

A new Africa-EU Strategy: Recommendations for EU support to peace and security in the framework of a renewed Africa-EU Partnership

October 2020

Introduction

In March, the EU released a Joint Communication entitled '[Toward a comprehensive Strategy with Africa](#)' (hereafter 'JC'), and in June the Council of the EU adopted [conclusions on Africa](#) (hereafter 'CC on Africa'). These documents provide the basis on which the EU seeks to agree with its African partners a new joint Strategy to guide the [Africa-EU Partnership](#). This new Strategy is due to be adopted at the upcoming sixth AU-EU summit.

The European Peacebuilding Liaison Office (EPLO) believes that the adoption of a new Strategy presents an opportunity to enhance the EU's support to peace and security through the Africa-EU Partnership. The purpose of this statement is to provide recommendations for achieving this objective.

We welcome a number of elements in the JC and the CC on Africa, including that they underline the need to address the 'root causes' of conflicts, that they recognise 'democracy, good governance, the rule of law, human rights, gender equality and inclusive and participative societies' as 'preconditions for peace',¹ and that they emphasise the EU's support to the women, peace and security (WPS) and youth, peace and security (YPS) agendas.

The following recommendations are focused on the new Africa-EU Strategy and its implementation.² They build on lessons learned from some of the challenges encountered in the implementation of the peace and security agenda of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy adopted in 2007, including that civilian conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities have too often continued to be overlooked in favour of military and short-term crisis management actions.

Recommendations

- 1. The new Africa-EU Strategy should include as one of its core objectives to contribute to the human security of populations by building peace and addressing the root causes and drivers of violent conflict.**
 - The EU should ensure that the new Strategy is based on a 'people-centred approach' – as endorsed in the CC on Africa – and that it prioritises the human security of populations, especially marginalised people, rather than state-centric, militarised security.³
 - The EU should focus in particular on supporting civilian conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities, and on building EU and African civilian capacities to respond to complex threats to human security (including cross-sectoral threats such as the climate

¹ CC on Africa, p. 4.

² In line with EPLO's mandate, these recommendations are only aimed at the EU and joint EU-Africa institutions and mechanisms.

³ The JC and the CC on Africa include a number of points relating to security but they make no reference to 'human security' itself.

crisis and pandemics), as part of the implementation of the peace and security agenda of the new Strategy.

- The EU should ensure that the peace support operations (PSOs) and capacity building actions it supports as part of the Africa-EU Partnership have as a primary objective the promotion of conflict prevention and human security (including through the greater inclusion of civil society expertise and the exchange of existing good practices). In addition, the EU's assistance to African security forces must be conditional on anti-corruption measures, gender sensitivity, human rights and IHL compliance, and the existence of robust mechanisms for civilians to report abuses (which would trigger a halting of security assistance measures, including through the African Peace Facility (APF)⁴).
- 2. The new Africa-EU Strategy should emphasise the critical importance of conflict sensitivity, and for engagements in the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership to adhere to the 'Do No Harm' principle and to be systematically conflict-sensitive.**
- The EU should ensure that dedicated institutional and financial resources are allocated to ensuring the conflict sensitivity of both its own and civil society engagements in Africa.
 - The EU should ensure that its actions are based on robust gender- and climate-sensitive conflict analysis informed by the meaningful consultation of diverse civil society actors and communities, both as a precondition for decision-making for engagements and during the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions. The results of these consultations and analyses should also be made public whenever possible.
 - The EU should ensure that the new Strategy highlights the close links between good governance, public health and peace, and the need for responses to health emergencies (e.g. in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic) to be conflict-sensitive and to address the governance aspects of public health (e.g. patterns of unequal distribution and exclusion that may exacerbate the likelihood of violent conflict).
- 3. The new Africa-EU Strategy should emphasise and address the linkages between democracy, good governance and peace.**
- The EU should ensure that the new Strategy recognises the essential role of diverse civil society in contributing to enhancing governance, including through inclusive dialogue with authorities and by monitoring government activities, in particular in relation to peace and security issues, and the implementation of related policies.
 - The EU's continued support to the operationalisation of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the African Governance Architecture (AGA) should promote the linkages between the two and the essential participation of diverse civil society in their institutions and decision-making processes.
 - The EU should ensure that the new Strategy highlights the importance of robust accountability mechanisms (including civilian complaint mechanisms), particularly for security-related actions supported in the framework of the Africa-EU Partnership.
- 4. The new Africa-EU Strategy should explicitly guarantee the active, meaningful and inclusive participation of diverse civil society in the Africa-EU Partnership.⁵**
- The EU should consult and integrate input from diverse African and European civil society (including young women and men from various segments of society, especially the most marginalised)⁶ as part of the drafting of the new Africa-EU Strategy.
 - The EU should institutionalise the active and meaningful participation of diverse civil society in the Africa-EU Partnership, in particular on the basis of their expertise on

⁴ It is envisaged that the APF will be replaced by the proposed European Peace Facility (EPF) in 2021.

⁵ This implies guaranteeing the active participation of people of diverse socioeconomic groups, genders, ages, geographical origins, religious beliefs (and lack thereof), ethnicities, sexual orientations, (dis)abilities, including the most marginalised.

⁶ This also includes non-binary people.

thematic issues and through existing inclusive civil society platforms, and ensure that this participation is effective.

- The CC on Africa calls for the ‘active participation of civil society’ in the Partnership. As civil society has previously faced obstacles in participating in the Partnership, the EU should ensure that the new Strategy explicitly recognises diverse civil society as a key partner whose participation in the Partnership is meaningful and supported with adequate resources and through appropriate (and safe) spaces for dialogue and contributions to decision-making processes (including online spaces).
- The EU should support the transparent monitoring and evaluation of the inclusion and implementation of civil society input.
- The EU should pay particular attention to supporting the participation of African civil society in the Partnership to offset the power imbalance between European and African civil society and the latter’s lack of representation within global civil society platforms.
- The EU should invite diverse civil society to provide regular briefings to the Council of the EU’s Africa Working Party (COAFR) and to the EU’s Political and Security Committee (PSC), in particular in advance of the annual joint consultative meeting between the EU PSC and the AU PSC, and in advance of and during joint missions in fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions.
- The EU should support mechanisms aimed at engaging civil society continuously in the monitoring of Africa-EU Partnership peace and security activities, including PSOs.

5. The EU should ensure that diverse civil society is adequately supported through the Africa-EU Partnership, including by:

- Ensuring that the new Strategy explicitly recognises the essential roles of diverse civil society actors in initiating and contributing to peace, as well as the need to protect an open space and enabling environment for civil society in general.
 - The JC calls for ‘concrete initiatives to reinforce civil society organisations’ (p. 13), but it does not highlight civil society’s crucial contributions to peace and human security. Conversely, the CC on Africa emphasises that the ‘participation of civil society and young people in building sustainable, inclusive and peaceful societies is essential’ (p. 4). The EU should ensure that this is also highlighted in the new Strategy.
- Ensuring that diverse civil society is provided with adequate funding (including long-term, flexible funding) and support (including tailored and needs-based capacity building and technical advice) through the Africa-EU Partnership, on the basis of civil society actors’ own initiatives for peace.
 - The EU should take additional concrete steps to ensure that the diverse needs and priorities of populations (as identified and defined by population groups themselves, including the most marginalised) are at the core of its engagements, and that the EU’s actions are based on the principle of local ownership and on supporting civil society initiatives for peace, including those which aim to strengthen community-level resilience.
 - The EU should ensure that initiatives to reinforce civil society organisations build on existing local and national civil society mechanisms and listen to their expertise in promoting and fostering peace (instead of replacing existing mechanisms).
 - The EU should increase the access of local and national civil society organisations (including informal organisations) to EU funding, in particular to the envelope which will replace the Pan-African Programme in the Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI).

- 6. The new Africa-EU Strategy should be gender-sensitive, mainstream support to gender equality and include concrete short- and medium-term commitments for the implementation of the women, peace and security (WPS) agenda.**
 - The EU should ensure that the new Strategy emphasises that the full and meaningful participation of women and girls from all segments of society in decision-making processes and in peacebuilding efforts is necessary for building sustainable peace. The new Strategy should include an explicit commitment to the implementation of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions on WPS,⁷ and it should identify how this will be measured and reported.
- 7. The new Africa-EU Strategy should be youth-sensitive, mainstream support to diverse young women and men, and include concrete commitments for the implementation of the youth, peace and security (YPS) agenda.**
 - The EU should ensure that the new Strategy emphasises that the inclusive and meaningful participation of diverse young women and men in decision-making processes and in peacebuilding efforts is necessary for building sustainable peace. The new Strategy should include an explicit commitment to the implementation of UNSC resolutions 2250, 2419 and 2535,⁸ and it should identify how this will be measured and reported.
- 8. The new Africa-EU Strategy should highlight the value of enhancing the integration of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts through a ‘nexus approach’ based on human security.**
 - Although the CC on Africa do not mention the ‘Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus’, the JC calls for ‘better linking humanitarian, development, peace and security efforts’. The EU should promote an understanding of the ‘peace’ dimension of the Nexus as referring to peacebuilding actions and principles, and not military co-operation or similar state-centric security actions.
- 9. The new Africa-EU Strategy should highlight the linkages between the climate crisis, peace and conflict, and the need for peacebuilding and climate adaptation and mitigation efforts to address them.**
 - Although the JC mentions climate change as an ‘additional source of instability’, neither the JC nor the CC on Africa underline the need to ensure that peacebuilding efforts take the impact of climate change into consideration. They also omit the need for climate adaptation policies and programmes to be conflict-sensitive, and the importance of integrating peacebuilding and climate adaptation efforts.
 - The EU should support projects which integrate peacebuilding and climate adaptation efforts as part of the implementation of the new Strategy. Special attention should be paid to the specific human security implications of climate change for marginalised groups.
- 10. The new Africa-EU strategy should highlight that any co-operation on migration must be conflict-sensitive, respect the rights of migrants and refugees, and promote the development benefits of migration and regional mobility.**
 - The EU should ensure that its co-operation with African partners on migration management is based on gender-sensitive analysis of its impact on conflict dynamics, and that it never undermines peace, development and human rights.
 - The EU should work with its African partners to expand protected migration pathways and recognise the importance of migration and regional mobility as a source of livelihoods and resilience.

⁷ These are UNSC resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242, 2467 and 2493.

⁸ Additional recommendations on how to support young women and men through the Africa-EU Partnership are available in the EPLO statement '[Supporting Youth, Peace and Security in the renewed AU-EU Partnership](#)' (November 2017).