

New Windhoek Dialogue 2017

Declaration and Recommendations ahead of the 5th AU - EU Summit

From 6-9 October 2017, the New Windhoek Dialogue brought together centre-right political parties from 12 African countries, Members of the European People's Party (EPP) Group in the European Parliament, representatives of European centre-right parties as well as the representatives of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung.

Participants discussed issues related to:

- the African Union - EU relations and the expectations for the 5th AU - EU Summit
- investment in youth for accelerated inclusive growth and sustainable development
- trade and regional integration
- migration and management across borders
- finances and investment
- democracy, good governance and human rights

Participants agreed on the following:

I. on relations between Africa and Europe:

- We acknowledge that Europe and Africa share a common history and the people also share a set of common values. Cooperation is of benefit for both sides and global challenges such as terrorism, piracy, climate change and migration need to be addressed jointly.
- We highlight that sustainable and inclusive economies are of benefit for both continents and their creation should become a core priority in summit discussions and subsequent initiatives.
- We acknowledge that differences between Europe and Africa exist but we agree that there is more that unites us than divides us.
- We strongly recommend that a continuous dialogue on all levels allowing for open and constructive discussions and the establishment of trustworthy relations needs to become an overall goal, thus enhancing the mutual understanding for each other's positions.
- In our opinion it is time to reinvest in our relationship. The summit should pave the way for a shift in relations between Europe and Africa away from a relation dominated by development assistance and towards a relation that emphasises trade and investment and the engagement of the private sector from both continents.
- Taking into consideration that previous action plans and roadmaps have been too ambitious, we strongly recommend that the forthcoming summit sets specific priorities and identifies flagship initiatives in these priority areas whose implementation can be monitored closely by all stakeholders, including civil society.
- We reiterate that the success of the AU – EU Summit conclusions, action plans and roadmaps depends on the political will for speedy implementation. In order to reap the rewards of development initiatives the commitment of African leaders to the rule of law and good political as well as economic governance remains an essential precondition.
- As both sides strive for a partnership of equals, we support the efforts of AU Member States to transform the African Union into a financially autonomous institution.
- We expect that AU - EU relations move out of the sphere of mere inter-governmental exchanges and summits and revert to the spirit of the Joint Africa EU Strategy (JAES) advocating a people-centred approach where ordinary citizens and the role of civil society and political parties are enhanced.

II. on investment in youth for accelerated inclusive growth and sustainable development

- We note that with an average of 60% of African youth unemployed and taking into consideration demographic developments on the continent, urgent action is required NOW in order to bring young people into employment. National governments have to develop short-term, mid- and long-term approaches on how to create sustainable jobs for this labour force. In doing so they particularly have to take into account the current obstacles of access to finance and access to land.
- We call for quality education on primary, vocational as well as on academic levels which caters for the needs of labour markets.
- We equally highlight that it is not sufficient to transfer only technical skills to our youth but also to instil ethical and moral values for the benefit of the social fabric of our societies.
- We encourage African businesses to invest more in their youth and to trust their capacities.
- We highlight that urgent action is needed to address the high drop-out rates of girls from school and their early marriages.
- It is of our concern that in some countries government programmes for African youth has become a political instrument; and we underline that programmes with a character of hand-outs have to be avoided but skills of young people need to be enhanced instead.
- We encourage governments to increase their exchanges with their youth, to provide opportunities for political participation and to develop implementable youth employment strategies.
- We invite the African Union to further contribute to the development of technical, vocational and educational training programmes (TVET) and the European Union to provide technical support and to modernise the educational programmes of these centres.
- We encourage the full use of existing programmes of intercontinental student exchange programmes, including Erasmus + which should be enhanced.
- We invite the private sector and public institutions to work towards increased youth mobility within Africa and between both continents, and welcome initiatives which open up opportunities for young people across the continent like the African Union Youth Volunteer Corps; in this context we call on the European and national parliaments to consider setting up a programme of traineeships for African students.
- We call on the EU Commission to coordinate possibilities of establishing bilateral Youth Exchange Centres between European and African states.

III. on migration management across the borders:

- We are of the opinion that root causes of migration within and out of Africa need to be addressed. In this context state fragility, lack of security and weak economies caused inter alia by overall lack of good governance and widespread corruption are to be addressed as a matter of priority. We acknowledge that a better migration management is needed and that it has to involve all stakeholders.
- We strongly commend that priority areas for migration management (tackling root causes of migration, legal migration, protection and asylum, migrant smuggling and human trafficking as well as return and readmission) are addressed in parallel and in a comprehensive manner.

- We caution that singling-out one issue or leaving aside others which might not appeal will obstruct any progress and success.
- We encourage the EU and European Member States to explore further options for legal migration and at the same time call on African governments to enhance their cooperation on readmission and return. Where applicable discrimination of dual citizenship should be abolished.
- Cooperation with African governments on issues of migration management, must not lead to neglecting democratic values and our strife for human rights.
- We support various initiatives adopted at European level to tackle the underlying causes of migration: notably the continental migration partnerships, the Trust Fund for Africa and the European Fund for Sustainable Development; we call for their implementation in a continued, coherent and efficient manner.

IV. on trade and regional integration:

- We acknowledge that regional integration can support Africa's growth potential and can act as a catalyst for peace and prosperity.
- We advocate for the establishment of a Continental Free Trade Area that could double the growth of intra-African trade. In this regard the Economic Partnership agreements, when well implemented, could be a step towards fulfilling this objective. An additional effort has to be undertaken for countries who have not yet signed the EPAs.
- We note that African businesses are not pushing sufficiently for Free Trade Agreements as they are not involved in negotiations or consulted, and we strongly advocate doing so.
- We call for an increased cooperation between the European and African private sectors and for concentration of investment in key sectors such as sustainable energy, basic infrastructure, sustainable use of natural resources and agriculture.
- We alert to the fact that regional integration necessitates mutual knowledge, breaking-down of language barriers, sufficient financing and an overall political will.

V. on finances and investment:

- We underline that economic governance needs to improve as otherwise external initiatives such as the EU External Investment Plan will fall short in its impact and foreign investors will not find the conducive environment they need.
- We recommend that more emphasis is placed on domestic resource mobilisation and the fight against illicit financial flows; we deplore that each year some 50 billion USD are drained out of Africa in form of illicit financial flows, and call on the AU and the EU to create effective tools to combat this and to ease restrictions that currently impede the repatriation of funds.
- We note that next to endemic corruption levels in most African countries, in many of them the business sector is in the hands of the ruling elite regulating access to markets.
- We underline that the attainment of Africa's full potential of natural resources would boost its competitive advantage; we welcome the EU initiatives to promote better management and more transparent trade in natural resources.

VI. on democracy, good governance and human rights:

- We consider democracy, human rights and the rule of law as a universal value and the heart of the partnership between Europe and Africa.
- We emphasize that democratic values need to remain guiding principles for Europe's engagement with Africa irrespective of external or internal challenges (populism).
- We expect that the 5th AU – EU Summit confirms the adherence of its participants to this universal concept of democracy.
- We call on the AU and the EU to equip parliamentarians with the necessary means to exercise their oversight functions vis-à-vis the executive.
- We take notice that demands for deepening democracy on the African continent remain high. However challenges in this regard prevail and persist. This also includes creating provisions for regular, free, fair and transparent elections in which a level playing field exists and all parties have a fair chance and enjoy equal rights.
- We condemn any attempts of incumbent rulers to extend their terms in office by violating or amending constitutions; or by manipulating public opinions and calling for constitutional referenda.
- We strongly support joint efforts for the establishment of an AU-EU forum on democracy, human rights and elections where these deficiencies become addressed.
- We call on African governments to adhere to the Charters, Conventions and Declarations fostering democracy and human rights to which they are signatories to.
- We encourage the democratic leaders of Africa to fight for democracy on the continent and to promote democracy, human rights and the rule of law through the African Union.
- Civil society organisations (incl. media, churches and political parties) are critical partners; we call on African leaders to ensure fully inclusive policies that allow for the participation of civil society and opposition political parties in the democratic life of the countries.
- We call on the AU to ensure that its member states respect the independence of the courts and other regulatory institutions as they exercise their role in adjudicating disputes among others relating to politics and business.
- We call on EU delegations to reach out to democratic forces in partner countries and to enhance their communication on the actions and initiatives undertaken by the EU and the decisions taken at the AU-EU Summit.

Participants took note of the situation in:

Angola

We strongly criticize the repeated practice of fraudulent electoral processes, as last witnessed during the electoral process leading up to the general elections of 23 August 2017, full of irregularities, without a level playing field for all contestants, frustrating the hopes for change of millions of Angolan citizens.

We condemn systemic corruption, the violation of human rights, political assassinations, acts of political intolerance throughout the country, by elements of the national police and complete capturing of state institutions and public media by the ruling party.

DR Congo

We call to attention that the necessary steps for holding elections in the DR Congo, enshrined in the *Accord Politique Globale et Inclusif* that has been agreed to and signed on the 31st of December 2016, have not been realized, yet.

We demand that the Congolese government respects its constitutional obligations and its own commitments in order to provide for free and fair elections in the DRC before the end of 2017.

Gabon

We condemn the constant threats, attacks and use of force against the political opposition, human rights defenders, as well as journalists. We call on the government to respect the right to peaceful protests and to stop all harassments and persecution of critical and opposing voices.

We urge the Government of Gabon to conduct a thorough and expeditious reform of the electoral framework, taking account of the recommendations made by the EU EOM.

Tanzania

We strongly condemn the vicious attack on the Chief Whip of CHADEMA, Hon. Tundu Lissu who got shot in the capital of Tanzania, Dodoma on 7th September 2017.

We lament that neither the Tanzanian government nor parliament have so far made any effort to take care of the medical costs for the treatment of his severe injuries which he suffered while serving his country and its people.

Togo

We are concerned about the deteriorating political climate in Togo and firmly condemn the violence applied by security forces against peaceful protesters leading to severe and fatal injuries.

We call up on the government to initiate the constitutional and institutional reforms demanded by the Togolese people in order to limit presidential terms and to organize free and transparent elections.

Uganda

We note with concern the repressive environment in which the Ugandan Parliament is considering the controversial constitutional amendment: seeking to remove the presidential age limit in order to make the incumbent president eligible to contest the 2021 elections.

In particular we condemn the siege and attack on the 27th of September 2017 by members of the armed forces on members of parliament opposed to the constitutional amendment.

We call upon the speaker of the Parliament of Uganda and the Executive Branch of the Ugandan government to respect the sanctity and independence of the legislature and promote an environment of tolerance and respect for the rule of law and citizens constitutional rights of freedom of assembly and expression, as well as peaceful protest.

Participating parties:

Angola: CASA-CE, UNITA; **DR Congo:** CDC; **Gabon:** Union National; **Ghana:** NPP, **Ivory Coast:** PDCI-RDA; **Mozambique:** MDM; **Niger:** MNSD; **Nigeria:** PDP; **South Africa:** IFP, **Tanzania:** CHADEMA; **Togo:** FDR; **Uganda:** DP, FDC.

Croatia: *Hrvatska demokratska zajednica*; **Germany:** CDU; **Luxemburg:** *Parti Chrétien Social Luxembourgais*; **Poland:** *Platforma Obywatelska*; **Portugal:** *Partido Social Democrata*; **Romania:** *Partidul Național Liberal*