Strategy, with a view to a people-centred partnership, an appropriate and Prominent place needs to be defined in the institutional partnership for the Parliaments, civil society and other non-state actors. Africa and the EU will therefore further promote the development of a vibrant and independent civil society and of a systematic dialogue between it and public authorities at all levels.

The institutional architecture and implementation offers some opportunities and raises some challenges for the engagement of civil society and Parliaments

- ◆ Regular Africa-EU Summits
- ◆ The establishment of joint EU-AU experts' monitoring groups on the priorities identified in the action plan, to which CSO would be invited to participate. Institutions talk about rather 8 joint groups, one per partnership.
- ◆ The mapping of CSO networks and the invitation to CSO to prepare general and specific monitoring reports
- ◆ Regarding the funding of the strategy, the question remains as unclear as it was last year<sup>1</sup>. Member States will be asked to make additional contributions and to become the "chef de file" on the different partnerships. This is still under discussion. We would need to monitor the impact on the EDF regional programming process and the forthcoming mid-term review of ACP country strategy papers (2

### 3. Recommendations to the JPA

- ◆ To insist on regular information and transparency of process from the EU and AU
- ◆ To get involved and create space for parliamentary and citizens engagement and scrutiny in the implementation of the Strategy and the Action Plan
- ◆ To enhance the dialogue on the Strategy between Parliaments and CSO at national and international level.
- ◆ To insist on appropriate and additional funding of the Strategy, in order to enhance the participation of CSO and Parliaments
- ◆ To support and to reinforce by national and international measures the capacities of the CSO, particularly in Africa. The EU has a significant programme of support to the African Union, which could be used to widen access for CSOs to AU decision-making processes and debates.
- ◆ To attend to an in-depth dialogue between Africa and the EU rooted in mutual accountability and respect, concerning objectives like good governance, promotion of all human rights and transparency in both continents.

For further information, please go on [www.concordeurop.org](http://www.concordeurop.org) Tel +32 472 346 311

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<sup>1</sup> " The implementation of the Joint Strategy and the initiatives to be developed in this framework will be supported by existing financial instruments in accordance with their respective scope and their relevance to the objectives and activities concerned, such as the European Development Fund (EDF), the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI), the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI), the Instrument for Stability, as well as the Thematic Programmes and by EU financial institutions, such as the European Investment Bank (EIB)"