

“THE POST-COTONOU FRAMEWORK – A EU-ACP PARTNERSHIP AFTER 2020”

POSITION PAPER

1. Context

The current **ACP-EU Partnership Agreement (CPA)** was signed on 23 June 2000 in Cotonou, Benin. It was concluded for a 20-year period and **will expire in February 2020**.

The expiry of the Partnership Agreement, currently covering 100 countries with a total amount of almost 1.5 billion people, is the opportunity to renew the EU’s relationship with its ACP partners, considering the current global context.

According to the European Commission, the new partnership between the EU and ACP countries will be built upon 3 pillars:

- The UN 2030 Agenda, which sets out the Sustainable Development Goals;
- Global Strategy for the EU’s Foreign and Security Policy;
- Coherence with the European Consensus on Development.

The next few months will be crucial for the definition of a legislative framework for the relations between Europe and the African continent, not only because of the expiration of the Agreement, but also because the next **multiannual financial framework** will also be discussed.

2. The Commission’s Proposal

On December 12, 2017, the College of Commissioners presented a “*draft negotiation mandate*” to the European Council. This proposal is expected to be approved during the next **Foreign Affairs Council on Development**, which will take place at the **end of the month of May 2018**.

The Commission’s proposal highlights the **private sector** as determining for the **economic growth and sustainable development of communities**, a mention we welcome and fully support. It is important to establish a **structured dialogue between**

the Commission and the European private sector, to assure that the final negotiation mandate considers the interests of European companies.

The inclusion of the **private sector** in the negotiation process is also important to ensure the achievement of the **sustainable development goals** included in the UN 2030 Agenda, as companies are, most of the time, the entities which assure the **onsite implementation and supervision** of such measures. Effective development cooperation plays a crucial role in helping African countries meet these objectives. Reinforcing the European presence in African countries will also be a way to continue to ensure **Europe's role as promoter of free trade and economic growth and development**.

3. Priorities for CIP

Portuguese companies have important **strategic interests** in the African market, not only due to long-standing cultural relations with **Portuguese-speaking countries**, but also due to Portugal's privileged geographical position in Southern Europe. The advantage of having a common language is obviously compelling in reinforcing relations with countries like Angola or Mozambique, but nowadays Portuguese companies are **expanding their interests and focusing in French-speaking and English-speaking African countries**.

Accelerating **Africa's structural transformation** through a **friendly environment to the private sector** and promoting its **sustainable economic and social development** as well as its **inclusive growth** is a priority for CIP and its members. To achieve this, there are some specific objectives we would like to see implemented, and where we believe the private sector's role, in partnership with the European Union, would be very important:

- a) Enhancing **access to financing** for the cooperation between European and African small and medium sized enterprises;
- b) **Foster entrepreneurship and the creation of jobs** in African countries, to foster a stable economic and political environment, to help control the heavy migration flows;

- c) Improving African medical protection and social care policies;
- d) Support **regional African integration** as a tool to broaden regional markets;
- e) Creation of **Vocational and Education Training centres**, with high integration of information technologies.

Additionally, in the context of exponential populational growth, climate change and evolving nutrition patterns, we also recognize the value of **investing in higher agricultural productivity**, to cooperate in improving innovation, sustainability and competitiveness, for both big commercial and family farmers alike, again including their access to financing.

It must be considered that **Chinese companies** are exponentially increasing their presence in these markets, as they benefit from heavy State support and subsidies for this effect. The inclusion of **provisions in the European External Investment Plan** (through the European Fund for Sustainable Development) that ensure a **fair support to European companies** to develop these activities is essential to guarantee its success.

European companies are more effective – due to the rigorous scrutiny they face in terms of production quality and compliance, they will be able to transpose **high productive standards** to these countries. Also, they will serve as **local development hubs**, not only contributing to economic growth, but also **investing in education and professional skills**, through local vocational training programmes, even sometimes attributing scholarships that allow locals to access higher education levels. To achieve these ambitious goals for the Post-Cotonou Framework, it is crucial that an **open and structured dialogue between official representatives from the European and African private sectors is also assured**.

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