



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**RECH 317**

**NOTE**

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From: Presidency  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Strengthening dialogue and S & T cooperation with Africa: recommendation by the SFIC  
- Presidency note

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Delegations will find, in annex, a note from the Presidency on the above-mentioned topic.

**Strengthening dialogue and S & T cooperation with Africa: recommendation by the SFIC  
Presidency note**

**Premise**

In its Conclusions of 26 May 2010<sup>1</sup> the Council *"takes note of the work carried out in the framework of the EU-Africa cooperation, under 8th partnership dedicated to science, information society and space, and invites SFIC to explore the need for its possible involvement in the preparation of the EU-Africa Summit to be held in November 2010"*.

**Rationale**

Scientific and technological development is clearly recognised in Africa and Europe as a vehicle for poverty reduction, economic growth, sustainable socio-economic development and welfare, and its crucial role as a tool to accelerate progress towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals is undisputed.

In that respect, the important role of bi-regional scientific research cooperation in priority areas of mutual interest has been the focus of recent attention by the top political leaders of Europe and Africa<sup>2</sup>. A very important step was achieved in Lisbon, Portugal, in December 2007, when the Heads of States and Governments of African and European Countries agreed on an enhanced dialogue and cooperation by launching the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES) and, afterwards, with the set up of the 8th thematic Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space (P8) in the framework of the Joint Strategy's first Action Plan 2008-2010, which should remain as a cornerstone of the second Action Plan (2011-2013), scheduled to be adopted at the next Africa-EU Summit on 29/30 November 2010 in Syrte, Libya.

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<sup>1</sup> Doc. 10246/10.

<sup>2</sup> Ref.: Africa-EU Summit conclusions, Lisbon, Portugal, December 2007, European Parliament resolution of 21 February 2008.

Europe and Africa have strengthened their scientific links over recent years; S&T cooperation has been rapidly evolving, at various levels and through a diversity of mechanisms. At the EU level, the resources devoted to S&T cooperation with Africa within the European Union development and research instruments increased substantially over the last few years. The 9th and 10th European Development Funds have allocated budgetary envelopes to strengthen S&T capacities in Africa, and, since the launch of FP7, the S&T cooperation between the two continents is increasing considerably.

Notwithstanding important deliverables in the areas of space and information society, specific examples of S&T cooperation include:

- The highly successful work on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis through the *European and Developing countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP)*, which has been done in close cooperation with local partners. This work will hopefully continue, as an extension of EDCTP is under consideration at the moment.
- The publication of the *FP7 dedicated call for Africa*. For the first time ever, DG Research has published a call targeting one continent, Africa. With a budget of €63 million, this call has a multidisciplinary approach as it integrates various scientific research fields such as food, agriculture, health, land and water in the African basins. The priority research areas for this call were chosen in close cooperation with the African authorities. They are not only relevant to Africa's needs, but based on existing African capacity. This is a significant move from the old paradigm of scientific cooperation with European scientists, research organisations and funders deciding what's best for Africa, to a new situation where research is managed by African Institutions via partnership with Europe. The contracts issued from this call are currently on the way.

- With the help of the European Commission and the ACP Secretariat, the African Union Commission will launch a new research initiative at the beginning of 2011: *the African Research Grants*. This will make €15 million available from the European Development Fund for proposals on scientific topics defined by the African research community. The African Research Grants programme will have a double impact: it will create a system of competitive research grants on a pan-African level to increase research excellence; and it will also help to build up the capacity for research programme management in the AUC Human Resources Science and Technology Department which will manage the programme.

There are also several significant activities developed and taking place at the level of the EU-AU Member States which are increasingly enhancing S&T cooperation between the two continents. One should nevertheless notice that so far, the Member States have shown limited interest to participate in the EU-Africa Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space.

### **High level S&T policy dialogue**

In order to enhance awareness to all Member States and to strengthen the commitment of Member States to increased S&T cooperation with Africa, further consolidate the 8th partnership, and ensure complementarity between the bilateral (involving individual countries of Europe and Africa) and the bi-regional levels of cooperation, the Africa-EU High Level S&T Policy Dialogue, involving Member States and the executive Commissions on both sides, must be enhanced. This dialogue should drive forward the cooperation between the two continents in science and technology. A structured S&T policy dialogue would allow the two sides to further develop their common understanding and build mutual trust, to strengthen the overall cooperation framework, and to define common priorities for future science, research, development and innovation collaborative activities.

The principle of a High Level S&T policy dialogue between Africa and Europe has already been endorsed by African Ministers for Science and Technology at the last AMCOST<sup>3</sup> meeting in Cairo on 10 March 2010, and, more recently, by the AU-EU Commission to Commission meeting of 8 June 2010 in Addis Ababa.

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<sup>3</sup> African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology.

This dialogue should be implemented through the existing Partnership 8 cooperation framework, and in close coordination with the relevant structures of the JAES, more specifically the science component of Partnership 8. An effective governance structure should be ensured aiming for a broad participation of members states at an appropriate level.

Strategically oriented and forward looking, the dialogue should serve as a platform for regular exchanges on S&T-related policy issues and would aim to formulate long term priorities to strengthen Africa-Europe S&T cooperation and define a common vision of scientific research between the two continents.

On that basis, the scope of the dialogue could cover a range of relevant issues, including:

- exchange of information and good practices
- setting of objectives and priorities for cooperation
- promotion of the use of research results
- common answers to global challenges and related actions

### **Towards a new action plan 2011-2013**

The lessons learnt from the cooperation to date need to be reflected in the implementation of the coming Action Plan that should take into account the need to reinforce:

- the implementation oriented character of the Joint Experts Group, which should go beyond information sharing, should prioritise projects and initiatives and identify resources for implementation;
- the active involvement and ownership of the Member States on both sides and other stakeholders, including the private sector, complementing the work of the two executive Commissions;
- the synergies with other Partnerships, in particular the Partnerships on Infrastructures and on Migration.

**Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation**  
**Recommendation on Reinforcing S&T dialogue and cooperation with Africa<sup>4</sup>**

In its Conclusions of 26 May 2010<sup>5</sup> the Council "takes note of the work carried out in the framework of the EU-Africa cooperation, under 8th partnership dedicated to science, information society and space, and invites SFIC to consider its involvement in the preparation of the EU-Africa Summit to be held in November 2010".

The Strategic Forum for International S&T Cooperation (SFIC), on the basis of the Council conclusions of 26 May 2010, recommends the following:

- acknowledge the achievements of the Africa-EU Partnership on Science, Information Society and Space, notably the significant progress made through the Framework Programme and the European Development Fund towards meeting the objectives of the Partnership;
- support the establishment of an Africa-EU High Level S&T Policy Dialogue by the Africa-EU Joint Summit of November 2010 in Libya, with a view to maintaining the political impulse given by the Joint Summit of Lisbon 2007, steering the implementation of the Action Plan 2011-2013 and strengthening further the EU-Africa cooperation in the field of science, technology and innovation, notably within the framework of Partnership 8;
- call on the Member States and the European Commission to actively engage in the implementation of the High Level S&T Policy Dialogue with Africa;
- encourage the Member States and the European Commission to actively engage with the AUC and the African Member States and Regional Economic Communities so as to make further progress in supporting and implementing the EU-Africa Partnership Action Plan;
- consider that the definition of a new Action Plan for the years 2011-2013 represents a good opportunity to strengthen the Science component of the Partnership and ensure the effective pursuit of its objectives through stronger engagement of the Member States and other stakeholders on both sides in its concrete project-based implementation.

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<sup>4</sup> Doc. ERAC-SFIC 1356/10.

<sup>5</sup> Doc. 10246/10.