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# SEARCHING FOR A UKRAINE-EU COOPERATIVE APPROACH WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF IMPLEMENTING POLICIES IN AFRICA

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*In the fall of 2018, the European Union launched a new partnership initiative with African countries, called the Africa-Europe Alliance. It emerged as a reaction to the increasing role and weight of the African region in international relations and the intensifying struggle for its resources among global players. In this regard, the questions arise whether the developed initiative corresponds to realities of today and what objectives are being pursued. At the same time, against the backdrop of Ukraine leadership's resolute efforts on the way to gaining full EU membership, more attention needs to be paid to the issue of cooperation between Kyiv and Brussels in the search for a cooperative approach in relations with the countries of the African continent.*

## Introduction

The beginning of the 21st century was marked by a period of military and political stabilization on the African continent, which entered the stage of progressive economic development.

According to the most optimistic scenario and in case the "African Economic Revolution" succeeds, the GDP of the region's countries over the next four decades will reach the level of the US and EU GDP, in current prices, combined, by 2050. Africa has left behind the period of

over 200 years of decline, and in the near future, we can expect that in the pace of economic growth, the Africans will surpass the success of the "Asian tigers".<sup>1</sup>

In view of this, the EU is paying more attention to the African continent in its foreign policy. The former Chairman of the African Union Commission and former Foreign Minister of Gabon, Jean Ping, in the context of Africa's growing importance for the EU, stated: "Business and political circles of the Old World are beginning to look at Africa as a long-term political ally and potential business partner."<sup>2</sup>

- 1 C. Robertson, Y. Mhango, M. Moran, and others, *Why Africa Will Rule the 21st Century*, "African Business Magazine", 07 January 2013 [<https://africanbusinessmagazine.com/uncategorised/why-africa-will-rule-the-21st-century/>].
- 2 J. Ping, *Mondialisation, paix, démocratie et développement en Afrique: l'expérience du Gabon (preface Hubert Védrine)* [*Globalization, Peace, Democracy and Development in Africa: The Experience of Gabon (preface Hubert Védrine)*], L'Harmattan, 2002.

The current architecture of relations between the EU and Africa was established back in 2000, when the most comprehensive document, the *Cotonou Agreement*, was signed by 48 African states. The main objectives of cooperation are poverty reduction, integration of the participating countries into the world economy, and sustainable development. The most important innovations of the agreement compared with the previous partnership deals were the expansion of cooperation in the political sphere and the principle of reciprocity of obligations. Assistance on the part of the EU is conditioned by certain political requirements for partner countries on peacekeeping, respect for human rights, good governance, etc. The agreement expires in January of 2020, so in May of 2018, negotiations over a new document started. It is tentatively expected to cover six priority areas: democracy and human rights, economic growth and investment, climate change, poverty reduction, peace and security, as well as migration and mobility.

In the framework of the *Cotonou Agreement*, in 2007, a *Joint Africa-EU Strategy* was developed. This document has been agreed by the EU, the African Union, and individual African countries. Periodic action plans, including the EU-Africa Road Map for 2014-2017, are being developed. In 2017, updating the system of relations within the framework of the Africa-EU partnership was launched. The *Abidjan Joint Declaration of the Fifth EU-Africa Forum* envisaged joint actions in four areas: economic opportunities for youth, peace and security, mobility and migration, and cooperation on governance.

The complexity of relations between the EU and African countries is also due to the three Regional Strategies for Addressing Security

Issues in the African Ridge, the Guinean Gulf, and the Sahel.

However, in the fall of 2018, a new EU-Africa strategy was declared, known as the Africa-Europe Alliance, which is set to become very ambitious in terms of its objectives.

### **The Africa-Europe Alliance: Overview of Relations Strategy**

In his statement on the EU's position at the plenary session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg on 12 September 2018, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said: "To speak of the future, one must speak of Africa – Europe's twin continent. Africa is the future: By 2050, Africa's population will number 2.5 billion. One in four people on earth will be African. We need to invest more in our relationship with the nations of this great and noble continent. And we have to stop seeing this relationship through the sole prism of development aid. Such an approach is beyond inadequate, humiliatingly so."<sup>3</sup>

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***the EU is paying more attention to the African continent in its foreign policy***

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At the highest level, the EU recognizes that Africa no longer needs charity but rather a balanced partnership that is fair and genuine, and that the EU needs such kind of partnership as well. Juncker calls the new format of relations between the parties a new "Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs between Europe and Africa", covering creation of new jobs, long-term investment, and an updated agreement on free trade.

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3 *State of the Union 2018: The Hour of European Sovereignty*, Authorised version of the State of the Union Address 2018, "Europa.eu", p. 8 [[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-speech\\_en\\_0.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-speech_en_0.pdf)].

However, relations between the EU and Africa cannot be symmetrical at present, because the two regions are at different stages of development. The degree of integration of African countries within the African Union is lower than the interdependence of the EU member states, and politically, a significant number of regimes in African countries are far from European standards of democratic governance. Equally, the level of technological development of the two regions differs just as much, and this could be compared with the asymmetric partnership of the countries of North and Latin America within the framework of the Organization of American States, which was founded in 1948.

It is possible to identify a wide range of issues of mutual interest. First, the EU and Africa are moving closer together to keep alive the mechanisms for maintaining multilateralism in international relations. In particular, they are interested in the effectiveness of the United Nations and other international governmental organizations. Secondly, there is a growing global competition for Africa ("New Scramble for Africa"). China, Russia, India, the Gulf States, and Turkey continue to expand their presence on the continent, and this competition may cease to be peaceful, as exemplified by the military struggle of various non-African forces through their proxies for areas of influence in Libya after the fall of the regime of Gaddafi in 2011. Therefore, it brings Africa and the EU closer together in pursuit of common interests, such as combating global warming, promoting sustainable development, and ensuring security. Thirdly, contribution of the EU countries to the

strengthening of regional and sub-regional international organizations in Africa, which increases the weight of the continent in international relations, is indisputable. The European Union's High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, compared these partnerships to the relationship between "brothers and sisters"<sup>4</sup>.

At the same time, the most controversial topic in European-African relations now is the issue of migration. On the eve of the May elections to the European Parliament, a program of consistent migration control policy may be put forward, as only 10% of citizens of the ten EU member states covered by the Pew Research Global Survey are inclined to allow their governments to increase quotas for new migrants<sup>5</sup>.

Consequently, this is a concern for African governments, for which the migration problem has become a threat to the friendly relations with the EU. In particular, in terms of continued implementation of provisions of the Action Plan approved in 2015 at the EU-Africa Summit in Valletta, \$1.9 billion was allocated for African governments under the Emergency Fund for elimination of poverty and consequences of conflict with a view to repatriating African migrants. Yet even back then, the Africans urged the Europeans to develop more fundamental tools for solving the migration problem, as Africa needs programs to create new jobs that will be proportional to the pace of rapid population growth in the region. However, there are still doubts whether it will fully constrain migration<sup>6</sup>.

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4 *Speech by High Representative / Vice-President Federica Mogherini at the panel "Towards a renewed Africa-EU partnership" of the S&D Group Africa Week 2017 Bruxelles, "Europa.eu", 27 September 2017* [[https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/33156/speech-high-representative-vice-president-federica-mogherini-panel-towards-renewed-africa-en\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/33156/speech-high-representative-vice-president-federica-mogherini-panel-towards-renewed-africa-en_en)].

5 P. Connor, J.M. Krogstad, *Many Worldwide Oppose More Migration – Both into and out of Their Countries*, Pew Research Center, 10 December 2018 [<http://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/12/10/many-worldwide-oppose-more-migration-both-into-and-out-of-their-countries/#more-309372>].

6 E. Bassot, *Ten Issues to Watch in 2019*, European Parliamentary Research Service, January 2019, pp. 8-9 [[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2019/630352/EPRS\\_IDA\(2019\)630352\\_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2019/630352/EPRS_IDA(2019)630352_EN.pdf)].

Juncker's September initiative to create an Africa-Europe Alliance is a response to the growing demand from the African partners. At the same time, they deepen the agreement reached at the 5th EU-Africa Summit, held in November 2017 in Abidjan (Côte d'Ivoire). Four goals of the Africa-Europe Alliance are articulated<sup>7</sup>: 1) stimulating strategic investments and strengthening the role of the private sector in creating new jobs; 2) investing in people through investing in education and advanced training; 3) improving the business environment and the investment climate; and 4) using the full potential of economic integration and trade.

At the same time, 36% of African trade is currently focused on the EU markets, while the volume of foreign direct investment from the EU to Africa is 40% of the total amount of foreign funding raised.

The new alliance between the two continents will create up to ten million jobs in Africa in the next five years; 30 million Africans will receive access to electricity networks, another 24 million Africans – access to all-season highways through new EU investments in infrastructure projects; 105,000 students and researchers will be able to use the Erasmus+ program to study in the EU, and 750,000 people will be able to attend vocational training<sup>8</sup>.

In practical terms, the Africa-Europe Alliance project consists of ten types of activities:

1) improvement of conditions for investment through provision of guarantees and combined financing;

2) identification of the most promising production and processing chains and the conclusion of contracts for jobs and growth in terms of their implementation;

3) establishment by the end of 2019 of sectoral mixed-stakeholder groups on both sides for strategic development in important areas of the economy: digital, energy, transport, and agriculture;

4) strengthening the operational capacity of the African Union to promote continental integration;

5) support for specific national development initiatives for individual countries;

6) development of a strengthened dialogue and cooperation with African partners to improve the investment climate, especially as regards investment protection;

7) support for the negotiation of an EU-AU Free Trade Area, which should replace the Economic Partnership Agreement;

8) strengthening EU-Africa trade and developing conditions for the long-term formation of a comprehensive free trade area between the EU and Africa;

9) support for inter-African communications and communications along the EU-Africa line; and

10) mobilization of a package of financial resources: In the period 2014-2020, these needs were estimated at EUR 32.5 billion; then, for the period 2021-2022, funding was increased by 23%.

7 *Communication on a New Africa – Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs: Taking Our Partnership for Investment and Jobs to the Next Level*, COM/2018/643 final, Brussels, 12 September 2018 [<https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?qid=1537433689163&uri=CELEX:52018DC0643>].

8 *Strengthening the EU's Partnership with Africa: A New Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs, State of the Union 2018*, the European Commission, 12 September 2018 [[https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-factsheet-africa-europe\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/commission/sites/beta-political/files/soteu2018-factsheet-africa-europe_en.pdf)].

The Africa-Europe Alliance, as a result, provides for the solution of the migration issue through the implementation of programs to create new jobs, as well as the formation of a comprehensive Afro-European Intercontinental Free Trade Area in the long run.

### **Ukraine's European Integration and Common Interests in the African region**

The current state of relations between Ukraine and the EU is regulated within the framework of the *Association Agreement* signed in 2014 between the European Union and the European Atomic Energy Community and their member states, on the one side, and Ukraine, on the other side. Although currently the EU is not ready to give Ukraine the prospect for membership, as was the case with the signing of a series of European agreements with ten Central European countries, the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine in February 2019 consolidated in the Constitution of Ukraine the course for acquiring the full membership status in the EU and NATO. According to the explanatory memo, consolidating the legal certainty of Ukraine's course toward EU and NATO membership at the constitutional level "will mobilize Ukrainian society and Ukrainian authorities, and promote reforms aimed at meeting the criteria for full membership in the EU and NATO".<sup>9</sup>

The course toward full integration into the EU requires the Ukrainian leadership not only to harmonize the country's legislation with the criteria and standards of the Union, but also to seek complementarity in the coordination of foreign policies, including in the African direction.

At the current stage, Chapter IV of the *Association Agreement* with the EU provides for a gradual integration of the Ukrainian economy into the EU's internal market within the framework of establishing a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA). The distinctive feature of the Ukraine-EU DCFTA is a comprehensive program of adaptation of regulatory norms in trade-related areas to the relevant EU standards. This will largely eliminate non-tariff (technical) barriers to trade and allow for enhanced access of Ukrainian exporters to the EU's internal market. At the same time, the EU has set course toward the establishment of an intercontinental free trade area with African countries, which creates additional opportunities for Ukrainian exporters to expand trade with Africa.

A specific feature of the current stage in the EU development is Brexit, which is due to be completed on 30 March 2019. Consequently, the consolidation in the Constitution of Ukraine of an irreversible course toward EU membership is of practical value, and after the accession to the EU of Montenegro and Serbia, the Ukrainian membership application might start being considered if it is submitted.

Establishing wider trade relations with Africa, as well as involving Ukraine in solving the region's security issues, is an integral part of European aspirations. At the same time, this coincides with Ukraine's core interests in expanding its partnership with Africa.

Politically, Kyiv is interested in African countries supporting its position in international platforms, especially in the UN. In the context of Russia's hybrid aggression, the task of Ukrainian diplomacy is to counter

9 Проект Закону про внесення змін до Конституції України (щодо стратегічного курсу держави на набуття повноправного членства України в Європейському Союзі та в Організації Північноатлантичного договору) [Draft Law on Amendments to the Constitution of Ukraine (Regarding the Strategic Course of the State on Acquiring Full-fledged Membership of Ukraine in the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization)], Verkhovna Rada, [http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4\\_1?pf3511=64531](http://w1.c1.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb2/webproc4_1?pf3511=64531).

Moscow's hostile actions. In particular, the Ukrainians are trying to make clear to the African nations the threats of dealing with the Russian Federation. Russia undermines regional security by indirectly interfering in the political processes of Sudan, Libya, DR Congo, Zimbabwe, Madagascar, and a number of other countries in the region where authoritarian rule is strong. The conservative regime of President Putin shows solidarity with autocrats alike.

In economic terms, Ukraine is interested in finding more partners in trade, as well as expanding and deepening trade with them. The policy should be based on regional markets, where there is a high growth rate and demand for Ukrainian products. Ukraine needs to step up efforts in Africa's "under-traded markets".<sup>10</sup>

Therefore, the next step will be the intensification of FTA talks in promising markets of the African continent – with Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Nigeria, and the South African Republic. Ukraine also seeks to establish close contacts with the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which brings together 44 countries and will clearly become a key economic body in the region.

African countries are Ukraine's traditional partners in the field of military-technical cooperation. Besides, Africa's technological development is correlated with the capabilities of our state. Ukraine considers African markets to be promising for selling Ukrainian products to the machine-building industry and rendering scientific, technical, and construction services.<sup>11</sup>



***Establishing wider trade relations with Africa, as well as involving Ukraine in solving the region's security issues, is an integral part of European aspirations***

It turns out that in parallel lines with the course toward European integration, Ukraine has become much more pro-active in the African direction, which compensates for the effects of decreasing contacts with CIS countries. Therefore, given the proximity of Africa to the EU and Ukraine, it would be appropriate to consider a new model for coordinating the policies of both EU and Ukraine in the African direction.

### **Search for New Approaches to Ukraine-European Cooperation with Africa**

Apart from the actual trade and economic activity in Africa, Ukraine and the EU have common interests in stabilizing the situation in the region. Despite the current trend of a general decline in the flow of illegal migrants to Western Europe, ongoing military conflicts and the complicated security situation in a number of African countries will potentially keep the possibility of increase in migration. While the EU countries are the final destination for African migrants, Ukraine could be used by illegal migrants as a transit state. This creates additional risks for public safety, especially in the Black Sea region, which is becoming most vulnerable to this threat. At the same time, Ukraine's successful policy of adaptation of refugees

10 *Послання Президента України до Верховної Ради України «Про внутрішнє та зовнішнє становище України в 2018 році» (Message of the President of Ukraine to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On the Internal and External Situation of Ukraine in 2018")*, "НІСД", 20 September 2018 [<http://www.niss.gov.ua/articles/3133/>].

11 *Аналітична доповідь до Щорічного Послання Президента України до Верховної Ради України «Про внутрішнє та зовнішнє становище України в 2018 році» (Analytical Report to the Annual Message of the President of Ukraine to the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On the Internal and External Situation of Ukraine in 2018")*, К.: НІСД, 2018 [[http://www.niss.gov.ua/public/File/Analit\\_Dopovid\\_Poslannia\\_2018.pdf](http://www.niss.gov.ua/public/File/Analit_Dopovid_Poslannia_2018.pdf)].

and IDPs will be of significant interest to the EU countries in terms of managing migrants and refugees.

In relation to another security component, peacekeeping, the European Union has no significant experience in conducting peacekeeping and “coercion to peace” missions. The EU carried out operations in the Balkan countries in cooperation with NATO, and they were mainly policing missions. The EU operations on the African continent were to support United Nations peacekeeping missions (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, and Central African Republic), which also focused on policing. In turn, the Ukrainian military has an acclaimed experience in participating in a broad spectrum of peacekeeping operations (Sierra Leone, Liberia, and the Ethiopia-Eritrea border, Sudan, Southern Sudan, and DR Congo), while 44,000 Ukrainian troops gained similar combat experience, according to the Ministry of Defence<sup>12</sup>.

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***Apart from the actual trade and economic activity in Africa, Ukraine and the EU have common interests in stabilizing the situation in the region***

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Summarizing the theses brought up, it can be concluded that there is a range of sectoral topics (trade, peacekeeping, and migration) shaping a zone of common interests for Ukraine and EU countries. At the same time, it should be noted that there are currently no formal or non-formal mechanisms for interaction within the EU-Ukraine-Africa format, although they would be very useful.

Therefore, it would be appropriate for all sides to create an intergovernmental mechanism for joint discussion and decision-making on these issues.

It could also be possible to set up discussions of tripartite issues at the “strategic African round table”. Israel could become an example of such a format. In 2018, this country successfully arranged a Strategic round table devoted solely to African issues. The event was organized by the Forum of Strategic Dialogue (FSD), the European Leadership Network (ELNET), and the European Policy Center (EPC). It was attended by 30 experts from Israel, the EU, Africa, and the United States. The event also attracted high-ranking officials from all sides.

Following the round table, a new policy approach to Africa was proclaimed, envisaging rejection of parallel policies, while establishing a common policy for the region. As a result, the new strategy consists of the following four elements<sup>13</sup>: 1) importance of public-private partnership and access to capital; 2) a need for African-based projects of a local nature that would belong to Africans; 3) focus on communities in the context of funding deficit; and 4) development of projects of high efficiency and flexibility.

The concept of trilateral cooperation as an option of the asymmetric “EU-Africa-Ukraine” triangle might seem difficult to implement. However, the approach that includes holding in Brussels a high-level expert discussion on Ukraine’s engagement in the implementation of the Africa-Europe Alliance appears to be productive and may give rise to a new institute of the EU foreign and security policy. On the other hand, it is

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12 *Участь ЗС України у міжнародних операціях з підтримання миру і безпеки (Participation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in International Operations for Maintaining Peace and Security)*, Офіційний веб-сайт Міністерства Оборони України, February 2019 [<http://www.mil.gov.ua/diyalnist/mirovtvorchist/>].

13 *EU and Israeli Development Approaches in Sub-Saharan Africa*, “EINet”, 09 August 2018 [<https://elnetwork.eu/country/eu/eu-and-israeli-development-approaches-in-sub-saharan-africa/>].

a tool for harmonizing relations between Ukraine and the EU, which could be very useful in terms of boosting the presence of Ukrainian businesses in Africa – a region of rapid economic growth and big contrasts, but without which it is impossible to imagine the development of humankind.

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