



***Building bridges of understanding between Africa and Europe in the wake of the war in Ukraine***

***Date: 04 October 2022***

***Format: Online***

***Time: 3pm-5pm EAT***

**Background**

The war in Ukraine has elicited diverse reactions in the geopolitical landscape and created tensions across the globe. African and European countries have taken diverging positions in their response to the war. Although most actors have vocalised concern and condemnation of the war on the occasion of the vote at the UN General Assembly (2 March 2022), many have varied in their approach regarding engagement with the parties and approach to mitigate the military escalation. This has put a strain on the relationship between Western (EU) and African actors, with tensions being observed in various arenas where these stakeholders interact, including in Addis Ababa.

Although there is a mutual recognition of the importance of AU-EU relations and stronger strategic collaboration between them, the differing views and actions on the war in Ukraine have threatened to jeopardise the improving AU-EU relationship.

To bridge the gap between the diverging perspectives that exist between the various European and African stakeholders, a convening of actors from European and African civil society organisations and think tanks will discuss the historical underpinnings that have shaped AU-EU relationship and how these are linked to existing differences, and varying approaches and positions on the war in Ukraine. Discussions will seek to produce a common understanding of the challenges at hand and devise a conciliatory and collective approach towards reversing the drawbacks the war in Ukraine has had on the world's economy, including in Africa, as well as ensuring the protection of civilians impacted by the war.

**Objective of the webinar**

- The webinar will take stock of the evolution and current dynamics of Africa-EU relationship/partnership by unpacking concepts such as “win-win” and “solidarity” that have been used to characterize what an idyllic AU-EU rapport should look like. This is in contrast to existing realities of the relationship.
- The webinar will seek to air out differences toward reaching a mutual understanding between Western and African audiences on the war in Ukraine. This will be done with the goal of finding effective and constructive avenues to arrest the global repercussions and mitigate the impact of the war on civilians in Ukraine
- Build bridges of understanding between African and Western audiences in Addis and beyond in the wake of the war in Ukraine
- Attempt to offer guidelines on a path forward for a constructive and mutually beneficial Africa-EU relationship



## Outcome

- African and European CSOs/Think Tanks contrast perspectives on Africa-EU relationship and provide recommendations on how the relationship can be made more constructive and mutually beneficial
- Western (EU) and African audiences understand the role/agency of African actors in IR and the importance of an equal/balanced relationship between Africa and Europe
- Western (EU) and African audiences gain further insight and understanding about their varying positioning on the war in Ukraine
- Western (EU) and African actors identify ways they can support and cooperate with one another while simultaneously finding ways to address the implications of the war in Ukraine
- Western (EU) and African audiences gain a greater understanding of the contested/nuanced positions of African actors regarding the war in Ukraine

## Moderator:

L Muthoni, Regional Director, Open Society Foundation, Africa Regional Office

## Speakers:

Speaker 1: Philomena Apiko, Head AU-EU relations, ECDPM

Speaker 2: Dr Yonas Adaye Adeto, Commissioner, Ethiopian National Dialogue Commission and Associate Professor, Addis Ababa University

Speaker 3: Dr Giovanni Faleg, Senior Analyst, EUISS

Speaker 4: Liesl Louw-Vaudran, Senior Researcher, ISS Pretoria

## Organisers:

- Amani Africa
- European Center for Development Policy Management (ECDPM)
- Institute for Security Studies (ISS)
- Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS)