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EU-Africa relations ahead of the EU-AU Summit:
Taking stock, looking forward

EUROPEAN INSTITUTIONS & POLICIES

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Summary

- The European Union's (EU) development policy is a broad field of activity that has undergone multiple significant modifications in both its definitions and its goals.
- The external relations of the European Union have long included development policy, resulting in an asymmetrical relationship with Africa.
- Since the turn of the century, the scope of the EU-Africa relationship has expanded to cover new challenges including climate change, terrorism, trade liberalization, and migration.
- EU development policies reveal a long-term shift in EU development priorities away from fundamental development goals and toward a wider array of ambitions, actors, and methodologies.
- Identifying and prioritizing the International Organizations on which it and its member states should best focus their diplomatic and political capital is a challenge.
- Given the political clout and relevance of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) for the continent's economic development, the EU can concentrate its efforts on encouraging its implementation by deepening its Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).
- Working together to strengthen multilateralism and support the implementation of the European Green Deal and the AfCFTA form the axis of a new articulated African agency.

Introduction

Development policy has always been an important objective and a core instrument of the European Union's external relations toolkit. There are varying opinions as to the extent to which the EU development strategy in the past was more normative and driven by the requirements of the beneficiaries[1]. However, since the 2000s, the EU has paid more attention to pursuing its own interests, albeit under the guise of "shared" interests with "partners"[2]. The EU's collaboration with the African Union (AU) began in April 2000 in Cairo at the first Africa–EU Summit[3]. Although trade and development cooperation constituted the initial focus of the partnership, these have lost their centrality over time as other issues such as peace and security, as well as migration, have taken precedence. More broadly, the EU and the African Union have no unified policy framework, and there is no single policy framework through which the EU, the African Union, and its member states collaborate on trade and development. Instead, the EU has devised a variety of economic, aid, and political partnership initiatives with AU member states: the Cotonou Partnership Agreement[4], the Post-Cotonou Agreement[5] and the Joint Africa–EU Strategy[6]. Given the importance of trade and development for AU–EU cooperation, it is important to explain structural inequalities, **especially in view of the upcoming AU–EU Summit on 17-18 February 2022**. This paper provides an overview of AU–EU trade and development relations as a contribution to this effort. It portrays the inefficiencies of the policy nexus pursued by the EU and depicts the policy debate on the issues of multilateralism, climate change, peace and security as well as migration.

"Thus, the EU's development policy gradually expanded to include, first, a group of low- and middle-income countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific; later, countries from Asia and Latin America, North Africa and the Middle East; and, finally, countries from south-eastern and eastern Europe."

European Development Policy: evolving tensions and contested transformations

The EU's development policy has colonial and postcolonial roots, as evidenced by its origins[7]. In the 1950s, predominantly French colonial administrators projected onto the EU level interests which included funding and trade privileges aimed at expanding market access and developing political clientelism[8]. Over time, many member states

[1] Del Biondo, 2015; Elgström, 2000; Farrell, 2005; Hurt, 2003
[2] Holden, 2020
[3] Within the AU–EU member states, the partnership's objective is to strengthen and promote political relations, as well as to strengthen and promote issues of mutual concern. The partnership's overall goal has been to create economic growth and development through integrating economic and trade policies.
[4] The Cotonou Partnership Agreement (CPA) was signed in Cotonou, Benin, in 2000 for a 20-year period. It is the overarching policy framework for the development of cooperation between the EU and the African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) Group – now known as the Organization of African, Caribbean, and Pacific States (OACPS). The CPA is regarded as "the world's most advanced collaboration between the EU and some of the world's poorest countries." It establishes the legal and financial foundation for the three strategic pillars of cooperation: economics and trade, political discussion, and development collaboration. The CPA focuses on poverty eradication and inclusive sustainable development between the EU and the OACPS, formerly known as the ACP, which comprises 79 member nations.
[5] Based on suggestions from the European Commission, the new partnership agreement between the EU and members of the OACPS has been partially completed and awaits approval by the Council of the European Union. This post-Cotonou accord establishes the platform for political, economic and sectoral collaboration for the next two decades. The new agreement is expected to modernize collaboration and expand the breadth and size of the EU and OACPS' aspirations to better address current and future challenges.
[6] The Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) establishes a broad, long-term political framework for continental cooperation. It was adopted in December 2007 at the second EU-AU Summit. The key goals of the joint plan are to strengthen the AU-EU political discourse, extend cooperation, and foster a people-centered partnership. It is implemented through multiannual roadmaps and action plans that are adopted following each AU-EU Heads of Government Summit.
[7] Haastrup, Mah, & Duggan, 2021
[8] Dimier, 2021; Garavini, 2012

added their own demands while remaining averse to further integrating their foreign policies. Thus, the EU's development policy gradually expanded to include, first, a group of low- and middle-income countries from Sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific; later, countries from Asia and Latin America, North Africa and the Middle East; and, finally, countries from south-eastern and eastern Europe[9]. In particular, in the 1960s, the early agreements with newly-independent republics in Sub-Saharan Africa were already partnership agreements[10]. At different periods, different policy aims have shaped these relationships. In the 1960s and 1970s, economic growth and human and social development were at the forefront of the original focus on Africa. Clientelist ties collided with postcolonial concepts of modernization and dependency-related demands for a new international economic order (NIEO) in that environment[11]. In the 1980s and 1990s, the EU generally adopted neoliberal ideals, including economic and political conditionality in its aid programs[12]. With the Maastricht Treaty of 1992, development policy became an official EU competence and emerged as a distinct policy with a robust EU-level bureaucracy, budget and policy standards governing the common policy more precisely than before[13].

"The European Consensus on Development of December 2005 was a significant step in this direction, as it laid out a single vision for development based on a set of principles and a focus on assistance effectiveness and policy coherence for development."

Since the late 1990s, EU development policy has undergone several changes, as it was deemed inadequate by international technocratic development policy standards, particularly those of the World Bank. As a result, the EU sought to revitalize its development policy and strengthen its external impact, which made it necessary for the European Commission to step up its efforts to federate the bilateral policies of its member states through the coordination of initiatives, joint standards, and common guidelines[14]. The European Consensus on Development of December 2005 was a significant step in this direction, as it laid out a single vision for development based on a set of principles and a focus on assistance effectiveness and policy coherence for development[15]. In the 2000s, the EU sought to address international development needs with foreign aid, which served as the "currency" of its global participation, partly due to a lack of other ways to shape global structures and a lack of interest or political will in other areas, including trade[16]. The EU's external effect and agency grew heavily reliant on its participation in international development, primarily when the European Commission calls on the support of member states[17]. Simultaneously, the scope of development policy was expanded--for example, by extending development financing to security and climate change, and by leveraging private investment. The EU had already spent considerable sums of foreign funds in post-conflict recovery contexts in the 1990s, but the securitization of aid increased in the early 2000s with the global war on terror[18].

Private-sector development, which had fallen out of favor in the wake of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), whose focus was on social development and eradicating extreme forms of poverty, resurfaced in the 2010s as an effective response to demands for economic growth and job creation[19]. By integrating existing blending mechanisms, the EFSD was founded in 2017 to finance the EU External Investment Plan (2016) and

[9] Grilli, 1993
[10] Del Biondo, 2020; Kotsopoulos & Mattheis, 2018
[11] Drieghe, 2020; Garavini, 2012
[12] Arts & Dickson, 2004
[13] Bergmann et. al., 2019
[14] Steingass et.al., 2021
[15] Carbone, 2009
[16] Bollen, De Ville, & Orbie, 2016; Smith, 2013
[17] Carbone, 2007
[18] Hadfield, 2007
[19] Holden, 2020

scale up private sector involvement in developing countries[20], indicating a more neoliberal or market-oriented EU development strategy[21]. The ratification of the New European Consensus on Development in 2017 signaled a shared commitment by all EU actors to every part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and to the Sustainable Development Goals. Due to opposing internal foreign and security policy objectives, these movements have led to tensions within the EU's external policies[22]. Some have attributed these tensions to a growing politicization of development policy[23]. However, it is not a political battle over international development or international collaboration among EU politicians that is driving this politicization; rather, it has become clear that foreign aid is insufficient to address both national and global concerns, which have become increasingly differentiated. Furthermore, aid budgets have come under pressure as other policy communities in the EU compete for the same resources; such competition concerns different external policy areas, such as trade or foreign and security policies, or policies with an external dimension, most notably on the environment and migration[24].

"Normative Power Europe (NPE) has long served as a definition of the EU self - its ontological identity - in EU studies. It presumes an "ideational impact of the EU's international identity/role", which is based on the EU's ability to influence what is considered normal in international affairs."

African Agency as a challenge to Normative Power Europe

Normative Power Europe (NPE) has long served as a definition of the EU self – its ontological identity – in EU studies. It presumes an "ideational impact of the EU's international identity/role"[25], which is based on the EU's ability to influence what is considered normal in international affairs[26]. The EU pursues foreign relations in order to bring others closer to its own vision of how the world works and should work[27]. NPE has a significant impact on the formulation of EU foreign policy actions[28], notably toward Africa[29]. It constructs the EU's identity as well as the identities of the EU's others in ways that allow EU actors to overlook their own shortcomings; as a result, NPE is linked to the EU's sense of self. An "asymmetrical" EU-Africa relationship has its roots in a coloniality of power which articulates colonial mentalities, psychologies and worldviews into the so-called "postcolonial era", while highlighting social hierarchical systems of exploitation and dominance. It has its origins in centuries of European colonial expansion, but it is still being perpetuated today through cultural, social, and political power dynamics. The desire to reconfigure Africa–EU ties has been based on this coloniality of power. However, with the need for a less hierarchical partnership, as well as shifts in African interests and international partnerships over the last two decades, which have allowed for the growth of African agency, the EU's ontological security has been called into question from the outside. Internal political and policy fragilities are increasing the external problem. This paper argues that such threats to the EU's ontological security, as well as the EU's response to these threats, will have major consequences for the future of EU-Africa ties.

[20] This Fund should be able to leverage up to €44 billion in investment projects with a budget of €4.4 billion.
[21] Holden 2020
[22] Beringer, Maier, & Thiel, 2020
[23] Hackenesch, Bergmann, & Orbie, 2021a
[24] Furness & al., 2020; Smith, 2013
[25] Manners, 2002, p. 238
[26] Manners, 2002, p. 240
[27] Diez, 2013
[28] Haastrup, 2020
[29] Staeger, 2016

Joint Africa Europe Strategy (JAES)[30]

The unilateral EU Strategy for Africa established a new pledge in 2005 to move away from a donor-recipient mentality and toward a relationship based on equality, ownership, and cooperation. These ideas were not innovative in and of themselves. Nonetheless, when the Strategy was released in 2005, it looked to signal a significant rhetorical shift in the relationship, preparing the way for the current state of affairs. The 2005 EU-Africa Strategy was significant because it explicitly recognized that the disparities in interactions between the EU and African countries had harmed their relationship. Following Lomé IV, it was expected that its successor would allow the African side to state its priorities more clearly and take greater control of the collaboration[31]. The Cotonou Agreement, signed in 2000, was hailed as a new foundation for steering away from an imbalanced partnership. The fact that the 2005 Strategy was developed so soon after Cotonou suggested that the 2000 agreement had failed to deliver on its promise of greater African agency. The relationship's ramifications effectively ensured that the Treaty of Rome's promises of economic and social development remained unmet. The 2005 Strategy acknowledged the problematic impact of asymmetric relationships on the cognitive and material aspects of the relationship between the EU and African countries, and presented a theoretical path to emancipation. It also emphasized the fact that Africa had a new collective representative: namely, the African Union (AU).

"The 2005 Strategy acknowledged the problematic impact of asymmetric relationships on the cognitive and material aspects of the relationship between the EU and African countries, and presented a theoretical path to emancipation. It also emphasized the fact that Africa had a new collective representative: namely, the African Union (AU)."

Under the ACP framework, the basic problems of EU-Africa cooperation were addressed in the 2005 Strategy. However, because it was developed without consultation with African actors, the Strategy was widely criticized by African political elites as an illegitimate premise for change. While the power imbalances between the EU and Africa were acknowledged, the will to change them was seen as lacking on the part of more powerful actors. Since the African side was included in the drafting process, the 2007 Joint Africa-EU Strategy was the first agreement in which Africans had a "contribution of equals" on paper[32]. It signaled a more ambitious EU external relations strategy in Africa, as well as a more ambitious African foreign policy. African elites sought to use the AU and assert the continent's interests through the articulation of agency within the JAES[33]. Thus, the JAES has laid the groundwork for a true partnership of equals and its promise for African agency, but most EU–Africa ties have been formed outside of it. The EU has insisted on the ACP's previous arrangement as the basis for the partnership. In this sense, the EU has made it easier to keep the unbalanced status quo, while significant transformation in existing power structures remained elusive.

[30] The second EU–Africa summit, which resulted in the endorsement of the Joint Africa–EU Strategy, took place in Lisbon in December 2007. Based on agreements between the European Commission, the African Union Commission, and European and African member states, the JAES was "a strategy with Africa, rather than a plan for Africa." Its goal was to end the "outdated, threadbare relationship of 'giver' and beneficiary." Words like 'partnership,' 'common, 'shared,' 'unity,' and 'joint' figured more heavily in the JAES texts than in prior documents on EU–Africa relations.

[31] In addition, the Lomé IV Convention was approved in 1995 and covered additional areas of involvement, such as democracy and good governance, private sector development, gender equality, and human rights advocacy.

[32] Hurt, 2003

[33] Haastrup, 2020

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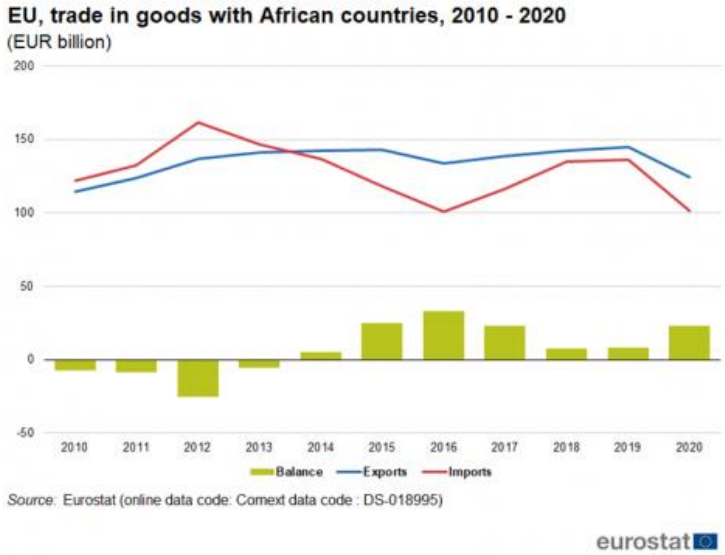

Figure 1. EU, trade in goods with African countries, 2010-2020 (EUR billion)
Source: Eurostat

Trade

The economic relationship between the EU and the group of African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries, with its focus on aid for economic growth, poverty alleviation, and commerce, was the subject of most of the early writing on EU–Africa ties. There was less focus on the new African institutions formed to articulate African agency and represent African interests in diverse international politics activities. The message was clear: Africa can only serve one role, be it through its states or its institution: that of a recipient of international relations norms, rather than an active participant[34]. The Cotonou Agreement[35] served as the overarching framework for trade, aid, and development cooperation between the EU and the 79-member ACP group of countries, including the 55 members of the African Union. Cotonou replaced Lomé's non-reciprocity-based trade regime with Economic Partnership Agreements. These agreements were marketed as "development instruments" that would help ACP countries achieve economic growth and attract foreign investment, while also establishing new trade arrangements compatible with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) free-market rules. The trade system was skewed to favor the EU, which used Africa to market its industrial exports[36]. Decades later, the relative importance of both exports from Sub-Saharan Africa to the EU and imports from the EU to Sub-Saharan Africa has decreased. In 2000, the EU received 35.5% of Sub-Saharan Africa's total exports, but this had dropped to 22.9% by 2018. Similarly, in 2000, Sub-Saharan Africa purchased 30.6% of its total imports from the EU, but that figure had fallen to 21.3% in 2018[37]. Worse, the trajectory of European imports is crumbling: they amounted for 6.6 percent of overall imports in 1980, 3.2 percent in 1990, and less than 1% in 2019[38]. Still, the EU was Africa's top trade partner in 2020, accounting for 28% of both exports and imports, as depicted in **Figure 2**.

[34] Haastrup, 2020
[35] According to Article 19 of the agreement, the key goals of Cotonou are: "poverty reduction and eventually eradication; sustainable development; and progressive integration of the ACP countries into the world economy." The attainment of economic growth and job and employment creation, the expansion of the private sector, and the promotion of regional integration are all listed as primary goals in Article 20 of the agreement.
[36] Makhan, 2009
[37] Hurt, 2020
[38] Kappel, 2021

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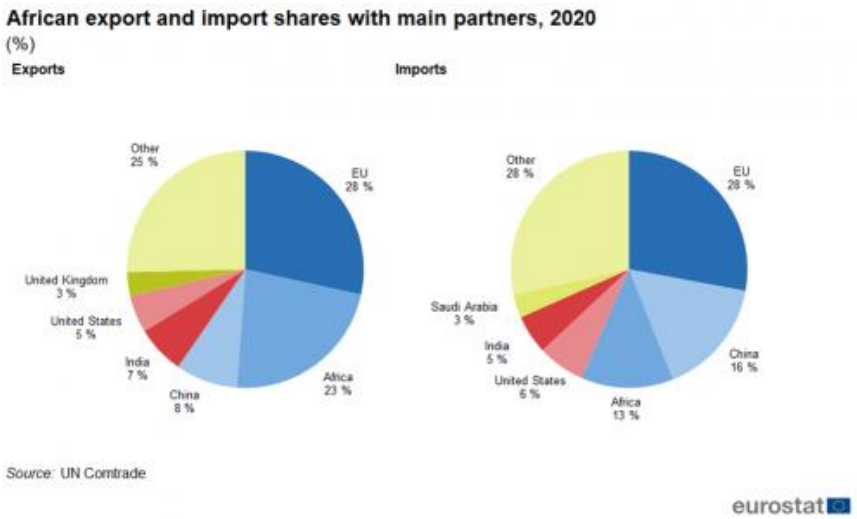

Figure 2. African export and import shares with main partners, 2020 (%)
Source: UN Comtrade

One of the AU's objectives was to provide a voice for the continent in its engagements with external actors[39], especially on matters such as trade. The AU recognized eight Regional Economic Communities (RECs) throughout Africa, as recommended by the Abuja Treaty of 1991[40], as building blocks towards the development of an African Economic Community by 2028. This policy encapsulates Africa's ambition for regional integration as an alternative path to Africa's growth. In an effort to champion a common Africa-EU policy framework, the Joint-Africa EU strategy (JAES) was launched at the AU-EU Summit in 2007 to dilute the criticisms aimed at the EU's Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs). The JAES, on the other hand, was absorbed into the EU-ACP framework, which was similarly sized. Despite the fact that the JAES attempted to disrupt donor-recipient dynamics by rejecting the fragmented EPAs imposed by the EU and not based on the AU's REC structures, the JAES failed to achieve its goal[41]. The EU proceeded to negotiate interim EPAs with smaller Southern African nations while the JAES was being discussed, directly undercutting the Joint Strategy's ambitions for regional integration. According to MacDonald, Lande, and Matanda, the EU threatened African governments with the loss of preferential treatment received since the Lomé Convention in the event of negotiations leading nowhere.[42]

Despite the benefits, most African countries openly opposed the negotiations, defying the AU's tacit support for the EPAs. While Ghana and Ivory Coast were eager to sign, Nigeria warned that EPAs would stifle development and jeopardize jobs. Kenya, East Africa's largest economy, has been a vocal opponent of EPAs, while in the SADC, Botswana, Namibia, and Swaziland have been vocal opponents of the agreements. Cameroon led the campaign against EPAs in Central Africa[43]. As a result, the AU has become a feeble and ineffective interlocutor. The idea that the EU was mindful of this alarming development but passively watched on as it came to pass was not only an

[39] African Union, 2019
[40] Other subregional groupings, such as the West African Economic and Monetary Union and the Manor River Union within ECOWAS, and the Southern Africa Customs Union within SADC, to name a few, exist in addition to these recognized RECs.
[41] Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are regional confederations of African countries. The RECs have evolved independently, with distinct responsibilities and structures. The RECs' overall goal is to facilitate regional economic integration between members of specific regions and through the African Economic Community (AEC), which was founded under the Abuja Treaty (1991).
[42] MacDonald, Lande, and Matanda 2013
[43] European Commission, 2017b

"The redivision of Africa into EPA groupings also stripped regions of the cohesion required to convey a unified voice, as well as establishing a complicated and intertwined web of RECs and eroding regional integration in Africa."

indictment of the continental body, but it was also a glaring testament to its waning prowess as a mediator between Africa and the EU. Surprisingly, the existence of these RECs only served to complicate, and in some cases obstruct, efforts in Africa to achieve quick regional integration, as the EPA negotiation groups in Africa did not conform to the African Union's five conventional geographic regions[44]. The redivision of Africa into EPA groupings also stripped regions of the cohesion required to convey a unified voice, as well as establishing a complicated and intertwined web of RECs and eroding regional integration in Africa. According to Nunn and Price, the EU embraced an interventionist strategy based on free trade and neoliberal dogma, forcing ACP members to give up key aspects of their policy autonomy and economic philosophies. Some have gone so far as to accuse the EPAs of being a "divide and conquer" strategy designed to allow Europe to control Africa's trade, stifle African industrialization by favoring the production of primarily agricultural items and maintain the asymmetric nature of Africa-EU trade relations.

Development Aid

"On the surface, the EU appears to be generous in supporting Africa's development. In specific ways, EU support to Africa aligns with Brussels' broader goals as these are outlined in the Cotonou Agreement: namely, poverty alleviation and development."

Historically, the European Union has been a critical donor to Africa's development. The European Development Fund (EDF) constitutes the most important source of EU aid to Africa, though funding has dwindled since the end of the Cold War. African nations accounted for 12 of the top 15 EU Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipients from the EDF in 1988–1989. Only six African nations were among the EU's top 15 assistance recipients in 2008–2009, twenty years later[45]. Between 2010 and 2013, France contributed an average of $3,979 million to Africa, accounting for 13% of total net bilateral disbursements; the United Kingdom contributed $3,592 million, accounting for 12%; and Germany contributed $2,885 million, accounting for 8%[46]. Between 2010 and 2012, the social sector--including education, health, water, sanitation, social infrastructure, and services--received 40% of overall EU funding. The economic sector[47] received 20% of overall EU support to Africa, while production received 10%. In this perspective, it is worth remembering that the EU, the US, and China contributed more than half of the AU's $277 million operational budget in 2013, with the remaining funds coming almost entirely from five AU members: Algeria, Egypt, Libya, Nigeria, and South Africa. In addition, the EU provided €40 million in development aid in 2011 for three project areas--agriculture, environment, and climate change, with the disbursement spread out over four years until 2015[48]. Infrastructure (€10 million) and science and technology (€14 million) are other areas that have benefited from the EDF since 2011[49].

On the surface, the EU appears to be generous in supporting Africa's development. In specific ways, EU support to Africa aligns with Brussels' broader goals as these are outlined in the Cotonou Agreement: namely, poverty alleviation and development. Cotonou's goals were also congruent with helping Africa meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Indeed, the widely publicized 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and subsequent 2008 Accra Agenda for Action, contained policies aimed at maximizing the positive impact of development assistance on recipient countries, while

[44] For example, the EPA for West Africa includes Mauritania in North Africa. Meanwhile, six SADC countries--Tanzania, Madagascar, Mauritius, Seychelles, Zimbabwe, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)--have been separated into three independent negotiation regions: the EAC, Eastern and Southern Africa, and Central Africa. This has made it difficult for the SADC's 15 members to agree on the collaboration agreements.
[45] Akokpari, 2017
[46] Akokpari, 2017
[47] Transport and communications, energy, and banking
[48] Africa-EU Partnership, 2017
[49] Africa-EU Partnership, 2017

also speeding up Africa's development and poverty reduction. The Paris Declaration highlighted the need for the EU to properly organize and administer multilateral and bilateral aid, and to provide African governments with a sense of ownership over aid that has been delivered. In practice, however, the EU assistance policy has followed the old familiar pattern of unbalanced donor-recipient relationships. This can be seen *inter alia* in the aid allocation procedure and criteria. Historically, the EU has been hesitant to surrender authority over assistance decisions. Even in the aftermath of the Paris Declaration[50] and the Accra Agenda[51], the EU has retained substantial ownership and control over aid initiatives, while the recipient ownership principle has neither supplanted nor replaced complex conditionalities that still apply to EU aid. Moreover, analysts have criticized the criteria used by the EU to allocate aid in Africa, which result in aid darlings such as Burkina Faso, Ghana, Mozambique, Rwanda and Zambia benefitting from preferential EU funding, while aid orphans, such as Burundi, the Central African Republic, Chad, and Guinea Bissau, go hungry.

"In effect, country strategic papers serve as the governing frameworks for EU development aid. However, critics have pointed out that, in practice, the national strategic documents reflect the interests of donors represented by EU delegates, rather than the interests of recipients."

Proposals to disburse aid to African countries are always preceded by the drafting of country strategic papers. These documents, which are prepared by EU delegations in partnership with recipient governments and local actors, highlight recipients' needs and specify EU intervention and implementation timeframes. In effect, country strategic papers serve as the governing frameworks for EU development aid. However, critics have pointed out that, in practice, the national strategic documents reflect the interests of donors represented by EU delegates, rather than the interests of recipients[52]. In that respect, civil society organizations have pointed out that the EU's transportation support has tended to focus on "main structuring highways rather than roads in and going to rural regions, which would have a bigger impact on rural poverty"[53]. Indeed, most country strategic papers for ACP countries in Sub-Saharan Africa are prepared without the participation of recipient governments. In short, despite the constant rhetoric about "partnership", EU development aid to Africa has tended to promote the specific interests of contributors. Indeed, one observer has even questioned "the appropriateness of using the term 'partnership' rather than, for example, a principal-agent relationship" in light of the unequal management of development aid policies[54].

Peace and security

Despite the narrative of "partnership among equals", in the sphere of peace and security, the asymmetries are pretty significant. African partners' reliance on foreign financing has been cited as one of the significant concerns jeopardizing the continent's efforts to give "African answers to African challenges". The EU is the AU's second most important financial partner in terms of peace and security. The EU contributed around €2.9 billion in financial assistance to the APSA[55] through the APF[56] between 2004 and 2019[57], with peace support operations receiving the majority of funding, as depicted in

[50] The Paris Declaration (2005) is a practical, action-oriented plan for improving aid quality and development impact. It develops a monitoring framework to analyze progress and guarantee that donors and beneficiaries hold each other accountable for their pledges.
[51] The Accra Agenda for Action (AAA, 2008) takes stock of progress and sets the agenda for achieving the Paris objectives sooner. It was created to reinforce and deepen the implementation of the Paris Declaration.
[52] Carbone, 2021
[53] Carbone, 2009
[54] Makhan, 2009
[55] Haastrup, 2020
[56] The APF is one of the cornerstones of AU–EU cooperation and has three goals: improved discussion, operationalizing the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), and underpinning peace-support missions in Africa.
[57] Mackie, 2019

"In line with the previous developments, the development of a European Peace Facility (EPF) tends to undermine the AU's role in the long term, as the EU can embark on direct military cooperation with African nations and regional organizations. EPF resources can be also utilized outside the African continent due to their global character, with no money designated explicitly for Africa."

Figure 3. However, the African Union's institutions have demonstrated a limited capacity for absorbing foreign funds[58], impeding the efficient delivery of the AU's objectives. This financial mismatch is exacerbated by the AU's inability to secure large co-funds to match EU funding. In line with the previous developments, the development of a European Peace Facility (EPF) tends to undermine the AU's role in the long term, as the EU can embark on direct military cooperation with African nations and regional organizations. EPF resources can be also utilized outside the African continent due to their global character, with no money designated explicitly for Africa. The AU's inability to bargain to achieve its preferences constitutes an additional imbalance. Thus, in 2011, Africans lobbied for an African solution in Libya, but met with opposition from the EU delegation to the AU and from Brussels. Many AU diplomats and policymakers saw this as an insult to their organization's authority in Africa. This asymmetricality can also be seen in the EU's desire to modernize African security, where it consistently fails to consider the context and local demands while developing its African security agenda, opting instead for unachievable long-term objectives.

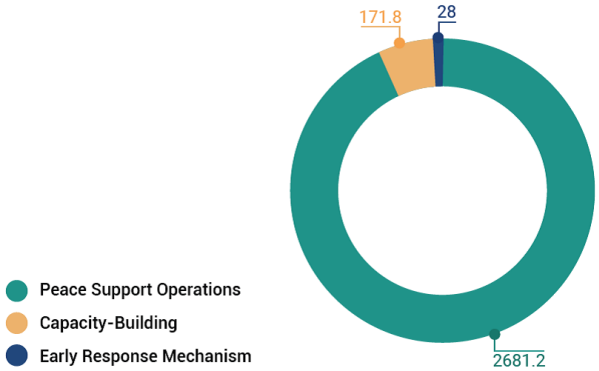

Figure 3. APF contracted amounts per type of activity, 2004–2019 (in million euro)
Source: European Commission, African Peace Facility. Annual Report 2019 (Luxembourg: Publications, Office of the European Union, 2020), 10

Migration

The 2015 surge of refugees/migrants into Europe from Africa fed into European rhetoric about the "migration crisis" with far-reaching implications, including the introduction of various policies related to migration, development, and security. **The EU-Africa Valletta Summit in Malta in 2015** served as a critical juncture in the migration-development-security nexus, with the formal inauguration of the "European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Stability and Addressing Root Causes of Irregular Migration and Displacement in Africa" (EUTF for Africa)[59]. Since 2016, the EUTF for Africa has funded a wide range of projects involving assistance conditioning[60]. The main non-governmental development organizations' (NGDOs) narrative has centered on how the EUTF was designed to serve the EU's self-interest, where "the focus on border controls and security hampers the attainment of the EU's global development objectives", particularly poverty reduction and respect for human rights[61]. The less than €2 billion agreed at the time was portrayed as insufficient to address the root causes of forced displacement and migration,

[58] The African Union obtains 67% of its assessed contributions from member nations every year. However, on average, 30 member nations default, either partially or totally, each year.
[59] Council of the European Union, 2015
[60] These include the training of police, border guards, and intelligence services, as well as the biometric identification of African nationals, which allows for the future tracing of possible terrorists, traffickers, and "undesirables".
[61] Caritas, 2017

"The main non-governmental development organizations' (NGDOs) narrative has centered on how the EUTF was designed to serve the EU's self-interest, where "the focus on border controls and security hampers the attainment of the EU's global development objectives", particularly poverty reduction and respect for human rights."

especially when spread across 26 countries. The majority of the projects also appeared to violate the principle of aid channeling through recipient country systems[62]. With little consultation with local actors, projects reflecting EU goals were created in Brussels and member state capitals. NGDOs have also pointed out instances where EUTF money has harmed people: for example, assistance afforded to Libyan authorities has fueled "human trafficking and arbitrary incarceration of refugees in horrible and deadly conditions"[63]. In all, Oxfam's detailed analysis of the EUTF's projects found that more than a quarter of the fund's resources had been spent on migration management projects with little development impact, and that traditional development projects were frequently used as leverage to persuade countries to agree to return and readmission[64].

Policy nexuses in the EU-AU relationship

Key governments in the global North, along with shifts in central international organizations, led by the United Nations, and prompted by the emergence of performance indicators like the Millennium Development Goals, witnessed broad, cross-policy support for the theme of "sustainable development". While poverty eradication constituted a moral imperative for the EU, it was no longer a prerequisite for a range of international goals, thus empowering the EU to construct "a more peaceful, prosperous, and equitable world", weakening development's overall autonomy as a policy and integrating it in the EU's broader policy toolkit. **The Treaty on European Union of 2009**[65] codified this change by stating that development policy must be conducted within the context of the EU's external relations[66]. Austerity-driven demands also framed Lisbon's implementation, leading to the streamlined methodology of the Comprehensive Approach[67], in which aid budgets were redirected to reflect broader concerns[68]. Both **the 2011 Agenda for Change (AfC)** and **the 2017 New European Consensus on Development** reflected this shift toward more global-oriented strategies and the increased use of identifiable nexuses between key external policies – specifically neighborhood, security, and migration[69]. The EU has moved away from emphasizing developing-country benefits as the goal of development cooperation and toward the pursuit of "mutual benefit" presenting its self-interest as a donor and the needs of development cooperation recipients as two legitimate and concurrently attainable goals of development cooperation[70]. However, the shift to mainstreaming or integrating development into other policy areas has exacerbated he politicization, monetization, and securitization of EU policies[71], resulting in the EU becoming a less distinct regional and global development actor.

[62] Szent-Ivanyi , 2021
[63] Oxfam 2020b
[64] Oxfam, 2020a
[65] The Lisbon Treaty defines development policy as a shared responsibility between the EU and member states, with "the reduction of poverty, and, in the long run, the eradication of poverty" as the ultimate goal (Art. 208 TFEU).
[66] Sherriff, 2019, p.17 In the first decade of the new millennium, the Lisbon Treaty represents the times, attempting to respond to growing security threats and globalization, both of which «tested the conventional boundaries between external and domestic issues».
[67] Bergmann et al., 2019, p. 548
[68] Orbie, 2012 pp.22
[69] European Commission, 2017a
[70] Keijzer and Lundsgaarde, 2018
[71] Delputte and Orbie, 2020

a) The Security-Development Nexus

"The EU has moved away from emphasizing developing-country benefits as the goal of development cooperation and toward the pursuit of "mutual benefit" presenting its self-interest as a donor and the needs of development cooperation recipients as two legitimate and concurrently attainable goals of development cooperation."

In the 2005 ECD, migration was not regarded as a critical aspect of development; however, by the 2017 ECD, it was regarded as a critical theme intimately linked to poverty, political instability, and social insecurity[72]. Policymakers in member states urged the EU to use its diplomatic influence, and its development resources, for broader political purposes. Hence, directives from member state governments conditioned aid disbursement on cooperation on migration and security, especially as governments began to pay more attention to where their money was going[73]. In line with the developments of the Lisbon Treaty, many of the actors involved in the "**Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel**"[74] intentionally used it as a "laboratory of experimentation" to reconfigure EU external action and emphasize a security-development policy nexus predicated on the notion that security is a requirement for development[75]. Following the implementation of the 2011 Sahel Strategy, which placed a strong focus on the security-development nexus, the EU established and restructured a number of initiatives to address the region's unpredictable security situation. The new security-related objectives proposed in the financial envelope for the Sahel within the 11th European Development Fund, through which the EU has allocated almost €2.6 billion to the five Sahelian governments and regional initiatives, were clear evidence of this[76]. After the 2015 refugee crisis, the EU extended the mandate of EUCAP Sahel Niger in March 2015, adding support for Nigerien authorities "in preventing irregular immigration and combating associated crimes" to its list of obligations[77].

Thus, the evolution of the EU's Sahel policy is understood as a "foreign policy entrapment cycle" in which path dependencies and lock-in effects have amplified existing narratives of the security-development nexus, making the adoption of an approach grounded more strongly on development policy solutions less feasible[78]. The EU has developed a status quo bias by adopting a security-focused approach to the area in both its rhetoric and policy, which reinforces the already enormous hurdles of moving off an established path. A "troubled regionalization strategy" molded by the EU's determination to foster and support the G5 Sahel as a regional organization is a path dependence inherent in the EU's approach[79]. The EU has effectively prevented ECOWAS from playing a key role in supporting peace and stability in the region by relying on the G5 Sahel to fill the regional security vacuum left by ECOWAS' failure to provide a regional response to the 2012 Mali crisis[80]. The general policy thrust of ensuring a security-

[72] Furness & Gänzle, 2017; Keukeleire & Raube, 2013

[73] The 2018 DAC peer review encouraged the EU to consider this broader conflict. According to the report, "cross-policy responses to global risks are promoted in the EU Global Strategy, which recognizes that peace is linked to prosperity and inclusion [..., but] linking development cooperation with migration increases the risk of allocating development funds based on migration patterns, diluting the focus on development objectives"[73].

[74] It focuses on four main points: (a) It connects security and development, emphasizing the importance of security for the growth of Sahelian economies; (b) It advocates for more regional cooperation in the Sahel, assigning a potential supporting role to the EU; (c) It asks for the development of capability and security and development cooperation; (d) It emphasizes the EU's critical role in promoting economic development and creating a safe environment.

[75] Security threats, for example, put "European and international development cooperation operations in jeopardy," according to a 2011 EU Council meeting.

[76] Pichon, 2020

[77] Pichon, 2020

[78] Plank & Bergmann, 2021

[79] Venturi, 2018

[80] According to the EU's Sahel Regional Action Plan 2015–2020, the G5 Sahel is the region's primary partner, with the AU or ECOWAS playing a supporting role only "outside the five Sahel countries." In other words, the EU has tied the success of its involvement to the performance of a newly formed regional organization that had to build its capacity for regional security and development from the ground up when it was established in 2014.

development nexus is accelerated and consolidated by lock-in effects, making alternative policies impossible. In the case of the EU's Sahel policy, both internal and external influences have influenced these lock-in consequences. Internally, France has been a driving force behind the EU's participation in the region since 2012, pushing for broader and deeper EU involvement as well as seeking to 'Europeanize' its own operations in the Sahel[81]. A second internal factor is the inter-institutional competition that has intensified lock-in effects within EU entities, as explained above.

"Thus, the evolution of the EU's Sahel policy is understood as a "foreign policy entrapment cycle" in which path dependencies and lock-in effects have amplified existing narratives of the security-development nexus, making the adoption of an approach grounded more strongly on development policy solutions less feasible."

b) The Trade-Development Nexus

As the December 2007 deadline for the conclusion of the EPAs set by Cotonou drew nearer, it became evident that none of the African configurations would be able to reach comprehensive agreements with the EU on a regional basis. On core concerns like market access, supporting policies, and financial resources needed to enhance ACP capacities, progress has been slow. Regional integration and growth, according to some observers, were clearly no longer among the EPAs' top concerns. Instead, it seemed that the primary goal was to achieve the WTO compatibility criteria as soon as possible. Much of the focus of the European Commission (EC) on trade liberalization during the discussions for the Cotonou Agreement appears to have centered on the need to secure broad and regional EPAs between the EU and the ACP. ACP negotiators and stakeholders, on the other hand, expressed major concerns about the development dimension of the EPAs on numerous occasions, and called for the EU to be more flexible on critical topics such as trade liberalization and development assistance[82]. They emphasized that the liberalisation process and assistance should be properly scheduled for both the EPA negotiation and implementation, so that the ACP could prepare for the discussions after 2007 and confront the adjustment costs and obstacles as they emerged. As a result, for most of the negotiating process and in relation to the development dimension of the EPAs, the lack of responsiveness and flexibility demonstrated by the European Commission's unwillingness to tolerate several of the major concerns of ACP countries and regions concerning, for example, the interpretation of Article XXIV of the GATT[83] or the comprehensive character of the agreements, arguably stymied the EPA's developmental value in the eyes of the ACP.

However, it is hard to overlook that this blueprint came at a time when EU policymakers were becoming increasingly enthusiastic about promoting neoliberal development principles, particularly regional integration, on the international stage[84]. From the mid-1980s onwards, elements of neoliberal policy conditionality began to creep into EU–ACP development cooperation[85]. However, this was primarily in relation to EDF resources, with the centerpiece of Lomé – non-reciprocal market access – largely immune to these early reform pressures. Indeed, EU policymakers intended to establish reciprocity for exactly this reason, believing that greater exposure to global market pressures would help to promote those types of policy reform that would encourage economic development and diversification[86]. In line with the previous analysis, while EU is content

[81] France was a driving force behind the formation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force, as well as military cooperation between the French Operation Barkhane and Sahelian troops. Furthermore, France campaigned for the creation of the Sahel Alliance as a primary donor-coordinating platform for nations involved in the region, including Germany and the European Commission, and has been the driving force behind the Coalition for the Sahel.
[82] Makhan, 2009
[83] The ACP nations have requested additional flexibility in the European Commission's interpretations of Article XXIV of the GATT, advocating for a narrower scope of liberalization and lengthier transition periods.
[84] Heron and Murray-Evans, 2018
[85] Brown 2004
[86] Heron and Murray-Evans, 2018

about achieving the goal of trade liberalization by implementing the EPAs, the goal of its development policy and especially poverty reduction is being questioned as stipulated by recent evidence. In particular, despite the slight changes in employment, our simulations imply that job losses of 18,000 jobs in SADC, 85,000 jobs in the EAC, and 210,000 jobs in ECOWAS are feasible when compared to the International Labour Organization employment data[87]. In addition, workers in industrial sectors and, potentially, households that rely disproportionately on social payments and public services are the socioeconomic categories most affected by trade liberalization. This is in stark contrast to both African partner countries' expectations and the EU's commitment to fostering sustainable economic development in the Global South, as expressed explicitly in both the new European Consensus on Development and the Treaty on the European Union.

"Energy policy, on the other hand (being a fundamental EU shared competence), focuses on liberalizing markets and increasing market access for EU energy companies, particularly those with expertise in energy transition. This can cause issues in relations with developing nations, since the EU may appear to be pursuing multiple agendas at once, some of which view energy as a public good, while others prioritize energy as a tradeable commodity."

c) Climate Change-Development nexus

In terms of a broader integration approach, significant publications underline the human security implications of climate change[88]. Thus, the climate-development nexus is linked to other nexuses due to its tendency to increase conflict or force migration. This is unsurprising, given that sustainable development is a concept that cuts across all sectors. However, it is obvious how the poverty reduction framing could be lost here, especially if policy sectors like migration and energy are just linked to internal politicized issues. While the 2017 Consensus stipulates that international aims should match the EU's central domestic policies, this becomes more challenging when looking at measures within the borders of the EU. For example, the 2017 Consensus states that "supporting Africa and the EU's neighborhood in this energy transition will be part of the enabling framework for the EU's energy Union" in terms of "the scale of financial investment needed to bring about universal access to safe and clean energy services"[89]. Energy policy, on the other hand (being a fundamental EU shared competence), focuses on liberalizing markets and increasing market access for EU energy companies, particularly those with expertise in energy transition[90]. This can cause issues in relations with developing nations, since the EU may appear to be pursuing multiple agendas at once, some of which view energy as a public good, while others prioritize energy as a tradeable commodity.

For example, EU energy diplomacy strives to hasten the global energy transition while maintaining affordability, protecting the environment, and reaching the sustainable development goals. In order to achieve this, EU energy diplomacy will encourage energy efficiency, the deployment of safe and sustainable low-carbon technology, increased uptake, and system integration. There is also a strategy to gradually phase out fossil fuels. The task is to integrate energy diplomacy and climate diplomacy: because of the difficulty of combining these priorities with the broader goal of sustainable development, there is a risk that the specific focus on poverty will move farther down the priority list as domestic climate considerations take precedence over external development goals. The European Green Deal, which represents both the EU's new post-pandemic growth strategy and a goal to make Europe the world's first climate-neutral continent by 2050, provides more examples of the implicit blurring of internal and external policies in the explicit use of nexuses. The link between climate diplomacy, which has a relatively clearly defined framework for external action, and energy diplomacy, which does not, will be critical[91]. The goal is for the EU to engage with this

[87] Tröster et. Al., 2020
[88] De Roeck et al., 2016
[89] European Commission, 2017a, p. 24
[90] Kuzemko & Hadfield, 2016
[91] Hadfield & Lightfoot, 2021

"…because of the difficulty of combining these priorities with the broader goal of sustainable development, there is a risk that the specific focus on poverty will move farther down the priority list as domestic climate considerations take precedence over external development goals."

new phase of Green Deal diplomacy with all the resources available to it, from trade policy and technical support to capacity building, development cooperation, and crisis management where necessary[92]. The EU will use its political and economic influence, expertise, and financial resources to combat climate change under this so-called "Team Europe" strategy[93] and thus satisfy its energy demands[94] by promoting renewable energy, supporting green transitions--especially in fossil-fuel-dependent countries--, and green energy trading[95].

While stressing the importance of all EU efforts and policies to assist a successful and just transition to a sustainable future, the Commission recommends a vague and programmatic "do no harm concept"[96]. While EU rhetoric focuses on defining an entirely new partnership agenda with developing countries, the reality is that "some promising ideas [...] will need to be followed by actions and diplomatic efforts to persuade partners that an external action in support of the Green Deal is in their mutual interest"[97]. There is criticism, for example, that the Green Deal is primarily a European agenda focused on climate mitigation, but the African Union's Agenda 2063 prioritizes poverty reduction, climate adaptation, and job creation[98]. And, despite Africa's political commitments to reduce CO2 emissions in the energy sector[99], some African countries still rely substantially on fossil fuels for both internal consumption and exports. Oil and gas, for example, account for more than 80% of the total export revenue of both Nigeria and Angola, whereas coal accounts for more than 90% of energy production in South Africa and Botswana. Furthermore, Algeria and Libya send about 60% of their fossil fuels to the EU, so the EU's decarbonization efforts will severely impact their economies. Furthermore, nations like Kenya and Niger have recently made large oil, gas, or coal discoveries, and demanding that these treasures not be exploited is politically problematic. A closer examination of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) reveals that their climate financing and investment activities are almost entirely focused on mitigation projects[100]. As resources and needs differ across the African continent, it quickly becomes clear that the financial resources of the Global Europe "Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument (NDICI)" are insufficient to achieve the EU's Green Deal aspirations of worldwide leadership on climate change[101].

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[92] Montesi, 2020
[93] Montesi, 2020
[94] Although Russia is by far the largest energy supplier, many African countries also contribute significantly. Nigeria and Libya were the largest exporters of crude oil (7.1% and 6.1%, respectively) and natural gas (3.0% and 1.2%, respectively), while South Africa (2.8%) and Mozambique (1.8%) sent hard coal to the EU in 2018. Energy goods accounted for the highest share of African exports to the EU in 2019, at 46.5%.
[95] A transformation from fossil-fuel to green-energy trade links between the EU and African countries is critical in the medium to long term, if the EU and African countries are to meet their commitments under the Paris Agreement and the 2030 Agenda.
[96] Sikora, 2021
[97] Hege, 2020
[98] Hackenesch et. al., 2021b
[99] Activities in African Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) focus on energy as a top priority, with over 80% of countries planning to implement energy efficiency measures and 94% renewable energy measures. Goal 7 of Agenda 2063 calls for the development of "environmentally sustainable and climate-resilient economies and communities" and the promotion of renewable energy.
[100] The EIB committed 94.3% to mitigation and 5.7% to adaptation for the same period, 2008-2018. The EBRD had a 90.7% and 3.9% ratio, respectively, while 5.4% addressed both mitigation and adaptation at the same time. See www.aid-atlas.org for further information. The African Development Bank had the greatest share of adaptation money to overall climate finance (48.9%) among multilateral development banks in 2018, followed by the World Bank Group (37.0%).
[101] The "Global Europe" "Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument" (NDICI) has a budget of EUR 70.8 billion, of which at least EUR 17.2 billion has to be spent on the "neighbourhood," which covers Northern Africa, and at least

"In this sense, the Chinese model put the NPE model to the test by emphasizing a revised dependence. The nature of China's foreign aid has imposed significant "competitive pressure" on the European assistance regime by providing different development templates and questioning basic assumptions both about how aid should be delivered and how support contributes to development."

d) Power Shifts: the role of the People's Republic of China in Africa

While the EU-27 continues to be Africa's primary trading and foreign direct investment partner, competition from China has jeopardized the EU's historic ontological identity as a "natural partner"[102]. African policymakers appear to have discovered a development partner in China whose interests, experiences, and capacities fit their industrialization goals. Between 2014 and 2018, Chinese investment in labor-intensive industries increased by 43.8%, resulting in a vast expansion in Africa's transportation networks, port facilities, and telecommunications infrastructure[103]. In this sense, the Chinese model put the NPE model to the test by emphasizing a revised dependence[104]. The nature of China's foreign aid has imposed significant "competitive pressure" on the European assistance regime by providing different development templates and questioning basic assumptions both about how aid should be delivered and how support contributes to development (the concept of 'untying aid', for instance[105]). European donors, for their part, are straining to reconcile their goal of fostering governance reforms with the new aid paradigm's heightened emphasis on country-led reform initiatives[106]. Given that the Chinese development model affirms Westphalian norms of state sovereignty, emphasizing the principle of non-interference and rejecting the conditionality of assistance on economic or political reforms[107], China is strengthening its interconnected geopolitical, economic, infrastructure, and standard-setting capabilities[108].

China's desire to diversify dependence in its relations with Africa tends to thwart EU's position in the African economic landscape Whereas trade flows between the EU and SSA have increased favorably albeit slowly, Sino-SSA flows have developed explosively in all categories, except Chinese exports of raw materials[109]. According to the rationale of the Silk Road Academy, both China and Africa must wean themselves off their reliance on Western markets and seek new and more stable capital, commodities, and investment markets[110]. The high degree of complementarity between the two markets creates a large collaboration space for upgrading methods of cooperation and developing a new win-win cooperation situation. This improvement in collaboration mode marks nothing more than a shift in Africa's reliance away from the neocolonial model bequeathed by the imperialist age toward a new reliance on China. The fate of the continent under the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) will not result in a mutually beneficial relationship playing to any ostensible alternative but will in practice be one of unequal exchange and exploitation, consistent with previous readings of Africa's underdevelopment. While many Chinese-financed infrastructure projects are being developed or are already operational across Africa, they frequently lead to increasing and potentially unsustainable debt levels, even if China does not own the majority of debt in most countries[111]. After significant relief was provided through the Highly Indebted Poor Country and Multilateral Debt Relief initiatives, several experts and

EUR 26 billion on Sub-Saharan Africa. Climate change will be addressed with 30% of all monies from the NDICI - Global Europe allocation.

[102] Hadfield & Lightfoot, 2021

[103] Brautigam, 2020

[104] Taylor & Zajontz, 2020

[105] In the European Union (and the OECD more broadly), principles such as aid untying were established to divide aid from foreign commercial policy; these standards are not officially accepted by China and other growing (non-OECD DAC) countries.

[106] Grimm & Hackenesch, 2017

[107] Grimm & Hackenesch, 2017

[108] Carmody, 2020

[109] Carmody et. al., 2022

[110] Carmody et. al., 2022

[111] Brautigam, 2020

"While many Chinese-financed infrastructure projects are being developed or are already operational across Africa, they frequently lead to increasing and potentially unsustainable debt levels, even if China does not own the majority of debt in most countries."

institutions have warned against rising unsustainable debt levels across most of the continent. Djibouti, for example, where China has created its first overseas military post, raised its foreign public debt from 50% of GDP in 2015 to 91% in 2017[112]. Furthermore, it has been stated that Chinese money accounts for 77% of the government's debt[113] and that the country expelled Dubai Ports (DP) World from the operation of the port near its military installation in 2018 due to Chinese pressure.

Concluding remarks

While the European Union's (EU) development policy, which dates back to the 1957 Treaty of Rome, has undergone multiple significant modifications in its definition and goals, it has retained the asymmetrical relationship between Africa and the EU[114]. Africa still suffers from poverty and stagnation in social development indicators despite decades of development aid from the EU, while Europe has prospered as a foreign policy actor by strengthening integration and expanding its reach and capabilities. The EU favors the asymmetric status quo, as it minimizes fear and anxiety and feeds into the bloc's ontological security. This manifests itself in interests that logically prioritize the EU, jeopardizing both the concept of a partnership of equals and support for African-led projects. This is clearly illustrated by the use of nexuses since 2005, in which development has transitioned from forming the core of the EU's external relations to being just part of an increasingly multi-layered, integrated EU approach to external action, as it has evolved from a core policy to a multipurpose "one-stop-shop". This development approach is required to address multiple "root causes", as well as the myriad consequences of poverty, inequality, weak governance, climate change, environmental degradation, and unmanaged migration[115]; as such, it is fundamentally different from its post-2000 predecessor in terms of definitions, budget, designated actors, implementation, and evaluation.

"The EU favors the asymmetric status quo, as it minimizes fear and anxiety and feeds into the bloc's ontological security. This manifests itself in interests that logically prioritize the EU, jeopardizing both the concept of a partnership of equals and support for African-led projects."

From the initial problem-solving goal, through the specified instruments, funding, and audience, to the modes of implementation and evaluation, the EU development strategy generally remained true to its internal logic. However, since 2000, various policies have been grafted onto the original development framework, ranging from security to sustainable development and migration[116]. The problem stems from the EU's worldwide positioning as a development player, and the fact that, given the current political climate in the EU, such reforms are fraught with danger. Development remains the EU's cornerstone strategy, capable of addressing fundamental causes and multi-sectoral impacts ranging from climate change to conflict poverty to bad governance, including chronic inequalities caused by Covid. "Such tremendous expectations unavoidably impose unrealistic demands"[117] on the EU's structure, budget, and constituent member states. The EU's development policy has attempted to reconcile its goal of combatting poverty in its unique way with broader global shifts in the definition and application of assistance policy and the rise of both human security and sustainable development as overarching global storylines. The EU's development policy is increasingly situated between the bloc's normative objectives and the global geopolitical realities in which it is immersed due to this foreign policy struggle.

[112] Maçes, 2018
[113] Dahir, 2019
[114] Carbone, 2021
[115] Furness et al., 2020
[116] Huliaras, 2020
[117] Furness et al., 2020, p. 91

The European Union-African Union Summit has been rescheduled for **February 17th, 2022**, after being postponed in 2020. The COVID-19 pandemic is still going strong, and Africa desperately needs a long-term post-pandemic recovery strategy[118]. Increased security difficulties and political instability in some places are impeding this recovery, as is the urgent need to address climate change on a continent that will be home to 2.5 billion people by 2050[119]. As the EU's priorities have moved beyond trade and development cooperation to embrace security and climate change, the Summit offers an opportunity for the EU to re-establish its relationship with Africa in more equal terms, thus implicitly recognizing the AU as its leading interlocutor in setting engagement parameters and agendas for high-level meetings and guaranteeing that African concerns and interests are addressed. Working together to strengthen multilateralism and support the implementation of the European Green Deal and the AfCFTA form the axis of a new articulated African agency. The proposals made by UN Secretary-General António Guterres on "Our Common Agenda"[120] can be used by EU and AU states as the basis for pressing for meaningful reform and bringing the UN up to date on contemporary realities in the security realm and beyond[121]. A stronger WHO necessitates initiatives aimed at improving national and international rapid detection capabilities, strengthening early detection mechanisms, and investing in COVAX and the COVID-19 Tools Accelerator[122]. Although neither the EU nor the AU are Security Council members, both unions and their members are keenly interested in the UNSC agenda[123]. A more systematic approach to engagement between the EU and A3 UNSC members could be promoted. EU UNSC members, particularly France as a permanent member and regular penholder on African matters, should begin consistently reaching out to A3 member states and affected states[124] by facilitating the negotiation process and meaningful coordination through the incorporation of A3 ideas into draft resolutions on Africa[125]. In addition, reforms aimed at a more coherent and effective UN development system through the establishment of a reliable financing model for the resident coordinator system, *inter alia* in the form of assessed contributions, will ensure that African voices are heard in both fora, and that decisions affecting Africa are not made without extensive African participation.

"Given the AfCFTA's political clout and relevance for the continent's economic development, the EU can concentrate its efforts on encouraging AfCFTA implementation by deepening the EPAs and enhancing the investment regulatory framework to allow for the rapid development of digital infrastructure, innovation ecosystems and healthcare systems."

The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)[126] can be viewed as a model for regional integration and articulation of African agency[127]. Several African trade experts have recognized the "strong argument for a continent-to-continent strategy" that builds on AfCFTA integration and streamlines the fragmentation of existing trade agreements[128]. Acknowledging this, Africa's most important trading partner has hailed it as a "milestone" toward the "long-term objective of building a continent-to-continent

[118] Kaba, 2022
[119] Kaba, 2022
[120] Pagoulatos & Blavoukos, 2021. In general, the AU and its members have prioritized a strong African involvement in matters of African peace and security.
[121] Mackie, 2019
[122] Brozou, 2021b
[123] The desire to bring a united African voice to the UNSC table was reaffirmed by the AU PSC on March 10, 2021, reflecting a previous AU Assembly vote in January 2016 that called for cooperation between UNSC decisions and PSC stances. While France and several of the other permanent members supported the idea of African permanent seats, given the disagreements among the five permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States), no overall reform formula could be agreed upon.
[124] Brozou, 2021a
[125] Brozou, 2021b
[126] It is the world's largest free trade area, connecting 55 nations and creating a market of 1.3 billion people by cutting tariffs on nearly 90% of products sold inside the zone.
[127] Abrego et al., 2020; Saygili, Peters, & Knebel, 2019
[128] African Union, 2018

free trade area between Africa and the EU"[129]. Given the AfCFTA's political clout and relevance for the continent's economic development, the EU can concentrate its efforts on encouraging AfCFTA implementation by deepening the EPAs and enhancing the investment regulatory framework to allow for the rapid development of digital infrastructure, innovation ecosystems and healthcare systems[130]. At the same time, the EU's need for sustainable raw materials will increase under the Green Deal[131], opening new green trade opportunities. In the broader context of climate change, a more targeted AU-EU climate strategy based on a continent-to-continent alliance provides a clearer cooperation perspective, encouraging the prioritization of investments in technical capacity and human development, and accelerating efforts to support agricultural transformation[132], with a particular focus on sustainable agri-food systems and sustainable energy[133], with the ultimate goal of industrialization in mind[134]. To ensure that the AU and the EU speak with one voice, the next Summit provides an opportunity to form ambitious "climate partnerships" by strengthening support for the Paris Agreement and the Joint Africa–EU Strategy[135].

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[129] Through its Pan-African Program, the EU has contributed to this regional development. This program provided more than 60 million Euros through to 2019 to help the formation of the AfCFTA.
[130] Brozou, 2021a
[131] Many of these essential resources are found in African countries, such as lithium in Zimbabwe and cobalt in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Madagascar, essential for e-mobility
[132] The EU supports the Joint Communication Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa, which offers cooperation for long-term growth and jobs. The African Union supports CAADP, which serves as a framework for agricultural transformation across Africa with the aim of growing investment and productivity in the agricultural sector and attaining annual agricultural growth figures of more than 6% as a means of improving food security and economic development.
[133] The Africa Europe Foundation's High-Level Group Report on Climate, which was presented in December 2020 and discusses how an Africa–Europe Climate Alliance might renew Africa–Europe relationships in 2021, is relevant in this context.
[134] This is backed by the joint Abidjan Declaration and the fifth AU–EU Summit, both of which prioritize four primary strategic areas of collaboration, including four strategic priority areas that entail investing in people – education, research, technology, and skills development.
[135] Resty, 2022

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