



EU-AU MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS MEETING

Brussels, 21- 22 January 2019

JOINT COMMUNIQUE

1. As agreed at the African Union (AU) – European Union (EU) Summit, held in Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire, on 29 and 30 November 2017, the AU and EU held the first of a series of annual joint ministerial meetings in Brussels, Belgium, on 21 and 22 January 2019. The meeting gathered the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Member States of the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) and was co-chaired by the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Rwanda and Chair of the African Union Executive Council, Richard Sezibera, with the participation of Commissioner of Peace and Security Smail Chergui, representing AU Commission Chairperson Moussa Faki Mahamat, and in the presence of EU and AU Commissioners.
2. Ministers stressed the importance of having this meeting as an annual event, which will contribute to strengthening the continent-to-continent partnership and addressing common challenges. Ministers reiterated their common interest and opportunity for a strong and mutually beneficial partnership in the spirit of shared ownership, responsibility, reciprocity and mutual accountability and transparency.
3. Ministers recalled the 5th AU-EU Summit, held in Abidjan on 29-30 November 2017, under the theme *Investing in Youth for Accelerated Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development*, which initiated a step change in the AU-EU partnership and identified the strategic priority areas for cooperation until the next EU-AU Summit envisaged to be organised by the EU in 2020.
4. Ministers acknowledged progress on the development of the Abidjan Action Plan and look forward to its finalisation by the two Commissions by the next College-to-College-meeting. They took note of the implementation of a number of joint initiatives under the strategic priorities identified during the Abidjan Summit and agreed to continue the implementation of the Abidjan outcomes. They took stock of the follow-up undertaken since Abidjan in each of the following priority areas for the AU-EU continent-to-continent partnership.

A. Economic cooperation

5. As closest neighbours, Europe and Africa are already prime trade, investment and development partners. In Abidjan, it was agreed to redouble joint efforts to advance sustainable and inclusive growth, economic transformation and development. In particular, the two partners agreed to cooperate on enhancing the investment climate, as well as mobilising investments in the fields of agriculture, infrastructure, energy, digitalisation, industry and air transport, among other sectors.

6. The meeting was updated on the important progress made in the continental integration process through the launch of the *African Continental Free Trade Agreement* (AfCFTA), the *Single African Air Transport market* and the adoption of the *Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence and Right of Establishment*. The EU, having experienced the multiple benefits of regional integration and of an increasingly harmonised business and investment climate, reaffirmed its commitment to share its own experience and partnership in regional integration and cooperation, to which it will lend its full support. Ministers agreed on the importance of developing trade relations between Africa and Europe
7. In a related manner, the meeting was informed of the launch of, and the progress on, the European Initiative '*Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs*', and encouraged both sides to engage in further consultations to ensure that implementation of the Alliance concept responds to the priorities of both continents.
8. The meeting was updated on the progress of the *EU External Investment Plan*, which is deploying EUR 4.1 billion to leverage an estimated EUR 37 billion in African and European private investments.
9. Ministers also welcomed the sub-regional cooperation and integration initiatives, with a view to creating an integrated and competitive African market and fully aligned with the AfCFTA, and the contribution they can make to stability, prosperity and sustainable development on the African continent.
10. Ministers committed to joining efforts to combat corruption in the two continents and promote international cooperation to combat illicit financial flows and tax avoidance and evasion, as well as to strengthen cooperation on asset recovery.
11. Ministers reiterated that to achieve the right skilled labour force, as agreed in Abidjan, it is important to invest in youth through market-responsive education and training opportunities, especially for women and girls, including by rolling out more vocational training and education programmes as well as R&D and scientific exchanges, with the involvement of the private sector. Participants further agreed on the importance of internationalisation and harmonisation of higher education in Africa to develop a culture of mobility with a view to increasing quality of education and comparability. In this respect, mobility of students and staff shall be further supported since it is seen as a key driver of socio-economic development as it helps to equip young people with relevant skills to build their future. Programmes like Erasmus+ facilitate the delivery of those results, and could inspire other programmes towards those aims.

B. Resilience, peace, security and governance

12. Ministers agreed that cooperation in the field of peace and security during all phases of the conflict cycle is a central pillar of the AU-EU partnership. New threats to international and regional peace and security, in particular the spread of terrorism, piracy, radicalisation, violent extremism, the illegal arms trade and organised crime, have an impact on the stability of both continents. These threats require concerted efforts, in accordance with international law, including international human rights law.
13. Respect for democratic principles and the rule of law and the involvement of civil society are important for stability and sustainable development to meet the political and economic expectations of a growing youth population. The AU-EU Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance signed in May 2018 puts the

institutional partnership on a solid and structured basis, taking into account the complexity of the emerging threats and the need to address their root causes.

14. All these efforts will contribute to Africa's ambition of *Silencing the Guns by 2020*. Continued support to stability in crisis-affected regions and countries, including the Sahel, Libya, the Great Lakes region, CAR, South Sudan and Somalia, needs to be reinforced through coordinated engagement, in support of African efforts to promote lasting peace, security and stability on the continent. Ministers welcomed the positive steps towards regional peace and stability, particularly the Ethio-Eritrean rapprochement and its wider impact for peace and security in the Horn of Africa, and agreed to support the process.
15. Both sides confirmed their mutual commitment to the implementation of the Women, Peace and Security agenda, UNSCR 2250 on Youth, Peace and Security, as well as compliance with International Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law throughout this cooperation. Moreover, ministers stressed the importance of good governance, institution-building and respect for and promotion of human rights, including gender equality as important tools to prevent conflicts.
16. Ministers acknowledged the contribution of the fruitful AU-EU cooperation towards the full operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and expressed backing for enhancing the links between the APSA and the African Governance Architecture (AGA), in line with the AU reform process.
17. Ministers welcomed the launch of the revitalised *AU Peace Fund*, the appointment of its Board of Trustees, and the commitment to mobilise resources from AU Member States to the target of USD 400 million by 2021 to finance AU operational peace and security activities. It was explained that the Fund should become a major instrument for Africa and its partners investing in peace and security in Africa.
18. In the framework of the EU's longstanding support for sustainable and predictable financing for African-led Peace Support Operations, both sides welcomed the commitment of EU Member States to replenish the African Peace Facility for the period 2019-2020. Ministers underlined the importance of ongoing negotiations in New York on the use of UN-assessed contributions for AU-led Peace Support Operations authorised by the UN Security Council. In this respect, ministers welcomed the adoption by the AU of its compliance policies in November 2018, as well as the commitment of the EU to support the ongoing AU efforts to operationalise the framework.

C. Migration and mobility

19. Ministers welcomed the AU's revised migration policy framework for Africa and Plan of Action 2018-2027 and the AU Protocol on free movement of persons, the African Agenda on Migration and the African Observatory and Research Centres on Migration, as well as the achievements to date and the mandate to update the Joint Valletta Action Plan (JVAP). They welcomed the work done by the EU Trust Fund (EUTF), intended to address the main challenges of the JVAP, and encouraged to continue monitoring the results and improving the implementation of its five pillars, as well as the effectiveness of the JVAP.

20. The EU Member States which adhered to the UN Global Compact on Migration and UN Global Compact on Refugees and the AU welcomed their adoption of non-legally binding international cooperation frameworks, aimed to complement individual national strategies and acknowledging country-specific approaches to discussing migration-related challenges relevant to both continents.
21. Ministers recognised the recent progress on designing the AU-EU continent-to-continent cooperation on migration, which can add value in terms of ensuring consistency and complementarity, among existing processes, including those of Rabat, Khartoum and the Horn of Africa. Both sides expressed support for broader cooperation in this respect.

D. Cooperation on the global scene

22. Ministers shared the conviction that multilateralism is the most effective mode of international cooperation to address global issues, level the international playing field and contribute to common, sustainable and ambitious solutions to today's challenges.
23. Ministers recalled that at the summit in Abidjan, African and European leaders committed to boosting joint cooperation as equal partners on the global scene. In delivering on this commitment both sides agreed to work together to promote the crucial role of the rules-based global order with the UN at its core and to support effective multilateralism at a time when it is being particularly challenged.
24. Ministers undertook to strengthen joint high-level policy dialogue to adopt a more coordinated approach and converging positions in international negotiations. They agreed to continue to implement and cooperate on priorities including the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on financing development, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its Sustainable Development Goals, and the AU Agenda 2063. A post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, ocean governance, implementation of the Iran nuclear deal (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - JCPOA) are, among others, examples of areas where cooperation can make a difference.
25. Ministers in particular welcomed the adoption of the Paris Agreement work programme in Katowice in December 2018, and looked forward to jointly exploring ways to secure ambitious implementation of the Paris Agreement in all its aspects.
26. Dialogue and working together on the global scene can also provide support to the multilateral trading system and the process of WTO reform, with benefits for both Africa and Europe. The AU and the EU should also work together to support the process of UN reform, including efforts on reform of the UN Security Council and the revitalisation of the work of the General Assembly. In parallel, the work on AU-EU-UN trilateral cooperation is a positive development, as illustrated by the Task Force on Libya.

E. Post-2020

27. Ministers recalled the commitment made in Abidjan to promote an even stronger mutually beneficial partnership between the two Unions. They recalled that the AU Assembly of Heads of State at its extraordinary session, held in Addis Ababa on 18 November 2018, expressed its will to continue the AU-EU continent-to-continent

partnership post-2020, backed by commitments on both sides and appropriate instruments and frameworks. While acknowledging the engagement of African states and regions in different cooperation frameworks and the need to preserve their interests, specificities, diversities and acquis, ministers confirmed that the AU and EU would continue to work towards enhancing the continent-to-continent partnership, post-2020, with a view to the next AU-EU Summit.

F. Closing

28. Ministers expressed satisfaction regarding the expanding cooperation between the AU and the EU in all areas and agreed that this reflects the common interests of the two continents and the need to work together to achieve shared goals.
29. The participants manifested their commitment to a closer and stronger partnership between the EU and the AU and also welcomed initiatives undertaken by Member States in that respect.
30. The ministers commended the co-chairs for the organisation of this successful first annual ministerial meeting and looked forward to the second ministerial meeting, due to take place in Africa before the end of this year, as agreed in Abidjan, to report on implementation of Abidjan outcomes and review deliverables for the next AU-EU Summit envisaged in 2020.