

FOREWORD

This issue of *Estratégia*, “Global Challenges and Europe-Africa Relations: One Year after the Joint Strategy”, draws on papers issued by institutions that belong to EARN¹, the Europe-Africa Research Policy Network, and on presentations made by participants at two international seminars held in Lisbon during the second semester of 2007.

EARN is a non-governmental initiative from African and European institutes, centres and networks aiming to contribute to the *EU-Africa Political Dialogue*. It was launched in Lisbon, on the eve of the 2nd European Union-Africa Summit of Heads of State and Government, at a public conference organised by the Institute for Strategic and International Studies (IEEI) and the European Centre for Development Policy Management (ECDPM), with the support of the Portuguese Presidency of the EU.

The *vision* of the network is of an effective political dialogue between Europe and Africa to help increase relations, to face common challenges and to foster peaceful and sustainable development in both continents. Its *mission* is to contribute to these goals by strengthening Euro-African partnerships among non-governmental actors, through networking, joint activities and the development of knowledge and institutional capacities. Its *objectives* are to debate and to suggest common actions on concerns which arise from bilateral relations as well as from global or local challenges on various fields – human security and violent conflict, diverse and contradictory policies, issues of global governance, climate change and energy, poverty and inequalities, just to name a few.

The *programmes, activities and outputs* of EARN are organised around two axes: policy research and information and dialogue. The *policy research programme* includes a number of papers and workshops, the annual conference of the network and one annual report on EU-Africa Political Dialogue. The *information and dialogue programme* consists of a website that includes an electronic dialogue forum and a listing of publications and dissemination activities. Research activities, including papers and workshops are organised around four thematic and one overarching *working groups*: (i) peace and security; (ii) governance; (iii) trade and regional integration; (iv) poverty reduction and development and (v) EU-Africa Partnership and Global Issues. EARN members choose to participate in one or more of the working groups.

The *organisation and governance* of the network consists of a Steering Committee and a Coordination Team. The Steering Committee is composed by leaders of the working groups (one African, one European) and led by a Chair and two co-Chairs. The Coordination Team is composed by a team of people working for the network coming from the Steering Committee chair institutes. The budget and the plan of action are managed by the Coordination Team under the supervision of the Steering Committee.

Membership is decided by the Steering Committee upon suggestion from members or on direct request from candidates. Admission criteria requires candidates to be non-governmental organisations, with intellectual and operational independence. EARN

¹ EARN is the acronym for European Union – Africa Policy Oriented Research Network.

favours up comers from a broad range of fields – academic, development, humanitarian, political, security – in order to allow a diversity of perspectives based on up-to-date and accurate information.

The *added value* of EARN results not only from its goals, composition and outputs, but also from its focus and approach. Its *focus* is on challenges that affect both continents, in order to increase reciprocal awareness of realities and to foster debate on common concerns and possible answers. Its *approach* is policy-oriented in order to inform public opinion and decision-makers on analysis and proposals from non-governmental actors. Accordingly, EARN is interested in participating in a number of Partnership Actions envisaged in the Strategic Partnership and the Plan of Action of the 2007 Lisbon Summit. However, the activities of EARN will also cut across various fields envisaged in the partnerships and priorities of the Plan of Action, allowing for more global and non-sector based approaches, avoiding donor-recipient or recipient-donor attitudes and building working partnerships amongst African and European institutions, researchers, practitioners and policy-makers.

Fernando Jorge Cardoso