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EPP Group Position Paper on

# AFRICA

February 2022

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## The case for a mutually beneficial partnership

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Africa is and will remain a key partner of the EU. As continental neighbours, we are bound together by a shared history, culture and geography. Moreover, the EU and its Member States constitute Africa's biggest partner on all counts in terms of trade, investment, Official Development Assistance (ODA), humanitarian assistance and security. As we emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic and the global economic recession, both the EU and Africa face a growing number of challenges that require a coordinated response. In particular, these challenges relate to: trade, investment, and job creation; education; climate change; health, including access to vaccines; agriculture and food security; sustainable and efficient development cooperation; institution building and good governance; peace and security; increasing geopolitical competition; as well as migration. However, with mounting challenges, a wide range of shared opportunities also emerges. Together, the EU and Africa must seize this moment of opportunity to build back better after COVID-19 and truly deliver on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This will require greater commitment from both sides to form a closer and more effective partnership, based on mutual interest, strategic priorities, structured and effective cooperation, and clear long-term goals. As a guiding principle, the Group of the European People's Party (EPP Group) therefore advocates for an EU-Africa partnership that is based on reciprocity, shared responsibility, solidarity, mutual respect and equality.

The EU has begun to shift away from the increasingly obsolete donor-recipient mentality towards a partnership on equal footing, beginning with the Juncker Commission's Communication on a new Africa-Europe Alliance, followed by the von der Leyen Commission's 2020 Joint Communication "Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa", and reaffirmed by Parliament in the 2021 Strategy for a new EU-Africa Partnership. The EPP Group advocated for this shift, as it allows both sides to pursue their own interests but also to identify common areas of cooperation on which they can work together. It reflects our core values as a centre-right Christian-Democratic political Group: solidarity, subsidiarity and policymaking towards the common good. The EPP Group considers that the challenges outlined above will require the EU and Africa to:

- > Boost trade, investment and job creation
- > Support access to quality education
- > Mitigate and adapt to climate change and respond to environmental challenges
- > Strengthen health systems, pandemic preparedness and local vaccine manufacturing
- > Transform agriculture to ensure food security
- > Ensure development effectiveness and the efficiency of aid
- > Foster institution building and good governance
- > Facilitate lasting peace and security
- > Address geopolitical competition on the African continent
- > Tackle the root causes of migration

## Trade, investment and job creation

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The EPP Group welcomes the EU Trade Strategy of 2021, which places a special focus on Africa by proposing several strands of action to strengthen trade and economic links between our two continents, and reinforcing the EU's engagement with African countries. Notably, with a total of EUR 124 billion of imports from Africa, the EU is already the most open market for African exports - and Europe is by far Africa's largest export market and its main customer. In 2020, total trade in goods between the 27 EU Member States and Africa was worth EUR 225 billion, compared to EUR 115 billion for China and EUR 38 billion for the United States. However, we need to significantly reduce non-tariff barriers to EU-Africa trade in goods and services. That demands dialogue on new product requirements and quality standards introduced by Green Deal legislation as well as new liability obligations for companies, which refer to environmental and social standards.

European companies do not yet make full use of the investment and business opportunities in Africa. As the EPP Group, we are committed to change this trend: by drawing best practices from African frontrunner countries under the G20 "Global Compact for Africa", by providing technical support to change legislative frameworks and to improve the investment climate and by removing obstacles like pushing for double taxation agreements. We also need to adapt. We also need to adapt the work and tools of the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European

Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to the investment needs in Africa, particularly through providing more risk capital and guarantees in order to facilitate large investments while maintaining EU support for smaller scale local projects. In addition, it is crucial that European investments are accompanied by a visible presence of the EU and continuous political dialogue.

The activity of foreign investors as well as the take-off of African businesses is hampered by fragmented markets, inefficient transit regimes and border crossings procedures for goods, services and people, as well as poor implementation of regional integration commitments. The EPP Group calls on the EU, with its experience in developing the European Single Market, to strongly support the regional, economic and political integration in Africa. In particular, the timely, effective and comprehensive implementation of the African Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), the flagship project of the Firts-Ten-Year Implementation Plan (2014-2023) under the African Union's Agenda 2063, which entered into force on 30 May 2019, is of utmost importance. We consider it indispensable for the EU and Africa to boost cross-regional trade; for example, through enhanced political dialogue and cooperation with the African Union and its Member States. We ask existing Economic Partnership Agreements to be examined if they fit and support regional integration and are in line with current EU policies like CO2 reduction targets or the new Common Agricultural Policy.

The EPP Group adheres to the long-term vision of a continent-to-continent free trade agreement. To that end, our close relationship between the EU and the Southern Neighbourhood could serve as a model as it illustrates that trade policy can be an instrument for fostering regional integration and stability as well as creating a win-win situation for Africa and the EU. Therefore, the EPP Group believes that the conclusion of a free trade agreement, covering not only goods but also services, would improve economic development in the Southern Neighbourhood and facilitate European investments.

In addition to trade and investment, job creation is a significant challenge for Africa, as the working age population is expected to grow by 450 million people over a 20-year period, from (2015 to 2035). This population growth as well as demographical trends will significantly

influence a variety of developments, such as the fight against climate change, migration, as well as peace and security. To keep up with the rapidly growing population, millions of new jobs are needed every year in Africa. Through trade and investment, new opportunities will open up for African countries to create jobs. Against this backdrop, the EPP Group finds it even more important that the EU supports the implementation of the AfCFTA and continues to work with African countries on facilitating and promoting private investment on the continent. Particularly, the digital economy in Africa offers prospects for increased job creation. Our African partners are actively seeking the EU's assistance in enhancing Africa's digital infrastructure and ensuring proper connectivity and Internet access across the continent. Therefore, the EPP Group asks the European Commission to put special emphasis on digitalisation under the "Global Gateway Initiative" with regard to Africa.

We welcome the Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP) reform, and we will actively work towards a reform that will make the GSP fit for purpose for the next decade, to continue to help African beneficiary countries build resilience by diversifying their economies, increasing export opportunities and generating jobs and growth. Furthermore, loans and equity finance can be advanced with the European financial institutions, through access to microfinance, which can provide a boost to entrepreneurs, including female entrepreneurs.

At the multilateral level, the World Trade Organization (WTO)-led Aid-for-Trade initiative aims to help developing countries, least developed countries in particular, to build the supply-side capacity and trade-related infrastructure they need to implement and benefit from WTO agreements - and more broadly expand their trade. This initiative is a key component in trade relations with Africa, particularly in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis. The EPP Group therefore reaffirms its support in relation to WTO-led Aid-for-Trade measures between EU and African countries. Furthermore, the EPP Group emphasises the reform and modernisation of the WTO and the WTO rulebook as an important area for EU-AU cooperation and expects that the EU supported WTO Director Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala presents results in this regard.

## Support access to quality education

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As previously mentioned, Africa's population will double by 2050 and a majority of the current population is under the age of 25. Young people are therefore most valuable for Africa to boost economic development. Education is the tool to enable the continent to use this resource. If given the right opportunities, every person can have an impact on progress, sustainable development, and growth. That is why the EPP Group considers that access to quality education for all must be ensured, regardless of gender, socio-economic status, cultural background and religion. Education, including vocational training, is a horizontal and holistic issue that affects every dimension of the SDGs and is essential to accomplish Agenda 2030 as well as to boost African economic development and attract foreign investments. Access to decent work can only be achieved if the work force in Africa will possess the knowledge and skills required by the rapidly changing labour market.

While the state of education has worsened globally due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has had a particularly negative effect on education in Africa, with UNICEF recently estimating that 40% of all school-aged children across Eastern and Southern Africa are unable to attend school due to COVID-19-induced closures. Alarmingly, the World Bank stated that the effect of COVID-19 on education could be felt for decades to come. Despite the fact that the level of investment of African Governments in education stood at 5% of GDP in 2020, which was the second highest of any region, education still suffered. In particular, there is concern with regard to girls' and young women's education access, participation and completion, which highlights a clear gender disparity in educational attainment in Africa. To address these challenges, the EPP Group considers that concrete steps in the field of education are needed; such as, to define benchmarks and indicators to reduce illiteracy and improve the quality of education, as well as to promote and advance gender equality in education in Africa. The EPP Group expects the European Commission to deliver substantial change in the field of access to quality education in Africa. That requires the EU to engage, with not only governments, but also other local organisations, including churches and faith-based organisations providing education. Additionally, significant

investments in infrastructure, electrification, and digitalisation are required to integrate all children and youth into schools.

The EPP Group understands that a lack of coherent regulation on the national level hampers quality education; therefore more efforts are needed to provide technical assistance to our partners. At the same time, we underline the importance of scholarships and academic exchange between youth in Africa and the EU through Erasmus+ and Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs linked with teachers' training in order to strengthen educational structures. It is also important to create stronger linkages between education, skills development and employment to allow the full participation of youth in the labour market. The EPP Group therefore supports and wants to further develop vocational training in Africa. To ensure that these efforts in education and vocational training correspond to employment possibilities, we intend to further encourage investments of European companies in order to generate the required labour demand. To help integration of students into the fast evolving labour market, digital skills need to be taught in school. At the same time, adults should have the opportunity to learn new skills. As such, the EPP Group puts a focus on the concept of lifelong learning.

## Mitigate and adapt to climate change and respond to environmental challenges

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Africa is one of the regions that suffers most from the consequences of climate change while it bears the least responsibility for global warming. Natural disasters have an adverse impact on the lives, livelihoods, homes and ecosystems, as well as on the economy. Furthermore, the impact of climate change will have implications for peace and security as well as migration.

The EPP Group considers it not only an obligation under the Paris and other international agreements, but a moral duty to help African countries to adapt, to establish crisis measures, and to counteract to climate change. This should include, for example, support of nature-based and local solutions like the initiatives around the Great Green Wall project, protection of systemic forests and biodiversity - like with the Congo Bassin initiative, making products deforestation-free and the introduction of climate-resilient agriculture.

Access to energy and the future energy demand are key issues that the EU and Africa should address together. There is huge potential in terms of technology cooperation, renewable energy projects and for clean energy exports in the form of hydrogen. Often, technical advice regarding energy market legislation is needed which should be provided through EU-African cooperation, as well as the development of common standards. The EPP Group points out that sustainable energy cooperation should be one of the main features of the “Global Gateway Initiative” with regard to Africa.

The EPP Group is convinced that the EU should further work together with African countries, regional organisations, and the African Union to foster investment in climate friendly infrastructures and initiatives, sustainable agriculture, waste management and circular economy projects. EU-African partnership should include a strong focus on the sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems; notably, by strengthening legal frameworks and by promoting innovative, climate smart and climate-resilient agriculture, as well as sustainable global value chains, while ensuring a level playing field for companies - notably for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) - in line with the core values of the EPP Group.

Furthermore, as a result of climate change, water risks becoming a scarce resource; therefore the EPP Group asks to attach higher importance to water diplomacy. The EU and Africa should develop together sustainable solutions for water management, such as reservoirs and treatment of wastewater. Climate diplomacy in general must be more effective in order to promote the links between domestic, foreign and international climate policy; in this regard, we reiterate our demand to establish an EU Climate Envoy at cabinet level. Finally, environmental and climate protection initiatives in Africa must be in line with internationally agreed joint objectives, using appropriate instruments like the Emission Trading System.

### **Strengthen health systems, pandemic preparedness and local vaccine manufacturing**

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The global COVID-19 pandemic is not wavering and continued efforts to augment vaccination rates and mitigate the consequences of the pandemic are required. EU efforts to fight the disease have brought

tangible results, but the fight does not stop at our borders. Africa, as an emerging and developing continent, will play a crucial role in the future of the global fight against pandemics and public health challenges. The EU, as Team Europe, has shown unprecedented international solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic, with over 300 million doses shared globally by the end of 2021. The EPP Group welcomes that the EU and its Member States have mobilised EUR 8 billion to help Africa address the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic; have launched an initiative to support Africa’s recovery, i.e., offering financial and technical expertise with particular regard to young entrepreneurs and small businesses; and have strongly committed to cooperate to foster African production of essential medical goods, local production of vaccines and resilient health systems. However, we still believe that more efforts are necessary to facilitate easy and affordable access to vaccines and to healthcare in Africa. These must include active support of an environment that allows setting up capacities for local vaccine manufacturing, and strengthening preparedness, the training of local health professionals and scaling up response capacities - as well as access to medical equipment and supplies to countries with fragile healthcare systems. Additionally, we believe that churches and religious communities should be supported as they can play a key role in cooperating with local communities during the pandemic. To overcome the global pandemic, we need to ensure that our African partners develop capacities to overcome the disease.

### **Transform agriculture to ensure food security**

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For the EPP Group, a common objective for both the EU and Africa should be to transform the way we produce, distribute and consume. This is particularly evident with regard to food. We are far from reaching the goal of SDG 2, i.e., Zero Hunger by 2030, with hunger continuously increasing since 2014. In addition to this, malnutrition rates are very worrying. In fact, both have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Two in every ten people in Africa are undernourished. This challenge will only become more acute due to population growth, with a number of forecasts predicting that the population of Africa will double to 2.5 billion - 20% of the world’s population - by 2050. The EPP Group considers it crucial that the EU and Africa tackle this challenge together. Cooperation

between the EU and its African partners must focus on the central issue of food supply; for example, with targeted investment in a sustainable agricultural revolution that provides African farmers with the means to make farming resistant to climatic related challenges, while improving productivity and increasing the income of smallholder farmers, who form the backbone of African agriculture. In this context we also underline the high potential of Public-Private-Partnership and microfinancing to further empower local farmers. Another challenge in the context of food insecurity is the lack of proper transportation networks. Due to that, farmers are frequently restrained from delivering agricultural products over certain distances. Therefore, the EPP Group encourages further EU engagement to facilitate market access for farmers. Trade by respecting fair conditions is the baseline for European exports and imports, also in case of food and other agricultural products. At the same time, we need to ensure that agricultural exports do not contradict the goal to establish a more resilient food sector in Africa.

Furthermore, to significantly reduce Africa's current dependence on imports of food, seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, the EU can contribute through financial and technical support, policy dialogue, knowledge exchange, new technologies, as well as by promoting African innovation. For example, efforts should focus on access to water, which is the basis of agriculture and food security. In particular, we are in favour of building irrigation systems and seed banks to preserve genetic diversity. These are crucial actions that are of utmost importance to further develop the African agricultural sector, which is one of the most important sources of employment on the continent and offers prospects for people in local communities, particularly women. Thus, with the necessary knowledge and technology at our disposal, the EPP Group calls on Europe and Africa to display the political will to end hunger on the African continent.

## **Ensure development effectiveness and the efficiency of aid**

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The EPP Group is convinced that the EU was correct in deciding on a change of approach towards Africa, starting by moving away from a donor mentality towards a partnership on an equal footing, wherein both sides

pursue their own interests but identify common areas of cooperation on which they work together. The necessity to identify common areas of cooperation is particularly important in development cooperation, in order to ensure development effectiveness and the efficiency of aid. Regrettably, EU development cooperation with Africa is still not sufficiently aligned with partner countries' own efforts and local needs, nor is it sufficiently coordinated with other partners' efforts. In addition to this, we have observed that development cooperation must be better delivered through EU partners' institutions and systems as well as local actors and civil society; for example, civil society and non-governmental organisations, churches and faith-based organisations, ensuring democratic country ownership and the inclusion of all stakeholders. We therefore strongly support the 'Team Europe Approach' whose objective is to combine resources from the EU, its Member States, and financial institutions and which must become the general norm. A flexible approach towards development cooperation making room for innovative development cooperation tools and methods can help to maximise development efficiency and results. On the other side, African Governments have to live up to their responsibilities and create an environment where development cooperation can have a real impact.

Thus, to build back better after the COVID-19 pandemic and address the major challenges in post-COVID Africa, the EU should use its powerful toolbox of instruments and aid modalities in a coordinated manner to allow task sharing and avoid fragmentation of aid, and identify priorities where it can effectively provide the greatest value added impact. The EU should consider possible new avenues to achieve better aid efficiency; such as, to make development aid conditional on cooperation with the EU on issues such as human rights, democracy, good governance, the fight against human trafficking, illicit trade in weapons, and migration management, as well as to increase the joint programming of development cooperation between EU Member States. The EPP Group advocates for a regular review with our partner countries on jointly agreed development objectives in order to address shortcomings; we advocate also ending cooperation if breaches of agreed objectives happen over a longer period of time. The EPP Group emphasises in this regard that the mentioned values of human rights, democracy and good governance are mutually beneficial. Furthermore, the EU should make use of the expertise of smaller

EU and African actors, such as civil society and non-governmental organisations and SMEs, within the EU-Africa agenda. Diversifying partnerships between well-established traditional actors and qualified newcomers with valuable niche expertise would positively affect development cooperation efficiency and ownership of the agenda among EU Member States and African countries.

## **Foster institution building and good governance**

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Weak governance, fragile state structures, a lack of access to public services and serious deficiencies in respect of democracy and the rule of law - notably corruption - are acute problems in some African countries that hamper sustainable development. These deficiencies have an impact on the scarcity and inefficiency of basic public services, such as education, health, public administration, justice and security, among others. Therefore, the EU must contribute to the strengthening of institutions and governance, as well as combatting corruption and illicit financial flows in African states. By promoting institution building, African citizens will get access to better quality public services.

The EPP Group believes that it is not a question of exporting or imposing institutions, but rather contributing to the proper functioning of already existing public administrations. It is important to ensure that state structures are established throughout the whole territory of African states, particularly in the most peripheral regions where citizens may feel most abandoned. Institution building and the consequent access of citizens to public services will not only contribute to greater respect for human rights, but also to increasing citizens' trust in the state. This trust is essential for raising of public revenues.

## **Facilitate lasting peace and security**

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It is of fundamental importance to both our continents that lasting peace and security is achieved and maintained in Africa. Peace and security are not only essential to achieve long-term sustainable development in Africa, enabling cross-regional and intra-African trade, investment, and large-scale job creation, ensuring food security, providing education, but also to ensure Europe's

security and prevent irregular migration. The EPP Group sees several obstacles to peace and security on the African continent; notably, the situation in the Great Lakes Region, the ongoing conflict in Tigray, Ethiopia, as well as in Mozambique's northern province of Cabo Delgado.

The Sahel region, which stretches from Mauritania to Sudan and is home to 150 million people, is of particular concern in relation to peace and security and plays an important role from a strategic and security point of view, but also in terms of EU border management as it is a major transit zone towards EU external borders. Growing state fragility in that region as illustrated by the coups in Mali, Sudan and Burkina Faso, pose a particular threat to stability. Furthermore, increasing activities of armed groups affiliated to the so-called Islamic State in the Sahel region, but also throughout the African continent, and their aim to build a new, so-called caliphate in areas of failing or absent statehood, as is happening currently in the Lake Chad Basin, threaten African and European security alike. Unfortunately, however, despite the EU and its Member States considerable efforts to ensure stability, the security situation is worsening and the region, already blighted by endemic poverty, inequality, and social and political exclusion, continues to suffer from the deteriorating situation. Besides the Sahel region, other areas of strategic importance for the EU are the Horn of Africa and the Gulf of Guinea, where piracy has been on the increase over the last years. In that context, the EPP Group highlights and expresses its strong support for the EU Special Representative for the Sahel and the EU Special Representative for the Horn of Africa with regard to fostering peace and security - as well as stability and development in Africa.

The EPP Group also considers that Islamist terrorism continues to pose a severe security challenge, as well as the persecution of Christians and other religious groups on the continent. Furthermore, radicalisation, which is mostly affecting young people, should be addressed by improving governance and securing access to education. We also take note of the fact that competition for scarce resources is increasing, which is aggravated by climate change. This could intensify existing inter-ethnic conflicts and increase military conflicts over resources such as land or water, which could further destabilise the affected countries. Additionally, unlawful military transitions, transitional organised crime, bad governance, ethnic conflicts and human rights abuses pose a threat to fragile and developing states, which struggle

to provide the necessary security to their citizens. It is therefore important to build and strengthen democratic structures in Africa.

European and international assistance is vital for enabling African countries to guarantee their own security. Within the framework of its Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the EU is currently engaged in 11 military operations and civilian missions in Africa. However, additional actions are necessary to further develop the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). While the EU with its CSDP already substantially contributes to conflict prevention and peacebuilding across the African continent, African countries are also required to establish the necessary conditions in order to ensure success of the joint efforts. In particular, with regard to the APSA, strengthening capacities in the areas of conflict prevention, conflict transformation and peacebuilding as well as fostering the capacities of the regional Economic Communities and their regional mechanisms in these areas, is important. In this context, we strongly welcome the continuous efforts of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) to protect and defend democracy and stability. We further stress the need for full stakeholder involvement in conflict resolution if peace is to be sustainable. In that regard, the EPP Group reiterates its support for UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolutions 1325 and 2250 and the full involvement of both women and youth in peace processes on the African continent. Additionally, churches and religious leaders play a crucial role notably in conflict mediation, peacebuilding and reconciliation, particularly by facilitating inter-religious dialogue.

Security sector reforms should put special emphasis on the fight against corruption within the armed forces, as well as to ensure their adherence to international humanitarian law. Furthermore, the EPP Group also encourages the African Union to improve the coherence of its Political Security Committee with the UN Security Council guidelines in order to give African countries a stronger presence in the UNSC. As the EPP Group, we remain committed to strong European engagement in African security based on an integrated, properly coordinated approach, guided by the principle of enabling Africa to assume responsibility for its own security. As such, the EPP Group considers it necessary to assess the CSDP operations and missions regularly in relation to their respective objectives and

their contribution to the overall integrated approach of the EU. In addition, we encourage the deployment of the European Peace Facility (EPF), which covers military and defence implications expenditures through national budgets by EU Member States to support military peace support operations in African partner countries and regions, while ensuring human rights. Addressing conflict and fragility is key to meeting commitments as regards Agenda 2030 and to ensure that no one will be left behind. Therefore, we advocate for a more integrated approach between humanitarian assistance, development cooperation and peacebuilding by developing an extensive policy framework - a 'triple nexus'.

Furthermore, when it comes to security, individual security and safety is equally as crucial as securing nations and continents. The EPP Group is committed to tackling violence against women and girls on the African continent through bilateral and multilateral fora, including the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative. The drive to tackle sexual and gender-based violence, including trafficking, female genital mutilation and child, early and forced marriages, is imperative.

## **Address geopolitical competition on the African continent**

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The EPP Group notes the increasing geopolitical competition and growing presence of other actors in Africa, most notably China and Russia, but regards their economic and military presence and activities without any 'normative restraints', in many respects, as a non-viable contribution to a long-term sustainable economic and social development. The EPP Group deems any one-sided economic, financial and technical dependence that lacks a focus on the rule of law and the fight against corruption as a counterproductive approach to improve the general living conditions of African citizens. Furthermore, China uses its influence and the dependencies of African states to advance its own political agenda by securing African support for its policies towards its neighbours at the level of the United Nations. In fact, this trend has been more obvious during the COVID-19 pandemic, during which countries relied on quick loans and medical supplies from China to mitigate negative socio-economic consequences.

In addition to China, Russia is becoming more involved on the continent, particularly in the field of defence and security, including arms trade. This was clearly marked with the first Russia-Africa Summit held in October 2019, whereupon Russian President Vladimir Putin agreed on military technical cooperation agreements with more than 30 African states, as well as with the recent signing of military cooperation agreements with Nigeria and Ethiopia. Furthermore, Russia makes use of private and clandestine actors, the so-called “Wagner Group”, in Africa to advance its own geopolitical objectives while lacking a positive agenda for the African continent. Military cooperation of African Governments with Russia is incompatible with a simultaneous security and defence cooperation with the EU as it threatens to aggravate instability and to undermine European security efforts in Africa. Therefore, we consider it imperative to closely monitor these activities and to reassess EU cooperation with the respective countries. Furthermore, such growing presence of external actors that follows primarily economic and geopolitical objectives requires an EU counter strategy to preserve the achievements of EU efforts in Africa, to defend its interests, as well as to increase its visibility.

For the EPP Group, such a strategy would far more emphasise the cooperation of African civil society and their European partners through a narrative that clearly outlines the achievements and lasting benefits of close cooperation with European actors. Based on the full respect for human rights, media freedom and accountability, transparent and responsive governance, and the fight against corruption, which are key elements for ensuring a stable and inclusive political, social and economic environment in Africa, the EU must coordinate with countries truly interested in a prosperous and positive long-term development of the African continent. As the EU, we must offer sustainable alternatives for our partner countries as laid out, for instance, in the Global Gateway Strategy, which aims at boosting investments in infrastructure and decreasing foreign dependencies. Furthermore, the EU needs to strengthen its political profile and visibility.

## **Address the root causes of migration**

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Migration from Africa is a challenge and opportunity for Europe. Underlying trends

in economic development, demographic changes, globalisation, transport and communication, and political instability mean that Africans will continue to attempt to enter the EU in any way possible to seek refuge, find a better life; i.e., economic migration, or unite with their families. Yet, most African migration takes place within the continent. To avoid that Africans are being forced to leave their homes in the first place, the EPP Group considers it imperative that the EU and Africa tackle the root causes of migration jointly. If the challenges mentioned above – trade, investment and job creation; access to quality education; adaption to climate change and environmental challenges; strengthening of health systems; agricultural transformation; development effectiveness and the efficiency of aid; institution building and good governance; peace and security; the geopolitical competition in Africa continent – are properly addressed, African migration to Europe can be significantly stemmed. Both continents should strengthen their cooperation on the basis of respect for human rights and international law, the principles of cooperation, solidarity, and shared responsibility. Thus, in terms of concrete action, the EU should work closely together with African authorities to tackle the root causes of migration; deliver an effective legal migration policy; take into account migration policy when developing EU development cooperation; enhance cooperation on border management; fight against traffickers and smugglers involved in illegal migration; as well as to conclude return and readmission agreements between the EU and Africa – possibly including informal agreements.

## **Delivering on strategic priorities and achieving tangible results**

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African security and stability is crucial for the European Union. We need a new approach to develop democratic multilateralism further in order to address common challenges and cooperate closely with African countries, which are important international partners and actors. This paper has identified ten areas of challenges and opportunities for the EU and Africa, as well as pointing out priority actions to seize these opportunities and address the common challenges. To ensure that the EU and Africa will deliver on the strategic priorities outlined above and achieve tangible results, the EPP Group believes that both the EU

and Africa must fulfil certain preconditions. First, the EU and Africa must fully commit to a strategic partnership that should pave the way towards a partnership of true equals, wherein both sides increasingly move beyond the donor-recipient relationship, basing their relationship on the guiding principles of reciprocity, mutual benefit, shared responsibility and solidarity. Second, the EU Institutions and the Member States must act more coherently and unified in their relations with the African continent, working together in close cooperation on common priorities. Third, and finally, the EU and Africa must strive to better coordinate on converging interests and jointly identify concrete long-term goals, structure cooperation and increase the frequency of dialogue at all levels of government, including a deepened Parliamentary dimension of cooperation. The EPP Group is convinced that a combination of this approach and the strategic priorities outlined above will enable the EU and Africa to build back better following the COVID-19 pandemic and achieve tangible results to the benefit of both continents and their populations.