

RESHAPING EU POLICIES TOWARDS THE EU- AFRICA PARTNERSHIP IN THE 'NEW NORMAL' ERA OF THE POST COVID-19 WORLD

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ABSTRACT

Over the last couple of decades, the European and African economic landscapes have changed considerably. The two continents are facing increasing interconnected challenges and opportunities. This leads to a growing awareness for a more global and integrated vision for the whole Europe-Mediterranean-Africa region (EMA). In addition to the challenges related to security, stability, unemployment, education, competitiveness, migration, demography and climate change, the need for a stronger collective Euro-Med-African resilience has become even more urgent and strategic within the framework of the new context created by the Covid 19 crisis.

The aim of this policy paper is to present the new parameters to take into consideration in order to reshape the relations between the EU and its Mediterranean and African neighbours. In particular, the policy paper highlights the importance of an increased South-South cooperation and it illustrates this through the example of Morocco's strong involvement in the Continent.



1. INTRODUCTION

Morocco has learnt how to retain and preserve its assets. However, its influence on the regional scene tends to be growing in real terms - all the more so, since Morocco's Mediterranean and international policies appear today to be aligned with not only regional and global changes, but also with the very evolution of its own society.

Until recently, the European Union displayed few synergies in its relations with the Mediterranean region on one hand and the African continent on the other. Since the inception of the European Union in 1958, parallel tracks (institutions, programs, instruments) have been implemented by the EU to manage relations with both these regions.

But today, the two spaces are facing increasing interconnections as well as similar challenges and opportunities, which is naturally leading to the consideration of a much broader and integrated vision.

For example, security-related challenges, such as the fight against terrorism, radicalism, and all forms of illegal cross border trafficking (human, drug, crime, weapons etc) see their geographical scope expand considerably.

Maintaining a separate vision between a neighbourhood policy comprising North African countries with policies implemented by the EU towards the rest of the African Continent can no longer be strategic or efficient.

Yet, ideas to create stronger links between the two tracks already occurred a few years back. A first step towards more synergy had started in 2006, through the concept of 'neighbours of neighbours', which was introduced by the European Commission in a Communication related to strengthening the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), in which it stated:

"We should also look beyond the Union's immediate neighborhood to work with "the neighbours of our neighbours". In Central Asia, for example, or in the Gulf, new instruments (...) will be able to fund regional cooperation activities including countries in both regions – this could be of importance in sectors such as energy, transport, environment, and research policy. (...) Similar considerations also apply beyond the North African ENP countries, in the context of the EU-Africa Strategy, where

broader regional cooperation programs and cooperation in areas like migration, infrastructure, energy, peace and security will be of great interest"¹.

Unfortunately, the concept was never fully implemented or put into operation. For instance, financial mechanisms for the Mediterranean countries could not be used for Sub-Saharan countries and vice versa. Even at the political level, there were no joint initiatives and/or cross participation. At an organizational level within the EU, Mediterranean affairs and African affairs were dealt with within the European Commission and the EEAS, by two separate entities.

Since 2015, the "migration crisis" and the Libyan crisis have triggered a growing awareness and a sense of urgency in the EU for a more global and integrated vision for the whole Europe-Mediterranean-Africa region (EMA). The willingness to implement new European strategies with the EMA region has, therefore, amplified and accelerated.

In 2019, the newly elected President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, made her first official visit outside the European Union to Addis Ababa where she said:

"It has been now less than a week since the European Commission has taken office. And here I am, in the heart of the African continent. I have chosen Africa for my very first visit outside of Europe. I hope my presence at the African Union can send a strong political message because the African continent and the African Union matter to the European Union and the European Commission. For my first visit, I have chosen the continent hosting the world's fastest-growing economies—a continent with immense ambition and aspirations, but also with vast needs. And I have chosen the African Union's headquarters – as the home of all African people, from Cairo to the Cape. For us, for the European Union, you are more than just a neighbour. Both our Unions are. Both our Unions are built on a dream – a dream of peace and a dream of economic prosperity in our continents. And therefore, it is for me of utmost importance that – I also think that our founders – both in Africa and in Europe – knew that only unity could make our continents strong in a changing world. The African Union is a partner I count on and I look forward to working within the spirit of a true partnership of equals".

¹ "The neighbours of the EU's neighbours" College of Europe. Retrieved from <https://www.coleurope.eu/neighbours>

The coincidence of this new European "doctrine" with the launch, about the same moment, of the African Continental Free Trade Area, as well as the new impetus for Euro-Mediterranean relations, following the celebration of the Barcelona Process in November 2020, provides a golden opportunity to open a new chapter in the future relations between Africa, the Mediterranean countries, and the EU.

Moreover, the unexpected emergence of the coronavirus crisis further accelerates transformational changes in EU-Africa relations. The Covid-19 pandemic could, therefore, be a significant opportunity for reshaping the EU-Mediterranean-Africa cooperation model.

This Policy Paper attempts to answer the following questions: what is the institutional state of play of the Euromed and EU-Africa relations? What are the new perspectives and opportunities for the EU-Africa Partnership? What role could the Mediterranean region play in a renewed EU-Africa vision? Could the COVID-19 crisis be an accelerating factor to reinvent the Euro-Mediterranean-African cooperation model? How important is the strengthening of South-South cooperation for a renewed partnership with the EU?

2. OVERVIEW OF THE INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORKS THAT HAVE SHAPED THE EUROMED AND EU-AFRICA RELATIONS

The objective of this section is not to go into details about the description of EU-Mediterranean and EU-Africa relations but, rather, to give an overview of the existing institutional frameworks². The section aims at highlighting the parallel tracks that have been followed by the EU during recent decades.

² For more details on the subject, the reader may refer to the author's book « L'avenir de l'Europe est au Sud » co-edited in 2019 by EMEA and CEPS.

A. The Euromed partnership and the challenge of regional integration

From the 1960s onwards, many initiatives have emerged to promote Euro-Mediterranean cooperation and to integrate the European Union within its wider regional environment.

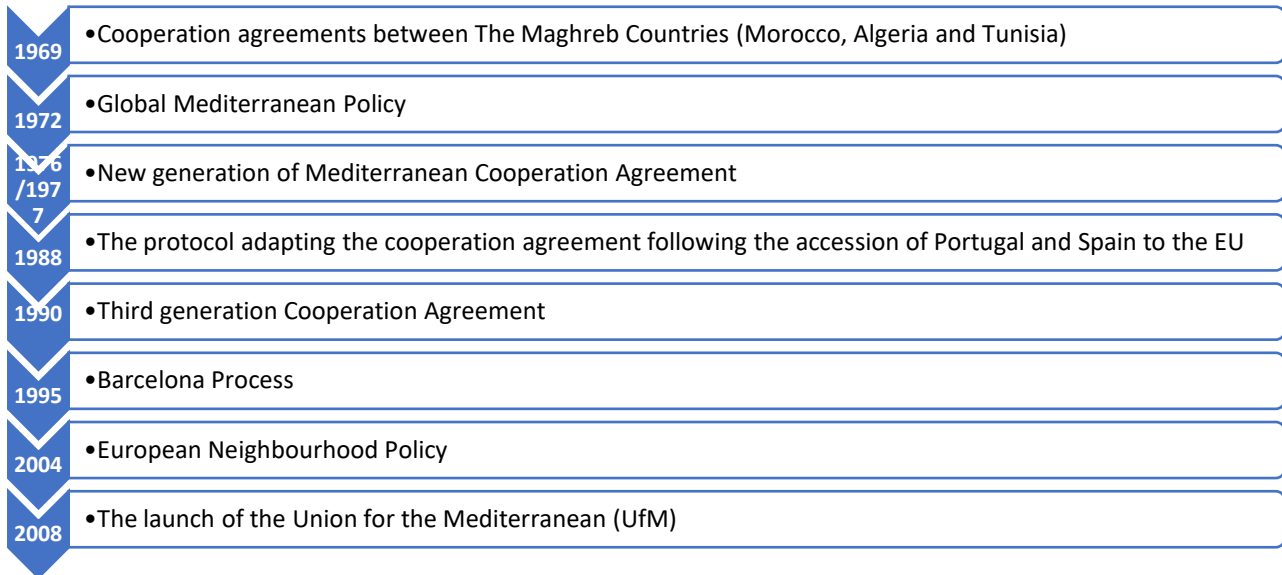
Starting from association agreements with three North-African countries in 1969 (Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia) until the launch of the Union for the Mediterranean in 2008, various initiatives aimed to build a regional space promoting peace, security and shared prosperity. This fell within the framework of many European strategies towards the Mediterranean countries, the latest of which has been the European Neighbourhood Policy, launched in 2004, which was revised twice in 2011 and 2015 and is about to have a new version in 2021.

One of the characteristics of EU's policies in the region is their focus on:

- The EU's priorities.
- A state-to-state approach: although efforts are made to enlarge the scope of the cooperation to non-state actors, cooperation is still dominantly developed towards public budget support.
- The bilateral track: One illustration of such a pattern is, according to DG Near statistics, the distribution of EU funds towards Mediterranean countries showing 90% towards the bilateral track and 10% towards the regional one. Such distribution can also be explained by the very weak level of regional integration in the Euro-Mediterranean region. A study³ conducted by the UfM Secretariat in 2016, showed that in the overall UfM region, 90% of trade flows were registered within the EU, 9% between the EU and its Mediterranean neighbours and 1% between the Southern Mediterranean countries.

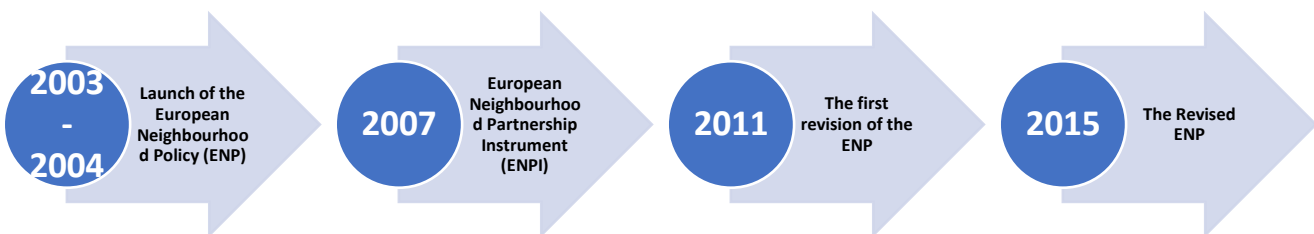
³ www.ufmsecretariat.org

Figure 1: The historical track



Source : Fathallah Sijilmassi, *l'Avenir de l'Europe est au Sud*, Ed. EMEA/EMNES/ CEPS, 2019

Figure 2: The evolution of the European Neighbourhood Policy (2003-2015)



Source : Fathallah Sijilmassi, *l'Avenir de l'Europe est au Sud*, Ed. EMEA/EMNES/ CEPS, 2019

A discussion on the new revised ENP took place in Barcelona in November 2020, on the margins of the 25th anniversary celebrations of the Barcelona Process, in preparation of a new version to be adopted in 2021.

Yet, four decades of cooperation and 25 years after the launch of the Barcelona Process, the expected positive impacts of the neighbourhood policy in the Euro-Mediterranean area remain below expectations.

Not all is gloomy to be fair. Much has been done and achieved.

Nevertheless, the region has witnessed increased political instability, conflicts and security threats. The development gap between the two shores of the Mediterranean has widened. Migration flows have significantly amplified.

During the Union for the Mediterranean Regional Forum, as well as through some recent initiatives, the political willingness to give a new impetus to the Euro-Mediterranean region has been reaffirmed. The Covid-19 crisis has triggered further interest in that direction.

Euromed relations are, therefore, at a crossroads with many challenges ahead and the interdependence between the countries in the region is stronger than ever.

The Covid crisis and the 25th anniversary of the Barcelona Process offer a unique opportunity to launch a new proactive phase, in which a collective stronger resilience can be envisaged.

B. The traditional framework of EU-Africa relations

a. EU-ACP partnership

For decades, the legal framework of the relations between the European Union and Sub-Saharan African countries was the ACP (Africa-Caribe and Pacific) Partnership Agreement.⁴

Although Africa represents the majority of the countries involved in the ACP Agreements, this partnership was a way of maintaining privileged relations between EU states and a large number of developing countries around the World.

⁴ See Appendix 1: EU relations with the Caribbean and Africa

The last EU-ACP Agreement was initially scheduled to expire in February 2020 but, as negotiations on the future Agreement are ongoing, it was extended to December 2020.

According to the European Commission⁵, the end of the Agreement is the opportunity to rejuvenate the EU's relationship with its ACP partners, considering the current global context.

Therefore, the question that arises today is whether the rationale behind the ACP-EU partnership, as expressed in the Lomé Convention of 1975 and the Cotonou Agreement of 2000, is still valid. Indeed, despite some common points between the ACP countries and, in particular their vulnerability, economic, political and social trends are constantly differentiating between booming middle-income countries and fragile and less developed states (Geert.L, 2016).

b. Cooperation through the Africa-EU partnership

In addition to the institutional framework of the EU-ACP Partnership Agreements, the EU and Africa gradually started to have a direct political and cooperation dialogue within the framework of EU-Africa Summits.

The main objectives of this partnership consist in *“strengthening economic cooperation and promoting sustainable development, with both continents co-existing in peace, security, democracy, prosperity, solidarity and human dignity.”*⁶

The partnership is guided by the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) that aims to balance the relationship between the two continents, in order *“to move beyond a donor/recipient relationship towards long-term cooperation.”*

This vision is based on principles of ownership, partnership and solidarity and it marked a new phase in Africa-EU relations.⁷

⁶ African Union “What is the Africa-EU Partnership? Retrieved from <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/partnership-and-joint-africa-eu-strategy>. The main pillars of the Africa-EU partnership are revealed in Appendix 2.

⁷ African Union “What is the Africa-EU Partnership?” Retrieved from <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/partnership-and-joint-africa-eu-strategy>

The joint strategy was launched in 2007 and has been implemented through multiannual roadmaps and action plans adopted after each Africa-EU Summit of Heads of State and Government.

Figure 3: The evolution of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy Priority Areas

2008-2013 : First and Second Action Plan

Peace and Security
Democratic Governance and Human Rights
Regional Economic Integration; Trade and Infrastructure
Millenium Development Goals
Climate Change
Energy
Migration, Mobility and Employment

2014-2017 : Roadmap

Peace and Security;
Democracy, Good Governance and Human Rights;
Human Development
Sustainable and Inclusive Development and Growth
Continental integration; Global and Emerging Issues

2018 Onwards: Abidjan Declaration

Investing in People - Education; Science, Technology and Skills Development;
Strengthening Resilience, Peace, Security and Governance;
Mobilising Investments for African Structural and Sustainable Transformation;
Migration and Mobility

Source: from <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/partnership-and-joint-africa-eu-strategy>

Throughout every phase of the partnership, there has always been a strong emphasis on maintaining peace and security on the African continent.

c. Specific support for the implementation of the Africa-EU Partnership

Besides specific projects financed by EU and African Union Member States and their development institutions, the European Union provides specific support for the EU-Africa partnership through two main programs: The Pan-African Program and the African Peace Facility.

Table 1 : Support for the implementation of the Africa-EU Partnership⁸

The Pan-African Program	The African Peace Facility
Supports projects with trans-regional, continental, or global added value. It is the first ever EU program in development and cooperation that covers Africa as a whole. (EUR 845 Million for 2014-2020)	EU's main instrument to support African-led peace support operations, the operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) and initiatives under the Early Response Mechanism (ERM). (over Eur 2.7 Billion since 2004)

Source : <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/about-us/financing-partnership>

d. EU-Africa economic relations: Beyond traditional aid

Until 2000, EU-Africa relations were almost entirely based on development aid. In 2018, EU28 ODA to Africa increased by 4.3% and reached EUR 25 billion.⁹

The European Union remains the largest donor to Africa¹⁰. With €20 billion in annual aid to the continent (Kateb, A, 2019), the European Union now seeks to supplement this approach with a deeper economic and commercial partnership. Indeed, the EU helps partner countries benefit from various sources of funding to support the implementation of their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In fact, the EU plays a key role in bringing aid, investment, trade, and liberalization of the full potential of all financial flows closer together, as "*The European Fund for Sustainable Development guarantee plays a key role in unlocking additional finance for partner countries. The EU also supports partner countries to improve tax collection and public spending.*"¹¹

Besides aid, trade and investment play a crucial role in the EU-Africa partnership.

⁹ Data from EU commission, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_674

¹⁰ see Appendix 3: Top 10 multilateral donors to Africa

¹¹ The European Commission 2019, "The European Union remains world's leading donor of Official Development Assistance with 75.2 billion euros in 2019" https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_674

Indeed, according to the African Development Bank Group¹², Africa is today's second fastest growing region in the world. The continent is emerging as an area of strategic competition, attracting major non-European powers such as the United States, China, and Russia. In the last two decades, the continent has particularly seen a growing presence of Chinese investments. Not just state-led ventures, but also private Chinese enterprises have become increasingly engaged in trade and investment with many countries around the continent¹³.

The Appendix 5 underlines that, on balance, the EU is the first commercial partner for Africa. This strong economic reality shapes other aspects of the relationship and provides a potential that can help address other strategic issues such as security or energy. Moreover, as the international context becomes more volatile and uncertain, there is now the urge to reinvent a new model for the EU-Africa relationship.

3. THE CONTINENTAL SHIFT: REVITALISING THE EU- AFRICA PARTNERSHIP IN A CHANGING CONTEXT.

Over the past two decades, the European and African economic landscapes have changed considerably. On the African side, the strong increase of trade champions and the presence of Asian giants, such as China, is stronger than ever. On the European side, the pandemic of COVID-19 has highlighted the need to redefine Europe's economic sovereignty on trade and industry.

Moreover, concerns over public opinion on uncontrolled irregular migratory flows and the risk of climate change refugees call for a review of the relations between EU and Africa within a new partnership framework.

In Africa, the ambition to create a common market was launched since 1991 under the Abuja Treaty. This project gained ground and the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) was created in March 2018 and entered into force in January 2021.

¹²African Development Bank Group, (2016) Africa remains world's second fastest growing region. <https://www.afdb.org/en/news-and-events/africa-remains-worlds-second-fastest-growing-region-17036>

¹³ More details on trade and investment in Africa are given in Appendix 4 and 5.

The ACFTA is the first flagship project within the African Union “2063 Agenda”¹⁴ and regional economic communities (REC) in Africa are the cornerstone of the ACFTA.

A. The African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA): A revival of intra-regional trade

In January 2012, the Conference of Heads of States and Governments of the African Union adopted a roadmap for the global architecture and the rapid implementation of the ACFTA, as well as an action plan to boost African trade within the continent.

The ACFTA aims at “*accelerating African economic integration with the creation of a continental market of goods, services, persons and capital essential for the strengthening of the economic integration, the promotion of agricultural development, food security, industrialization and the structural economic transformation*” as stated within the framework of the 2063 Agenda adopted by the African Union in April 2015.

The Agreement was adopted in July 2019 after the Niamey (Niger) Ad Hoc Summit on the ACFTA, with the ratification of more than half the signatory countries.

Work undertaken within the framework of the implementation of the ACFTA shows healthy dynamics and progress, as the following activities were achieved:

- The decision has been taken that no country should increase customs tariffs during the transition period; a series of technical negotiations have taken place during 2020.
- Cooperation is ongoing with the International Trade Centre (Geneva) for data collection and information dissemination mechanisms.
- A group of countries (G6: Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Sudan, Zambia, and Zimbabwe) committed to liberalize up to 85-90% in the next 15 years on the condition of reciprocity.
- Negotiations on rules of origin are still on-going.
- A secretariat is established in Accra (Ghana) to facilitate the implementation of the Agreement.

¹⁴“2063 Agenda: The Africa we want” Retrieved from <https://au.int/en/agenda2063/overview>

- The Secretariat will prepare an Annual Report on the state of play of the implementation and the global assessment of the Agreement and submit it to the Heads of States.
- The finalization of all aspects of the negotiations (investment, competition policies, intellectual property etc) was planned for December 2020.

The implementation of the ACFTA represents a unique opportunity to strengthen commercial relations between EU and Africa. The long-term perspective *“is to create a comprehensive continent-to-continent free trade agreement between the EU and Africa”*.¹⁵ This partnership should be fully exploited as building blocks for the benefit of the ACFTA to increase African exports, to attract investment in industrial sectors and to encourage the creation of regional value chains through flexible rules of origin. To this end, *“the Alliance will further strengthen and target Aid for Trade measures to support trade facilitation and the approximation of technical and trade standards, product quality and other regulatory measures”*.

B. Regional Economic Communities- an intermediary step to a comprehensive union

There are eight Regional Economic Communities (REC) in Africa, all seeking to build viable economic and political spaces that can be a source of information, discussion, and negotiation on any of the key issues that the continent is facing. In a nutshell, the African REC are:



¹⁵ European Parliament (2020) A Comprehensive EU Strategy for Africa Trade and Investment.

Table 4: Export trade of the Regional Economic Communities by partner, 2010-2017 average (in %)

	Intra-Community	China	United States	European Union	Africa	Rest of the World
ECCAS	2	34	15	20	4	25
SADC	19	20	8	20	3	30
UMA	3	5	8	63	2	19
ECOWAS	9	3	12	29	7	40
COMESA	9	12	4	37	8	30
IGAD	14	21	3	16	12	34
CEN-SAD	7	5	9	40	5	34
EAC	20	5	4	19	18	34
Africa average	10	13	8	31	7	30

Source: "Next steps for the African Continental Free Trade Area: Assessing regional integration in Africa", United Nations Commission for Africa, African Union, African Development Bank, UNCTAD, 2019.

Table 5: Import trade of the Regional Economic Communities by partner, 2010-2017 average (in %)

	Intra-Community	China	United States	European Union	Africa	Rest of the World
ECCAS	3	34	13	19	5	26
SADC	16	27	8	21	3	25
UMA	3	5	8	64	2	18
ECOWAS	8	4	13	31	6	38

COMESA	9	13	5	38	5	29
IGAD	14	21	3	16	12	34
CEN-SAD	6	5	11	41	4	33
EAC	17	14	5	19	14	31
Africa average	9	17	8	31	6	28

Source: "Next steps for the African Continental Free Trade Area: Assessing regional integration in Africa", United Nations Commission for Africa, African Union, African Development Bank, UNCTAD, 2019.

C. An increased intra-African Partnership: Morocco as a champion for South-South Cooperation

As Morocco strengthens its economic presence in the African continent, it seems interesting to look more closely into the case of the development of trade and investments between Morocco and the rest of the African continent. Moroccan trade and investment in Africa have experienced strong growth over the past ten years. This has been the case in a growing number of countries and sectors (see Appendix 6)¹⁶.

Whilst it is true that these economic dynamics have essentially developed with the ECOWAS countries, they have also gradually diversified into other sub-regions of the continent. It is interesting to note the case of Egypt in 2017, which can be explained by a large-scale operation in the banking sector but which, nevertheless, reflects the potential of the "North Africa" region (see Appendix 7)¹⁷.

From a sector perspective, diversification is also happening on a large scale. Whilst sectors¹⁸ such as Banking and Telecommunications have remained dominant over the last decade, the fact is that the presence of Moroccan companies has clearly diversified in recent years, thus paving the way for local partnerships and broader South-South initiatives.

¹⁶ Evolution of outward FDI flows from Morocco to Africa and the continent's share in total flows are exposed in Appendix 6.

¹⁷ Geographical structure of outward FDI flows from Morocco to Africa between 2003 and 2017 is exposed in Appendix 7.

¹⁸ Structure of outward FDI flows from Morocco to Africa by sector between 2008 and 2017 is exposed in Appendix 8

Morocco's active presence on the Continent falls within a global strategy and a strong leadership by His Majesty the King of Morocco Mohammed VI with the aim to promote South-South cooperation in Africa, to increase Africa's role in the global value chains as well as to lay the ground for a renewed and updated win-win partnership between the EU and Africa.

Within this perspective, the Mediterranean can play a stronger central role in the global Europe-Mediterranean-Africa region.

Morocco therefore through concrete achievements, strong and proactive leadership and a global strategy plays a pivotal role in this new global vision.

4. THE POST COVID-19 WORLD: BROADENING HORIZONS OF COOPERATION IN THE EU-AFRICA PARTNERSHIP

The current COVID-19 pandemic marks the advent of a new age in which the issues of economic resilience and national sovereignty will be widely discussed.

A. Moving from short term priorities to long term strategies

From a historical point of view, the EU's interest in Africa seems mainly to be guided by promoting development aid, framed by political conditions, security on the continent, a desire to control migration and humanitarian claims.

Several indicators illustrate the fact that these cooperation frameworks have not met their development objectives.

Challenges such as demographic trends, climate change, as well as strategic resilience, all lead to the need for a more global and balanced approach to the EU-Africa partnership. Priorities need to be common and the Agenda needs to be jointly developed. Within this framework, the global perspective needs to be more long term, mainly to prepare a better future for the young from both continents. Analysis indicate that the population of the African Continent will multiply fourfold by 2100 reaching close to 4,5 billion people (from 1,3 billion now) and that, by 2100, 50% of the planet's young people will be African.

B. New areas of partnerships arise, mainly in education and employment

The idea of a more integrated EU-Mediterranean-Africa region has been in progress since the beginning of the 21st century. The decision of the Malta Summit in November 2015 to set up an emergency trust fund for Africa of almost EUR 3 billion (in addition to direct contributions from member states) and undertakings from the EU-AU Summit in November 2017 in Abidjan have launched fast-growing dynamics.

A new "Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Jobs and Investment"¹⁹ was proposed by the EU in September 2018, in line with the guidelines of the last AU-EU Summit in Abidjan in November 2017. The new Alliance aims at building a balanced partnership by encouraging trade and investment, particularly in the areas of education and skills. The objective is to mobilize private investment and to support African initiatives, in particular the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA). It is interesting to note that this new strategy has quantitative objectives (see table below).

Thus, there seems to be a strong aim to develop a relationship beyond the traditional aspects of trade and financial aid and to bring forth a new partnership – one that is more modern and more in line with the needs and realities of the two Continents, especially for future generations.

Table 7: The EU-Africa Alliance: areas of cooperation

Education Field	Employment and Youth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investments made through the EU-Africa alliance will create up to 10 million jobs in Africa in the period 2018-2023. 24 million people will have access to roads that can be accessed all year-round, thanks to investments in transport infrastructure. 105,000 students and academics will 	<p>In an interview with <i>Point Afrique</i>, former AFD Director General Jean Michel Severino said: "By 2030, 450 million people will enter the labour market in sub-Saharan Africa. Based on current growth, about 200 million jobs are expected to be created, unprecedented in global economic history. It also means that some 200 to 250 million new</p>

¹⁹ European Commission, 2018 « State of the Union 2018: Towards a New Africa-EU Alliance to deepen economic relations and boost investment and jobs. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-5702_fr.htm

participate in Erasmus by 2027.

- 750,000 people will benefit from vocational training measures to improve their skills.
- 30 million people and businesses will benefit from access to electricity through EU investments in renewable energy and the strengthening of the production capacity of 5²⁰GW."

working-age people will have only the informal sector as an²¹alternative."

The challenges of demographics, job creation and the young are, of course, at the heart of all the strategies to be defined for this new partnership relationship between the EU and Africa. A few figures illustrate²² this:

- Currently, nearly 50% of Africa's population is under the age of 18.
- By 2030, Africa's under-18 population will increase by almost 170 million people.
- By 2050, 40% of the world's children under the age of 18 will live in Africa.
- By 2100, 50% of the world's children under the age of 18 will live in Africa.

Source : Authors' own elaboration

C. The need for more resilient GVCs and the nearshoring strategy

In recent years, the growth of trade and GVCs has started to slow down. According to the 2020 World Development Report of the World's Bank (World Development Report, 2020), the fragmentation of production in the most dynamic regions and sectors in the world has reached maturity.

²⁰ European Commission, (2018) « State of the Union 2018: Towards a New Africa-EU Alliance to deepen economic relations and boost investment and jobs. http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-18-5702_fr.htm

²¹ Interview with Jean-Michel Severino, Former Vice-President of the World Bank for East Asia and former director of the French Development Agency, 2015. Retrieved from http://afrique.lepoint.fr/economie/jean-michel-severino-les-entrepreneurs-africains-des-heros-du-quotidien-15-06-2015-1936449_2258.php

²² UNICEF Executive Summary "Generation 2030, Afrique 2.0" 2017. Retrieved from https://www.unicef.org/publications/files/Generation_2030_Africa_2.0_Executive_Summary_Fr.pdf

Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis has suspended GVCs, due to the lack of visibility and the uncertainty that continues to weigh on the global economy. When Chinese factories suddenly closed in January 2020, it was obvious that there would be a domino effect and, thus a disruption in supply throughout economies worldwide.

In fact, most European countries (Germany, France, Italy, the UK) have proved to be dependent on Chinese suppliers in some strategic and vital sectors. If one considers the pharmaceutical industry, it appears that for several years now Europe has offshored its pharmaceutical manufacturing. *“Today, 80% of active ingredients are imported from China and India, including molecules for vital medication such as antibiotics, anti-cancer drugs and vaccines. Just thirty years ago, only 20 per cent of active ingredients were imported”* (C.Rustici, 2020).

In the past, it is true that European companies have made the choice to relocate their production to low-wage countries, with the aim of reducing supply costs (Best-costs). But today, Europe should adopt a more balanced distribution of sources of supply and develop means of production that are closer to consumers. In fact, in a context of US-China trade competition, European companies have already started restructuring their supply chains. This transition might accelerate after the end of the COVID-19 crisis. Nearshoring and the need to shorten supply chains has become a central issue for most European countries.

Indeed, in this new global environment, the need to secure essential supplies and to reduce the European Union's dependence on the rest of the world is becoming more and more critical. As such, and besides the health issues it has engendered, the COVID-19 pandemic can be seen as a unique opportunity for Europe to win back its sovereignty over crucial industries, such as medical and pharmaceutical manufacturing (C.Rustici, 2020). Indeed, the coronavirus crisis has highlighted the vulnerability of global value chains. Therefore, many companies are wondering about the organisation of their value chains, with nearshoring being one of the avenues to explore.

Regional relocation in a Euro-Mediterranean-Africa area can, thus, be an opportunity for strengthening EU-Africa relations, in terms of increasing and diversifying demand, integrating industrial sectors, and developing innovation capacities, especially in the renewable energy and technological sectors.

For this purpose, strategic analysis is currently being conducted to present the ongoing changes experienced by GVCs and to explore possible openings for industries in the Mediterranean and Africa region. The main sectors concerned by these structural changes could be those that are strategic and essential, such as the agri-food and pharmaceutical industries, as well as the green economy and digital sectors.

5. CONCLUSION: AN OPPORTUNITY TO MOVE FORWARD

Although relations between the EU and Africa are long-standing, during recent decades they were mainly limited to commercial and financial aspects.

Today, the COVID-19 crisis gives us an opportunity to reshape the EU-Africa relationship.

The economic opportunities and increasing competition arising from more economic power between emerging countries in African markets are leading the move towards a new positive dynamic in relations between The EU and African countries, in order to establish a genuine balanced partnership.

Several factors highlight the added value of a potential Africa-EU partnership, in particular: the opposing demographic trends between the two continents; booming African markets; the potential for trade, investment and remittance flows between Africa and the EU; the need for sustainable industrialisation for Africa; acquisition and mastery of technologies; infrastructure development; Africa's ambitions for regional and continental integration; Africa's concerns regarding equitable and inclusive growth, etc.

The success of any renewed partnership between Africa and Europe will largely depend on the ability to build a common agenda and to act collectively in a spirit of full partnership for its implementation. Common priorities are not the sums of priorities. It is a question of defining jointly common priorities and objectives to be achieved in the short, medium and long term. Africa's full participation and ownership of the process will be key. Just as the EU will need to set targets that go beyond short-term issues, to engage in a forward-looking vision for the future that ensures a stable and sustainable future for all.

Africa is, therefore, now a priority for the Mediterranean countries and for the EU. Let's never forget that the Mediterranean is also an African sea!

Overall, the framework directive of a renewed Africa-EU relations would be a win-win partnership. To ensure the transition from development aid to co-development, there is a need to rethink the current modalities of cooperation and to redefine an industrial region with a balanced distribution of value creation (production, brand, and innovation) between the countries which participate in global/regional value chains.

The pillars of this partnership, which are summarily explained in the following table, could be further discussed in the next EU-Africa summit. In this perspective, whilst consolidating the overall bi-continental cooperation, a gradual and pragmatic approach may be to combine the continental approach with a sub-regional one, relying on the assets provided by the RECs.

For instance, EU-Med-Africa could very well benefit from a 5+5+5 process whereby the already existing informal dialogue framework of the 5+5 (Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Malta, Mauritania, Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya) maybe extended to the G5 Sahel (Mali, Burkina, Niger and Tchad²³).

In the same vein, Morocco's strong partnership with the ECOWAS is a strategic asset for possible EU-ECOWAS dialogue and cooperation.

In both cases, there are numerous key subjects that have a specific geographical and geopolitical relevance. Advancing sub-regional cooperation, in accordance and coherence with the EU-AU global framework, would be a very positive contribution to the global bi-continental path and it would give content and stronger relevance to the concept of a Euro-Mediterranean-African global region.

Table 8: Pillars of a new Africa-EU partnership

Education Field	Employment and Youth
The growing influx of sub-Saharan migrants, transiting through North African countries to	As mentioned above, the demographic challenges, and youth unemployment issues

²³ Mauritania is a member of the G5 and the 5+5 Dialogue

<p>cross the Mediterranean and reach Europe, has clearly revealed the urgency of a more structured and operational Europe-Mediterranean-Africa vision.</p> <p>It is, therefore, necessary to call for investment in research and development in Africa and to consolidate education cooperation between Africa and Europe.</p> <p>To this end, the strengthening of links between the EU and Africa in academic and cultural fields should lead to concrete projects.</p>	<p>must be at the heart of all the strategies to be defined for the new partnership between the EU and Africa.</p>
<p>Digitalisation and IA</p>	<p>Sustainable Development and Renewable Energy</p>
<p>The adoption of more advanced technologies, thanks to the virtual absence of any technological heritage, constitutes the strength of Africa in the digital area. In the words of the economist Alexander Gerschenkron, "the advantage of backwardness" or the leapfrog represents an opportunity to break free from the traditional development process and extend access to essential services, even to the most vulnerable populations.</p> <p>By directly accessing 4G networks and by developing impressive technological innovations, we can say that Africans have freedom of experimentation and innovation. African decision-makers become more and more convinced that technology is now</p>	<p>The ecological transition requires favouring projects that generate energy savings and could be more resilient to climate change. Ambitions for green economic growth, master plans for urban planning and development, territorial climate plans and urban development programs have been placed as a priority in many African countries. Faced with such challenges, African countries must innovate to achieve a new dynamic of South-South and triangular cooperation, to ensure their ecological transition.</p> <p>Furthermore, in the era of the green deal, which represents a new growth strategy to transform the EU into a green economy, developing an EU-Africa alliance, as part of a strategy that takes climate and</p>

consubstantial with any attempt at development, it constitutes a leverage effect for countries wishing to accelerate their emergence and, therefore, deserves that States devote significant investments in this field.

To this end, investment projects to be developed with more advanced countries, particularly European ones, should focus on the combination of Hard (infrastructure, investments, networks) and Soft (education, content, vision) factors. This is based on significant technological capacities and targeted support policies, aimed at public and private institutions.

This digital transformation should go through three major sectors: agriculture, industry, and urbanisation.

environmental issues into account, is essential for both continents.

Source: Authors' own elaboration

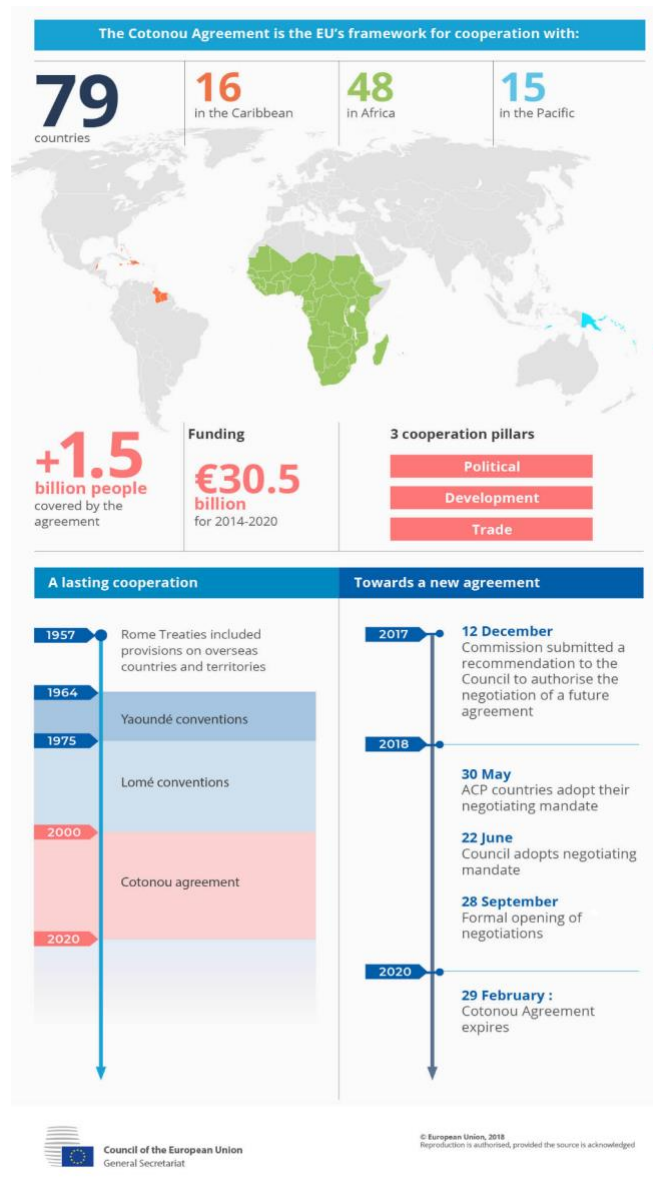
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7. APPENDICES

A. Appendix 1: EU relations with the Caribbean and Africa



Source: Council of the European Union

B. Appendix 2: What is the Africa-EU Partnership?



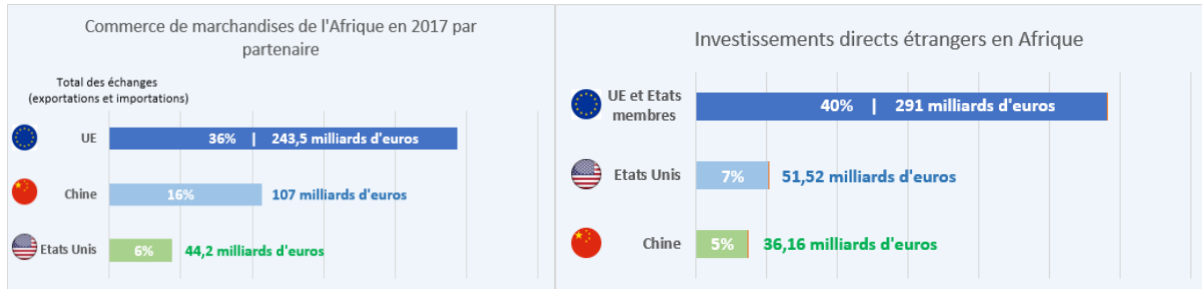
Source: <https://africa-eu-partnership.org/en/partnership-and-joint-africa-eu-strategy>

C. Appendix 3: Top 10 Multilateral donors to Africa (USD million, net disbursements)

	2015	2016	2017	3-year average	% of all multilaterals
1 International Development Association	6 246	5 844	6 851	6 313	31%
2 EU Institutions	5 176	6 328	6 326	5 943	29%
3 Global Fund	2 211	2 622	3 059	2 631	13%
4 African Development Fund	2 059	2 029	2 427	2 172	11%
5 Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization	1 016	755	763	845	4%
6 UNICEF	540	549	558	549	3%
7 IFAD	182	239	319	247	1%
8 UNDP	235	221	207	221	1%
9 IMF (Concessional Trust Funds)	361	23	242	209	1%
10 Global Environment Facility	218	257	112	196	1%
Other multilaterals	1 535	1 185	1 284	1 334	6%
Total multilaterals	19 778	20 052	22 148	20 659	100%

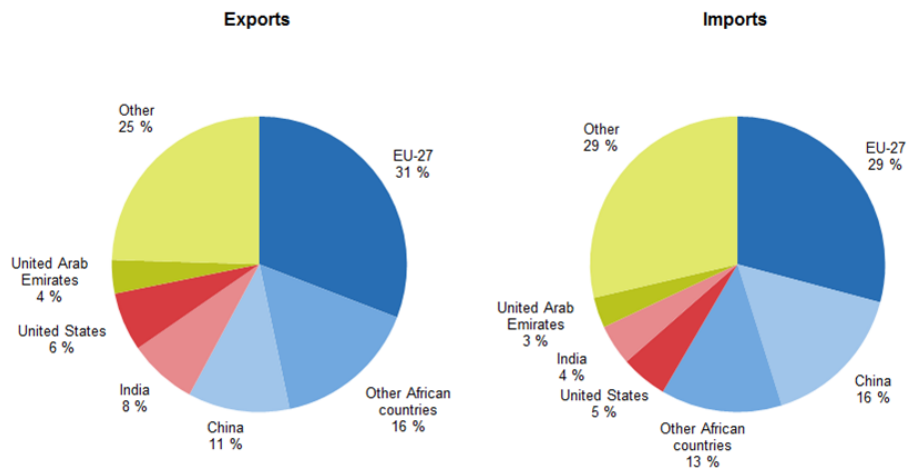
Source: OECD- Development aid at a glance: Report 2019 Edition

D. Appendix 4: Trade and Investment in Africa - 2017



Source: IMF and Eurostat, World Investment Report, 2016 UNCTAD.

E. Appendix 5: African export and import shares with main partners, 2019

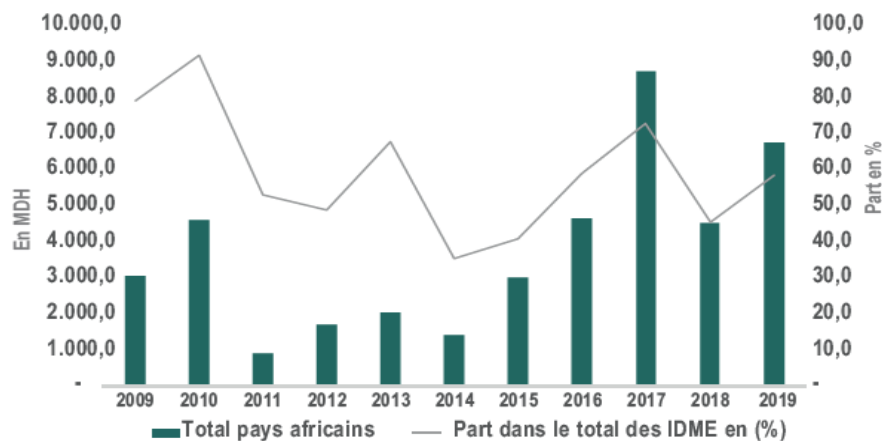


Source: UNCTAD



Source: ec.europa.eu

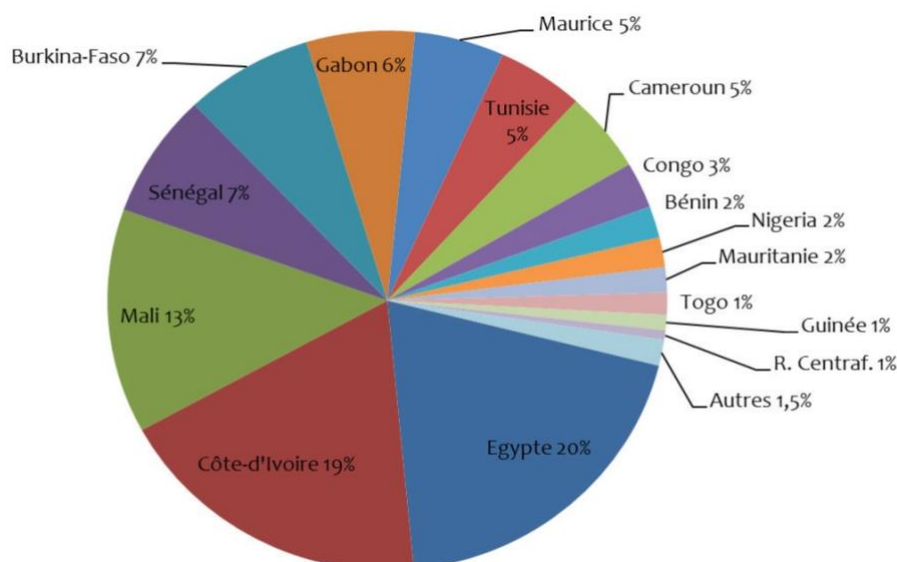
F. Appendix 6: Evolution of outward FDI flows from Morocco to Africa and the continent's share in total flows



Source & Calcul : Office des Changes
Chiffres 2019 provisoires

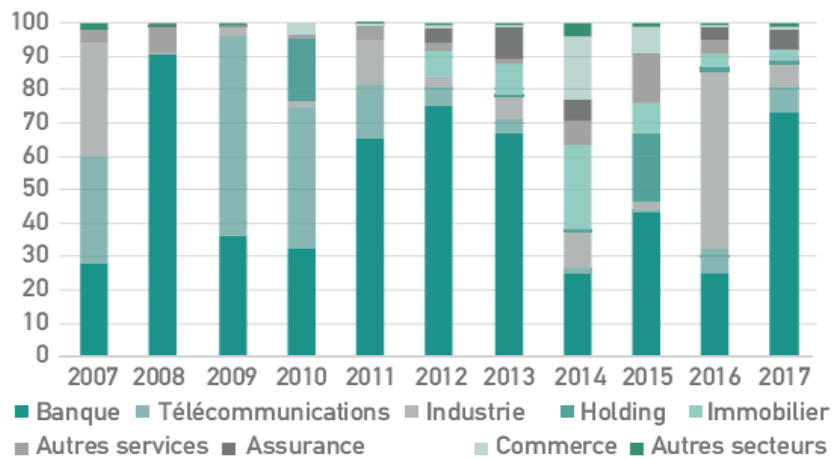
Source: National Trade Office, Morocco, 2019.

G. Appendix 7: Geographical structure of outward FDI flows from Morocco to Africa between 2003 and 2017



Source: National Trade Office, Morocco, 2017

H. Appendix 8: Structure of outward FDI flows from Morocco to Africa by sector between 2008 and 2017



Source : National Trade Office, Morocco, 2017. *Report of Ministry of Finance "Maroc-Afrique: une coopération renouvelée »* November 2020.



ABOUT EMNES

The Euro-Mediterranean Network for Economic Studies (EMNES) is a network of research institutions and think tanks working on socio-economics policy in the Euro-Mediterranean. EMNES is coordinated by the Euro-Mediterranean Economists Association (EMEA).

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