

# AGENDA FOR ACTION

An EARN Proposal on the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and the Future of Africa-EU Relations<sup>1</sup>



Europe Africa  
Policy Research  
Network



## 1. The Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES): What has been achieved and what next?

The 3rd Summit of African and EU Heads of State and Government to be held in Tripoli (Libya, 29-30 November 2010) provides an opportunity to assess progress of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) since the last Summit in 2007. The JAES remains an innovative framework for a more comprehensive and deeper partnership between Africa and the EU. The JAES has the potential to overcome the traditional donor-recipient relationship and to reinforce political dialogue at a continental level on all thematic areas of common interest to Africa and Europe.

Three years is clearly too short a period to assess the results of this ambitious framework and to ensure full ownership by the various stakeholders in both Africa and Europe. Dialogue and cooperation have improved in key areas such as Peace and Security and in some relatively new areas such as Climate Change, Energy and Science, Information Society and Space. Regular Commission-to-Commission meetings, Troika Ministerial and technical experts meetings and the establishment of a strong EU Delegation to the African Union (AU) in Addis Ababa have contributed to broaden and intensify discussions between both Unions. The AU is increasingly taking up its continental mandate, which is also reflected in the progress on pan-African architectures on Peace and Security and on Governance.

However, much remains to be done. On the African side, the AU Commission mandate is too restricted to lead a supranational agenda; the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are too little involved in shaping continental policy positions; non-state actors are not consulted enough; current human and financial

resources are well below the level of ambition; and AU Member States decisions are still too little informed, if at all, by common continental interests. On the EU side, Member States commitment remains weak and at times fragmented, with bilateral initiatives disjointed from the common process; common interests are unclear; EU's policies and initiatives towards Africa still lack coherence; and EU's negotiating attitude and agenda setting is often perceived by many African partners as led by a patronising attitude rather than a real commitment to a partnership of equals.

The partnership risks becoming estranged from its political content. There is a tendency to adopt technocratic approaches to some of the contentious political issues between Africa and the EU. Despite more intense consultations and exchange, Europe and Africa have not addressed sufficiently or frankly, divergences of views on major aspects of the partnership. A case in point are the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), a major contentious issue in the relationship between Europe and Africa in the past decade that has not been formally integrated into the JAES. Europe and Africa have also adopted different positions on climate change (e.g. such as at the 2009 Copenhagen Summit), and major differences exist on other crucial issues such as migration, peace and security, governance and human rights and EU-Africa cooperation in other global fora.

Failure to address sensitive issues and to confront the inevitable differences of perspective and diverse interests risks undermining the political relevance of the JAES. There is a need for constructive, open debate at the highest political level in both continents if Europe and Africa truly want to reach credible compromises on all issues of common concern.

<sup>1</sup> Extract from the EARN publication: *BEYOND DEVELOPMENT AID. EU-Africa Political Dialogue on Global Issues of Common Concern. This text was elaborated jointly by IEEI, ECDPM and SAIIA, respectively chair and co-chairs of EARN and responsible for the EARN Working Group on Global Issues.*

Against this background, the Europe-Africa Policy Research Network (EARN) proposes an Agenda for Action on the future of Africa-EU relations as an input into discussions during the 3rd Africa-EU Summit in Tripoli and the 2nd Action Plan of the Joint Africa-EU strategy. The EARN proposal is based on the collective analysis and discussions between African and European policy researchers up to the last EARN meeting in Praia (Cape Verde), officially recognised as a side event to the 3rd Africa-EU Summit.

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## 2. Crosscutting challenges to change the culture of the partnership

EARN strongly recommends the following steps to revitalise the JAES:

- **Expand the dialogue** by including the contentious issues between both parties on the agenda. EPAs, amongst others, should therefore be an integral part of the dialogue;
- **Improve the quality and the impact of the Africa-EU dialogue** by ensuring that contentious issues are discussed among equals at the highest political level and not left only to technical experts (e.g. migration).
- **Reinforce the political dialogue in multilateral fora** on issues of common interest. A better understanding of what drives European and African positions would facilitate building common ground or identifying specific issues where consensus and a joint positioning is possible;
- **Improve the analysis of the political economy** with a view to better understanding the real interests and dynamics at play, and to identify the drivers of change which can move the process forward on both continents;
- **Move beyond development aid** by mainstreaming crosscutting issues (e.g. climate change adaptation, energy sustainability, migration). This also requires extending the political dialogue to European and African member-states, to the RECs and to non-development cooperation departments in the European Commission (e.g. environment, energy,

justice and home affairs) so as to ensure that the partnership overcomes the traditional donor-recipient dichotomy and becomes effectively more oriented towards common concerns and common interests;

- **Clarify unambiguously the relationship and complementarity between the JAES, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement, and the Union for the Mediterranean.** This requires action and clarity of purpose from both European and African actors;
- **Increase the levels of participation and ownership** of other African and European stakeholders beyond the pan-African and European institutional actors and structures (e.g. national governments and parliaments, RECs, economic and social actors, civil society, media, research community, etc). This can be done by providing more incentives and opportunities for these actors to participate and engage in the JAES process and link the JAES Action Plan to the development plans and respective interests of African and European countries and regions;
- **Address the asymmetry in the partnership** by strengthening legitimate and capable African institutions at pan-African and regional levels and by focused capacity building initiatives at all levels;
- **Ensure joint responsibility for mobilising and for adapting the necessary financial means** to realise the JAES’ ambitious objectives, i.e.: African partners mobilising more of their own resources; the EU rationalising its various financial instruments dealing with Africa, each with its different regulations (e.g. European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument, European Development Fund (EDF)). However, both parties should avoid the relationship becoming focused only on issues of financial instruments and volume of resources;
- The best **communication** strategy for the JAES partnership will be it delivering concrete results that in themselves gather attention. However, an active communication and information strategy on the JAES involving media and other stakeholders in both continents could be beneficial, especially if the above-mentioned crosscutting challenges are adequately addressed.

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### 3. Policy oriented recommendations in key thematic areas of the JAES

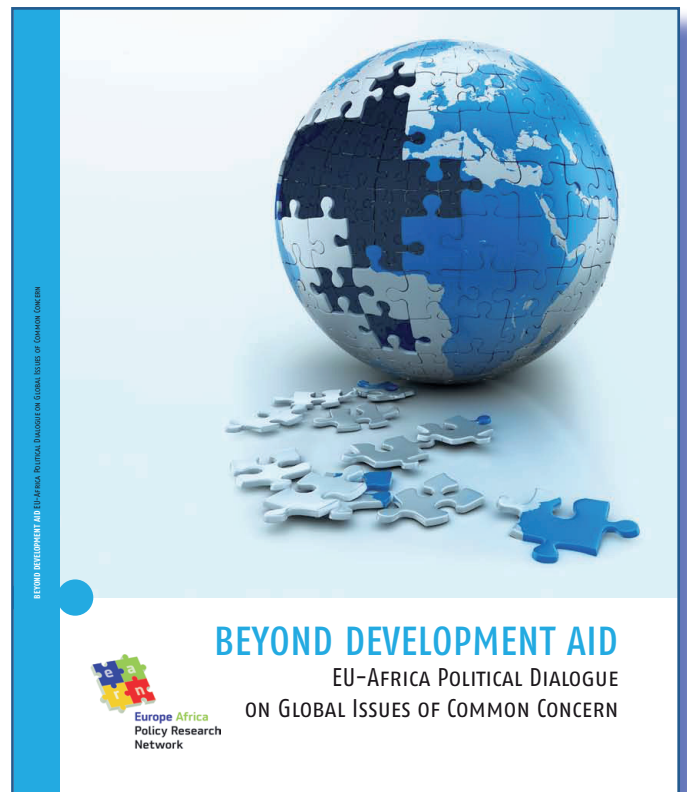
EARN also makes the following specific recommendations on key thematic areas of the JAES: (1) Peace and Security, (2) Global Governance, (3) Trade and Regional Integration, and (4) Climate Change.

#### 3.1 Peace and Security

- **Engage in an open dialogue at national, regional and continental level** on European and African security interests, priorities and expectations, thus allowing for an identification of shared security threats. Acknowledging differences of views on approaches to security from both parties can allow for a better understanding of these differences and move on to explore common ground;
- **Improve coordination and harmonisation of national positions on both sides** to ensure more coherent and effective Africa-EU cooperation. On the EU side, the European External Action Service, and the EU delegation to the AU in Addis Ababa can play a constructive role in co-ordinating European common defence and security policy positions and initiatives. On the AU side, the Peace and Security Council can play a key role in articulating common positions among African states on sensitive security and political governance issues;
- **Jointly ensure predictable and sustainable funding for African peace operations**, including from African sources. This is likely to require an engagement at the highest political level;
- **Look beyond African peace and security issues.** If the peace and security partnership between the EU and Africa is meant to encompass global security concerns, its focus should not be limited to African security problems alone.

#### 3.2 Global Governance

- **Unpack and openly discuss principles, values and fundamental action points for a more representative international governance system** that all key players within Africa, Europe and beyond can agree to.
- **Work towards internal coherence of positions in multilateral fora;**
- **Explore practical ways in which Africa and the EU can better coordinate and converge positions in multilateral fora.** The upcoming G20 meeting in Seoul



- in November and the Cancun Summit on climate change in December are examples of opportunities to both consolidate their internal positions as a group, and jointly identify areas of consensus. A positive step in that direction would be for the EU and the Committee of Ten (African Ministers of Finance and Governors of Central Banks) to liaise on their positions on African issues before the Seoul G20 Summit;
- **Work towards the reform of the International Finance Institutions** (IMF and World Bank). In the G20, where the EU and Member States have a quarter of the seats, the EU should use its stronger leverage and presence to support Africa's proposals.

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#### 3.3 Trade and regional integration

- **Expose and address incoherencies in European and African approaches to regional integration, trade and development** through the JAES. Clarify the links and complementarity between bilateral trade agreements, existing processes at sub-regional level – including the EPAs and the Union for the Mediterranean – and

at the continental level. The JAES could facilitate meetings across regions to exchange views on progress in EPA negotiations and in other regional processes, on best practice in assessment needs and on identification of regional complementarities;

- **Better integrate the EPA agenda in the 2nd Action Plan of the JAES.** This would mean a full recognition and respect for the diversity of interests across African countries and regions and an objective assessment of the EPAs provisions that could support regional integration and development or, on the contrary, undermine these.
- **Re-programme and align the different EU resources with the objectives of the JAES.** The mid-term reviews of the European Development Fund (EDF) and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument provide an opportunity to do so, if jointly agreed by the EU EDF Committee and the ACP Committee of Ambassadors.

*“Explore practical ways in which Africa and the EU can better coordinate and converge positions in multilateral fora”*

### 3.4 Climate change

- **Mainstream climate change adaptation** into policy thinking and planning through all pillars of the JAES in the 2nd Action Plan and particularly into development policies. Climate change adaptation projects at grassroots level could be the most adequate entry point to do this;
- **Co-ordinate positions** on broader areas such as global responsibility for climate change, differentiated responsibility according to a country’s capacity, the 20°C threshold, increased adaptation financing, etc. That would lay the basis for a possible joint position at the December 2010 Climate Change Summit in Cancun and/or at the 2011 Conference of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in South Africa;

- **Mobilise new additional resources for financing climate change adaptation**, primarily for those countries most vulnerable to the impact of climate change.
- **Improve transparency** over the amount, the delivery mechanism and the sector focus of funding for climate change adaptation in line with the Copenhagen commitments. An option would be to channel funding through an existing UN mechanism (e.g. the UNFCCC Adaptation Fund or the Least Developed Countries Fund of the Kyoto Protocol);
- **Support the development of institutional, negotiating and technical capacities in Africa on climate change** (e.g. surveillance and monitoring, accurate climate data and information, etc) and encourage existing initiatives that focus on strengthening the resilience of African societies, particularly those dependent on natural resources for their livelihood;
- **Promote more South-South collaboration** and sharing of experiences on climate change mitigation and adaptation through existing policy frameworks (e.g. JAES, Cotonou agreement) among Least Developed Countries, small islands states and other vulnerable developing countries. Such collaboration and exchange should also include aspects like how to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation into development plans for resilience.

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More information on the **EARN Network** is available on <http://europafrica.net/earn/>.

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