

Africa strengthens partnerships with Europe

European Union officials met African Union Foreign Ministers in Brussels this week to discuss common action on issues such as peace, security and governance; trade and investment; and continental economic integration; as well as their commitment to multilateralism.



European Union and African Union Foreign Ministers take stock of their strong partnership. Credit: European External Action Service (EEAS)

Chaired by the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Federica Mogherini and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Rwanda Richard Sezibera, the meeting brought together participants from the 28 EU member states and from the 55 members of the AU.

This ministerial meeting was the first annual inter-Summit EU-AU ministerial meeting. It was an opportunity to take stock of the implementation of the outcome of the [5th AU – EU Summit](#) (Abidjan, 29-30 November 2017), which marked a milestone in reshaping the relationship into an even stronger, mutually beneficial partnership better adapted to a rapidly evolving global context.

"This meeting confirms our common determination to build on our partnership and go towards an even stronger, deeper and more political partnership and friendship between both continents. A partnership that we all, Africans and Europeans alike, see as our shared and vital interest," High Representative Mogherini said. "This is a partnership that works because we are both committed to it."

The European Union is Africa's first partner in all sectors: in trade, in aid and investment, in peace and security. "We are above all political partners and this is the real change in nature of our relationship that we have decided to put in place," High Representative highlighted.

Three areas

Discussions focused on three main areas of cooperation, the first one being peace, security and governance. As the central pillar of EU – AU partnership, this includes a daily coordination and full support from the EU to the work that the African Union is doing in the continent, Mogherini said.

Trade, investment and continental economic integration is the area where the countries decided to step up their engagement. Reminding of the [Africa-Europe Alliance for \[Sustainable\] Investment and Jobs](#), Mogherini noted Africa needed clearly more private investments to create the jobs for the growing youth population.

"The European Union will contribute by supporting and de-risking investment concretely through our [External Investment Plan](#), and this goes together with action on the African side that is ongoing to strengthen the business climate."

The ministers also agreed to work to promote cooperation among the EU and the African Union on the global scene. "The African Union and the European Union are collectively a force that works to shape the global agenda and to strengthen and support effective multilateralism. Together we are 82 countries - we do make a difference in the global context," High Representative concluded.

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