

AFRICA IN THE VIEW OF EUROPEAN STRATEGIC INTERESTS

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Abstract: *Despite the myth of marginality and irrelevance, Africa has always played an important role in international politics. The slave trade, the struggle for territorial acquisition and control and the subsequent colonial period, the proxy wars of the Cold War and the growing importance of the continent's natural resources demonstrate how important Africa was and is to the wider global political economy.*

States and international organizations have defined areas of strategic interest in their main strategies. Africa is seen as an area of strategic interest for a number of actors of the international scene, such as the UN, the EU, the World Bank, BRICS, and the USA, Russia, China, Japan or the Arab states of the Middle East.

This paper presents a realistic research of Africa's importance to the EU and means to mutually exploit one each over for a win-win output. The research is presented in an analysis built on three phases: better understanding of African profile as provider of resources and consumer of security, identified European strategic interests in Africa and the EU-AU cooperation framework as expressed in documents and political leaders' narratives.

Keywords: *European interest, strategy, EU-AU cooperation, resources, policies.*

Introduction

Africa plays a vital role in the geopolitical landscape in terms of its geography, being a vast landmass stretching from the temperate zones in both the northern and southern hemispheres. It has natural resources in the form of minerals, metals, and fossil fuels, and the potential to contribute to global food security¹, all of which usually represents the etalon for prosperity. Yet as a continent, it has failed to exploit these strengths for its people, because weaknesses prevail in terms of struggle for supremacy over the resources “that converted the continent into a hotspot of proxy wars, tribal distinctions, and the religious segregation fomented in the prolonged violence that swallowed millions of young population, exhausted resources

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¹ Pavocat Blog, *Africa: its Geopolitical importance, International Trade and the Scourge of Corruption*, 2023, available at: <https://pavocat.com/africa-geopolitical-importance-trade-corruption/>, accessed on 11.09.2024.

and ruined infrastructure”². Therefore, more than 60 years elapsed since the United Nations declared Africa’s political independence, but the continent is still far away from attaining its economic status despite the huge natural and human resources.

For centuries, African peoples and empires had been involved in trade and diplomatic relations with European ones. Moreover, at the outbreak of World War I, European control of Africa was almost complete³. After World War II, and in keeping with the principles of the United Nations, the colonies and protectorates gained their independence, but Europeans remained connected to the continent, some specialists building a parallel between the history of colonialism and the history of European integration represented in the *Eurafrica*⁴ concept. Africa’s strategic value was robbed by East-West competition for influence until the collapse of the Berlin Wall in 1989⁵, thus “Africa’s importance again dissipated thereafter, allowing for a brief period during which development priorities rose in international prominence”⁶. In the beginning of the 21st century, Africa’s oil exports and location in the United States war against terrorism briefly elevated its status. Still, although “European–African, not US–African, relations have been deeper and more enduring”⁷, China’s footprint and influence in Africa has become more important each year.

Nowadays global powers (as China, the European Union, the United States of America, Canada, Israel, and Japan) are all in the race for Africa and influence economy and security aspects of the continent. Step by step, the globalization and lately geopolitical shifts in the world triggered the emergence of multiple international actors that has diversified the pool of partners for the African countries to be able to choose from, making the EU an important but not necessarily the only or the most preferred partner.

² Harjeet Singh, Sweety Kumari, “Africa, Europe, and a History of Geopolitical Relations”, *The New Federalist*, 24 November 2022, available at: <https://www.thenewfederalist.eu/africa-europe-and-a-history-of-geopolitical-relations?lang=fr>, accessed on 11.09.2024.

³ *Africa Under Colonial Rule*, Mapping History, 2024, available at: <https://mappinghistory.uoregon.edu/english/AF/AF01-03.html>, accessed on 11.09.2024.

⁴ According to the Eurafrikan idea, European integration would come through a coordinated exploitation of Africa, and Africa could be efficiently exploited only if European states combined their economic and political capacities. Therefore, in 1957, these two propositions interlocked, contributing to the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC), which in leading political circles and major news media was simultaneously perceived as the creation of Eurafrikan. See details in: Peo Hansen, Stefan Jonsson, “Another Colonialism: Africa in the History of European Integration”, *Journal of Historical Sociology*, vol. 27, issue 3, 2014, p. 448.

⁵ Jakkie Cilliers, *Africa in the World. Thematic Futures*, African Futures and Innovation Programme, 07 August 2024, p. 13, available at: <https://futures.issafrica.org/thematic/18-africa-in-the-world/>, accessed on 11.09.2024.

⁶ Idem.

⁷ Idem.

The major challenges facing European societies in terms of security, environment, energy, information society, terrorism, etc. contour strategic agenda for the Union. The main aims of the European Union within its borders are related to “promoting peace, its values and the well-being of its citizens, offering freedom, security and justice to its citizens, and taking appropriate measures at its external borders to regulate asylum and immigration and prevent and combat crime”⁸. But the same type of goals are provisioned also for its external world for which the EU aims “to contribute to peace, security, the sustainable development of the Earth, solidarity and mutual respect among peoples, free and fair trade, eradication of poverty and the protection of human rights, in particular the rights of the child, as well as to the strict observance and the development of international law, including respect for the principles of the United Nations Charter”⁹. Under this context, we consider it is paramount to identify Africa’s contribution to the EU interests and mutual relations as the African continent and economies gain importance worldwide.

1. The paradox of the African continent

International organizations, as UN, EU, BRICS, and great powers or smaller nations see Africa as strategically important for its strengths (natural resources, energy security, new markets for trade and investment), but as well for its weaknesses (potential export of insecurity to the other international actors).

To understand why Africa is seen as an area of strategic interest for the EU, but also for other actors of the international scene, there is needed to show some strengths of the African continent are:

- Africa is the youngest continent in the world demographically, its population of 1,521,819,869 inhabitants has an average age of 19.2 years¹⁰ of which 60% are under 25 years old¹¹. Moreover, it is estimated that the

⁸ *Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and The Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union*, Article 3, Official Journal of the European Union C 202/1, 07.06.2016, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12016ME/TXT&from=EN>, accessed on 12.09.2024.

⁹ *Ibidem*, Article 5.

¹⁰ *Africa Population*, Woldometer, 10 September 2024, available at: <https://www.worldometers.info/world-population/africa-population/#:~:text=The%20current%20population%20of%20Africa,of%20the%20total%20world%20population>, accessed on 10.09.2024.

¹¹ UNFPA, *The Demographic Dividend Atlas for Africa. Tracking the Potential for a Demographic Dividend*, vol. II, September 2017, p. 10, available at: https://www.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/resource-pdf/UNFPA_African_Atlas_KW_RS_SZ.pdf, accessed on 10.09.2024.

population of the African continent by the year 2030 will represent 42% of the world's young population¹², thus the largest workforce globally;

- The African continent has 65% of the world's arable land and 10% of the fresh water source¹³ but also important high-quality wood resources, such as mahogany, exported to other regions;

- Beneath the surface of Africa lies a wealth of mineral resources of enormous value. In 2019, the continent produced almost 1 billion tons of minerals worth \$406bn¹⁴;

- Almost half of the 55 African countries are known to have proven natural gas reserves¹⁵ (the richest in such resources are: Nigeria – 5.85 trillion m³, Algeria – 4.51 trillion m³, Senegal – 3.40 trillion m³, Mozambique – 2.83 trillion m³, Egypt – 2.19 trillion m³). As a major source of wealth and energy in Africa, the development of oil and gas resources is proving essential for economic growth and income expansion¹⁶;

- The continent hosts 40% of the world's gold reserves (See figure 1) and approximately 90% of those of chrome and platinum¹⁷. The world's largest reserves of cobalt, diamonds and uranium are also located here.

¹² World Economic Forum, *Why Africa's youth hold the key to its development potential*, Sep. 19 2022, available at: <https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2022/09/why-africa-youth-key-development-potential/>, accessed on 10 September 2024

¹³ African Development Bank Group, *Feed Africa*, 2019, p. 2, available at: https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Generic-Documents/Brochure_Feed_Africa_-En.pdf, accessed on 10.09.2024.

¹⁴ Al Jazeera, *Mapping Africa's natural resources*, 15 February 2022, available at: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/2/20/mapping-africas-natural-resources>, accessed on 10.09.2024.

¹⁵ Values are found in the original source in trillions (thousands of billions) of cubic feet. They were converted to m³, approximated to two tenths, using the application on the website <https://www.magicbricks.com/cubic-feet-to-cubic-meter-pppfa>.

¹⁶ Energy Capital and Power, *Top 10 African Countries Sitting on the Most Natural Gas*, 16 July 2021, available at: <https://energycapitalpower.com/top-ten-african-countries-sitting-on-the-most-natural-gas/>, accessed on 10.09.2024.

¹⁷ UN Environment Programme, *Our Work in Africa*, 2024, available at: <https://www.unep.org/regions/africa/our-work-africa#:~:text=The%20continent%20has%2040%-20percent,internal%20renewable%20fresh%20water%20source>, accessed on 10.09.2024.

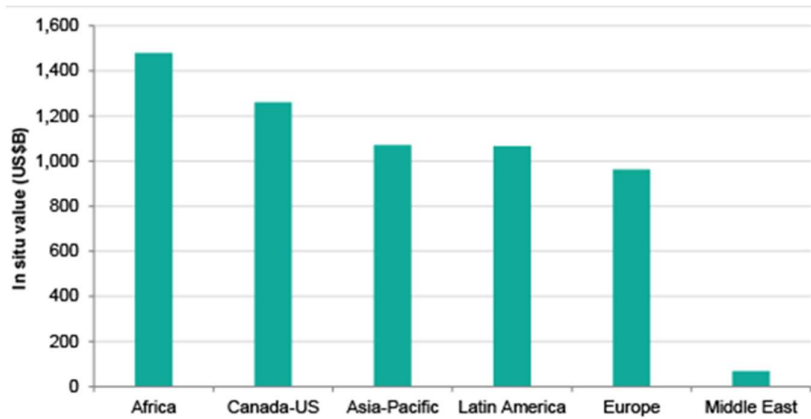


Figure 1 – Value of unexploited reserves of gold in the world¹⁸

To exemplify the African development potential, the figure above shows the level of gold reserves on this continent still unexploited, estimated in 2015 at a value of 1.5 trillion dollars (1500 billion), the main countries where find these deposits being Algeria, Egypt, South Africa, Libya, Morocco, Nigeria. Not to mention new deposits discovered, for example, the July 2022 one in Uganda estimated at \$13 billion¹⁹. In fact, Africa in 2021 accounted for almost a quarter of the global gold production of approximately 3,000 tons, with the total production of gold mines on the continent amounting to 680.3 tons. Major gold-producing African states include Ghana, South Africa, Sudan, Mali and Burkina Faso²⁰. In fact, based on the existing resources and their degree of exploitation, it is predicted that, in the years 2023-2026, 3 of the 10 economies with the fastest growing gross domestic product in the world will be from this continent, namely Guyana (25.8%), Niger (7.6%), Libya (6.9%)²¹.

¹⁸ Frik Els, *Africa gold reserves now worth \$1.5 trillion*, SNL Metals and Mining, 22 September 2016, available at: <https://www.mining.com/africa-gold-reservers-now-worth-1-5-trillion/>, accessed on 10. 09.2024.

¹⁹ Heidi Vella, *The \$13tn question: Will Uganda's newest gold deposit change the face of mining?*, Mining Technology, 14 September 2022, available at: <https://www.mining-technology.com/features/uganda-gold-deposit-investment/#:~:text=In%20July%20the%20Ugandan%20Government,approximate%20value%20of%20%2412.8tn,> accessed on 09.09.2024.

²⁰ Energy Capital Power, *Biggest Goald Producing Countries in Africa*, 5 September 2022, available at: <https://energycapitalpower.com/biggest-gold-producing-countries-in-africa/>, accessed on 08.09.2024.

²¹ Focus Economics, *The World's Fastest Growing Economies*, 27 June 2023, available at <https://www.focus-economics.com/blog/fastest-growing-economies-in-the-world/>, accessed on 10. 09.2024.

Given the identified strengths, the geopolitical competition in Africa has recently intensified, especially between the great powers such as China, Russia, the USA and the EU, but also between the middle powers such as Turkey, Japan and the Gulf states. Furthermore, Africa's strategic importance has led all UN P5 members to request the G20 to make the African Union (AU) its 21st member in 2023.

In addition to the palette of strengths, the African continent also registers a number of weaknesses (conflicts - wars, political violence, terrorism, etc. -, underdeveloped states - many of them failed -, military dictatorships or authoritarian leaderships, corruption, poverty, malnutrition, hunger and emigration). Among those presented, we will exemplify those that have the highest potential to directly affect the economic and security interests of Europeans, respectively: *conflict, failed states and migration*.

High propensity to conflicts is one of them, with increases in political violence mainly in Somalia and the Sahel states (in Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger), where state forces are involved in a conflict with Islamist insurgents. Political violence is also fervent in D. D. Congo, compounded by worsening relations between it and Rwanda, and mutual cross-border harassment. Regarding the terrorist phenomenon, the Global Terrorism Index in 2022 showed that "the Sahel has become its new epicenter" and the same Index in 2024 stated that "Regionally, the impact of terrorism is far higher in sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa ... than any other regions in the world"²².

*Africa hosts the most countries in Top 10 failed states*²³. Thus, in 2024 Failed States Index of the US-based Fund for Peace Institute is shown that 8 of the top 10 failed states in the world are in Africa, namely Somalia, followed by Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Yemen, the Central African Republic, and Chad²⁴. In 2022, in the same Index were included only 7 African countries but although the continent's direct trade and financial ties with Russia and Ukraine are reduced, the war has affected the continent's economies through higher prices of goods, food, fuel and general inflation which reflected in this specific ranking.

²² Institute for Economics & Peace, *Global Terrorism Index*, 2024, p. 3, available at: <https://www.visionofhumanity.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/GTI-2024-web-290224.pdf>, accessed on 08.10.2024.

²³ There is no official, universally accepted definition of a failed state. However, most every definition includes certain common, often intertwined characteristics: decreased ability to defend national boundaries; decreased ability to police its territory; decreased public services; decreased economic stability; decreased legitimacy. See: World Population Review, *Failed States*, 2024, available online at: <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/failed-states>, accessed on 10.09.2024.

²⁴ The Fund for Peace, *Fragile State Index*, 2024, available at: <https://fragilestatesindex.org/global-data/>, accessed on 10.09.2024.

African migration has been on a steady upward trajectory for the past two decades. The record level of more than 40 million African migrants in 2022 represented a 30% increase compared to 2010²⁵. However, Europe is not the main recipient of African migration as “less than one-third (27.2%) of all African migrants live in Europe”²⁶. But, the constant increase in global temperatures triggered by the climate change that makes certain regions of Africa become uninhabitable (due to water shortages, intolerable heat waves, and increased disease outbreaks, among other factors), specialists show will further contribute to increased migration to Europe²⁷.

Among the already presented shortcomings, the African continent faces development challenges in food security, healthcare, sustainability and infrastructure that need to be urgently addressed.

2. Main coordinates of EU – African cooperation

The two continents have close economic, cultural and geographical links, and relations developed through the European Union (EU) and African Union that cover areas such as peace and security, democracy, human rights, development and sustainable economic growth. Moreover, relations between the European Union and Africa predate the origin of the EU itself. With the Lomé Convention of 1975, relations between the two regions were established on a firmer footing with a highly institutionalized framework of cooperation hailed at the time as a partnership of equals.

The successor to the Lomé Convention, the Cotonou Agreement, was an innovative form of inter-regional cooperation, a hybrid form of inter-regionalism between the official regional grouping of the European Union and a “constructed” region comprising 79 states from Africa, the Caribbean, and Pacific countries.

In the last few years, Euro-African relations have been characterized by the progressive development of an intercontinental dialogue based on stated principles, but also on a consensus on shared values, interests and strategic objectives. This change in EU-Africa relations was reflected in a series of steps: the first EU-Africa summit held in Cairo in 2000, the second resulting in the 2005 EU strategy for Africa and the new joint Africa-EU

²⁵ Africa Center for Strategic Studies, *African Migration Trends to Watch in 2023*, January 9, 2023, p. 1, available at: <https://africacenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/African-Migration-Trends-2023.pdf>, accessed on 10.09.2024.

²⁶ Africa Europe Foundation Debate, *Africa and Europe. Facts and Figures on African Migration*, February 2022, p. 2, available at: https://mo.ibrahim.foundation/sites/default/files/2022-02/aef_summit_african-migrations.pdf, accessed on 10.09.2024.

²⁷ Xavier Aragall, Amal El Ouassif, Anna Ferro, Matías Ibáñez, *Climate change and migration Understanding factors, developing opportunities in the Sahel Zone, West Africa and the Maghreb*, Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, April 2023, p. 6, 9, available at: https://www.iemed.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/Climate-Change-and-Migration_FNF_IEMed_.pdf, accessed on 06.09.2024.

strategy adopted in December 2007 aimed “to take the Africa-EU relationship to a new, strategic level with a strengthened political partnership and enhanced cooperation at all levels”²⁸. Later, at the 2010 summit, in addition to issuing the Tripoli Declaration containing the second action plan (2011-2013) of the EU-Africa Joint Strategy, a Joint Declaration on Climate Change was also issued.

The fifth Africa-Europe Summit took place in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on 29-30 November 2017. Under this framework a joint declaration was adopted “outlining common priorities for the EU-Africa partnership in four strategic areas: economic opportunities for youth; peace and security; mobility and migration; and cooperation on governance”²⁹. Furthermore, at the summit held in Brussels in February 2022, postponed due to the 2020 pandemic, a common vision for 2030 was adopted, with four outcomes: establishing grants and investments supported by the EU budget; renewed and strengthened cooperation on peace and security and on migration and mobility, and a commitment to multilateralism within the rules-based international order, with the UN at its core³⁰. The common vision starts to be materialized.

Africa's Agenda 2063 gives a long-term vision for Africa over the next fifty years, and EU's Agenda 2030 represents a global commitment to work with Africa towards the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals³¹. This is the current expression of EU real involvement toward African security and prosperity. For example, under the Global Gateway the Africa-Europe Investment Package approximately €150 billion were dedicated to bolstering cooperation with African partners³². The areas covered by the EU-Africa flagship projects are digital, climate and energy, transport, health, and education and research.

²⁸ *The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership. A Joint Africa-EU Strategy*, Council of the European Union, Lisbon, 9 December 2017, p. 2, available at: <https://data-consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-16344-2007-INIT/en/pdf>, accessed on 12.09.2024.

²⁹ *5th African Union - EU Summit*, European Council, 29-30 November 2017, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2017/11/29-30/>, accessed on 12.09.2024.

³⁰ *6th European Union - African Union Summit: A Joint Vision for 2030*, European Council, 2022, p. 3, available at: https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/54412/-final_declaration-en.pdf, accessed on 13.09.2024.

³¹ Eurostat, *The European Union and the African Union*, 2018, p. 6, available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/3217494/8999516/KS-FQ-17-001-EN-N.pdf/-6d38be9b-60de-44f5-aeed-dfb767e500f2?t=1529485136000>, accessed on 12.09.2024.

³² European Commission, *Global Gateway*, 2023, available at: https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/priorities-2019-2024/stronger-europe-world/global-gateway_en, accessed on 11.09.2024.

3. European Union Strategic Interests in Africa

Both Europe and Africa have undergone repositioning in this changing global context. This repositioning is positive for Africa because the continent has been able to diversify its partners, carve out a new role in this multipolar world, and exercise more agency³³. In this framework, the EU interests in the neighbouring continent Africa are: economic (commercial, energy, labour force); security (eradication of terrorism and radicalization, especially Islamists, addressing environmental risks, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, countering the risks that induce extra-continental migration such as poverty, the depletion of water and food resources, epidemics - such as those of COVID-19, malaria, Ebola, etc. -, combating conflict), but also social (reducing political instability and corruption, development of critical infrastructure; promotion of human rights, etc.).

Some African – EU economic and energetic perspectives

The EU Strategy for Africa outlines a framework of action for all EU Member States aimed at supporting Africa's efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)³⁴. This is in line with the key priority of the strategic partnership between the African Union and the European Union - Africa's continental integration.

The EU is Africa's largest trading partner, largest investor and largest donor of official development assistance (ODA)³⁵. For example, at the level of 2020, EUROSTAT showed that the European Union was Africa's main trading partner, and North Africa is the EU's largest goods trading partner among African regions (Figure 2).

³³ Lidet Tadesse Shiferaw, Mariella Di Ciommo, "Trouble in paradise: The EU-Africa partnership in a geopolitical context", *Briefing Note*, No. 172, ECDPM, November 2023, p. 4, available at <https://ecdpm.org/application/files/8516/9987/8956/Trouble-Paradise-EU-Africa-Partnership-Geopolitical-Context-ECDPM-Briefing-Note-172-2023.pdf>, accessed on 11.09.2024.

³⁴ *EU Strategy for Africa*, Eur-Lex, available at: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/EN/legal-content/summary/eu-strategy-for-africa.html#:~:text=The%20EU%20Strategy%20for%20Africa,regards%20governance%20and%20economic%20growth>, accessed on 14.09.2024.

³⁵ European Council, *Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)*, 30 May 2024, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2024/05/30/>, accessed on 12.09.2024.

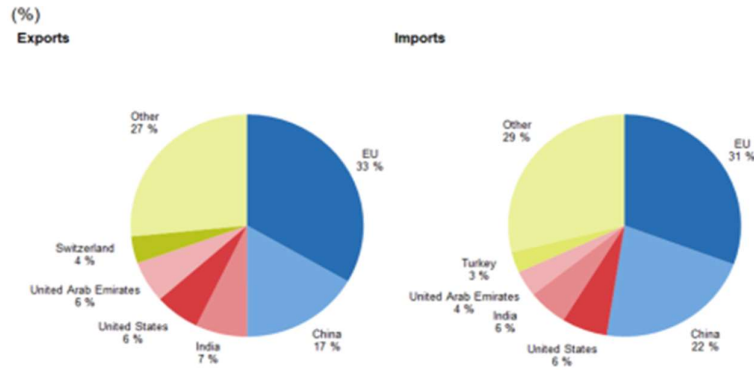


Figure 2 – African export and import shares with main partners, 2020³⁶

More than 90% of exports from African countries enter the EU duty free as they are covered by the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), the economic partnership agreements (EPAs) with sub-Saharan Africa, or the free trade agreements (FTAs) with certain North African countries³⁷. But, this is a win-win affair as improved trade with African countries helps the EU to diversify its supply chains, to strengthen its resilience and reduce dependencies on China and other Asian countries.

Still, Europe’s trade cooperation with Africa is almost exclusively focused on commodities and other primary goods, but services (banking, insurances, or transport) are largely missing from Europe’s trade and development cooperation agenda with Africa³⁸.

In the energy sector, European countries are looking to diversify away from Russian oil and gas to alternative sources such as those from Africa. Africa currently accounts for around 20% of Europe's gas imports, a

³⁶ Source: Eurostat Statistics Explained, *File:African export and import shares with main partners, 2020 update.png*, 15 February 2022, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:African_export_and_import_shares_with_main_partners_2020_update.png, accessed on 10.09.2024.

³⁷ European Council, *Foreign Affairs Council (Trade)*, 30 May 2024, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/fac/2024/05/30/>, accesat la 12.09.2024.

³⁸ Iza Lejarraga, *Tricks of the trade: Strengthening EU-African cooperation on trade in services*, European Council on Foreign Relations, 9 March 2023, available at: <https://ecfr.eu/publication/tricks-of-the-trade-strengthening-eu-african-cooperation-on-trade-in-services/>, accesat la 12.09.2024.

share that is likely to increase³⁹. Among African states, Nigeria is a major oil producer and also has the largest proven natural gas reserves in Africa (the 10th largest in the world)⁴⁰ and vast renewable energy potential, particularly in solar energy.

Africa's demographic boom presents a huge opportunity (and potential risk) for Europe. Africa will add 796 million people to the global workforce by 2050; Europe's societies are aging, and its workforce will decline by 156 million over the same period⁴¹. Therefore, in *the Declaration of the 6th European Union - African Union Summit: A Joint Vision for 2030*, the phrase "Respecting national needs, competencies and legal frameworks, pathways for legal migration opportunities will be further developed between both continents and within Africa"⁴² is defining the need to make the mutual cooperation work for the both partners to win: Europe – fresh workforce, Africa – financial support to improve its stability.

Means to promote European security interests in Africa

The European Union has been fully engaged in security issues in Africa for decades. The EU's integrated approach to preventing conflict in Africa draws on all the instruments at its disposal: development, trade, economic, diplomatic, political and military⁴³. In this idea, there are mix initiatives that cover security dimension of European-African partnership. The most important are financing security initiatives and participating in crisis management operation and missions on African soil.

EU developed a series of regional security strategies for parts of Africa:

³⁹ Teresa Nogueira Pinto, *Europe's energy switch may boost African producers*, GIS, 23 January 2023, available at: <https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/africa-europe-energy/>, accessed on 06.09.2024.

⁴⁰ Nigerian Upstream Petroleum Regulatory Commission, *Nigeria: Leading Crude Oil Producer in Africa*, 25 July 2024, available at: [https://www.nuprc.gov.ng/nigeria-leading-crude-oil-producer-in-africa/#:~:text=Nigeria%20continues%20to%20dominate%20as,barrels%20per%20day%20\(mbps\)](https://www.nuprc.gov.ng/nigeria-leading-crude-oil-producer-in-africa/#:~:text=Nigeria%20continues%20to%20dominate%20as,barrels%20per%20day%20(mbps),), accessed on 07.09.2024.

⁴¹ Mimi Alemayehou, David McNair, *False economy: Why Europeans should stop slashing development aid to Africa*, European Council of Foreign relations, 28 February 2024, available at: <https://ecfr.eu/article/false-economy-why-europeans-should-stop-slashing-development-aid-to-africa/>, accessed on 12.09.2024.

⁴² *6th European Union - African Union Summit: A Joint Vision for 2030*, 17–18 February 2022, p. 3, available at: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/02-18/sixth-european-union-african-union-summit-a-joint-vision-for-2030/>, accessed on 13.09.2024.

⁴³ European Union, *Factsheet*, 2004, p. 1, available at: https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/documents/fd/eu_factsheet_february2005/eu_factsheet_february2005en.pdf, accessed on 12.09.2024.

- In 2011, for the Horn of Africa, the EU adopted a strategic framework that outlines the actions to take to help the people of the region achieve peace, stability, security, prosperity and accountable government⁴⁴;

- In March 2014, the Council adopted a strategy on the Gulf of Guinea describing how the EU can help countries in the region tackle criminal activity and strengthen their maritime capabilities, the rule of law and effective governance⁴⁵;

- In 2011, the EU strategy for security and development in the Sahel was developed focused on “development, good governance and internal conflict resolution, political and diplomatic security and rule of law, countering violent extremism”⁴⁶. In this perspective, the EU held its first Structured Dialogue on Conflict Prevention and Peace Mediation with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in January 2024 in Brussels⁴⁷, in relation to Sahel region security.

The two main sources of EU funding for the African Union are the African Peace Facility (APF) and the Pan-African Programme (PANAF)⁴⁸. For example, through the AFP program alone, from 2004 to date, €3.2 billion has been invested in this dimension⁴⁹. Also, The PANAF, was set up in 2014 in order to support African integration, the first EU cooperation instrument that covers the whole of Africa and constitutes one of the main EU financial instruments for the implementation of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. It was funded under the EU’s Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) with €845 million for 2014-2020⁵⁰. Also, under the

⁴⁴ *EU-Africa relations*, European Council, 2020, available at: [⁴⁵ *Idem*.](https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-africa/#:~:text=In%202011%2C%20the%20EU%20adopted-,security%2C%20prosperity%20and%20accountable%20government.&text=In%202015%2C%20the%20Council%20adopted,regional%20action%20plan%202015%2D2020,accessed on 12.09.2024.</p></div><div data-bbox=)

⁴⁶ *Idem*.

⁴⁷ European Union External Action, *Annual Progress Report on the Implementation of the Strategic Compass for Security and Defence*, March 2024, p. 25, available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/2024/StrategicCompass_2ndYear_Report_0.pdf, accessed on 15.09.2024.

⁴⁸ PANAF provides dedicated support to the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and is the first ever EU programme for development and cooperation that covers Africa as a whole. See details at: European Union External Action, *The African Peace Facility (APF) and the Pan-African Programme (PANAF)*, 29.11.2018, available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/54650_en, accessed on 12.09.2024.

⁴⁹ Commission Europe, *African Peace Facility: African Union Peace & Security Operations boosted by an additional €800 million from the European Union*, 2023, available at: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/it/ip_19_3432, accessed on 12.09.2024.

⁵⁰ *Strengthening the African Human Rights System*, European Union External Action Service, 23.01.2018, available at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/node/38597_en#:~:text=

Africa-Europe Investment Package EUR 150 billion were promised to support Africa for a strong, inclusive, green, and digital recovery and transformation⁵¹.

The African Union relies on EU support for its peace missions. The EU provides small amounts of funding for militaries across the continent through its European Peace Facility, and maintains a large envelope of 600 million euros for the African Union for 2022-2024 to support African-led Peace Support Operations⁵².

Under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the EU takes a leading role in peacekeeping operations, conflict prevention and the strengthening of African security. Thus, the EU currently conducts a series of civilian and military missions and operations in Africa:

- civilian missions deployed to assist border management, conflict prevention, combatting organized crime and smuggling, reforming national security sectors or in monitoring the judicial system and the rule of law in the Central African Republic, Libya, Mali, Niger, Somalia;

- military missions to provide advice and training to local security forces to protect the civilian population in Mozambique, Somalia and the Central African Republic;

- military naval operations to restore and safeguard freedom of navigation and counter piracy (EUNAVFOR ASPIDES, EUNAVFOR ATALANTA) or to implement the arms embargo imposed on Libya (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI);

- mixed (civil and military) operations as EU RACC SAHEL aimed to “support G5 Sahel structures and countries to enhance regional cooperation and operational capabilities in the field of defense and security”⁵³ or EU SDI GOG set to support the West African countries of the Gulf of Guinea (Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Togo and Benin) in “empowering their security and defense forces and to improve the stability and resilience of their northern border areas”⁵⁴.

=It%20was%20established%20in%202014,845%20million%20for%202014%2D2020, accessed on 12.09.2024.

⁵¹ African Union, *Transforming Africa’s Energy Landscape: The Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative*, 03.07.2024, available online at: <https://africa-eu-energy-partnership.org/-transforming-africas-energy-landscape-the-africa-eu-green-energy-initiative/>, accessed on 17.09.2024.

⁵² *The African Union Relies on EU Support for Its Peace Missions*, ISPI, 9 July 2024, available at: <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/the-african-union-relies-on-eu-support-for-its-peace-missions-179534#:~:text=Even%20though%20the%20EU%20provides,African%2Dled%20Peace%20Support%20Operations>, accessed on 12.09.2024.

⁵³ European Union External Action, *The EU Regional Advisory and Coordination Cell for the SAHEL (RACC)*, 23.01.2023, available online at: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/missions-and-operations_en?s=410381#11927, accessed on 16.09.2024.

⁵⁴ *Idem*.

Also, the Cooperation between the EU Political and Security Committee (EU PSC) and the AU Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) is a key element of the AU-EU peace and security dialogue.

Conclusions

Africa is a serious source of critical raw materials, energy and labour force for the European Union and other global actors, but also of conflict, terrorism and immigration, having the potential to shape geopolitics and the world economy for decades to come. Therefore, Africa represents a strategic priority for Europe, and a partner with whom it must collaborate, at the one hand, to maximize the economic opportunities brought by the African human and material resources with European financial and technological support and, on the other hand, to diminish the African security weaknesses and, consequently, the probability of risks and threats to overflow in the European continent.

The main solution of the European Union to enhance Africa's opportunities and diminish its security shortcomings is expressed in the strategic goal of EU-AU partnership aimed at continental integration of Africa in the world's geopolitics, boosting its economy and ensuring its security to build prosperity.

European Union cooperation with the African Union cover a wide range of fields, from peace and security, democracy and human rights, to development and sustainable economic growth. The support is mainly materialized in: political guidance under the cooperation between the EU PSC and the AU PSC; financial investments in African institutions to build democracy, critical infrastructure to facilitate economic and social development and humanitarian aid for poor population; effective intervention in the crisis and conflicts on the African soil and maritime areas with civilian personnel and military troops to enhance peace and security in Africa.



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