

MEMORANDUM

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12 YEARS OF PUBLICATION

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DEVELOPMENT DAYS: NEXT EU BUDGET MUST INCLUDE 'MARSHALL PLAN FOR AFRICA', SAYS TAJANI

European Parliament President Antonio Tajani has said pragmatic, forward-looking solutions are needed to generate real change in Africa.

Speaking at the opening of the European Development Days (EDD) in Brussels on Tuesday, the Italian MEP also called for a “true Marshall Plan” for Africa.

This year’s event will focus this year on gender equality and women’s empowerment. The two-day gathering is the EU’s showpiece event for development aid.

In a keynote address on the first day, Tajani said, “We have to work with our African partners to address the root causes of migration flows. A true Marshall Plan needs to be part of the next EU budget in order to attract investment, infrastructure and to develop an industrial base while creating hope and prospects for the next generations.

“Investing in the empowerment of girls and women by promoting their access to education, finance, jobs, political and social leadership are essential levers for both economic growth and the fight against abuse and social exclusion. By galvanising population segments most affected by climate change, the foundations for a more fair and equitable society will be laid.”

On the margins of the event, Tajani will also hold bilateral meetings at the European Parliament with several African leaders including the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, the President of Niger, Mahamadou Issoufou, and the President of Liberia, George Weah, a former footballer.

Meanwhile, a group of civil society organisations has said that EU countries must “step up” to implement gender-responsive climate change policies.

The message was also timed to coincide with World Environment Day on Tuesday.

The call was made by six groups: CARE International, CIDSE, Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, ACT Alliance EU, WWF and GenderCC-Women for Climate Justice.

They all urged the European Union to “step up its ambition” in climate action, highlighting the need to pursue the Paris agreement’s goal of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C.

The groups say this is in line with this year’s EDD’s theme, ‘Women and girls at the forefront of sustainable development’.

A statement issued on the eve of EDD said, “Achieving this goal, globally, would substantially reduce harmful climate change impacts which exacerbate gender inequality and cause huge economic losses, impeding sustainable development efforts.

“Transforming existing power structures is key to effectively combatting climate change and to entering a gender- and climate-just future.”

The six organisations said, “Climate change impacts, such as droughts, floods, and heat waves, already exacerbate poverty and gender inequality, with millions of women and girls suffering despite current action to cope with these impacts. The present EU emission reduction targets are insufficient to prevent a temperature rise above 1.5°C.

“Additionally, current solutions, such as the rapid acceleration of renewable energy use and protecting ecosystems, must be gender-responsive and deliver substantial sustainable development benefits, particularly for the poorest people.

“We urge the political leaders of the EU and its member states in their ministerial and leaders’ meetings in June to commit to move beyond the current target of 40 per cent CO2 reductions by 2030.

“Leaders must also nationally implement the recently adopted UNFCCC gender action plan and increase financial support in developing countries for women and girls’ efforts to adapt to and mitigate harmful climate change impacts.” (EP 05-06-2018)

CHINA FUNDS FOUR PROJECTS IN MOZAMBIQUE WITH A DONATION OF US\$100 MILLION

China plans to donate about US\$100 million to finance four development projects in Mozambique, with the respective agreements due to be signed on Monday in Maputo during the 6th session of the Joint Commission between the two countries, the Mozambican press reported.

The four projects are the construction of Xai-Xai airport in Gaza province, construction of the Gorongosa Technical Institute in Sofala, technical assistance to the Zimpeto National Stadium (Maputo) and sending agricultural workers for training in China, according to Mozambican daily newspaper Notícias.

The Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Mozambique Maria Lucas said at the end of the session that the agreements reached are a sign of the success of the work that the parties have done since the previous session of the Joint Commission in 2015.

China's Deputy Minister of Commerce, Qian Keming, expressed his government's readiness to continue to support Mozambique's development by allocating resources and donations to priority projects that promote the well-being of the population.

The financing agreement for the construction of Xai-Xai airport was signed in 2017 and was expected to cost US\$60 million to improve transport conditions and facilitate the communication of people and goods, promoting the development of the local economy, especially through tourism.

The project for the Gorongosa Technical Institute involves the construction of educational buildings, workshops, a cafeteria, sleeping quarters for students and apartments for teachers, and the establishment will be able to train 740 students per year and offer courses in agriculture and livestock, including vegetable production, agricultural extension and agro-processing.

The agricultural sector project, budgeted at just over US\$3.0 million, is in its third phase, with the Chinese government sending agricultural technicians in the areas of agronomy, agro-processing, livestock, veterinary clinics and laboratories over a period of three years for technical demonstrations and training of Mozambican staff.

The second phase of the agreement to provide technical assistance to the Zimpeto National Stadium is valued at US\$1.8 million. (05-06-2018)

DEVELOPMENT DAYS: EU MUST CONTINUE TO BUILD ON PROGRESS MADE

The EU has made progress on its gender action plan, but much more is needed to meet our SDG goals, writes Linda McAvan.

In a year where gender has been a front-page issue around the world, from #MeToo to the gender pay gap in organisations like the BBC, it is fitting that this year's European Development Days will also focus on women and girls in sustainable development.

This is not a new theme in the development community; both the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals have tried to target gender equality.

Yet despite these frequent commitments on paper, in reality we still have a very long way to go. The EU is committed to promoting gender equality throughout all of its external policies in its 2015 gender action plan.

This set several key targets - from increasing the number of projects with a gender dimension to a culture change in how the EU services operate, making gender a responsibility of the top management in the EU's delegations.

The first report on the implementation of this plan has shown good progress, but we need to go further to make sure that gender is treated as a core competency of all external branches of the Commission.

There needs to be real buy-in from the very top level if we are going to meet our SDG commitment to gender equality by 2030. (EP 05-06-2018)

MOZAMBIQUE HAS TO REDUCE PUBLIC DEBT, SAYS IMF REPRESENTATIVE

Mozambique's public debt is much higher than the average for the members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), and it is vital to return it to sustainable levels, said the representative of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Mozambique in Maputo on Monday.

Presenting the latest IMF report on the economic outlook for sub-Saharan Africa, Ari Aisen recalled that Mozambique's public debt reached 110.1% of GDP in 2018 and is expected to continue to rise to 130.3% of GDP by 2022.

The IMF representative also said that the fact that the Mozambican government is negotiating debt restructuring with creditors, in particular of the US\$2 billion debts owed by public companies, is positive, but added that it is necessary to ensure the process provides results quickly.

At a meeting held in March in London, the Mozambican government proposed a 50% pardon of interest arrears, or US\$124.5 million of US\$249 million, and three restructuring options that extend the repayment deadlines, both of interest and of capital amortisation. (06-06-2018)

DEVELOPMENT DAYS: VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IS EVERYONE'S ISSUE

With the Spotlight initiative, the EU and UN are leading a global campaign to end violence against women and girls, writes Neven Mimica.

One billion women have reportedly suffered violence or abuse in their lifetime. That is equivalent to two of your closest friends, colleagues or relatives. However, the real figure may be much higher, as abuse is often underreported. These figures are shocking, yet surprisingly similar in every country in the world. It is an immense problem of global proportions.

This is why, together with the UN, we launched a global campaign last September to end all forms of violence against women and girls, called the Spotlight initiative. With this initiative, we want to spark a real global movement, to protect and give voice to those women and girls that were silenced by their societies and now want to speak up.

I am talking about women and girls trafficked for sex and forced labour, survivors of sexual assaults and domestic violence and those threatened with barbaric practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM).

Raising awareness remains a major priority. For example, in several countries rape is still considered a minor offence, not a crime. Many more countries face big challenges when it comes to implementing the good laws they have already passed. FGM remains widespread despite being prohibited in nearly every one of our partner countries.

In 2016 more than 1.5 million women received services for protection and care related to FGM and 3000 communities (8.5 million individuals) made public declarations of abandonment of such practices.

Spotlight is about prevention, protection and the provision of services, as well as ensuring women's economic empowerment and their participation in all aspects of society. It's about sharing evidence and engaging people to change their attitudes and mind-sets, as we know these are not eternal, but essential in achieving real and lasting change.

We need to address deep-seated cultural and societal norms that underpin the unequal treatment of women and girls and engage everybody in ensuring gender equality. We need to debunk the myths on gender that hold both women and men back. Men and boys must be part of the solution, not the problem.

The recent #MeToo and #TimesUp campaigns triggered a global chain reaction, emboldening millions of people - particularly women - around the world to speak out and inspire others. Now is the time to capitalise on this momentum, and to put an end to violence against women and girls once and for all.

Through the Spotlight Initiative we want to work hand in hand with women and girls, men and boys, politicians and CEOs, survivors and activists. We have put our money (€500m) where our mouth is; now we're calling on all partners to join us and help transform society for the better.

Ending gender-based violence isn't "just a women's issue", it's a question for all humanity, because whenever one girl's or woman's right - whether political, economic, social, and human - are violated, we all suffer.

Join us at the European Development Days 2018 to discuss how we can ensure women and girls are at the forefront of sustainable development(EP 05-06-2018)

NEW LUANDA AIRPORT, ANGOLA, STARTS OPERATING IN 2020

Construction works for the New Luanda International Airport (NAIL) are expected to be completed in 2020 if no financial constraints come up meanwhile, said on Tuesday in Luanda the director general of the Mace Group, the company awarded the project.

Rodrigo Januário, quoted in a statement issued by the Ministry of Transport, said the North runway is 66% completed, the South runway is 56% finished, the central apron for aircraft to access the terminal is at 58% completion and that at the main terminal the reinforced concrete structure and the metallic structure of the roof are finished, as well as all the facades.

Overall, said the official, construction of the New Luanda International Airport currently has stood at 60% completion.

In October 2017, during a visit to the project by President João Lourenço, the Transport Minister, Augusto Tomás, reported that the new airport, which had been under construction since 2004 by Chinese contractors in the outskirts of the Angolan capital, would only start operating in 2019, a delay of two years compared to the previous forecast.

The new airport is under construction in the municipality of Icolo e Bengo, 30 kilometres from the capital, with its operation, initially announced to begin in the first half of 2017, and the cost of the construction of the airport, including access roads, has already exceeded US\$6 billion.

Construction is carried out by the China International Fund Limited (CIF), which has been contracted by the Angolan government for US\$3.8 billion, with the equipment ordered from China National Aero-Technology International Engineering Corporation for a sum of US\$1.4 billion. (06-06-2018)

FINANCE, COTONOU AND WOMEN SET TO DOMINATE EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENT DAYS

As far as global development goes, few events can match the reach of European Development Days, whose Brussels edition will gather 8,000 development policy professionals this week.

It's small wonder that its supporters call it the 'Davos of development', as it will bring together a handful of European Commissioners, four African presidents, the UN's top brass and the development NGO and business communities.

The attending heads of state will include Rwandan President Paul Kagamé; Burkina Faso's Roch Marc Christian Kaboré, Niger's President Mahamadou Issoufou, and recently elected President of Liberia, George Weah. The UN's delegation will be headed by Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed. The theme of this year's EDD is 'Women and Girls at the Forefront of Sustainable Development: protect, empower, invest'.

But there will be plenty other issues on tap, from the EU's next seven-year budget and the migration crisis to the upcoming negotiations on a revised Cotonou Agreement between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific community

Gender equality and women's empowerment is integral to the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development agreed by the international community and to each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agreed in 2015.

"There can be no sustainable development if half of the world's population is left behind. We need equal participation and leadership of women and girls in all spheres of life – both in Europe and in the world," said European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker, who will open the EDDs on Tuesday morning (5 June).

Development policy in Brussels will be dominated by the talks on the next EU multi-annual financial framework. Most development NGOs were left underwhelmed by the Commission's MFF announcement in May.

Budget downgrades EU aid policy, say development experts

Development NGOs were united in criticising the European Commission's proposed changes to the bloc's external spending on Wednesday (2 May), warning that it effectively downgraded aid policy. The budget of €123 billion to cover all of the EU's external priorities for 2020-2027 was slightly higher than many expected, but it is unclear how much will be allocated to development spending. "We will have significant additional resources," a senior EU official said.

“The current structure is clearly unfit for purpose and we need more flexibility so that the EU and member states can finance short-term crises, but we can’t be robbing Peter to pay Paul,” Emily Wiggins, Interim Brussels director for ONE, told EURACTIV.

“We want an instrument on human security and migration and sustainable development,” she added. There are also concerns about the EU executive’s plan to merge its twelve existing external policy instruments into one.

The Commission also plans to integrate its European Development Fund into the EU budget. All are set to be hot topics of conversation in the panels and on the margins of the EDD.

The successor to Cotonou will be the focus of attention on Tuesday morning (5 June) at a panel featuring DG DEVCO director-general Stefano Manservigi, alongside the foreign minister of Togo, Robert Dussey and the secretary general of the ACP, Patrick Gomes.

Who pays for financing development, meanwhile, remains an everpresent theme.

With levels of development aid stagnant at just over 0.4% of GNI, and little political appetite to hit the UN-agreed 0.7% target, the international donor community wants the private sector to plug the financing gap.

The European Commission has proposed an expansion of its European Fund for Sustainable Investment (EFSI) – which seeks to use EU budget guarantees to leverage private sector investment in development projects in the MFF – and is set to unveil its legislative proposals on 14 June.

This is a source of significant concern for many NGOs. Last month, a group of development NGOs issued an open letter to EU lawmakers expressing their concerns about EFSI.

“There are justified concerns from civil society organisations,” a senior Commission official told EURACTIV.

The European Investment Bank (EIB), which manages EFSI, has emerged as a major player in EU development policy in recent years. The Luxembourg-based EIB has promised to design its programmes to ensure equal access by women and men; and target women’s economic empowerment.

Meanwhile, the EIB’s vice-President responsible for gender, former Finnish Prime Minister Alexander Stubb, has mooted the possibility of the EIB being responsible for managing a new EU development finance institution.

Migration control, which has become a common theme linking much of the EU’s development policy, will also be a hot topic, as it becomes increasingly clear the EU will ramp up the budget for controlling its external borders and keeping migrants outside.

The International Organisation for Migration’s Deputy Director General Laura Thompson will lead a panel on women and migration on 6 June (Wednesday), and the IOM will host another debate on the reintegration of migrants in West Africa. (EurActiv 04-06-2018)

MOZAMBIQUE MAY TAKE ON DEBT TO RETURN VAT TO COMPANIES

The Mozambican government is studying the possibility of issuing internal or external debt in order to return Value Added Tax (VAT) that has been handed over by companies, especially small and medium-sized ones, to the Tax Authority, but it has been retained by the State, Mozambique’s Minister of Industry and Commerce said Tuesday in Lisbon.

Minister Ragendra de Sousa, on the sidelines of the Mozambique Investment Opportunities Forum, which is taking place this week in Portugal, told Portuguese news agency Lusa that the problem is mainly focused on small and medium-sized companies, since large companies “have the financial wherewithal to enter into a current account with the State.”

De Sousa said that the option for internal or external debt depends on the associated costs and added, “nothing prevents us from getting external resources to finance domestic debt, it is something to be studied on a case by case basis.”

The Minister of Industry and Commerce also said when asked that the amount of arrears of VAT represents between 10% and 12% of Gross Domestic Product, and mentioned a figure of almost US\$2 billion.

Mozambique’s GDP totalled US\$80.464 trillion meticaïs in 2017, about US\$13.34 billion at the current exchange rate, according to figures from the National Statistics Institute (INE).

Most direct foreign aid to the State Budget has been frozen since 2016, after it was revealed that in 2013 and 2014 the previous government contracted loans, two of which were hidden, in the amount of US\$2 billion (15% of the Gross Domestic Product of the country), and to date the country has not made it clear where most of that money went. (06-06-2018)

ITALY RAMPS UP SUPPORT FOR SOMALIA'S INFRASTRUCTURE, CONTRIBUTES €1 MILLION TO SOMALIA INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

The African Development Bank, on May 28, 2018 in Mogadishu, participated in a signing ceremony that occasioned Italy's contribution of €1 million to the Somalia Infrastructure Fund (SIF). The ceremony was witnessed by Albert Mafusire, the African Development Bank's Principal Country Economist for Somalia, who represented the Bank's Deputy Director General for East Africa and Country Manager for Somalia, Nnenna Nwabufo; the Italian Ambassador to Somalia, Carlo Campanile; and the Federal Government of Somalia's newly appointed Minister of Public Works, Reconstruction and Housing, Abdifatah Mohamed Ibrahim.

The Somalia Infrastructure Fund is a Multi-Partner Fund with the overall goal of supporting Somalia to rebuild institutions, rehabilitate key infrastructure, and reinforce economic governance. The SIF, which is administered by the African Development Bank, aims to contribute to the efforts of Somalia and its development partners to consolidate peace, establish the basic institutions of a functioning state, and to accelerate inclusive and sustainable economic recovery and development.

As a special fund, the SIF operates within the framework of the Bank's [Strategy for Addressing Fragility and Building Resilience in Africa: 2014-2019](#).

Ambassador Campanile acknowledged the Bank's efforts in investing in infrastructure in Somalia, noting that the importance of the infrastructure needs assessment studies carried out by the Bank in highlighting the needs of Somalia in key sectors, including transport, energy, and water and sanitation.

Speaking on behalf of the Federal Government of Somalia, Abdifatah Mohamed Ibrahim pledged continuity of the work started by his predecessor and promised to facilitate all efforts by the Bank and its partners in the reconstruction process. Speaking on behalf of the Bank's East Africa Regional Development and Business Delivery Office, Albert Mafusire expressed gratitude to Italy for its support and partnership in rebuilding the country's infrastructure, emphasizing the importance of infrastructure as an enabler of economic transformation.

Italy's current intervention raises its total contribution to the SIF at about US \$3.2 million and becomes the second-largest contributor to the fund after the African Development Bank. It also takes the total paid in contributions to US \$29.7 million, representing about 44% of total pledged contributions. (06-06-2018)

FRENCH GROUP ACCOR WANTS TO INVEST IN ANGOLA AGAIN

French group Accor intends to invest in hotels in Angola once again, but this time without its former partner, Angola's AAA group, with which it broke ties in February, reported Angolan newspaper Valor Economic citing a source from the Ministry of Tourism.

The group's interest was expressed by the head of Accor Hotels for Africa and the Middle East at a meeting held recently with Angolan Tourism Minister Angela Bragança in South Africa, the paper wrote. The minister, in a recent meeting with the Angolan ambassadors accredited abroad, said there were complaints from both sides, but said the French group is interested in returning to the country.

Last February, it was announced that the French group had terminated the agreement for the management of 50 hotels in Angola under the Ibis brand and presented arguments related to the difficulty of access to foreign currency and the country's economic situation.

The partnership with the Accor group covered management, operation, branding, reservations and marketing, and the AAA group was the investor and owner of the hotels.

The Accor Group, under the trade name Accor Hotels, was founded in 1967 and operates in the hotel, travel agency, catering and casino management sector and is present in 100 countries, where it manages almost 4,000 hotel units of various chains and classes. (06-06-2018)

UK EXPANDS EXPORT FINANCE APPETITE IN WEST AFRICA AS FIRST REP IN AFRICA TAKES UP OFFICE IN GHANA.

Ghana becomes the first West African country to have a representative of the world's oldest export credit agency, UK Export Finance (UKEF) stationed in-country.

Steve Gray, who will be taking up office at the British High Commission in Accra as the UKEF Country Manager, will work closely with the Department for International Trade team to strengthen trading relations between Ghana and the United Kingdom reaffirming the UK Government's ambitions for more trade with the Ghanaian market.

Through its local presence in Accra, UKEF is strategically positioned to provide competitive and innovative finance to Ghanaian and West African companies looking to do business with the UK. Further evidence that the British government is committed to growing its trade relationship with its African partners, this appointment follows the recent announcement that the UK government is increasing the export finance cover available to the Ghanaian market from £125million to £500million, as well as the decision by the export credit agency to provide loan guarantees in the local currency of Cedi – allowing for the flexibility to “buy British and pay local” and going beyond other countries' credit agencies' offerings.

Steve Gray worked in Ghana with a UK construction company from 1996-98, returning in 2011 to spearhead the development of a major private sector-led infrastructure project. He has a wealth of experience and a very extensive record working within the wider African market, in countries like the Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, South Africa, Zambia and Tanzania.

Commenting on the appointment, UK Trade Director for West Africa, Kate Rudd, said:

"The UK has a long and solid business relationship not just with Ghana, but countries across the continent. UKEF's local presence, as well as the increase in export finance cover, and the decision to provide loan guarantees in local currency demonstrates the importance the UK attaches to the further development of commercial ties between the United Kingdom and West Africa."

Steve Gray, Country Head for Ghana, said:

"British businesses have a wealth of expertise and experience to support important sectors like infrastructure, energy, transport and healthcare in West Africa, while these fast-growing and dynamic markets offer huge opportunities for UK exporters. That is why I am delighted to be joining UK Export Finance and the British High Commission's trade team in Ghana, to support our two countries' growing trade relationship."

Established in 1919, UKEF is the UK Government's Export Credit Agency, helping buyers around the world trade with UK suppliers by offering attractive financing options. Alongside long repayment terms, UKEF has the ability to support a wide range of financing structures and offers one of the most flexible local content requirements of any credit agency in the world(DevDisc. 06-06-2018)

AIRLINES TRANSFER PART OF THEIR REVENUES OBTAINED IN ANGOLA

The revenues of airlines retained in Angola due to the inability to obtain foreign currency increased from US\$500 million to US\$386 million, a step that was welcomed by the director general and chief executive of the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Alexandre de Juniac, in a statement issued in Sydney, Australia, called on the Angolan government to continue cooperating with airlines to further reduce the problem of retained earnings and recalled that the country is second on a list led by Venezuela, where revenues of US\$3.78 billion are retained.

Third place on the IATA list is occupied by Sudan, with US\$170 million, Bangladesh with US\$95 million and Zimbabwe with US\$76 million.

Airlines had US\$4.9 billion in retained revenues in 16 countries at the end of 2017, a year-on-year drop of 7.0%, with IATA reporting that Nigeria has solved the problem of retention of US\$500 million.

De Juniac said last January on the sidelines of an international civil aviation conference in Luanda that airlines had US\$540 million withheld in Angola due to the inability to obtain foreign exchange to repatriate revenues.

The IATA Chief Executive stressed at the time that the inability of airlines to repatriate their revenues may lead to them cutting Angola as a destination. (06-06-2018)

KENYA'S MOMBASA PORT BRIDGE LINKING MOMBASA SGR TERMINUS READY

Construction work on the 250 m bridge linking the port of Mombasa to the standard gauge railway Mombasa SGR terminus is complete an upgrade that will drop the use of trucks to feed goods from ships to the rail.

The bridge will connect with a 2.7 km rail extension from SGR terminus to shipping cargo dispatch bays. This will ease the use road trucks in what is expected to lower cost of transport and swiftly move goods on SGR.

According to China communication construction company, the 250 m radius bridge will be part of the 2.726 km SGR Port Relief Line that will cover 10 berths at the Mombasa Port which is currently connected to the SGR terminus via a road.

The move is aimed at facilitating easier movement of bulky and heavy goods such as clinker, steel, iron and cement into the SGR. The [Kenya Port Authority](#) have been offloading goods via cranes and transporting them via trucks to the SGR line.

The SGR freight service, started its operations December last. Since then it has struggled to find more customers despite rock bottom prices. The SGR freight service is currently charging freighters a flat fee of US \$347.7 for a 20-foot container and US \$397.4 for a 40-foot type from Mombasa to Embakasi Inland Container Depot (ICD). It also charges US \$248.38 to transport a 20-foot container and US \$298.06 for a 40-foot container from ICD to Mombasa.

New market price

[Kenya Railways](#) introduced a market price of US \$640.83 for a 20 foot container and US \$837.55 for a 40 –foot container in January and cut the fare following the reduced traffic. The move comes in the midst of a row with freighters who have defied a government directive to transport their imports via the standard gauge railway.

The bridge will therefore reduce the amount of time taken to offload goods, and upload them on the SGR for onward transportation once the entire project is complete. In order to ensure the construction quality of the girder construction, the project was equipped with experienced technical management personnel and girder construction personnel (CRO 05-06-2018)

EUROMESCO JOINT POLICY STUDY: POLITICS OF RECOGNITION AND DENIAL – MINORITIES IN THE MENA REGION

The manipulation of sectarian divides by state and non-state actors, sectarian violence, persecutions faced by various ethnic and religious groups and threats of partition that now constitute a real scenario, make the question of minorities a key issue for the balance in the MENA region. Diversity management remains a key criterion for assessing the political transitions underway in this region. The approach proposed by this publication is to highlight the political and global dimension of the concept of minority, against the current culturalist and religious interpretations.

The study is composed of three chapters. The first chapter, by Paolo Maggolini, analyses the origin and development of the concept of minority in the region. It looks at the issue of minority management and the public policies put in place in this context. The interaction between state crises and those of minorities is an essential axis of reflection.

The second chapter, by Georges Fahmi, focuses on the relationship between Christians with the Syrian regime before 2011 and after the Arab Spring. It examines different positions of members of Christian community in relation to the popular uprising, identifying the factors that influence them. The chapter examines the instrumentalization of minorities by the different actors involved (local, national, regional and international actors), as well as the consequences and the dangers that certain political initiatives implemented by Western governments may have on the integration of the populations concerned into their local environment.

The third and last chapter, by Said Bennis, analyzes the governance of cultural diversity in Morocco. The “minority” in Morocco is a numerical majority. Therefore, the management of its claims is a delicate issue. The author proposes ways of thinking about diversity management that could serve as a basis for a better integration of the various social components into new national pacts. (EEAS 05-06-2018)

[Euromesco Joint Policy Study - Politics of recognition and denial](#)

EUROMESCO POLICY BRIEF – CITIZENSHIP CHALLENGES IN THE ARAB REGION

The Arab Spring put forward a number of demands, headed by democracy, social justice and equality for all citizens. It is therefore not surprising that a number of minority groups actively participated in the uprisings, calling for end of oppression and the recognition of their rights. This is where the relationship between minorities and citizenship emerges, since equality between all citizens before the law together with the preservation of the cultural specificities of each group is at the core of the concept of citizenship. In this policy brief, Mohamed ElAgati examines the legal, political, socioeconomic and cultural challenges that the minorities faced before and after the uprisings, drawing a set of recommendations to promote the values of citizenship in the Arab world. (EEAS 05-06-2018)

[Euromesco policy brief - Citizenship challenges in the Arab region](#)

COMESA, EU SIGN DEAL TO ENHANCE ZAMBIA-MALAWI TRADE

Africa's biggest trading bloc, COMESA, has signed a financing agreement with the European Union (EU) aimed at enhancing trade facilitation between Zambia and Malawi, a state-run news agency reported on Wednesday.

The four-year 13.5 million euros agreement, signed in eastern Zambia's Chipata town, was meant to contribute to infrastructure development, improved trade, private sector development, among others at border entries of the two countries, according to the Zambia News and Information Service.

Alessandro Mariani, the head of the EU delegation in Zambia, said at the signing ceremony that the funds were part of a total envelop of 85 million euros allocated to the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) for development programs in Zambia and Malawi, which also includes good governance and the fight against climate change.

Sindiso Ngwenya, the Secretary-General of COMESA said cross border innovation plays a critical role in trade integration in the region but noted that there was need for governments to engage cross-border traders in the decision-making process for smooth implementation of policies. (Xinuhanet 05-05-2018)

ACP GROUP SET TO NEGOTIATE AS ONE IN THE NEW MODERN POST COTONOU AGREEMENT



The 107th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers was held in Lome, Togo from 29th to 30th May 2018 under the Presidency of Jamaica, at a very crucial time of the ACP-EU Relations. This meeting remains an important milestone towards opening negotiations with the countries of the Africa, Caribbean, and Pacific Group of States (ACP) and the European Union (EU). Seventy-nine countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific will speak with one voice as they prepare to adopt a negotiating mandate between the ACP and the EU post -Cotonou Agreement.

Preceding this Session of the ACP Council of Ministers is a special session of ACP Council of Ministers convened on 27th May 2018 and dedicated to Post Cotonou Negotiations. Leading up to the launch of negotiations for the post-Cotonou period in 2018, there is a clear common interest in aligning future ACP-EU cooperation to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals.

Apart from the discussions on the future of the ACP Group and its relations with the European Union, the 107th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers will address strategic matters such as repositioning the ACP group as a more effective global player in order to respond better to the needs and aspirations of its ACP Member States. Ministers will also address ways of leveraging the principles of complementarity and subsidiarity between the ACP Group and the Regional and Continental organisations, sustaining financing of the group and lastly advancing the climate change agenda in a repositioned ACP Group.

Central to the discussions in Lome is the revision of the Georgetown agreement, amendments would include:- examination of provisions such as the Preamble of the Agreement, the criteria and categories of membership in the organisation, giving close attention to the call of ACP Heads of State and Government at their Seventh Summit in 2012 for "contacts and relations with other States and groups of States" to feature prominently.

Other key items on the agenda include commodities & trade issues, sustainable economic development, and development finance.

In the margins of the 107th Session of the ACP Council of Ministers, on 26th May 2018 an inter agency consultation will be held with the Continental and Regional organisations, such as the African Union Commission (AUC), CARICOM, Pacific Island Forum (PIF). The ACP Group recognises the important and active role played by the regional and continental organisations and calls for need to preserve and built upon such collaboration in a post –Cotonou Agreement. The focus of the meeting will be to ensure the contributions of the RECS and RIOS into the ACPs Group Negotiating Framework for a post-Cotonou Agreement.

The ACP Council of Ministers is the main decision-making body of the ACP Group under the Summit of Heads of State and Government. (ACP Press)

WE WANT SEPARATE AFRICA RELATIONS WITH EU, SAYS AU CHIEF

The African Union wants to beef up its status as a political actor with the EU.

The African Union's leadership has reiterated its wish to negotiate a separate relationship with the EU as part of an overhaul of the bloc's Cotonou Agreement with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries later this year.

"We have been thinking about the coming negotiations," said Moussa Faki Mahamat, the Chadian chairman of the African Union Commission.

"We think that the African continent should be acting as a whole," he added.

Speaking alongside European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker following the ninth meeting between the EU and AU commissions in Brussels on Wednesday (23 May), Faki said that the AU wanted "to be in a position to talk to each other one continent to another."

"We have three parts – the Maghreb, Southern Africa which has an agreement with the EU, and the other members of the ACP...we would like to act as a continent as a whole," he reiterated.

EU and Africa have a unique chance to rationalise their cooperation

While 2018 is undoubtedly an important year for the European Union in terms of its own future, it is also a year for resetting its relations with developing countries and in particular with its continental neighbour on the other side of the Mediterranean, the African Union, writes James Mackie.

The AU is anxious to establish itself as a political actor. However, the organisation, whose secretariat is based in Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa, is not party to Cotonou and the EU will be negotiating with officials from the ACP.

The Cotonou pact covers a range of development-related and investment policies in the ACP, as well as migration.

The Commission wants to broker one single agreement with the ACP countries and three regional compacts, including one for Africa, that would replace the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

On Tuesday, EU development ministers discussed their mandate for Cotonou Mark 2, having delayed a decision on finalising their position until next month. The ACP are expected to finalise their stance in the summer, weeks before negotiations between the EU and ACP are due to start in August.

EU-Africa strategy: An incentive for development?

After "years of indifference" and one of the biggest waves of migration to ever hit Europe, Africa now tops the political agenda. That means a new strategy has to be found, according to the European Parliament. EURACTIV Germany reports.

The EU is also anxious to avoid the charge from African countries that it is primarily interested in using the Cotonou talks as a means to condition new financial support and investment on African countries doing more to control migration.

"Co-operation with Africa goes far beyond migration," said Juncker, who described the relationship as "a partnership between equals".

"We have been talking about migration but I wouldn't want people to think it is the only thing (on the agenda)," Juncker added.

The two sides also signed a Memorandum of Understanding on peace and security which Faki said was about "formalising arrangements that already exist" such as the ongoing missions in the Sahel region and African Union mission in Somalia. (EurAct 24-05-2018)

The Memorandum is supported by the ACP-African, Caribbean, Pacific Secretariat, Chamber of Commerce Tenerife, Corporate Council on Africa, CIP-Confederation of Portuguese Enterprises, Hellenic-African Chamber of Commerce and Development, HTTC - Hungarian Trade & Cultural Centre, NABC- Netherlands-African Business Council, SwissCham-Africa and other organisations.

The Memorandum is also made available by AHEAD-GLOBAL, BCA, Chamber of Tenerife (by posting it at the Africa Info Market), CCA - Canadian Council on Africa, CCA - Corporate Council on Africa (USA), CIP, HTTC, NABC (by posting selected news) and SwissCham-Africa to their Members.



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