Pannel on

"The EU's Africa Strategy - Policy challenges that still face Europe"

First of all, let me thank "Friends of Europe" and the other organizers for inviting me to take part in this topical debate.

The EU is still Africa's biggest aid donor and commercial partner, but other global actors are increasingly present in Africa, namely China. That alone shows that **"Africa matters".**

"Africa matters for global governance" affirms specifically the current EU Council presidency, calling for a *"post-post colonial dialogue"* (to borrow the expression of Secretary of State João Cravinho yesterday) between Europe and Africa and for a "Joint EU-Africa Strategy" encompassing development-oriented, geo-strategic and political goals. In that spirit, this debate should rather focus on "*policy challenges that Europe and Africa face jointly* ":

Indeed, in this era of global interdependence, Africa's major challenges are also direct or indirect challenges to Europe: from poverty and poor education, HIV-AIDs, malaria, tuberculosis and other poverty-related diseases to armed conflicts and weak or perverted State institutions, unfair trade conditions and exploitation of natural resources: all these and other factors which prompt a steady stream of Africans to flee their motherland in despair, even risking their lives to cross the Atlantic and the Mediterraneum.

These problems are to be considered at the EU-Africa Summit, in Lisbon, next December. But the most fundamental challenge is: **will European and African leaders who will gather in Lisbon intend to carry on with "business as usual", forgetting promises** (such as those made at Gleneagles), **neglecting commitments** (such as those underpinning the EU Consensus for Africa or the Charter of the African Union) **and violating legal obligations, namely those on basic human rights undertaken under the UN aegis?**

The usefulness of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy which the EU Portuguese presidency is preparing, together with its Ghanean counterpart on behalf of the AU, will depend on the **political will to implement** from all or most partners expected to sit around the table in Lisbon, even after the press has stopped talking about the Summit.

Already questions arise: for example, how will the EU-Africa Strategy translate into reality through the EU development instruments, taking into account that negotiations on the two main **budget lines for development** - the Development Cooperation Instrument and European Development Fund - are nearly finished?

Let me be more specific on two main areas in EU-Africa relations: **peace and security and development**. Key words are: **Resources, coherence and ownership.**

I - Peace and security

First, concerning **Resources**:

The creation of the **African Peace Facility** has been important for African-owned crisis-management; however, it has been almost completely swallowed-up by the AU's Darfur mission;

The challenge for Europe is to come up with more predictable, flexible and long-term financing to support African peace-keeping capacities, while on the African side, there seems to be a reluctance to equip the AU with the resources it needs; the AU Peace Fund, for example, is clearly insufficient;

Beyond vague policy statements, a clear achievement of the Joint EU-Africa Strategy in this area would be a jointly defined EU-AU plan for the standing up of the African Standby Force from now until 2010 (and beyond, towards long-term sustainability), together with concrete figures for EU and African financial contributions - to be presented to other donors afterwards;

Second, **Coherence:**

The creation of the African Union Peace and Security Council and the growing institutional maturity of CFSP and ESDP are important developments, indicating a growing tendency for multilateral responses - both in Africa and in Europe - to challenges in the field of Peace and Security;

But the EU is still working hard to achieve coherence between its Community and CFSP activities in the field of security *on one hand*, and between itself and Member States *on the other*. Our global partners - including our African partners - must have a hard time understanding the arcane institutional set-up and complex political agendas that stand in the way of a converging Europe...

A recent example is a legal case brought before the European Court of Justice on the EU's activities in the field of the fight against Small Arms and Light Weapons: Council and Commission are having a turf war and, as a result, EU activity on the ground in the field of Small Arms – the real Weapons of Mass Destruction ravaging Africa - has been almost paralysed**.** Hopefully, the changes introduced by the new Reform Treaty will put an end to most ambiguities in this field;

Equally, on the African side, a myriad of continental, sub-regional and national actors makes it hard to establish fruitful, sustainable dialogue with "Africa": a clearer division of roles is needed.   It is up to our African partners to decide how far to go, obviously;

The Joint Strategy should lay out how the EU and the AU will improve their institutional relations within the existing framework, but also how they **plan to move to a more integrated, continent-to-continent relationship in the future**; more than statements about how close Europe is to Africa and vice-versa, the Strategy needs to point to a concrete institutional framework for AU-EU relations

and it should be used as an opportunity for both sides to renew their commitment for continental integration and multilateralism; both continents need to put the 'Westphalian curse' behind them - they can do it together;

Third, **Ownership**:

The EU has been producing strategies and policy outlines on fighting Small Arms and Light Weapons, on Disarmament Demobilization and Reconstruction and on Security Sector Reform more generally; it has also devised an *'EU concept for strengthening African capabilities for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts'*; These quite recent policies could have a tremendous impact on Africa; the DRC is an example.

But what is missing is a structured dialogue with African partners on these policies: **they need to be complemented by African contributions, so as to create joint EU-AU approaches to DDR, SSR or the fight against the proliferation of Small Arms**; for example, what can our African partners tell us about intra-African arms transfers that can help us improve the European Code of Conduct on Arms exports – which, by the way, we Europeans need to make legally binding? How should European (either CFSP and/or Community) instruments be used, in their view, to successfully close the gap between DDR and long-term sustainable development?

In other words, lessons learned from the countries where the EU and its Member States have been most active should help **create a joint EU-AU 'consensus on peace and security'; the outcome of the December Summit should be a first step in this direction.**

II. Development

In terms of **Resources:**

There is no need to reinvent the wheel, regarding resources for development cooperation. What is needed is **real political will to fulfil commitments:** the MDGs, various ODA commitments, Gleneagles, targets for basic health and education, aid effectiveness principles, etc. ... The roadmap is already there - and it is rather complete. **All that is needed still is accomplishment, delivery of promises.** And for that the **EU must focus** development cooperation policies and activities **on core development goals – the MDGs, obviously**.

On policy **Coherence**

In a *"post-post-colonial dialogue"* context, the EU needs to do more to ensure **policy coherence,** with a special emphasis **on reconciling its trade and development policies** and **aid effectiveness** – and, in that sense, the current negotiations on **European Partnership Agreements are a major test.**

A consistent overview of the efforts made by different actors is essential. A **donor coordination matrix** or atlas for each recipient country is required. There is also a need to move up from **targets and benchmarks into <u>outcomes measurements</u>**.

On **Ownership:**

There are many realities in Africa: successes co-exist with failures, sustained growth with destitution. Autocratic and repressive rulers also co-exist with vibrant societies. **Which Africa is the EU engaging with, in preparing for the EU-Africa Summit for next December?** Just with the governments, several of them illegitimate, corrupt and oppressive? Or also **<u>with all those relevant actors, including parliamentarians, NGOs, media and private investors who really deliver at the grassroots?</u>** Whose ownership must we ensure: a secluded «ex-officio», or one that truly reflects the energy and diversity of African societies?

That is related, of course with something beyond one's control: will the AU progressive presidency, under Ghana, be able to make some people in power commit their countries (albeit only verbally) into a meaningful dialogue on good governance? **<u>Can human rights and the rule of law - crucial elements for good governance, development and human security – be indeed discussed, not just in abstract terms, but in the specific context of nations where economic regression and political oppression are undeniably linked, such as in Ethiopia, Eritrea or Zimbabwe.</u>** Regardless of who will be sitting at the table – with or without Robert Mugabe... Can asymmetries of development be analysed from the standpoint of local societies' actors, either involved or excluded, not just with the contributions of beneficiaries of the "Chinese partnership" such as Omar Bashir, from Sudan? Can the national, regional and global security, economic and social implications of the HIV/AIDS pandemic be examined at the EU-Africa Summit with the concourse of the President of South Africa, whose obscurantist theories have dramatically delayed action? Can the crucial need for investment in access to sexual and reproductive health be considered not just from the standpoint of the growing feminization of AIDS, but also as a pre-condition for the realization of basic human rights and for the empowerment of African women?

The EU-Africa Summit must be more than a mere "photo opp". It must not shy away from **tackling the most sensitive and divisive problems**. It must also go beyond a one-off meeting: it should include follow-up actions, in which African civil societies representatives should be properly consulted and involved.

The crucial problem remains: despite efforts of the Portuguese and Ghanean presidencies of the EU and the AU, are the European and African partners who will sit around the EU-Africa Summit, next December in Lisbon, really committed to addressing these common and, actually, global challenges?

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