



11 September 2009

Report from the SA-EU Ministerial Troika to the Summit on the implementation of the Strategic Partnership between South Africa and the European Union

Following the establishment of the SA-EU Strategic Partnership on 14 May 2007, relations between South Africa and the EU have expanded significantly, both in terms of their scope and quality of interaction. The Strategic Partnership builds on our common values and interests, its aims being to significantly enhance SA-EU relations by moving from political dialogue to active political cooperation, as well as developing stronger and sustainable cooperation in economic and other areas.

Work on implementing the Joint Action Plan has been ongoing since its adoption. The progress made is reviewed below, as well as the avenues proposed for future cooperation.

Political dialogue

Dialogue has been strengthened since the establishment of the Strategic Partnership, particularly at summit level, with the first annual SA-EU Summit having taken place on 25 July 2008 in Bordeaux, France. Also, at ministerial level, SA-EU Ministerial Troikas have been taking place twice annually since May 2007. Political dialogue has covered a wide array of issues of mutual interest, at bilateral, regional, continental and global levels.

In addition to this dialogue at political level, the first SA-EU Summit in 2008 mandated a regular peace and security dialogue between South Africa and the EU PSC in a troika format, in the framework of the EU – South Africa Strategic Partnership and in support of the joint EU/Africa Action Plan. The first meeting was held on 10 June 2009 in Brussels under the Czech EU Presidency, with its success laying the foundation for continued and increased engagement between both parties.

Cooperation in specific areas

The SA-EU Strategic Partnership Joint Action Plan (JAP) and the SA-EU Trade, Development and Cooperation Agreement (TDCA) provide the respective political and legal frameworks for dialogue and cooperation over a broad area of functional endeavours. In this regard, the SA-EU Joint Cooperation

Council (JCC), which oversees the full implementation of the TDCA, met again in Brussels at the level of senior officials on 23 July 2009. This was the tenth meeting of the JCC since the signature in 1999 of the TDCA.

The main purpose of the meeting was to take stock of progress made in implementing the TDCA and discuss the way forward on the wide range of areas where policy dialogues and cooperation have been established in the context of the EU-South Africa Strategic Partnership.

A number of expert meetings on the sidelines of the JCC took place on 22 July 2009, to take forward cooperation on issues like the environment, migration, air transport, education and training, health as well as employment and social dialogue.

To date, the following SA-EU Dialogue fora have been established, namely:

- i. Peace and Security Dialogue – First meeting of the SA-EU Political and Security Committee troika held in June 2009.
- ii. Annual Consultations (Development Cooperation) – meeting since 1994.
- iii. Joint Science and Technology Cooperation Committee (JSTCC) – meeting since 1997.
- iv. Trade Cooperation Council (TCC) – meeting since 2000.
- v. Forum on Environment and Sustainable Development – Terms of Reference (ToR) agreed to in May 2007. Meeting since 2007.
- vi. Migration Dialogue Forum (MDF) – ToR agreed to on 4 November 2008. 1st meeting held on 22 July 2009.
- vii. Health Dialogue Forum (HDF) – ToR agreed to on 4 November 2008. 1st meeting held on 22 July 2009.
- viii. Space Cooperation – ToR agreed to on 4 November 2008. 1st meeting held on 27 January 2009.
- ix. Energy Dialogue – ToR agreed to on 16 January 2009. 1st meeting of the Working Group on Coal, Clean Coal Technologies (CCT) and Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) held on 11 April 2008.
- x. Maritime Transport Forum – ToR agreed to on 16 January 2009.
- xi. Joint Parliamentary Committee – established in February 2007 and meets twice per year.

The following dialogue forums are under consideration, namely:

- i. Employment and Social Dialogue Forum (SDF) – Terms of Reference under discussion.
- ii. Customs cooperation – Terms of Reference under discussion.
- iii. Aviation Dialogue: Terms of Reference under discussion

Today we endorsed the Terms of Reference establishing the ICT Dialogue.

During the plenary session of the JCC, on 23 July 2009, senior officials took note of progress made in well established areas of cooperation. The **Development** partnership will be enhanced with a new focus on the education and health sectors, and other priorities of the new South African government with combined programmes by the European Commission in this sector amounting over € 220 million in 2009. Senior officials also explored the possibilities for future cooperation with South Africa on the advancement of Africa's development and strengthening regional integration through the new South African Development Partnership Agency.

Science and technology represents another highly relevant area, with South Africa being one of the most successful participants from outside Europe in the EU's Framework Programmes for Research. Under the current 7th Framework Programme alone, €13 million have so far been awarded through competitive calls for proposals to South African organisations for work on projects covering for example health, food and agriculture, environment, information and communication technology, space as well socio-economic science and humanities research. In addition new S&T cooperation instruments like the COST programme for short-term scientific exchanges between South Africa and Europe are also being launched. On the role of Science and Technology for poverty alleviation, South Africa and the EU are currently implementing a €30 million budget sector support programme.

The JCC underlined the overall importance attached to **climate change** and intensified its policy dialogue in this area in the run-up to the EU-South Africa Summit and the forthcoming UNFCCC Conference of the Parties in Copenhagen. Interest was expressed in a dedicated climate change programme in the context of EU development assistance. It was agreed to hold a climate change workshop in South Africa.

In the area of **trade**, progress has been made in the Additional Protocol to the TDCA and the Cheese Agreement. The Additional Protocol was implemented on 20 February 2009, thus enabling the TDCA preferences to be extended to Bulgaria and Romania. Both parties have signed the Cheese Agreement and are committed to rapid implementation.

In the context of the SADC EPA negotiations, the parties have agreed to intensify engagements in an effort to resolve the outstanding negotiation issues.

Furthermore, senior officials assessed the outcome of technical discussions and the state of play of policy dialogues and cooperation in recently established areas of cooperation. A first meeting of the **Migration** Dialogue Forum, established in 2008, was conducted on the 22nd of July 2009, addressing issues such as the fair treatment of foreign nationals, integration policies and measures against xenophobia; aspects of mutual interest related to visa; brain drain and illegal immigration.

Space was confirmed as another new area of cooperation with great potential, in particular regarding ongoing work towards the extension of the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service (EGNOS) to Southern Africa, an initiative, which will significantly enhance global navigation satellite system applications for especially air navigation in the region.

The parties also confirmed the significant potential for mutually beneficial cooperation in the area of **Aviation**. They have recognised the urgency of addressing the legal uncertainty of existing bilateral Air Services Agreements between South Africa and EU Member States. To this end, South Africa is well advanced in the process of launching an assessment of a horizontal agreement with the EU.

There is also good progress in developing concrete cooperation projects and exchanges of experience in the areas of **Statistics** and **Customs**. SARS and TAXUD have agreed on the establishment of a customs committee to oversee customs cooperation between South Africa and the EU. The parties are also discussing ways to advance policy dialogues in the fields of **Energy**, as well as the prospects for broadening the cooperation to other areas like **Education and Training, Employment and Social Affairs** and **Crime and Justice**. Both sides have also agreed to pursue collaboration on policy dialogues on global **Health**, joint tasks teams and best practice on recruitment of health professionals.

We have agreed to further encourage our respective services to continue cooperation and reinforce existing dialogues in all areas of common interest.

Overall, the wide spectrum of issues addressed and the high quality of the discussions have helped to underline the wide scope and the potential of cooperation between South Africa and the EU.