



Concept Note

Fridays of the Commission

**“The Africa-EU cooperation: Achievements,
challenges and future perspectives”**

24 November 2017 in Abidjan, Côte d’Ivoire

Economic Affairs Department

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Africa-EU Summit is scheduled to be held on 28 and 29 November 2017 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, on the theme of **“Investing in People”**

A pre-event will be organized by the Department of Economic Affairs of the African Union Commission, in collaboration with the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM) on 24 November 2017. The event will be an opportunity to discuss the existing frameworks of cooperation between Africa and EU, especially the future of the Africa–Europe relation and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy.

The Joint Africa-EU Strategy remains the strategic political reference of EU-Africa relations. Since its adoption in 2007 it has provided the framework for ever deeper and broader cooperation between the EU and Africa well beyond the traditional eras of development cooperation and trade. The Joint Strategy aims to take the Africa-EU Partnership to a new strategic level with a strengthened political dialogue and enhanced multidimensional and new cooperation partnership.

In the lead up to the Summit, it is paramount to stimulate a shared understanding of the EU-AU relations among key policy and decision makers. This will be done through the Fridays of the Commission which is a policy dialogue platform for delegates working in multi sectoral organizations.

FRIDAYS OF THE COMMISSION

The *“Fridays of the Commission”* concept constitutes a series of conference debates on current, economic, political and cultural issues pertinent to the continent and which give the opportunities to different stakeholders to discuss on African developmental issues from an African perspective. The deliberations of this session will be captured in a Bulletin of the *“Fridays of the Commission”* and disseminated among the participants and a wide audience.

OBJETIVES

The main objective of this event will be to discuss the Africa-Europe cooperation and explore the different means that can be used to boost it.

More specifically, the discussions will focus on the following points:

- Understanding the history and evolution of the Africa-Europe cooperation and analyzing this cooperation since the Yaoundé convention
- Highlight the major achievements of the cooperation
- Identify challenges and future perspectives in the light of the expiration of the Contour Agreement in February 2020
- Examine the roles of the different actors
- Define the relationship with the Abuja Treaty and the Agenda 2063, the two main initiatives to boost African integration
- Establish the links between this cooperation and other existing cooperation frameworks, including the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The future of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (Lisbon 2007)
- The future of the Contour Agreement after 2020
- The definition of an ideal cooperation framework between Africa and Europe.

DATE AND VENUE

This *Friday of the Commission* is scheduled to take place on Friday 24 November, 2017 in Abidjan, Cote-d'Ivoire, as a pre-event of the Africa-EU Summit scheduled to be held on 28 and 29 November 2017 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire.

FORMAT OF THE SIDE EVENT

Panel discussions, led by invited officials and facilitators, will be organized and moderate discussions from the audience will follow up.

Four sessions will be organized (two in the morning and two in the afternoon).

Session 1. The history and evolution of the Africa-Europe cooperation: Initiatives, results, challenges and perspectives,

Session 2. The Joint Africa-EU Strategy (2007) and its implications on the African integration process,

Session 3. The cooperation instruments between Africa and Europe: are they still inessential?

Session 4. The Contour Agreement and the Joint Africa-EU Strategy: Which cooperation framework should be maintained after 2020?

PARTICIPATION

The Side Event will bring together many participants including:

- Representatives of the African Union Commission
- Representatives of the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM),
- Governments officials,
- Representatives from International and Regional Organizations,
- International and Regional Media Outlets and Journalists,
- Representatives of the Diplomatic Community,
- Scholars,
- Business Leaders and Private Sector Representatives.
- Students