



ENoP STATEMENT | TOWARDS A COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGY WITH AFRICA

INTRODUCTION

The European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP) welcomes the Joint Communication “*Towards a comprehensive Strategy with Africa*” that the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the European Commission (EC) have put forward to renew and strengthen the European Union’s partnership with Africa.

ENoP brings together **54 member foundations from 23 countries and 6 political families**. The network builds bridges between cross-party and international actors, leading them to the elaboration of joint strategic policy solutions in the areas of **democracy support** and **development cooperation**. The following statement brings the cross-party expertise of ENoP member foundations to contribute to the endeavour of the EU to deliver an **inclusive, fair and multidimensional Strategy for the EU-Africa relations**.

CONTEXT

The **Covid-19 pandemic** poses a tremendous challenge to the world, causing grave socio-economic consequences. While the pandemic’s full **impact on Africa** is yet to be felt, there is no doubt about the negative impacts it would trigger. Without a swift and effective response, there is a risk that poverty increases and social indicators worsen, thus jeopardising the improvements made over the last decades.

In times of **political polarisation** worldwide, the Covid-19 pandemic acts as an amplifier of cleavages. We see political leaders take advantage of the situation by silencing opposition and civil society voices in order to stabilise their power. These trends nourish the phenomenon of **shrinking space for civil society organisations** (CSOs) and lead to **democratic erosion** both in the EU and in partner countries.

Therefore, in order to be a **credible partner** and have success in reinventing its partnership with Africa, the European Union should act now and **abide by its core values, especially democracy**, which is at the heart of the EU and that distinguishes our **value-based approach** from the ones of other actors. Only through a strong commitment to **democratic values and the Sustainable Development Goals** (SDGs) can the EU achieve an inclusive and fair partnership with Africa.

PRIORITIES AND FOCUS OF THE NEW EU- AFRICA STRATEGY

ENoP welcomes the Commission's proposal to link the new Strategy with **multilateral agreements, such as the Agenda 2030 and the Paris Agreement**. The Communication also makes reference to intra-African developments, such as the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) or the AU Agenda 2063. A link to the **Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness of 2005** is however, missing.

Furthermore, the Communication does not mention the ongoing Post-Cotonou negotiations. The new Strategy should be **comprehensive** and in line with the **Africa pillar of the Post-Cotonou** agreement.

Although many multinational agreements and agendas are mentioned, the **document lacks sufficient prioritisation and commitment**. For the Strategy to indeed be a roadmap for a sustainable and fair partnership between the two continents, the implementation has to be more concrete and not merely place an ongoing focus on economic growth and private investment.

Responses to Covid-19 have shown that **swift and radical change is possible**. To respond effectively to growing challenges, such as climate change and rising inequalities, the EU needs to be more **concrete and innovative**. The EU together with its African counterparts should put forward a joint strategy that reflects this aspect. A paradigm shift is needed, rather than continuing with "business as usual".

The current document lacks a holistic approach with clear connections between relevant priorities and challenges. In relation to this, **Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD)** has to be prioritised more clearly in the Strategy. The EU needs to make sure that its policies, both internal and external, do not hinder sustainable development in African countries. The principles of PCSD should be applied across all EU policies.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINSTREAMING DEMOCRACY, RULE OF LAW, HUMAN RIGHTS, GENDER EQUALITY AND YOUTH EMPOWERMENT FOR AN INCLUSIVE DIALOGUE

While the Joint Communication mentions the importance of democracy, human rights and the rule of law as well as of empowering women and youth, it treats them as separate issues and as issues among others. These themes need to be mainstreamed and the document has to make clear that they are **interconnected preconditions without which none of the partnerships can be truly fulfilled**.

The Joint Communication does not sufficiently reflect the Commission's commitment to promote and protect **democracy, human rights and the rule of law**. Democracy and the rule of law are only mentioned in passing and are mainly linked to the issue of peace and security, even though democracy and the rule of law are **essential for the successful implementation of all the other partnerships**.

While the Commission does recognise democracy and the rule of law as fundamental **preconditions for sustainable development** and security in the long term, it does not propose a clear strategy to achieve it. More focus is necessary to strengthen democracy in the long term, by **including and supporting local actors such as civil society, political parties and local authorities**. Furthermore, it is essential that the fight against security threats, such as increasing terrorism is not used as an excuse for increased authoritarianism and thus an erosion of democratic progress.

The importance of **involving women and girls** is touched upon in the Communication, but it is only explicitly mentioned under the Partnership for Peace, Security, Governance and Resilience. Since empowering and involving women is an **absolute precondition for long-term development**, it needs to be **streamlined** throughout the document. The strategies needed to achieve this should also be clarified. In this regard, the importance of **Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)**, and the rationale behind, need to be emphasised. While fertility rates are decreasing globally, Africa's population is still growing rapidly. Being able to choose the number and spacing of children is an absolute precondition for women's full participation in society.

The African continent hosts the **largest youth generation** in history. Although the Communication mentions youth as a priority target, the document does not reflect this. The growing young population in African countries, struggling with urgent issues such as unemployment, has to be addressed more concretely and used as an opportunity to contribute to sustainable progress.

Mainstreaming democracy, women and youth is of utmost importance if we want to realise an inclusive and fair Africa-EU partnership. This needs to be integrated at all levels, with clearly identified inter-linkages between the issues and partnerships.

TOWARDS A JUST GREEN TRANSITION

The objective of this Partnership to achieve **economic development in line with the green transition** through innovation and in compliance with the Paris Agreement, is very much welcome.

However, the Communication fails to convey a **sense of urgency**. Climate change is one of the principal threats to quality of life on our planet. Beyond environmental problems, climate change threatens food security, water availability, health, housing and self-determination. Furthermore, **the burden of these impacts is not distributed equally**. The poor, women, children, indigenous people face disproportionate risks. While African countries contribute very little to the total global CO2 emissions, they are among the most vulnerable to global warming. In addition, these countries often have little means to contribute to and be included in relevant climate action and problem-solving processes.

To achieve **climate justice** and to let African countries attain the economic and social development they need, African CO2 emissions would have to increase and this might need to be compensated elsewhere. **The EU must therefore rethink its own policies in terms of emissions, trade, circular economy and agricultural policy** to enable **fair value chains** and a sustainable local production.

Although **urbanisation** is a continuing trend and by 2040 most Africans will live in cities, the Communication hardly mentions the challenges related to this trend. While **rising air pollution in cities** is a serious problem, other ones are **missing, such as employment, water, sanitation and infrastructure** for a growing population. The EU needs to work more closely with its African partners to address these challenges.

FAIR SOCIAL DIALOGUE

The **partnership for sustainable growth and jobs** should stress the need for a fair social dialogue and its link to specific ongoing programming of the EU more clearly. To create a better climate for investments, as prioritised in the document, the EU should **create space for capacity-building in a social tripartite dialogue** between state, employers and workers. Support for those structures and platforms needs to be strengthened. This not only creates stability in the market, but also **strengthens trust between the relevant actors**. A formalised way of resolving conflicts on the labour market decreases the risk for industrial actions and strikes, which significantly improves the possibility for foreign direct investments (FDIs). This is subsequently beneficial for **job creation and the decent work** agenda of the Commission.

OPPORTUNITIES OF MIGRATION AND MOBILITY

The proposed Partnership on Migration and Mobility lacks a strategy oriented towards better understanding the **link between migration and development**. European migration policies should contribute to positive impacts in developing countries. Through leveraging remittances, for instance, migrants and diaspora can play an important role as driving force in the development of countries of origin and destination.

Moreover, the new strategy should foresee the creation of **legal pathways for migration**. A lack of access to such pathways drives potential migrants in dangerous ways of migration.

The commitments reached during the **Valletta Summit on Migration in 2015** need to be taken into account. Migration flows should be managed on the basis of **solidarity, partnership and shared responsibility**, with reference to the importance of respecting human rights and international obligations.

The **resources of the European Fund for Sustainable Development** need to be used more effectively to address drivers of migration and in particular to support investments that strengthen local businesses, to guarantee decent work, and to create relevant education opportunities.

In this context, it is also important to highlight that **EU development cooperation funds should not be used for migration management purposes**, such as border control. They shall remain focussed on activities aimed at improving the socio-economic livelihood and sustainable democratic governance of partner-countries.

WAY FORWARD: AN EQUAL EU-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP

ENoP welcomes the fact that the following Communication is **a working document that allows for feedback and reflection**. The document should be used as a launch for consultation and a basis for discussion with relevant counterparts. **Input from civil society actors in both Africa and Europe has to be taken into account** when further elaborating the Strategy. This is crucial to make the process more democratic, transparent and accountable. Civil society and diaspora organisations in Europe, along with organisations, such as ENoP, with a substantive network in Africa, could function as a bridge in this endeavour.

ENoP stresses the importance of a fair **EU-Africa partnership** that takes stock of the **mutual interests and shared responsibilities** of both continents. The language of the Strategy should be adapted as to reflect this equality. In this regard, the diversity of the African continent, with 54 countries and many more different ethnic groups cannot be forgotten. To address this, **local expertise** should be included more clearly in the EU-Africa Strategy. One way to do that is by providing exchange between academia. Such cooperation will also benefit the objective of a mutually-beneficial partnership.

ENoP welcomes the recognition of the important contribution of diaspora for EU-Africa relations in the Communication. To be able to fully benefit from **diaspora's potential and network for cooperation beyond institutional relations**, a more comprehensive plan for the **inclusion of diaspora** in EU-Africa collaboration is needed. Diaspora should be **embedded in existing structures**, and resources to **professionalise diaspora organisations** have to be made available.

TIMELINE AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES

A strategy on paper is not enough: in order for the new and fair EU-Africa partnership to become vital, we need a **strategic timeline for implementation**. A transparent timeline and **clearly defined objectives** for the partnership are necessary for CSOs to be able to successfully monitor the outcome and implementation of the Strategy. This also implies clarity about the **financial resources** available for implementation. The current Communication shows an overly strong confidence in innovative finance mechanisms, such as the European Fund for Sustainable Development (EFSD). More emphasis is, however needed on the substantial economic role of **diaspora and remittances**. Remittances are crucial for development and of great importance for many African countries, though in sharp decline at present. The transfer costs of remittances need to be substantially reduced.

The Covid-19 pandemic highlights once again that more support from the European Union is needed to **increase public resource mobilisation** in African countries. To make this possible the EU has to prioritise the fight against **tax avoidance** in collaboration with other jurisdictions.

In addition, the EU should fight illicit financial flows, promote progressive tax systems and review unfair tax treaties.

ABOUT ENoP

The European Network of Political Foundations (ENoP) serves as a platform for dialogue and exchange between the European political foundations, civil society organisations, active in the fields of democracy support and sustainable development, and the institutions of the European Union.

Today, the Network brings together 54 member-foundations from 23 countries and 6 political families, represented at the European Parliament, namely: ECR, EPP, Greens, GUE, Renew Europe and S&D. Our members are active in over 100 countries around the world, where they bring civic education, support democratic processes and sustainable development through work with civil society and political actors.

In 2016, ENoP signed a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) with the European Commission, acknowledging the important role of the Network in the fields of development cooperation and democracy support. This FPA marks a set of common objectives of a Strategic Partnership to:

- Promote an enabling environment for political foundations, civil society and political parties;
- Encourage participation in policy making processes through political foundations, their partner organisations and political parties;
- Strengthen the capabilities of political foundations in promoting democracy and developing pluralistic societies.

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