



ATLANTIC FUTURE POLICY PAPER

03

The Relations between the European Union and Africa

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ABSTRACT

Within the framework of a wider Atlantic space, Atlantic Africa represents a difficult and conflicted region characterised by a confluence of strategic interests derived from its natural resources (tropical wood, gas, oil, uranium, fish etc.) and its geographical location on one of the world's busiest seaways. Yet, because of multiple security threats that weigh on its internal dynamics, the region appears particularly vulnerable and politically unstable. Aside from the security context, the countries' uneven economic performance has contributed to destabilising trends in the region as well. As a global actor wishing to ensure both its own security and international stability, the EU is particularly well equipped to intervene effectively in the region. However, the EU's approach has for years lacked an overall strategy for its engagements in the region, instead being largely empirical and pragmatic in nature. The multiple dimensions of this relationship provide information on trends in the EU's strategy towards the region and its reactions to threats that pass through the area, including coordination with other stakeholders in the broader Atlantic area.

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1. Introduction

From both a geographical and institutional point of view, Atlantic Africa covers a vast assemblage of territory, integrating 21 West and Central Africa coastal countries. Delimited to its North and South by two emerging powers, Morocco and South Africa, the area brings together in its epicentre the Gulf of Guinea.

Within the framework of a wider Atlantic space, Atlantic Africa represents a difficult and conflicted region characterised by a confluence of strategic interests derived from its natural resources and geographical location. Owing to the diversity of its resources (tropical wood, gas, oil, uranium, fish etc.) and its location on one of the world's busiest seaways, not only is Atlantic Africa one of the richest areas on the planet, but it is also a major centre of attraction. For instance, over this decade, the Gulf of Guinea, where offshore petroleum mining has multiplied, has become an area of central strategic importance for external powers in search of energy security, including the countries of the European Union (EU), the United States (US) and emerging powers like China and Brazil. In this respect, the region is a real 'geostrategic node', as it overlaps with a resource-filled geographical zone. Yet, because of multiple security threats that weigh on its internal dynamics, the region appears particularly vulnerable and politically unstable. Aside from the security context, the countries' uneven economic performance has contributed to destabilising trends in the region as well (section 2).

The region is relevant for a number of important multidimensional issues. Atlantic Africa – and more generally Africa as a whole – is becoming a major area of strategic competition between major powers and emerging countries (section 3). Although this new geopolitical condition would appear to increase the inherent bargaining power for those resource-supplying countries, as of yet this situation has not complicated the still privileged relationship between Atlantic Africa and the European Union. As a global actor wishing to ensure both its own security and international stability, the EU is particularly well equipped to intervene effectively in the region. This is largely due to the EU's ability to combine economic, diplomatic and military instruments in its engagements with Atlantic Africa. However, if internally the EU has all the necessary tools to develop its relations with the region, the actual implementation of EU policies raises a number of difficult questions. One must recognise that the EU's approach has for years lacked an overall strategy for its engagements in the region, instead being largely empirical and pragmatic in nature. The multiple dimensions of this relationship provide information on trends in the EU's strategy towards the region and its reactions to threats that pass through the area, including coordination with other stakeholders in the broader Atlantic area (section 4).

2. Atlantic Africa: A Region Battling with Great Issues

2.1. Managing Energy and Mineral Resources: Greed and Curse

Atlantic Africa has significant mining and energy resources that expose it to the greed of multinational enterprises. Companies seek to preserve a significant margin; States, for their part, try to negotiate more revenue for their public finances. The balance is often uneven, especially for the more vulnerable countries and populations. The region has therefore become a major strategic zone for powers seeking energy security: diversification of supply, quality of the African crude oil, instability in the Middle East as well as straighter and shorter maritime routes to Europe and the United States are

among the reasons for this interest. The abundance of raw materials constitutes a potential wealth for the States in the region. But the mismanagement of financial resources accruing from those raw materials has often turned this potential asset into a sort of 'curse', with pollution, waste, corruption and rising inequality¹ among its most severe symptoms. Countries are trying to guard against this curse by creating funds to finance investment programmes. These funds, however, are managed off-budget.

2.2. Degradation of Fishery Resources

Fishery resources constitute the second maritime wealth of the countries of the Atlantic coast of Africa. Illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Gulf of Guinea constitutes a loss of resources, of revenue and of livelihoods while posing a serious environmental threat to fish stocks. An important share of the fishing carried out by vessels from the EU and other parts of the world is unlawful. The depletion of fish stocks represents a danger for the future. Small-scale fishing suffers losses due to shortcomings in the refrigeration and processing chain. Small-scale fishing continues to be threatened by industrial, often foreign, European and Asian fishing.

2.3. The Impact of Global Warming

The physical characteristics of the Western part of the continent predispose countries therein to the adverse effects of climate change. Projected sea-level rises will have a significant impact on coastal cities.² This threat is likely to devastate large strips of land in fragile coastal areas. Forests are highly threatened by desertification. Losses of crop yields are important in some sub-regions. They are due to the fall in soil fertility and to increasing rainfall irregularity. Those areas are at risk of a 26% decline in their productivity by 2060. Some assessments provide that between 54 and 76 million people in West Africa (30-46) and Central Africa (24-57) will be exposed to water stress by 2025.³ Climate change will have consequences on the spread of epidemics (cholera and malaria).⁴ In addition, there are risks of increased malnutrition and infant mortality.

2.4. Drug Trafficking

Apart from Morocco, a cannabis producer, African Atlantic coastal countries do not produce significant amounts of harmful substances. However, the region is strongly involved in international drug trafficking. Its geographical location between Latin America, where a large part of the cocaine is produced, and Asia, mainly the Golden Triangle⁵ from where heroin is exported, has made Atlantic Africa a transit zone for supplying Europe and North America. The drug is transported across the Sahel, Morocco and Algeria to be sold and consumed in Europe. Drug trafficking is in turn often linked to arms trafficking, leading to the birth of a criminal economy. This problem is compounded by ties between drug traffickers and terrorist groups such as the Movement for the Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO) and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic

¹ E.g., the UNDP Human Development Report 2012 ranked Angola 148th out of 187. Close to 55% of Angolans were living in extreme poverty.

² Thus, the quasi-continuous conurbation between Abidjan and Lagos reckons more than 25 million people living one meter below sea-level, behind a sand dune, which, presumably, will not withstand a sea-level rise.

³ A characteristic of water shortage condition, water stress is when there is less than 1,700 m³ of water per year and per capita. Below 1,000 m³ refers to penury.

⁴ Some regions in Sub-Saharan Africa might have to battle with a 50% increase in malaria probability.

⁵ Myanmar, Laos and Thailand. The other main producing area is the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan).

Maghreb (AQIM). Rule of law and public authority are therefore threatened by corruption, money laundering and all kinds of smuggling.

2.5. Maritime Piracy and Banditry

Maritime piracy and banditry have experienced an unprecedented growth in the region since 2008, especially off the coast of the Gulf of Guinea. Several factors account for the expansion of piracy, including the pauperisation of large segments of the population in the sub-region, the weakness of State institutions and coast monitoring systems, the uncontrolled movement of weapons and the lack of regional responses or insufficient coordination among the riparian States of the Gulf of Guinea. The Gulf of Guinea is an area of growing importance for external powers importing hydrocarbons. The lack of a means to monitor maritime traffic and offshore marine, State weakness and the lack of effective onshore enforcement capabilities are conducive to the sustainability of the phenomenon.

2.6. Migration: Quickening Flows

Contrary to popular perception, the first destination for immigrants from Africa is not Europe but Africa itself. In addition to voluntary migration, there is the phenomenon of forced departures caused by war or natural disasters. Intra-regional migration accounted for three quarters of migratory flows between 2000 and 2012. These movements pose significant political challenges to governments. Much of the region's stability will depend on the ability to organise these regional migration flows. By 2050, sub-Saharan Africa will count 700 million people on the job market. If growth does not follow, migratory movements resulting from this population pressure will be unprecedented. Immigration plays something of a paradoxical role in the development process. While remittances from abroad amount to close to 15% of GDP in some countries, thereby helping with development, the flip-side of this phenomenon is that many of these countries are losing their skilled labour force given that skilled migration rates are particularly high across the region.

3. Securing the Region: A Concern for Stakeholders in the Atlantic Zone

Securing the coasts of Atlantic Africa is a concern for traditional stakeholders (including the United States and European Union) but also for emerging countries as well as African States themselves. The European economy remains highly dependent on the traffic of containers and the supply of strategic metals from one of the most sensitive sea routes in the world.⁶ Positioned in the centre of the geopolitical pond of the Atlantic Ocean, the Gulf of Guinea is particularly vulnerable and insecure. The area is indeed subjected to the confluence of all kinds of trafficking, acts of piracy as well as the flow of illegal migrants. No individual State in the sub-region is able to deal with these challenges. Moreover, the avowed will by riparian countries – belonging to distinct regional groupings – to pool their resources has not yet yielded an efficient regional management and surveillance system.

⁶ The major strategic road for containers goes through the Mediterranean Sea before travelling the Indian Ocean, passing the Strait of Malacca and crossing the South China Sea.

3.1. Atlantic Africa: A Major Stake for the United States

Without being central to its calculus, Africa represents a non-negligible interest for Washington. Since the end of the Cold War, US policy towards the region has been led according to two strategic axes. Arising from 9/11, the first axe is based on the imperative to fight radical Islamism, which has been gaining ground in Africa. The other aims to conquer African markets and secure energy supplies, which are bound to become more important as instability spreads throughout the Middle East (Rogalski 2009). In less than ten years, 25% of the oil imported by the United States will come from Africa, while today's figure is 18%, already exceeding the Middle East's 17% (Hugon 2010).

The military segment of the US policy towards Atlantic Africa has varied contours. It includes training programmes for military personnel, deployments of military bases, as well as direct intervention or 'subcontracting'⁷ and joint exercises. The whole set-up is coordinated by the Africa Command (AFRICOM), an American military command centre in charge of fighting transnational threats, ensuring a secure environment conducive to good governance and development and protecting American interests in the African continent.⁸ But the area is also strewn with 'mini-bases' located in a large number of States, thus allowing the monitoring, *inter alia*, of the actions of terrorist groups. Beyond the difficulty in assessing the threat posed by armed groups in the Sahel, Washington faces real problems of monitoring and evaluation under the implementation of its programmes (Pigné 2015).

The economic and commercial dimensions are also of interest to the United States. Targeting 40 African countries, the American law 'African Growth and Opportunity Act' (AGOA) adopted in 2000 introduces the possibility for eligible countries to export duty-free and quota-free items to the United States. It derives from the 'Trade Better than Aid' principle. To be eligible for the mechanism, a country has to meet a number of criteria: to establish a market economy, respect political pluralism, fight corruption and eliminate customs barriers. AGOA has allowed a significant growth in Africa-US trade. The United States is the first partner of Africa (to the tune of 27% of its exports), whilst the entire European Union absorbs 45% of African exports. The trade asymmetry is high: only 2% of US imports come from Africa. For the EU, the level has reached 3%, which is still derisory.

Half of US foreign direct investment (FDI) in the region targets those countries with hydrocarbon and mineral resources. The mining sector also attracts firms from across the Atlantic Ocean.⁹ Silicon Valley companies are also interested in coastal Africa. But that diversification by US investors remains marginal. In addition to promoting FDI, the AGOA is also to be viewed as an incentive for economic reforms. The United States also influences Africa through assistance derived from the Millennium Challenge

⁷ After a long search for a host country for its headquarters and several refusals, AFRICOM has resorted to setting up several agencies working as a network. One may add that unofficially, recourse has been made to private military companies.

⁸ That military unit, created in 2007, boasted 2,000 people and a 276 million dollar budget in 2012. It deploys its actions right from its headquarters located in Stuttgart, Germany, for want of a suitable host country in Africa.

⁹ The activity of Newmont Mining, world number 2 in gold mining, is particularly representative of that American appetite: 20% of its global assets lie in Ghana alone.

Account.¹⁰ Its stated objective is to reduce poverty. Beneficiary countries are selected on the basis of their progress towards good governance.

The four pillars of the US strategy towards Sub-Saharan Africa.¹¹ In recent years, President Obama wanted to refocus the US approach towards Africa beyond the security pane. Recent United States-Africa summits reflect this new approach, with the countries of sub-Saharan Africa in pursuit of objectives which are interdependent and strengthen one other: (1) strengthening democratic institutions; (2) stimulating economic growth, trade and investment; (3) advancing peace and security; and (4) promoting opportunities and development. While extending these guidelines to all its bilateral relations, Washington has nurtured particularly close relations with two countries: South Africa, due to its economic potential and geopolitical role, and Nigeria, the US's main trading partner in Africa and key security player due to the phenomenon of Boko Haram.

3.2. The Emerging Countries, New Partners of Atlantic Africa

Interest for several reasons. The region is being increasingly courted by the so-called 'emerging' countries. The reasons for this interest are multiple: the opening of new markets and growing appetite for Africa's natural resources; purchasing or leasing of cultivable land for the provision of food and biofuels; winning big contracts in the field of construction and infrastructure; seeking alliances in multinational fora. In addition, it is about the evolution of the region itself: next to a complex political, economic, social, environmental, and security reality, there is the new reality of Africa showing growth rates similar to those of emerging Asia.

Clearly, emerging countries have accorded Atlantic Africa great interest for the same reasons. Export of ores from this area by the BRICS has been increasing, drawn by Chinese demand but also, although to a lesser extent, by demand from India, Brazil and Russia. Far from being satisfied with simply importing resources necessary to their needs, BRICS countries tend also to impose themselves as real stakeholders in mining in this part of Africa. For example, Angola has become the first investment country for China in Africa. China has also been investing in the Democratic Republic of Congo and granting loans to various countries of Atlantic Africa, which are converted into projects undertaken by Chinese enterprises. In the mining sector, Brazilian companies are active: *Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional* (CSN) conducts geological surveys in Guinea. Gevale, a subsidiary of CVRD, is engaged in the rehabilitation of the Inga II dam in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Petrobras has been present in Angola since 1979; they have recently acquired new operating licences. The Brazilian company is also operational in Nigeria (Lafargue 2008). Moreover, Indian private companies such as the Tata Group, the pharmaceutical company Cipla and the automobile manufacturer Mahindra have been operating for a decade in Atlantic Africa countries. Fierce competition among emerging countries including China, India and Brazil, for access to mineral resources and markets in countries such as Angola and Gabon is also developing.

¹⁰ The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) is a bilateral American development fund created in 2004 and aimed to reduce poverty through economic growth. Its activities seek to promote partnership with countries which have achieved a certain level in the three following areas: good governance in public affairs, creation of a favourable environment for private initiative and State's commitment to make substantial investments in the social sector.

¹¹ White House, *U.S. Strategy Toward Sub-Saharan Africa*, Washington, June 2012. <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/209377.pdf>.

Brazil and the strategy for securing the South Atlantic. Brazil's African policy is particularly emblematic and representative of the new 'maritime diplomacy' or 'defence diplomacy' as carried out by certain middle powers. Endowed with the longest coast on the Atlantic shore, Brazil considers the maritime space between the northeast coast of its territory and the West African coast as a zone of major strategic interest. In addition to the historical and cultural ties between Brazil and the African continent, or the economic interests in the Gulf of Guinea, the attention accorded to the West African region is also related to its relative geographical proximity to Brazilian territory.¹² To protect its maritime interests in the South Atlantic, the Brazilian Navy has invested in its capacity to patrol African waters. That strategy follows a broader diplomatic goal that aims to promote Brazilian military technology in the context of competition with US and European States.

To support its transatlantic projection and its influence on the world stage, Brazil relies particularly on the dynamics of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLC) on the edge of the South Atlantic. Brazil is also involved in building, with African and South American partners, a South Atlantic cooperation environment under the auspices of the South Atlantic Peace and Cooperation Zone (ZOPACAS).¹³

3.3. The Limits of Regional Cooperation against the Challenges in the Region

Atlantic Africa has been implementing programmes of integration for a long time. Integration comes in three modalities: through the creation of regional markets; through the development of regional infrastructure projects and through the adoption and application of common rules.

Economic cooperation further enhanced by trade liberalisation. Five free trade zones are in force in the area: the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Custom unions are two: the East African Community (EAC) and the Economic and Monetary Union of West Africa (UEMOA). Formal intra-regional trade remains low, around 12% (compared to 70% among EU countries). Intra-regional trade share in the total trade varies according to regional groupings: SADC (15%); ECOWAS (11%); COMESA (7%); AMU (4%) (Jacquemot 2013). A new and different integration strategy for investment projects has been explored in Africa, but its development has been undermined by the modest integration financing capacity.¹⁴ The financing of regional infrastructure is crucial. A new instrument (the Africa50 Fund) has been created at the initiative of the African Development Bank (AfDB) and dedicated to the financing of infrastructure on the continent. The great challenge is to take steps to have international and regional

¹² The distance from the city of Natal, capital of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, located on the Atlantic Ocean in the northeast of the country, and Dakar, the Senegalese capital, is less than the distance between the two ends of the Brazilian territory.

¹³ ZOPACAS is a forum for dialogue and cooperation among countries in South America and African countries around the South Atlantic. It was created in October 1986, on the initiative of Brazil, with a view to promoting regional cooperation in such areas as environment, defence, peacekeeping and security in the 24 countries which have joined the project.

¹⁴ The path different from trade is that of integrating investment projects. The basic idea is, in the face of structural inequalities, market relations do not play a regulatory role but rather are an amplifier of space asymmetries and economic inequalities. In these circumstances, it behoves the States, by their adoption of an interventionist policy, to promote the creation of regional industrial and energy, transport and telecommunications infrastructure hubs. Thus, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) became from 2001 a framework of reference for the development of the continent through the funding of regional-oriented infrastructure and sectoral programmes.

institutions interested in raising the money required for the capitalisation of the Fund. Macroeconomic convergence may have a driving role to play in the regional integration process. Among experiences of regional integration through common rules, SADC has been the most significant.

Given that macroeconomic convergence may play a leading role in promoting regional integration, common rules have been set by regional groups in the area of Atlantic Africa. Those rules must be translated in principle into the coordination and the harmonisation of national standards, procedures and policies, and lead to the creation of regional public assets whose effectiveness in terms of reducing transaction costs and for that matter improving competitiveness may be superior to that obtained at the level of each individual State. Provided that each Member State adheres to the rules of the game. Among the experiences of regional integration through common rules, the SADC one is the most significant. The organisation has adopted a memorandum entitled Regional Indicative Strategic Plan. It defines the indicators and macroeconomic objectives and the parameters of cooperation in monetary and budgetary matters for the Member States. In that regard, central banks have established the criteria for macroeconomic convergence for the period up to 2018 (Jacquemot 2013).

Progressive involvement of regional institutions in maritime safety. The ECCAS was the first African community to equip itself with a relatively advanced maritime security programme. A maritime security funding mechanism has also been created. Despite that progress, ECCAS still suffers from the lack of naval and human resources engaged in maritime security. In 2012, ECOWAS created its first operational zone. It is through the expansion of Nigerian piracy into the territorial waters of riparian countries – including Togolese, Beninese and Ghanaian – that the regional scope of these security challenges has been recognised. A Code of conduct for the prevention and repression of unlawful acts perpetrated in the region of the Gulf of Guinea has been developed but its application is not yet effective.

Created in 2001, the Gulf of Guinea Commission (GGC) meets the need for a permanent consultation and negotiation mechanism to manage shared threats and problems in the region particularly in the field of maritime security.¹⁵ Its stakeholders are in favour of an expansion of its membership to integrate all riparian countries of the Gulf of Guinea. That perspective should however overcome reservations related to underlying geopolitical and historical differences that have sometimes made relations between Francophone and Anglophone countries in the sub-region tense.

4. The Atlantic Dimension of EU-Africa Relations: Implications for the EU

The EU distinguishes among its relations with Northern Africa (Euromed agreements), South Africa (free trade agreements) and the ACP countries (Africa, Caribbean and Pacific - Cotonou Agreement). The four objectives of the European Union in its relations with Africa in general and which also concern the countries of Atlantic Africa are: 1) peace and security, 2) governance, 3) trade integration and trade, and 4) development.

¹⁵ GGC comprises 8 member States, including 7 belonging to the Central Africa sub-region (Angola, Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, Equatorial Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe) and only 1 from West Africa: Nigeria.

The EU intervenes in Africa mainly through partnership, multilateralism, field diplomacy and soft power. In the phases of cooperation between Europe and Africa, the Yaoundé, then Lomé agreements, between the European Community and the ACP countries, were in a regionalist perspective of preferences and non-reciprocity taking into account international asymmetries. The changes which have occurred in the international environment (expansion of Europe, fall of the Berlin Wall, the reconciliation of doctrines of great international institutions) eventually made those agreements lose much of their legitimacy. In that regard, the European Union has shaped its agreements with its national or regional partners in accordance with WTO rules by gradually disengaging from principles of non-reciprocity and discrimination contained in the Lomé Convention. The Cotonou Convention has entered free trade agreements and the establishment of economic partnership agreements (EPAs) has overridden the generalised scheme of preferences (GSP) or the preferences granted least developed countries (LDCs) according to the EU's 'Everything but Arms' programme, which provided for preferential trade arrangements for all products, except arms. The European Union and the countries in the region have common interests. The sustainability of all marine resources is a major shared concern. The objective of the EU is to help the States of the region to achieve peace, security and prosperity within the framework of an integral regional development and security strategy.

4.1 The Joint Africa-EU Strategy

The Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), adopted in December 2007, has provided a global platform for relations between the EU and the African continent.¹⁶ That strategy focuses on the need to promote integrated security approaches encompassing conflict prevention, the consolidation of peace and conflict resolution with regards to governance and sustainable development.¹⁷

Since it defined its European Security Strategy in 2003, the EU has reiterated the choice position of the African continent in its foreign policy priorities. That date corresponds to the very first European mission deployed in Africa under code name 'Artemis'. Because the challenges in the Central African sub-region were multiple and diverse, the European Union developed its cooperation with those Central African States gathered within the ECCAS. Thus, structural issues leading to chronic instability were identified and dealt with crosswise within the framework of the EU-ECCAS cooperation. Over half of the ten States which compose the ECCAS live in situations of armed conflict or extensive instability. The European Union has prioritised its missions in each country depending on the extent of the violence and the level of instability. That characterisation of the European action testifies to the complexity of the challenges in the sub-region: challenges regarding security sector reform; challenges in peacekeeping and consolidation of peace; challenges related to the strengthening of democracy and the rule of law, to the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms; challenges in governance. It is in this context that, since 2003, the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP)¹⁸ has deployed missions in the DRC (Artemis, EUPOL RD Congo, EUSEC RD Congo, EUFOR RD Congo). On the other hand, the action by the European Union over the period 2003-2007 was focused on: support to ECCAS for the implementation of the MARAC (Early Warning Mechanism in

¹⁶ Council of the EU, *The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. A Joint Africa-EU Strategy*. Lisbon, 9 December 2007. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/97496.pdf.

¹⁷ European Commission. *First Action Plan (2008-2010) for the Implementation of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership*. Bruxelles, 31 October 2007. http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/jaes_action_plan_2008-2010.pdf.

¹⁸ Formerly European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP).

Central Africa); support to regional initiatives for prevention and resolution of crises, including the actions of DDRRR (Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement).

The conduct of European missions in Central Africa has shown a mismatch between the stated objectives and the means utilised by the involved stakeholders, namely the European Union on the one hand and the Central Africa States on the other. The distinctive feature of the European approach to crisis management is that it is primarily aimed at addressing the root causes of instability and violent conflict. But to stabilise, to secure does not mean to treat a structural and complex problem from the root. Issues related to democracy and the rule of law must nowadays be addressed differently from what was the case 20 years ago (Nguembock 2009).

The objectives of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. The EU-Africa strategic partnership is based on common values, interests and goals. The four main objectives of this long-term strategic partnership are: 1) to consolidate and to promote the political EU-Africa partnership with a view to addressing issues of common interest to both parties; 2) to consolidate and promote peace, security and democratic governance; 3) to respect human rights, fundamental freedoms, equality between men and women and sustainable economic development; 4) to promote and make viable an effective multilateral relations system, equipped with strong, representative and legitimate institutions.¹⁹ The four main objectives of this long-term partnership determine the overall framework within which specific strategies have been developed: (a) peace and security, (b) governance and human rights, (c) trade and regional integration, and (d) development issues.²⁰

This joint strategy, which in the long term would provide a very important framework for Africa-EU relations, should be implemented by abiding to successive short-term action plans, thanks to the introduction of enhanced political dialogue at all levels, producing tangible results in all areas of the partnership. In 2010, at the third edition of the Summit held in Tripoli, the issues of human rights, democracy, immigration and climate change emerged as major stumbling blocks. Pragmatism took over. The fourth EU-Africa Summit in 2014 helped reframe future relations between the EU and Africa.²¹ Europe does not want the new giants (China, India or Brazil), less demanding on human rights and environmental issues, to further nibble away its share of the market in Africa. Several factors were highlighted to justify the added value of the Africa-EU partnership, including: growing African markets; Africa's aspirations in terms of regional and continental integration; Africa's concerns with regards to equitable growth and the successful integration of the social dimension; the need for a sustainable industrialisation in the environmental arena; the substantial increase in trade flows,

¹⁹ Council of the EU. *Joint Africa EU Strategy - Action Plan 2011-2013*. 17593/10, Bruxelles, 30 October 2010. <http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&f=ST%2017593%202010%20INIT>.

²⁰ Council of the EU, *The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. A Joint Africa-EU Strategy*. cit.

²¹ The Summit noted that the importance of the results achieved to date, as well as the pace of their progress, are below the expectations of both partners and stakeholders. A more sustained effort was deemed necessary to advance the process initiated in order to ensure a greater capacity to adapt and produce a greater impact. In that regard, consideration was given the following actions: to resume the political dialogue on a regular basis between summits to inject more dynamism into the partnership; to develop a truly people-centred partnership, to strengthen the participation of African and European youth and civil society organizations; to strengthen the dialogue in the global forums towards cooperation for mutually beneficial negotiations in multilateral fora; to promote a 'win-win' partnership beyond aid; to promote good governance, human rights, the fight against corruption, as well as transparency and accountability; to strengthen the capacity of Africa for peace and security.

investments and transfers of funds between Africa and the EU; and opposing demographic trends between the two continents.²²

Gaps in the strategy. An analysis of the overall European strategy for the region and a comparison between the guidelines defined by strategic documents and the actual implementation on the ground reveal a number of strengths and weaknesses in the EU's action thus far. First of all, it is undeniable that the EU is a key stakeholder in the stabilisation of the region, basing its action upon quality programmes²³ and instruments allowing it to act in a large number of areas. Nevertheless, the EU has been striving to make its actions coherent, even though they fall under two logics, namely the intergovernmental and the community. Thus, some actions are developed by the Council or by the European External Action Service in the framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), while others are deployed by various Directorates-General of the Commission or community agencies. That specificity means actions performed under the EU's comprehensive strategic approach fall under specific responsibility channels, with rarely coordinated mandates, perimeters and commitment periods. In some cases, that can generate undesirable, or even counterproductive effects, resulting for example in duplication and involuntary competition layouts.

Perceptions by African stakeholders. Several African stakeholders have cast a critical look on the political balance sheet of the partnership. Their reservations come on several points. Terms used more often in their assessments of the joint strategy and the action plans are: inertia, lack of clarity in terms of objectives, search for meaning and identity.²⁴ In addition, recurrent questions are posed by several of those stakeholders on the actual status of the strategy (given that the only legal framework governing trade between Africa and Europe is shaped by the Cotonou Agreement).²⁵ The absence of political ownership of the strategy is also put forward, especially as it is conducted as a project or as a series of ad hoc projects rather than as a new strategic

²² Council of the EU. *The Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership. Investing in People, Prosperity and Peace*. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, October 2014. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2860/55618>.

²³ The fourth Africa-EU Summit agreed that the implementation of the Joint Strategy should be further improved in the light of the experience acquired and the progress of the situation in Africa, in Europe and in the world. The cooperation should be inspired by a results-oriented approach. The Summit agreed on actions in the priority areas where cooperation between the two partners is essential and has a strong potential, within the framework of the Joint Strategy, and where substantial value added can be expected. Cooperation will improve access to further and better jobs and social protection, as well as access for all to quality basic education and health care. That contributes to strengthening the cooperation among researchers to creating common academic research programmes, with particular emphasis on innovation and productive sector including research infrastructures. It promotes the engagement of the private sector as our key development partner and includes strengthening stakeholders' capacity to develop public-private partnerships. See Roadmap 2014-2017. In Council of the EU. *The Africa-European Union Strategic Partnership. Investing in People, Prosperity and Peace*. cit. pp. 25-43.

²⁴ The understanding and maintenance of cultural diversity are requirements, hence the need to develop a genuine cultural cooperation integrating all actors: States, civil society organisations and private sector. Education and the preservation of the heritage are important issues. It is therefore necessary to strengthen cooperation on cultural issues to meet the quest for meaning. The cultural challenge in the broadest sense - cultural policies, promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue must rise as the first concern of the cooperation strategy (Konaté 2009).

²⁵ African civil society stakeholders consider that explanations and clarifications need to be made on the real motivations of the European side, the scope of the cooperation strategy, its mode of management and specifically the absence of joint programming, its articulation with other instruments (ACP, European Neighbourhood Instrument), the issue of the relationship with the other budgetary envelopes under the European Development Fund (including national and regional envelopes meant to support regional integration processes), the issue of the articulation of the scales of governance and the local interventions at the continental level and the deadlines for its implementation.

vision of the Africa-Europe relationship. The political dimension of the strategy is rather formal.

African stakeholders note that the strategy suffers from structural problems. Thus, they disapprove of its segmentation into various technical and bureaucratic partnerships involving costs in terms of time, operation and finance for insignificant results. That segmentation tends to consider Africa as one, seriously undermining its ability to address sub-regional issues. That is one of the main reasons explaining the African stakeholders' general lack of interest and commitment to the strategy. Finally, emphasis has been laid on the lack of consistency and articulation between the strategy and other instruments of cooperation (Africa Governance Institute 2013).

4.2 Specific Issues of Cooperation

Economic partnership agreements (EPAs). The European Union accounts for half of Africa's trade exchanges and two-thirds of foreign investment. An assessment of the so-called Lomé Conventions which used to frame its relations with ACP countries before 2000 has led the European Union to a rather negative balance: those countries were not able to diversify their productions notwithstanding their free access to the European market for 95% of their agricultural products (FARM 2006). It therefore proposed a new type of partnership in 2000. The Cotonou Convention provided for free trade agreements and the establishment of EPAs (Hugon 2010).

The objective of the EPAs is to introduce, in return for access to the European market, reciprocal trade liberalisation measures. Two complementary ideas are associated with this trade reform: to promote regional groupings and to strengthen trade capacity. In the 'development' component of this new partnership, other ideas are included: to introduce a political dimension in the agreements, initiate a dialogue with civil society, by giving, in addition, the right of access to financing by the European Development Fund to non-State organisations, to stop the 'classic delirium' of aid conditionality by replacing it with performance obligations. EPAs are inspired by the principles of free trade. They represent a fundamental break in the relationship between Europe and Africa. The reasonable time-limit for upgrading, i.e. the abolition of trade preferences, is 12 years. At the end of that transition period, the opening will be 80% for ACP countries and 100% for EU countries (Bellora 2006).

The EPAs should be signed not individually but collectively, within a previously defined region: West Africa, Central Africa, East Africa, the Horn of Africa and Southern Africa. They also stipulate that the poorest countries will not have to sign an EPA, the option being to maintain the scheme of preferences within the 'Everything but Arms' scheme. The EU also sees trade negotiations as an opportunity to propagate other standards: respect for intellectual property, transparency in public procurement, modernisation of customs controls, compliance with the guidelines of the International Labour Organisation and consultations with civil society (Hugon 2010).

By end of 2013, only half of the 47 countries engaged in the EPA process had ratified the agreements. The negotiations have proved to be complex and difficult. The timing was never respected. Critics have essentially focussed on the adjustment costs the ACP countries have to bear in order to enter trade liberalisation, including a decline in customs revenues and the loss of autonomy in the definition of national policies. They demand a 25-year moratorium to liberalise their imports (Jacquemot 2013).

Fisheries agreements. The European Union is one of the major importers of seafood. Thus, an average of 240,000 tonnes leaves the African coast each year, mainly from

Morocco, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau, Senegal and Angola. There have been three generations of agreements in the region; many African countries (Senegal, Morocco, Mauritania, Guinea-Bissau and Namibia) wish to better protect their interests by signing new agreements based on the principles of sustainable management, including as a priority the conservation of marine ecosystems and fish stocks and measures to promote the local fleet and industry.

The balance sheet of these agreements is still very uneven compared to the declared aims and especially the registered results: overexploitation of stocks, decline of the local fishing industries, decrease in fishermen's income, aggravation of the economic dependence of African countries on Europe – both for their exports and for State revenue (Aboville 2010). Nevertheless, fisheries partnership agreements have the merit to exist and constitute a form of organisation and regulation of fishing activities, however imperfect they may be. Their place must be consolidated by strengthening their integrated approach to co-development.

Cooperation for security in the Gulf of Guinea. In 2014, the European Union adopted a Strategy for the Gulf of Guinea, which is based on an integrated approach. The strategy focuses on four specific objectives: 1) reach, among countries in the region and the international community, a consensus on the extent of the security threats in the Gulf of Guinea; 2) assist governments in the region in setting up institutions and strong maritime administrations in order to ensure security and the rule of law along the coasts; 3) foster the emergence of prosperous economies in the region so as to create jobs and to help vulnerable communities become more resilient and able to resist criminal or violent activities; 4) strengthen cooperation among the countries in the region and regional organisations in order to enable them to take the measures needed to mitigate threats at sea and on land (Dufau and Souaré 2011).

The strategy also aims to support the resolutions of the Yaoundé Summit of Heads of State,²⁶ which resulted in: 1) the adoption of the 'Code of conduct' relating to the prevention and repression of acts of piracy against ships and illegal maritime activities in West and Central Africa;²⁷ 2) the adoption of a memorandum of understanding on safety and security in the maritime space of Central Africa and West Africa, signed by the ECCAS, ECOWAS and GGC leaders, which includes the development of an action plan to follow up the implementation of the code of conduct (Luntumbue 2011).

Dialogue on migration themes. The issue of migration is among the policy priorities of the European Union. The Arab spring has confirmed the need for the European Union to develop a coherent policy on migration. A comprehensive approach was adopted in 2005, organised around three themes: promotion of mobility and legal migration, prevention and fight against illegal immigration and optimisation of the link between migration and development.²⁸ It is based on searching for a partnership with third countries and covers all of the issues relating to migration in a comprehensive and balanced way (legal migration, fight against illegal immigration, relationship between migration and development and the external dimension of asylum). The 2007 Lisbon

²⁶ The 2013 Yaoundé Summit saw the participation of the ECOWAS, ECCAS, and GGC member States.

²⁷ The code places particular emphasis on the exchange of information and coordination, as well as a clear commitment on the part of States to declare their exclusive economic zones and to ensure the application of their own laws, including in the field of fisheries, acts of piracy and armed robbery at sea, the protection of the environment, the pouring of waste and mineral resources, including oil.

²⁸ In June 2011, the European Council requested the European Commission to present an evaluation of the overall approach. Following the communication from the Commission of 18 November 2011, the Council decided to adapt it to the new migration needs with the title 'The New Approach to the Issue of Migration and Mobility'.

Summit and the adoption of the JAES mark the intensification of dialogue and cooperation between the two continents in the field of migration, mobility and employment. Within that framework, the partnership on migration, mobility and employment (MME) is a key element for the development of migration policies, both African and European. The MME partnership aims to strengthen dialogue between the various stakeholders around common objectives.²⁹

For its implementation, the European Union relies on regional processes (mainly the Rabat process with West Africa and the Prague process with East Africa) and various instruments of which a flagship project is the partnerships for mobility.³⁰ Since 2006, the Rabat process has brought together 57 European and African countries from North, West and Central Africa as well as the European Commission and ECOWAS to respond to and deal with migration issues. This intergovernmental dialogue provides a framework of consultation and coordination to origin, transit and destination countries for sharing a common vision for a rational, balanced and effective management of migratory flows from and through West and Central Africa. The Rabat process was followed by four ministerial conferences which allowed for the implementation of concrete projects at the bilateral, regional and multilateral levels.³¹ The latest Rome Conference centred on two thematic priorities in order to focus efforts, on the one hand, on strengthening the link between migration and development, and, on the other, on the prevention and fight against irregular migration with special attention paid to the management of borders and to return policies, including voluntary returns, as well as readmission in full respect for human rights.

Relations between the EU and African regional organisations. If the African Union is considered to be the principal interlocutor of the European Union, the regional economic communities are incorporated as full stakeholders in the partnership. Thus, in Atlantic Africa the EU is committed to the coordination and streamlining between ECCAS and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), especially through the proposal to develop a roadmap to achieve a merger between the two organisations. The EU also supports ECCAS actions in the area of maritime safety in the Gulf of Guinea. The European Union finances two major projects on food security and the strengthening of capacities for the prevention of regional conflicts (establishment of the Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism, CEWARN). In furtherance of the political dialogue between SADC and the EU since 1994, the cooperation programme aims to strengthen capacities to ensure the mediation of conflicts and to facilitate their resolution, to enhance the regional capacity in terms of disaster risk reduction, disaster management, humanitarian support coordination and the fight against human trafficking.

²⁹ See *Priorities for future cooperation in the area of migration and mobility in the framework of the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership*, Senior Officials Meeting, Brussels, 27-28 November 2013, <http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/en/node/7574>. The Action Plan included 12 items: political dialogue, four initiatives on migration, four on employment and three on higher education. Some themes such as mobility, the rights of migrants, international protection and the role of the private sector, were hardly paid attention to in terms of initiatives.

³⁰ Migration missions, cooperation platforms, migratory profiles and partnerships for mobility are the flagship projects thereof.

³¹ The 2nd Euro-African Conference on M&D took place in Paris in November 2008. Confirmation of the vitality of the process and adoption of the Paris Programme (Three-year Plan). The third Conference took place in Dakar in November 2011: endorsement of the results of the Paris Cooperation Programme; adoption of both the Dakar Strategy and a roadmap for its implementation.

5. Recommendations

Building a common strategy. The last EU-Africa Summit noted that the results achieved to date, as well as the pace of their progress, were below the expectations of both partners and stakeholders. This situation is due to the following main points: the political dialogue and the participation of stakeholders must be substantially reviewed and strengthened; the lack of financial resources and capacities on both sides to implement the ambitious action plans; the results are lower than originally expected, take time to materialise and lack overall visibility. A more sustained effort is necessary to advance the process initiated in order to ensure a greater capacity to adapt and produce a greater impact. In this regard, the following actions could be considered: to resume the political dialogue on a regular basis between summits to inject more dynamism to the partnership; to develop a partnership actually focused on populations, by strengthening the participation of civil society; to promote a 'win-win' partnership; to promote good governance, human rights, the fight against corruption, as well as transparency and accountability; to strengthen African capabilities for peace and security.³² The complexity of actions and of the stakeholders involved requires increased coordination among different EU stakeholders. And because a confrontation of two logics, intergovernmental and community, takes place here, the issue becomes even more complex.

Tackling the issue of security in the Gulf of Guinea. The EU's strategy relative to the Gulf of Guinea is based on an integrated approach linking border security challenges, governance and development at sea and on land. The interest in integrating all these dimensions is to obtain a bigger cumulative effect: the political dimension, good governance, the fight against corruption, security, the institutional component, the economic dimension and development. The EU can actually limit the risks by helping States strengthen the rule of law and to increase efficient governance across the whole region, including by the improvement of maritime administration. An effective fight against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea should integrate all the elements so far mobilised in a fragmented way to bring a comprehensive answer to the defining factors of this problem. It involves in particular considering the following dimensions: the implementation of a segment of aid to economic development in order to eliminate extreme poverty, reduce disparities, strengthen sub-regional cooperation as regards the capacities of riparian States to address crises in a coordinated manner, and the promotion of legal cooperation among riparian countries in order to punish perpetrators of acts of piracy. Finally, the fight against corruption and networks of illicit trafficking, which feed the instability in the sub-region, must also be addressed.

Fostering cooperation with other partners for the definition of a common vision of the expanded Atlantic space. The region is of strategic relevance for the external action of the European Union and other powers, old or emerging, in the expanded Atlantic space. The region is subject to the divergent interests of the States and organisations that are involved. The actions that take place are therefore not always complementary and coordinated. The multi-dimensionality and interconnection of issues – security, economy, politics – require coordinated responses. The revival of the interest shown by the United States towards that region of Africa is explained by the fact that it has become strategic on two aspects of growing magnitude: the fight against terrorism and the availability of natural resources. If the European Union seems to have

³² See *The Future of Africa-EU Partnership: Key Messages for the IV Summit*, Discussion note for the Africa and EU stakeholders' seminar, Brussels, 6 March 2014, <http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/en/node/7848>.

a privileged relationship with stakeholders in the sub-region in light of the history that binds them, the role of the United States remains central because of its military capabilities and its long fight against international terrorism. Wondering about the fate of a relationship between two stakeholders whose comparative advantages (development cooperation for one and military capabilities for the other) appear to be at the centre of stability concerns and issues in Africa, and pose the question of the coordination of the actions linking security and development cooperation policies. Coordination with stakeholders outside the EU for the definition of a common vision of the future of an expanded Atlantic region is non-existent. Efforts should be made to take into account all stakeholders, particularly the emerging countries in Latin America (Brazil). It is necessary to share a common understanding of an approach to addressing challenges in the region, covering all policy areas (economic development, security and human rights). While taking into account the often divergent interests of other stakeholders, it is important to develop structures for consultation between countries and regional groupings, as well as with other States, starting with those in the region. The EU must focus on actions to promote the maintenance of peace and stability in the Gulf of Guinea and it is important to provide support to countries and partner regional organisations by making available to them, according to needs, training, advice, equipment and resources in order to gradually improve their capacity to prevent or manage crises by themselves.

Promoting cooperation with regional groupings. The duplication of programmes among regional organisations have negative effects on the integration process in the area, especially if we add the financial constraints of the regional economic communities. Trade is limited by the absence of harmonisation instruments to facilitate the integration process of markets. The coordination mechanisms that exist have no regulatory basis and are not enforceable. The consensus on EPAs with ECOWAS could be a first sign to federate all its 28 members around a common strategy and convince the rest of Africa that the EU remains, despite some disagreements, its most reliable partner. African regional and sub-regional organisations have all, without exception, been created to meet the needs of their Member States concerning economic and social development. None of them was designed to deal with internal or inter-State conflicts. This development is largely explained by the increasing number and growing complexity of crises in Africa. The strengthening of cooperation between the EU and Atlantic Africa's regional organisations may be favourable to the development of the ideals of peace, respect for human rights, the rule of law, democratic principles and good management of public affairs, in the context of cooperation policies through agreements with the EU and organisations in the region.

Specific Challenges

The exploitation of fisheries resources. The upcoming negotiations are a unique opportunity to refocus EU-Africa fisheries agreements on a number of decisive axes. The objective here is to move lines and to engage resolutely in a perspective that is beneficial to both parties integrating the development pillars of economic, social and environmental sustainability. Therefore, the point is not to confine oneself to setting and reiterating targets towards a rational exploitation of the resource, which, in fact, is not disputed but to make of those agreements effective levers of intervention focusing on priorities for action: control and monitoring of the situation of fisheries resources, the intensification of cooperation with regional fisheries management organisations (RFMOs) and other existing regional bodies, the establishment of greater coherence and complementarity between the fisheries partnership agreements (FPAs) and other development policies of the European Union.

The ideal would be to have countries belonging to a same eco-region entering into trade negotiations with the EU as a bulk. This perspective is particularly open in West Africa for countries of the Sub-regional Commission of Fisheries.

The management of migratory flows. The action of the Rabat Process deserves to be more structured in order to more easily measure its impact, improve its visibility and better define its general orientation, resulting in: the definition of objectives and their assessment and an emphasis on the exchange of good practices, especially at the South-South level. The implementation of the global approach to migration requires a double coherence which is still lacking: between migration control and aid to development in the context of partnerships between countries of origin and receiving countries of migrants, and of a greater harmonisation among destination countries. On one hand, Europe still holds very disparate policies on the matter. On the other, dialogue with African countries on this central theme of migration is still stammering. This perspective should result in a strengthening of the mode of governance of the dialogue, by setting up new frameworks of action and increased physical activities.³³ The difficulties in implementing the strategy show that we must attack the root causes of migration through, inter alia, the implementation of international and regional law and the harmonisation of national legal instruments.

The fight against drug trafficking and organised crime is a priority for the EU. Europe and the United States have launched important initiatives in that area. Progress in the exchange of information between the two should be stepped up to avoid a duplication of actions in the region. Support must be given to the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan to combat illicit drug trafficking, organised crime and drug abuse. A coordination of actions with the UNODC is required for effective implementation of a multilateral crosscutting strategy based on the principle of shared responsibility: building capacity to contribute to the creation of an environment conducive to socio-economic development for the benefit of the populations.

Action against climate change. On that front, African States remain constrained by weak technological, technical, institutional and financial capacities. The difficulties of coordination also constitute an obstacle to the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation programmes. The EU and Africa recognise the need to implement existing commitments under the Convention and the Kyoto Protocol for providing the funds and technologies and capacity-building support. African countries are attentive to the idea of cooperation and the implementation of the integrated African strategy.

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³³ It is necessary also to increase job opportunities for young people in the regions of origin and multiply the social protection mechanisms towards vulnerable groups. The root causes of migration often lie in poverty, unemployment and underemployment; problems whose solution requires education, training, or support for young entrepreneurs. As it is necessary to strengthen cooperation among countries of origin, of transit and of destination in order to increase the efficiency of border management procedures and to improve visa issuing processes.

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