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Press Release

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European Commission adopts “European Union Strategy for Africa”

The European Commission has adopted today a proposal for a new EU Strategy for Africa. The Strategy suggests a framework for action for all EU Member States and the European Commission to support Africa’s efforts to attain the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The adoption was followed by an extraordinary joint meeting between the European Commission and the Commission of the African Union (AU).

The “EU Strategy for Africa” adopted today by the Commission proposes a strategic partnership for security and development between the EU and Africa for the coming decade. The strategy follows the decisions by the European Council in June to provide more and better development aid, to increase the speed of implementation and to focus aid in particular on Africa^[1]. The strategy focuses on key requirements for sustainable development such as peace and security, good and effective governance, trade, interconnectivity, social cohesion and environmental sustainability. In addition, it reaffirms the commitment to increase EU aid to Africa and to improve aid effectiveness.

President José Manuel Barroso stressed that “the problem of immigration, the dramatic consequences of which we are witnessing, can only be addressed effectively in the long term through an ambitious and coordinated Development cooperation to fight its root causes”. And he pointed out “*the emergence of strong regional and continental organisations and African leaders who have committed themselves to good governance and regional integration*”.

The success of this strategy will depend on the ability to improve significantly the way the EU and its Member States work together on development: It makes concrete suggestions to promote joint programming, an alignment of procedures and increasing budgetary aid. Commissioner for Development and Humanitarian Aid, Louis Michel, stressed that, “*if adopted by the Council, the EU Strategy for Africa will mark a true turning point to help Africa help itself. One of the EU’s most central challenges in Development cooperation remains to ensure a coherent and effective approach between 26 different actors, 25 Member States and the European Commission, with 26 Development policies.*”

Talking roads, railways, water and energy networks

The adoption of the strategy was followed by a joint meeting of all the European Commissioners with their African counterparts from the African Union Commission (AUC), under the chairmanship of Mr Alpha Oumar Konaré, the former president of Mali. Following an afternoon of political and technical meetings, both Commissions will adopt a Joint Declaration to reaffirm their partnership in the areas of development and security.

The “EU Strategy for Africa” proposes to launch a number of new initiatives, including an ambitious Governance Initiative and a Partnership for Infrastructure. Under the Governance Initiative, the EU will, for instance, provide support for reforms triggered by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), a unique tool for peer review and peer learning in good democratic governance by and for Africans.

And in the context of the Partnership for Infrastructure, the EU will support programmes that facilitate interconnectivity at continental level to promote regional trade, integration, stability and development.

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^[1] On 24 May 2005 and based on a proposal from the Commission, the Council established a new intermediate collective target for ODA, 0.56% of Gross National Income (GNI) by 2010, in order to reach 0.7% by 2015. By fixing the ODA collective target to a level of 0.56% by 2010, the EU will ensure additional funding of €20 billions as from that date. It was also decided that at least half of this additional funding will be dedicated to Africa.