Editorial

Gary Quince, EU Head of Delegation to the African Union
This edition of Link highlights the ongoing cooperation between Europe and Africa on Peace and Security. At the EU-Africa Summit in 2014, Africa and the European Union agreed that peace and security should continue to be a key area for cooperation under our Partnership as an essential prerequisite for development and prosperity. Conflicts and instability are indeed the major obstacle to development in many parts of Africa, from the Horn of Africa to the Great Lakes, from Sahel to Libya. Radicalisation and terrorism pose new threats to Europe and Africa. In addition to continued support to African led peace support operations, EU and AU are increasing their joint efforts in preventing conflicts through early warning and mediation and also through our work in supporting democratic governance and human rights, another key pillar of our Partnership. Similarly, the EU is supporting the AU in the fight against radicalisation and terrorism, through cooperation on regional intelligence and counter radicalisation activities.

This close partnership between the EU and Africa was reaffirmed during the 8th College to College meeting held on April 7th 2016 in Addis Ababa. The College to College is an annual meeting between the African Union Commission and the European Commission and was an occasion to discuss and enhance cooperation between the two Commissions within the 5 pillars of the Partnership agreed at the Summit in 2014.

As part of EU-Africa Strategy, the EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue on science technology and innovation held a Senior Officials meeting in Addis in April. The focus of the meeting was on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture, and adopted a research roadmap and announced a long term platform for cooperation in these areas.

The African Union has established 2016 as the African year of human rights with special focus on women rights, and the EU High Representative/Vice President Federica Mogherini also announced 2016 as the EU year of human rights activism and global campaigning. In this issue of Link! you will find an article on EU and AU joint actions on human rights in 2016, and an interview with the AU Peace and Security Programme Coordinator for Gender, Peace and Security, Ms. Antonia N’Gabala-Sodonon.

You will also find an interview with Mr Angel Losada, the European Union Special Representative for the Sahel, setting out the challenges facing the Sahel and how the EU is supporting the region to overcome them. Other articles cover the EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue on science technology and innovation mentioned above and the harmonisation of higher education through “Tuning Africa.” We also feature reports on the latest Reference Group on Infrastructure meeting held in Addis in February, the UK Energy Africa Campaign, progress since COP21, together with a readout on the recent College to College meeting.

I wish you good reading!

Gary Quince
EU Head of Delegation to the African Union
Three questions to Mr. Angel Losada, European Special Representative for the Sahel

What are the European Union priorities in the Sahel region, particularly in light of the European Union Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015-2020?

The Sahel region is one of the poorest in the world. Countries in the Sahel face many similar challenges such as extreme poverty, institutional weaknesses, internal tensions, very high population growth rates, high exposition to climate change and frequent food crises, illegal trafficking, radicalisation and violent extremism.

The EU was the first organisation to adopt a comprehensive Sahel strategy in March 2011 and it participates in the Ministerial Platform on coordination of the Sahel strategies and initiatives, is currently presided by Chad. The EU Strategy, which was based on the assumption that development and security are mutually supportive and that the challenges faced in the Sahel require a regional answer, was followed by the adoption in April 2015 of the Sahel Regional Action Plan.

The plan reinforces the EU’s focus on four key priorities:
1. Prevention of radicalisation
2. Creation of appropriate conditions for youth
3. Migration and mobility
4. Border management, the fight against illicit trafficking and transnational organised crime.

The Action Plan is being implemented with the full ownership and under the primary responsibility of the countries concerned, and in coordination with key international and regional organisations. It combines the contribution of EU actions, instruments and resources with those of the EU Member States.

After almost a year of the adoption of the Sahel Regional Action Plan, it is clear that the priorities that have been identified remain extremely valid in the context of today. A significant evolution is the shaping of the G5 Sahel, encompassing the five countries of the Sahel strategy, Mauritania, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger and Chad. As a strategic partner of the G5 Sahel, the EU’s engagement at a regional level has definitely enhanced. Since the migration crisis in Europe started last summer, strong emphasis has been put by European leaders on the migration aspects. The summit in Valetta, where the African Union had a special place as representative for the whole African continent, agreed on an Action Plan on return and readmission, fight against migrant smuggling and human trafficking and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement.

The EU works with the partners of Valetta and all its instruments, such as the 11th EDF, its CSDP missions, the Emergency Trust Fund (window Sahel and Horn of Africa), its EU delegations on the ground, the High Level Dialogues towards a constructive, complementary and coherent implementation of the Action Plan.

How is the EU contributing to the coordination of regional and international efforts in the Sahel which aim for lasting peace, security and development in this important region in Africa? What are the issues that the EU, AU, UN and other partners need to address as a priority in the current context of security, socio-economic and political challenges (e.g. terrorism, illegal trafficking, underdevelopment, and migration)?
The European Union is contributing to the coordination of regional and international efforts in the Sahel through various means. In the context of the follow up of the Mali peace agreement, the European Union, as a member of the mediation is an active member of the follow up committee and its subcommittee. In this regard, the EU works closely with the African Union, and most notably the Special Representative and Head of the African-led International Support Mission for Mali and the Sahel (MISAHEL) as well as the Special Representative of the SG, Head of the UN Mission in Mali (MINUSMA). Furthermore, the EU co-chairs the subcommittee on development. On an operational level, the EU CSDP missions interact on regular basis with MINUSMA and international forces of Barkhane and the national defense and Security forces.

On a regional level, the European Union is a long-time partner of the United Nations and the African Union and the EU Special Representative has worked closely with the Office of the Special Envoy for the Sahel, as well as the Special Representative and Head of the UN Office for West Africa. The European Union is also actively engaged in enhancing the coordination mechanisms of the International community on the Sahel. In close collaboration with Member states as well as with third countries it organizes periodic brainstorm meetings with Sahel special envoys and international partners active in the region with a view to enhance the coordination and coherence of messaging and in hopefully in time also actions.

The partner countries in the region have created the G5 Sahel in December 2014 and the the European Union has supported this process (recently adopted the G5 Sahel- EU Roadmap) which seeks to harmonize five highly homogeneous country’s security and development policies, from the beginning. The added value of the G5 is to apprehend border areas where state presence is rare, and / or civilian populations are very vulnerable especially vis-à-vis terrorist groups and traffickers. On these challenges, the European Union will also continue its engagement to the Nouakchott process as it believes that these processes are complementary and the aim is to have them enrich each other.

We have all come a long way. In my view the EU, AU, UN and other partners have strongly enhanced their coordination on working in partnership with the countries of the region in these last years. The fairly recent creation of the G5 Sahel now clearly sets the stage for stronger regional ownership to tackling security, socio-economic and political challenges.

Given the strong links between the Sahel countries and their neighbours, how does the EUSR envisage working with countries beyond the Sahel, and what are the most important fora for such cooperation with G5, Maghreb or Lake Chad Basin countries for instance?

The Sahel countries are indeed adjacent to the neighbourhood countries of the European Union. For all parties there is an opportunity to develop a common space for dialogue and cooperation between EU, Maghreb and Sahel as well as with other West African countries. The EUSR actively engages at a bilateral level with the countries in the region both in the Sahel as well as the neighbouring countries in West Africa and in the Maghreb. Beside the bilateral meetings during missions in the region, it is during foras such as the summit of the African Union and the opening of the UN General Assembly that the EUSR, has in depth discussions with leaders from the region. The EUSR is an active participant to the ministerial platforms of the G5, both on security, youth and infrastructure. The EUSR has also been instrumental in the setup of the periodic G5 Sahel Minister of Foreign Affairs meeting with the High Representative of the EU, of which the next will be held in Brussels in mid-June. The mandate of the EUSR has been extended to the region of the Lake Chad Basin and the EUSR engages on the challenges in this region with leaders of the countries concerned, as well as in the context of the Multinational Joint Task Force in the fight against Boko Haram, to which the EU is a large contributor and the Commission of the Lake Chad Basin.
At the Summit of Heads of States of January 2015, the AU Assembly declared 2016 as the Year of Human Rights with a special Focus on the Rights of Women. This is in keeping with the vision of agenda 2063 which gives a central place to human rights and the rights of women as part of achieving Africa’s quest for peace, integration and development.

Where the question of women’s rights in conflict and post-conflict situation is concerned, even though the issue is receiving attention at the highest levels, much more remains to be done for this to translate into concrete action on the ground. African member states still need to ensure full compliance with their obligations to protect, respect and fulfil women’s human rights in times of armed conflict, in peace-building processes, and during early recovery and post-conflict reconstruction phase.

One realizes that 15 year after the adoption of UNSCR 1325 and despite the numerous global commitments to promote women’s participation in peace and security, to end impunity for human rights violations and to address the gender-specific challenges related to post-conflict participation, women continue to be marginalized from early recovery post-conflict processes. This remains the case in spite of the mounting evidence that shows that when women are absent from post-conflict reconstruction processes, issues related to human rights, social services and justice including gender justice tend to fall between the cracks and are not addressed in the post-conflict phase.

Women must be part of designing structures of governance in the post-conflict phase to ensure that they are responsive to women’s needs and concerns. Addressing issues such of impunity and ensuring justice are key to reconciliation and national cohesion. However, the weakness of the justice mechanisms put into place in the immediate aftermath of conflict has resulted in often little or no accountability and redress for the full range of human rights violations suffered by the populations and women and girls in particular including high rates of rape and sexual gender based violence. This sends a message that although women suffer immensely in conflict, addressing their needs and grievances is not a priority for government.

Instruments such as the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003) – the Maputo Protocol - provide a comprehensive framework that support the implementation of women’s rights in post conflict contexts.

More specifically, the Protocol highlights a range of civil and political rights and allows women living in societies emerging from conflict to engage as equal partners in activities such as political participation; access to, and management of, land and inherited properties; and protection from violence. In addition to civil and political rights, the Protocol provides for fundamental economic, social and cultural rights that are essential for engendering post-conflict reconstruction.
Equally, CEDAW provides a cadre for member states to report on action taken to address the gendered impacts of conflict and women’s exclusion from post-conflict transition and reconstruction processes. However, many of the reports submitted by States parties still fail to provide sufficient information on the application of the Convention in post-conflict transition and reconstruction.

This raises the question of accountability of AU member states on women’s rights and the need for strong African institutions that ensure an effective and comprehensive supervision of the commitments to women’s rights. From there it becomes evident that strengthening the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights in engaging vigorously with member states in promoting and protecting human rights and women’s rights in particular, becomes indispensable to realizing the aspirations of agenda 2063.

**LINK! The European Union, in light of the UN Human Rights Council 10th year anniversary, have decided to involve in outreach activities to promote Human rights throughout 2016. Are there opportunities to champion the issues of Human rights in Post conflict situations jointly?**

The year 2016 is a seminal year for human rights on the continent as the African Union has declared 2016 the year of Human rights with special focus on women’s rights. Over the years the continent has developed its human rights architecture through the formulation and adoption of important instruments such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights and the operationalization of key institutions such as the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ rights and the African Court on Human and People’s rights.

Transitions from conflict to peace open the prospects for change including improving the rights of the population, giving particular attention to reducing inequalities towards women and youth and to previously disenfranchised groups.

At the AU the question of Human rights is cut across the work of the Department of political Affairs and the Peace and Security Department. Engaging with both Departments therefore provide numerous opportunities for championing the issue of Human rights starting with augmenting the awareness on African human rights mechanisms at national, regional and continental levels; promoting existing African human rights instruments and advocating for their ratification, domestication and full implementation.

As post conflict societies attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, supporting home grown reconciliation processes and national human rights institutions to serve justice and achieve reconciliation calls for collaboration between various actors in sharing lessons learned and building the capacity of those institutions.

Concomitantly stepping-up advocacy efforts for member states to ratify and implement the AU Human rights instruments is of paramount importance focusing specifically on advocacy for gender sensitive approach to post conflict situations and transitional justice initiatives, key to promoting gender equality, ending impunity and achieving the women empowerment agenda. In this regard, sensitization around the ratification and implementation of the Maputo Protocol should remain a priority for both the AU and its partners.

In June 2016, the AU will be convening a High-level dialogue in Kigali on the promotion and protection of Human Rights in Africa to be held on the margins of the AU Summit on Human Rights in Africa with Special Focus on the Rights of Women, a key outcome of the consultation will be the formulation of a 10 year plan of action on the promotion and protection of Human Rights in Africa that could pave the way for a stronger and more sustained dialogue and partnership between the AU and the EU on issues of human rights, diversity, minority rights, protection of the rights of women; internally displaced persons, refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons, within their territory or/and outside.

**LINK! What role does the Africa- EU Partnership play in its strong Peace & Security cooperation with the African Union on Post conflict reconstruction efforts?**

Where Post- conflict reconstruction is concerned, the collaboration between the AU and EU in the framework of the Africa Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) Roadmap 2016-2020 has not embraced the full spectrum of the 6 pillars under the AU PCRD policy 2006 which are: (i) security; (ii) humanitarian/ emergency assistance; (iii) political governance and transition; (iv) socio-economic reconstruction and development; (v) human rights, justice and reconciliation; and (vi) women and gender. Commitment made by the EU for that period has focused on supporting the Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration and security sector reform components. However, it is my understanding that other EU instruments being negotiated at the regional level are supposed to consider specific needs at that level.
In early March 2016, a year of human rights activism and global campaigning was announced by the High Representative / Vice-President Federica Mogherini. It will bring together the European External Action Service and EU countries under the banner “#EU4HumanRights”. The aim is to raise the profile of the work of the EU and its member countries on human rights around the world.

“The EU has a longstanding commitment to the universal protection and promotion of human rights. With the #EU4HumanRights initiative, we want to raise the level of EU’s engagement and to encourage a broad-based public discussion on human rights in the EU’s foreign policy,” Mogherini explained.

The EU’s Special Representative for Human Rights, Stavros Lambrinidis, said that human rights are and will remain a core part of what the EU is and what the EU does. The “human rights year” will highlight the EU’s common ownership of these values and our common work to realise them.

#EU4HumanRights will encourage a wide-ranging discussion on human rights in the EU’s foreign policy, reaching out to the public as well as stakeholders from politics, diplomacy, media, business, art and civil society.

This initiative will feed into the implementation of the Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy (2015–2019) adopted on 20 July 2015. It will thus increase common ownership and commitment of all stakeholders into all the challenges and individual actions identified in the five areas of the Action Plan.
One of the main aspirations which underpin Agenda 2063 is for an Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, Respect for Human Rights, Justice and the Rule of Law. The Ten Year Action Plan foresees that respect for the rule of law and due process, the rights of citizens will be part of the African socio-political culture. During the January 2016 Summit the African Union Heads of State and Government also dedicated 2016 as the African Year of Human Rights with Particular Focus on the Rights of Women. The objective of the year is to raise awareness on human rights on the continent and take stock of the progress made.

The African Human Rights System is planning more than 20 activities during the year, including a Continental Conference on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in Africa, appointment of goodwill ambassadors, a media campaign, a human rights hotline, human rights awards, launch of the Pan-African Human Rights Institute, a human rights memorial etc. The end of the year conference is expected to adopt a 10-Year Action Plan on the promotion and protection of human rights on the continent. This will be submitted to the AU Summit in January 2017 for adoption and will form part of the Blueprint/Roadmap for human rights in Africa Project 2016 is about galvanizing momentum towards the realisation of human rights, particularly the rights of women, and contributing to the fostering of human rights culture.

The link between human rights and security is real and twofold – conflict can lead to human rights violations and the sustained denial of human rights can lead to violent conflict. The African Union is working to put more effort into strengthening the nexus between the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and the Africa Governance Architecture (AGA). The possible linkages include human rights observation missions, early warning systems, mediation, follow-up to election observation missions.

In promoting human and people’s rights, the African Union Commission has proposed to make a deliberate effort to transcend from the conventional wisdom that human rights are only civil and political rights, and promote and protect also socio-economic rights. This would entail promoting such rights as the right to food, right to water, right to shelter, right to health, right to employment over and above other rights such as right to free speech, assembly etc.

Why 2016?
This year marks some important milestones in the human rights world, including the 10th anniversary of the UN Human Rights Council and the 50th anniversary of the International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights and on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The year 2016 is also a veritable watershed in the African continental human rights trajectory: 2016 marks the 30th Anniversary of the entry into force of the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights in 1986 and the 10th anniversary of the operationalization of the African Court. It is also the first full year of the implementation of the new EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy.
Human rights events across Europe

Human rights events across Europe in all 28 EU countries will be encouraged with the topics being part of the “EU Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy” adopted by Foreign Ministers last summer.

These events will cover the five priority areas identified under the new Action Plan on Human Rights and Democracy which include:

1. boosting ownership of local actors (support to National Human Rights Institutions, government authorities, parliaments, the judiciary and civil society),
2. addressing human rights challenges (with an emphasis on freedom of expression, freedom of religion, torture and death penalty, gender equality, children’s rights, non-discrimination, Economic, social and cultural rights and business and human rights)
3. ensuring a comprehensive human rights approach to conflicts and crises (with an emphasis on conflict prevention, transitional justice, international humanitarian law and accountability)
4. fostering better coherence and consistency in EU’s policies (with an emphasis on trade, migration, counter-terrorism, development cooperation and impact assessment)
5. a more effective EU human rights and democracy support policy (with an emphasis making the best use of EU tools and financing possibilities and better communicating EU’s work on human rights and democracy).

The events will be organised by the member countries themselves, on topics of their choice, under a common EU umbrella with the hashtag #EU4HumanRights
When heads of state and government at the 4th EU-Africa Summit in Brussels in April 2014 stated that, “higher education plays a crucial role for economic and social development in catalysing sustainable development by producing high quality human resources and in disseminating the results of scientific and technical research,” they were inspired by a great example of EU-Africa cooperation in the education space, namely Tuning Africa. They have made the expansion of the Tuning project one of the deliverables for the partnership on higher education.

**Tuning Africa**

The general objective of Tuning Africa is to support the harmonisation of higher education programmes and the creation of a distinctive and globally-competitive African higher education space, through an enhanced intra-African collaboration. The project is for and undertaken by universities. The concept is not unique to Africa. It emerged in 1999 from the Bologna Declaration in Europe. Tuning has since expanded all over the world with projects both at national (Australia, Canada, China, Georgia, India, Kyrgyzstan, Lithuania, Russia, Thailand and USA) and regional levels (Africa, Central-Asia, Europe, Latin-America, and Middle East and North Africa).

Tuning Africa is a network of interconnected communities of academics who reflect, debate and elaborate instruments and share the results around a discipline in the context of building mutual trust and confidence. They work in international, intercultural groups, communicating deep respect for the autonomy of co-participants at the institutional, country and regional level and generously sharing knowledge and experiences.

Tuning is a methodology with clearly designed steps for designing and implementing degree programmes but it is one with a dynamic perspective that allows for adaptation to different contexts.

**Pilot initiative**

In the second Action Plan for 2010-2013 of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES), the African Higher Education Harmonization and Tuning Pilot initiative was implemented as one of the activities of the Migration, Mobility and Employment Partnership. The pilot was conducted from 2011 to 2013 with the involvement of 60 universities distributed over the five regions of the African Union as well as covering the AU official language areas: Arabic, English, French and Portuguese. The pilot involved five distinct subject areas: medicine, teacher education, agricultural sciences, mechanical engineering, and civil engineering. The pilot developed curricula tailored to the needs expressed by society for each of the subject areas. The five streams designed degree profiles that covered the generic and subject-specific competences that had been identified in broad consultation exercises with graduates, employers, academics and students.

The commitment and enthusiasm of participants was a notable trait during the three years of the pilot; for most participating universities the person representing the university remained the same over these three years. Furthermore, most universities involved in the pilot initiative are also participating in the second phase. Even more remarkable is that the initial critics of the pilot have since become advocates for Tuning Africa as a method to improve harmonisation.

**Harmonisation and Tuning Africa II**

The second phase of Tuning Africa (2015-2018) is a concrete deliverable of the 2014-2017 Roadmap of the 4th EU-Africa Summit. Tuning Africa phase II has almost doubled the participation of African countries and universities so as to broaden the scope of the discussion and the impact of the project across the continent. The second phase has also been expanded to cover eight subject areas. Economics and applied geology have been added to the original five subject areas. One new transversal group now covers higher education management.
Both the old and new participants will complete the process of designing and developing a degree programme at both undergraduate/postgraduate level. Universities can decide to implement either a degree at their institutions or to implement joint degrees. For the latter, the main objective is to implement a joint degree programme (related to the subject area) at Bachelor, Master or Doctorate among a number of universities. Tuning participants meet twice yearly as part of the process. In between meetings they work on their assignments at their respective universities. The last general meeting took place in Addis Ababa from 29 February to 2 March 2016. The next general meeting is foreseen to take place in Accra, Ghana in October 2016.

**Credit system for Africa**

Finally, Tuning Africa phase II also aims to contribute to the development of an academic credit system for Africa. Currently, there is no academic credit system shared by all African countries. Moreover, many higher education institutions in the region are still rather unfamiliar with a credit system that would support curricular change and lead to a student-centred and competence-based higher education.

Support will be provided through scientific research about student workload in Africa and by developing a political definition of a credit system for Africa with the involvement of the Tuning Africa Project Advisory Group (TAPAG).

For further information on Tuning Africa see [http://tuningafrica.org/en/](http://tuningafrica.org/en/)
Access to food remains a global challenge and one that is growing more acute. Nutritional imbalances in Europe and Africa are increasing, characterised by persistent under-nutrition and growing diet-related diseases. The EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue (HLPD) on science, technology and innovation, which met in the first week of April, deliberated on how to tackle food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

The global population is projected to increase from seven to more than nine billion by 2050. The majority of this growth is expected to take place in Africa. Food availability needs to increase in the context of a changing climate with agricultural production systems under threat from extreme weather events, as well as in view of declining natural resources, particularly water, soil and biodiversity.

Over the past two years the HLPD on science, technology and innovation has been working with African and European experts and policymakers to develop a research roadmap for a jointly designed and implemented Research and Innovation Partnership to address the critical challenges of on both continents.

The preparatory work is done by a bureau comprising the European Commission, AUC and seven Member State representatives from each continent. The current European representatives on the bureau are: France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, Portugal and the UK, while on the African side they are: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Congo Brazzaville, Namibia, Nigeria and South Africa.

Hosted by the African Union Commission (AUC), the 3rd HLPD Senior Officials Meeting on 4-5 April marked the culmination of this process with the adoption of the research roadmap and announcement of joint EU-Africa commitment to implementation through a flexible, long-term platform of cooperation, such as an international research consortium that will operate in a food systems approach, linking research to innovation for enhanced impact at local level. The conclusions of the meeting, including the roadmap, was considered by the EU-AU College-to-College meeting on 7 April 2016.

The European Union has already committed €47.5 million over four years (2014-to-2017) to this initiative: €30 million from Horizon 2020 programme; and €17.5 million through the African Union Research Grants programme managed by the AUC.

Further investments are foreseen from 2018 onwards, but substantial additional support will be needed from African and European countries as well as from other key players. To prompt the needed response, the HLPD has organised a Stakeholder Forum on 5-6 April in Addis Ababa in order to present the Research and Innovation Partnership and advocate for stakeholder involvement in refining the research roadmap and for commitment to implement it from African and European governments and funding agencies.

Food security is not simply and issue of increasing the quantity of food produced. It is about access to food, affordability, stability of the food supply and the quality of that supply, beyond its basic calorie value. Hence there is a need to harness science and farmer knowledge to advance the innovation process.

The Research and Innovation Partnership is designed to be a joint effort involving African and European actors in an innovation system focused on three broad themes.

The EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue

As a component of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy, the HLPD provides an institutionalised forum for continent-to-continent dialogue on science, technology and innovation. Meeting biennially the forum develops policies, programmes and practices that enhance the quality and quantity of EU-Africa cooperation in science, technology and innovation.
The first is sustainable intensification. It involves the search for solutions on how to both improve the production of food, fibre and biomass and of related services and to reduce the environmental impact of such production and the depletion of natural resources.

The second focuses on agriculture and food systems for nutrition. How can the systems be changed to reduce waste and deliver more nutritionally-rich food to consumers? Thirdly, improvement of agricultural markets and trade is being sought. Agriculture remains a primary means of economic growth for many African countries. Research into improved global value chains would benefit small farmers and consumers alike and would expand the market opportunities for organic, fair-trade and other quality label production.

The desired impact of the EU-Africa Research and Innovation Partnership on food and nutrition security and sustainable agriculture.

Research and Innovation Partnership is better coordination and synergies between national, international and EU research programmes and multi-stakeholder innovation processes.
The latest Reference Group on Infrastructure (RGI) meeting, held in February 2016 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, reaffirmed the importance of implementing continental infrastructure projects. The benefits reach well beyond those a project directly connects; they form the cornerstone of the Joint Africa-Europe Strategy. The RGI meeting also highlighted the critical relationship between infrastructure and emerging global policy issues which requires an affirmative response.

**RGI agenda**

The RGI is mandated to coordinate the implementation of the joint infrastructure agenda for: transport; energy; water; and ICT. A key takeaway from the meeting was the validation of a pipeline of continental infrastructure projects, covering the four sectors.

The discussion focused on how to prepare, prioritise, finance and efficiently implement infrastructure projects. The meeting also examined how to further promote investment, including how to catalyse private sector investment.

Placing infrastructure in a wider context, the RGI’s proactive measures contribute, “to the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the global fight against climate change and tackle some of the root causes of migration by investing more and in a smarter way in infrastructure projects in Africa,” according to the meeting conclusions.

The RGI meeting brought together representatives from African and European Union Member States, African Union Commission (AUC), European Commission (EC), Regional Economic Communities (RECs), international financing institutions, public and private sector and Non-Governmental Organisations.

**Transport**

The RGI vision for transport involves the development of smart and multimodal transport corridors to reduce transport costs and the cost of doing business, which will ultimately enhance competitiveness, boost intra-African trade and increase Africa’s market share of global trade. Improvements to road, aviation and maritime safety and security are foreseen, as is the modular deployment of the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS) in Africa. Furthermore, the development of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) will be specifically promoted.

**Energy**

Initiatives on energy are to address challenges related to access, sustainability and affordability of services. Innovative financing schemes and the development of renewable energy in Africa are to be supported. It was noted that energy sector policy and regulatory reforms in partner countries and regions, and harmonisation efforts at regional/continental level are the best way to create an environment conducive to investment using instruments such as the EU SE4ALL Technical Assistance Facility. The RGI supports initiatives such as ElectriFI that will boost private sector participation.

**Water**

The measures agreed for the water sector follow the strategic direction agreed at the 2014 EU-Africa summit, in particular focusing on multipurpose water infrastructure. A key goal is to help attain the Africa Water Vision by 2025 through joint African-EU support for the roll-out of the African Ministers’ Council on Water Work Programmes. In addition, multi-sector investment is to be promoted, and support is to be provided for the cooperative management of trans-boundary water resources in Africa and for capacity building. Synergies with relevant initiatives are being targeted, including with African river basin organisations for sustainable cross-border hydraulic infrastructures.
ICT
For ICT, the RGI has a three-pronged strategy to increase the dividend from the global digital economy, today’s single most important driver of innovation, competitiveness and growth. The strategy involves: harmonization and alignment of e-communications policies and regulatory frameworks between Africa and the EU, including cyber-security, safeguarding human rights and data protection; encouraging the interconnection of research and education networks through e-infrastructures; and enhancing ICT capacities for all, including skills and literacy through greater access to ICT, universal and affordable internet connectivity, the promotion of digital entrepreneurship.

Next steps
This year’s RGI meeting, hosted by the AUC, had a more strategic dimension as a result of the outcomes of high-level policy dialogues, namely the global agreements reached through Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and COP 21, as well as the conclusions of the Africa-EU Valletta Summit on migration that took place in November 2015.

The conclusion of this RGI meeting is seen as one building block to reduce poverty, foster sustainable development and inclusive growth and strengthen continental integration.

Case study: Italy supports hydropower in East Africa Community
A barrier to the development of small hydropower in Africa is the acute shortage of skilled personnel with hands-on expertise of small hydro. Such talent is not only crucial for the operation and maintenance of small hydro plants but can also play a key role in the rehabilitation of defunct small hydro installations as well as the development of new ones.

To address this challenge, the African Union and Italy recently signed a financial agreement to support capacity development for small hydropower in the East African Community (EAC). The agreement was finalised within the framework of the Italy-Africa Initiative and the Italy-Africa conference on energy cooperation, which took place in October 2014.

When announcing the agreement, the Italian Ambassador made the point that energy is a cross-cutting issue affecting all sub-sectors and aspects of society. Energy is specifically relevant for the promotion of peace and security, effective humanitarian crisis management and human rights.

The coordination of the project will be conducted by the African Union Commission (AUC) together with the EAC and will start in November 2015 for a period of three years with an initial budget of €200 000 for the first year. This initiative is open for other potential partners to join.

On a related note, a host of potential infrastructure partners are to gather at the Second Stakeholder Forum of the Africa-EU Energy Partnership (AEFP), hosted jointly by the Italian Government, the AUC and the European Commission in May 2016, in Milan.
UK International Development Minister Nick Hurd has met leaders from across Africa to discuss the UK Department for International Development’s Energy Africa campaign. Ethiopia is the latest country to back the campaign, which aims to accelerate universal energy access in sub-Saharan Africa. They pledged to boost solar energy access in a deal signed with Britain at the African Union Summit in Addis Ababa in January.

An estimated five million households in Ethiopia lack regular electricity access. This not only disrupts daily life but is also a barrier to the country’s economic growth. Across Africa, outages cost countries 1-2% of their annual GDP.

Speaking at the African Union Summit, Nick Hurd said:

“At the current rate, it will be 2080 before everyone in Africa has the access to energy that we take for granted in the UK. Right now, two thirds of Africans have no electricity at all. This not only holds back individuals, but entire nations, and is why we are working in partnership with Africa to rapidly expand the solar energy sector.

In Ethiopia I saw for myself the difference that household solar capability can make to an entire family. Affordable, reliable electricity means children can do their homework after dark, women and girls are safer at night, and families are not forced to rely on expensive and toxic kerosene. And more than that – the mobile payments system, which is core to this solar technology, means people without bank accounts can access finance and build a credit history for the very first time.

More and more countries in Africa are joining the Energy Africa campaign. This new agreement with Ethiopia is another step towards overcoming the barriers stifling the household solar market and transforming the prospects of hundreds of millions of people.”

With the support of countries like Ethiopia, the Energy Africa campaign will help achieve universal energy access by 2030.

Elizabeth Mukwimba is a 62-year-old Tanzanian woman who now has solar lighting and electricity in her home at the flick of a switch, thanks to a scheme backed by UK aid.

The time to act is now, and the campaign is building on shifts already underway in the household solar market: the cost of solar power has crashed; battery technology has improved; appliances are more efficient; and crucially, the spread of mobile payment systems means people can pay for their energy with a simple text.

Since the launch of the campaign, African support has continued to grow. Ethiopia joins Malawi, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Nigeria, Somalia, Mozambique and Senegal, who have already pledged to join Africa’s solar revolution.
COP21 drives climate action cooperation forwards

Following on from the global agreement endorsed by world leaders in December 2015, at the UN Climate Change Conference COP21, concrete proposals are being pushing ahead around the world.

For example, top officials from global and regional agencies gathered in Brussels on 22-23 March 2016, along with representatives from the 79 Member States of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group, to accelerate work towards implementing the historic Paris Agreement on climate change.

The aim is to generate an action plan, including elements on partnerships and finance mechanisms, to tackle climate issues pertinent to African, Caribbean and Pacific developing countries.

High level participants including European Commissioner for Climate Action and Energy Miguel Cañete, UNEP Director Achim Steiner, UN FAO Director General José Graziano Da Silva, Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) Petteri Taalas and others met with regional partners and ACP ambassadors to discuss concrete next steps.

Representatives for the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), as well as the host of the next Conference of the Parties COP22 meeting, Morocco, also made presentations.

Prior to the Paris Agreement, the signing of the 11th European Development Fund Intra-ACP Strategy by the ACP Group and the European Commission allocated some €475 million to support climate action, resilience building and the environment in ACP countries up to 2020.

The ACP Group’s Issues Paper and Ministerial Declaration on COP21 also reaffirmed the view that climate change threatens the very survival of ACP countries, and poses immediate and long-term significant risks to sustainable development. Key concerns highlighted include adaptation to climate variability and adequate support for adaptation actions especially for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS); loss and damage associated with impacts of climate change; mitigation and limits on global warming; climate financing; technology development/transfer and capacity building; and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.

Climate Action: Making it happen

Turning good intentions into reality requires many players. The European Investment Bank (EIB) is one such actor. On the occasion of COP 21 in Paris late last year, the largest climate financier in the world pledged to increase investments across the board.

At a March event in its Brussels office the focus was on ACP countries. The EIB brought project promoters together to see what was possible. Project types represented ranged from large-scale renewable energy to resource management and funds investing in small-scale green initiatives.

The event heard how, for example, a Kenyan geothermal power station meets growing electricity demand and has a limited impact on the environment. It heard about the Africa Renewable Energy Fund, in which the EIB is an investor and about an innovative waste management project in Mauritius.
Clearly, the rhythm of activity on climate action needs to continue. “Translating the ambitions and decisions of COP21 at the global and multilateral level into concrete actions on the ground in our countries, is a major task that needs the commitment of all partners. We must not let the momentum slide on this vital opportunity to make a difference for our planet,” concluded ACP Secretary General Dr. Patrick Gomes at the recent meeting.

Boosting renewable energy trade

The move to clean energy could provide a real boost for African energy exports. As Sameh Mobarek a Senior Counsel and legal advisor to the World Bank noted in a recent blog, there is significant potential for solar energy generation in North Africa.

As Mr Mobarek notes, “following the COP21 commitments this rich source of low-carbon energy should bolster efforts to agree on a framework to import clean, sustainable energy from North Africa to Europe.”

As Europe reinforces energy market integration to meet renewable energy targets, the potential for such integration with North Africa, boosting regional employment and economic stability.

He posits that, “there is a win-win opportunity for both Europe and North Africa to increase their energy integration and establish a mechanism for renewable energy trading,” and suggests that agreeing on such a mechanism by the time global leaders meet again for COP22 in Marrakesh in 2016 should be the target.
The 8th College-to-College meeting between the European Commission and the African Union Commission held on 7 April 2016 in Addis-Ababa

The African Union Commission and the European Commission held their annual College-to-College meeting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. This is the most important EU-Africa event of the year, reaffirming the joint commitment to the vision, values and principles of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) adopted at the Lisbon Summit in 2007, which remains the strategic political reference for EU-Africa relations. College-to-College meetings between the European Commission and the African Union Commission (AUC) are held annually since 2008 to provide momentum to the Africa-EU Partnership. They bring together the two Commissions for political and policy dialogue to provide oversight and strategic guidance for the partnership as it progresses.

Discussions during the 8th College-to-College meeting focused on the current shared challenges facing both continents, along with the 5 priority areas of the 2014-2017 Roadmap: (i) peace and security; (ii) democracy, good governance and human rights; (iii) human development; (iv) sustainable and inclusive development and growth and continental integration; (v) global and emerging issues. The meeting’s objectives were to strengthen further the strategic partnership between the EU and Africa, to take stock of ongoing collaboration and to discuss AUC and EC priorities, as well as to discuss future co-operation in the perspective of the next Africa-EU Summit in 2017.

EU and AU Colleges recognised the shared responsibility in enacting the outcomes of the Valletta Summit.

The decision by the African Union to declare 2016 as the ‘African Year for Human Rights’ offers a unique opportunity to make further progress in this area and to help address the challenges the continent still faces. The EU High Representative / Vice-President of the Commission Federica Mogherini has also designated 2016 a year of human rights activism and global campaigning - #EU4humanrights - in order to raise the level of European mobilisation in this area. This year gives the African Union Commission and European Commission a strong impetus to work together to promote and protect universal human rights. Referring to the Rwanda genocide remembrance day, observed on the same day, HRVP Mogherini said ‘we can never forget the one million victims of this horrible genocide of 1994 and honour their memory and make sure that genocides like that will not happen again, anymore, in history’.

Discussions of Commissioners framed by exchanges in plenary, in the cluster meetings on Peace and Security, Human Development, Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights, as well as in bilateral format in the margins of the C2C were held in a collaborative atmosphere and contributed to the political and operational impetus of Africa-EU relations.

The C2C reaffirmed the strong sense that Europe and Africa face common threat of terrorism and that only a joined response can be effective. The Colleges had an open discussion on the African Peace Facility and financing of African led peace support operations, including on improving financial management procedures.

The two Colleges agreed on the need for increased investments and job creation in Africa, which includes industrialisation, basic infrastructure, more trade and links with vocational training, digital agenda, agriculture.

The C2C confirmed the holding of the Africa-EU Summit next year and also agreed to relaunch a regular EU-Africa ministerial dialogue. A complete reportage of the College-to-College meeting including the Joint Communiqué, information on side events and more will be published on the next LINK! Newsletter.
EU – Africa: A common future
By Jean-Claude Juncker and Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma

As we face the challenges of the 21st century there is more that unites Africa and Europe than divides us. We share a common history of thousands of years. Today more than ever we need to work together to build our common future and to work jointly on the defining global issues of our age.

We both have a shared view of the benefits of cooperation on our continents. Europe’s journey from the devastation of 1945 to a Union of more than half a billion citizens based on shared values and designed to create peace and prosperity is well known. So too is Africa’s liberation from colonial rule to independence and greater integration through the creation of the African Union (AU). Our journeys towards integration are far from over but by working together we can help each other forging stronger ties, learning the lessons from each other’s experiences and building sustainable growth that will benefit our citizens. Our two institutions, the African Union Commission and the European Commission work jointly to help drive this process forward.

Sustainable and inclusive growth and development for both Africa and Europe must benefit us all. This was well recognised by the leaders of Africa and Europe at the last EU-Africa Summit when they put Human Development at the heart of our cooperation. Africa’s population is growing fast. By 2035, the number of young African men and women entering the job market will exceed that of the rest of the world. The full and equal participation of women is essential. As the African Union’s Agenda 2063 recognises, no society can reach its full potential unless it empowers women and removes all obstacles to women’s full participation in all areas of human endeavour. To fully benefit from the demographic dividend, Africa needs to implement the policies spelt out in Agenda 2063 and these need to be implemented fast.

We know that sustainable development can only occur in stable and secure societies. We know, too, that security will be undermined if equal access to the benefits of sustainable development is not assured. This is becoming even more evident in times when terrorist groups are targeting disenchanted and often unemployed youth groups that seek to spread violent sectarian ideologies to destroy the pluralism of our societies. We must guarantee that all citizens, in particular the youth, find a place in society and be fully empowered to reach their potential.

Security cannot exist without justice, democracy, the rule of law, good governance and the effective respect for human rights of all individuals and communities. 2016 is the African Year of Human Rights with particular focus on the Rights of Women. The European Union (EU) has also designated 2016 as a year of human rights activism and global campaigning. This is an opportunity for all of us to team up, strengthen our work together in support of the African Governance Architecture, as well as in support of universally agreed human rights. Africa can be proud of having one of strongest human rights’ frameworks in the world: by the end of 2016 we should ensure that all our Member States have ratified all human rights treaties.
The African Peace and Security Architecture is designed to enable Africa to manage its own peace and security. This is in our common interest and the European Union is ready to continue supporting this goal. The work that has been done in countries like Somalia, the Central African Republic and Mali bears testimony to this. The African Peace Facility has pioneered a shared EU-Africa commitment by giving Africa the means to develop and use its own capacity to carry out essential mediation work, to prevent conflicts and to secure peace. In light of the connectivity of global threats and major regional crises, a strong and resilient African Union is essential.

Today’s migration crisis, partly rooted in violent conflicts, also makes a compelling case for closer cooperation. Europe is confronted by an unprecedented flow of refugees and asylum seekers. In Africa, too, people are on the move – from villages to cities, to neighbouring countries and sometimes towards Europe. Those moves are mainly motivated by fear and hope. Fear of conflict and poverty, hope for peace, security and opportunities.

We must address both the fears and the hopes. If we want to ensure integration, we must manage human mobility. Our two Commissions will continue to work together on migration and mobility. We will work together to address the root causes of illegal migration, support mobility and labour migration, reduce the cost of remittances, strengthen international protection, facilitate return and to combat human trafficking.

There is optimism about Africa’s future, and rightly so. For more than a decade, Africa has enjoyed sustained economic growth. Africa is an increasingly attractive place to do business. Trade with the EU has increased by 50% since 2007. Around 40% of Africa’s exports are made up of processed products, with a consistent trade surplus in Africa’s favour. The EU remains Africa’s main trading partner. Investments by European companies and their subsidiaries in Africa total over EUR 200 billion annually, making the EU Africa’s leading investment partner. Trade and investment relations between Africa and the EU can be improved further through closer cooperation, policy coordination and the conclusion of WTO negotiations. Europe also remains Africa’s main development partner with more than €20 billion official development assistance (ODA) per year.

But continued growth cannot be taken for granted. Decreasing price of oil and other commodities as well as reduced demand from China and other emerging economies will have negative impacts. Africa’s reliance on raw material exports makes it vulnerable to downturns in demand in overseas markets, hence the need for value addition through industrialisation.

Our two Commissions are working together to promote industrialisation, diversification and increasing value added. We are working together to promote investments in African infrastructure, facilitate technology transfer and intensify joint research and development. Last but not least, we are working together to boost agriculture to promote sustainable and inclusive economic growth. This is why creating a Continental Free Trade Area which promotes free and fair trade is so important.

Our Unions, our two continents face common challenges. From climate change, migration, ensuring sustainable economic growth to the fight against terrorism and violent extremism; those are challenges that we have to face together. We know well that we are stronger when we are working together. We are starting preparations for the 5th EU-Africa Summit to be held in Africa in 2017 with these objectives well in mind.
EU-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP

INVESTING IN PEOPLE PROSPERITY AND PEACE

Delegation of the European Union to the African Union

Roosevelt Street, Kirkos Subcity Kebele 10
P.O.BOX 25223/1000 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Telephone: +251-11-416 37 00
Fax: +011-416 37 03, +011-416 37 17

Email: Delegation-African-Union@eeas.europa.eu

For your feedback Biruk.feleke@eeas.europa.eu


https://twitter.com/EUtoAU