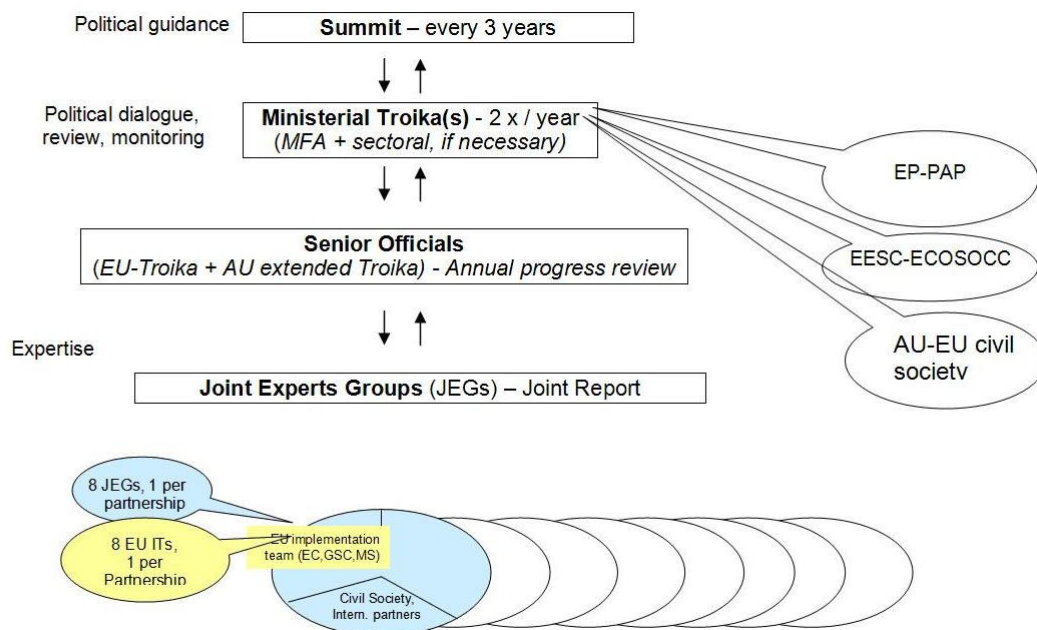


José Briosa e Gala*

Major Achievements and Constraints in the Implementation of the Joint Strategy and its First Action Plan (2008-2010)

The EU-Africa Joint Strategy represents an *ambitious policy framework*. It establishes a *Strategic Partnership* between equals, moving away from the traditional donor – beneficiary relation. It also provides a *Political Dialogue* for the discussion of issues of common concern (eg. regional integration); for reaching a joint response to global challenges (eg. climate change, energy, peace & security); for promoting key issues for development (eg. Millennium Development Goals, governance); for tackling new areas of cooperation: Science & Technology, space, information society; and also for promoting a broad-based people-centred partnership. In that context, it has created 8 thematic partnerships for concrete action with tangible results.

The *institutional architecture* is complex and multi-layered:



* European Commission President’s Special Advisor and Personal Representative for Africa. This paper is an adaptation of a powerpoint presentation at the EARN Roundtable on “The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership: one year after Lisbon”, held at Chatham House, London, 12 December 2008

The first *key achievements in 2008* are threefold: the existence of an extended AU-EU political dialogue and cooperation, the setting up of the institutional architecture and innovative working arrangements (Joint Expert Groups – JEGs) which represents the biggest ever division of labour endeavour, as well as initial progress on substance in each of the 8 thematic partnerships.

The *AU-EU Political Dialogue* has been open and frank, on a wide variety of topics:

- Implementation of the Action Plan and its 8 thematic partnership
- Crisis situations in Africa (eg. Mauritania) and beyond (eg. Georgia)
- Issues of global concern (eg. financial / food crisis, Energy)
- Issues of specific concern to one of the parties (eg. Principle of Universal Jurisdiction)

Regarding the *setting up of the institutional arrangements*, we can point out:

- *A strong effort and increased coherence at EU level:* strengthening of the Commission Africa inter-service group (>20 Directorates-General), reinforcement of the coordinating mandate of Council Africa working group, the establishment of a ‘Double-hat’ EU Delegation to the African Union in Addis Ababa (which provides for an interface with the AU and the African Union Commission), as well as several meetings of EU Implementation Teams with active participation of Member States. This is also a test case for policy coherence, aid effectiveness and division of labour within the EU.
- *At AU level,* a new AU Commission was elected in February 2008 (in office since April) and there is a strong commitment to the Africa-EU Partnership, illustrated by the involvement of inter-service group set up between the various AUC Directorates and by the recent designation of African co-chairs for the Joint Expert Groups, beyond the African Union Commission.
- *At joint AU-EU level,* an endorsement of the institutional architecture was made at the Ministerial Troika held on 16th September 2008. The first meetings of the informal joint expert groups on the 8 thematic partnerships were held in October and November, followed by a Ministerial Troika in 20-21 November, which endorsed the first joint progress report, communiqué and guidelines for JEGs.

The progress on the eight partnerships is mixed. Some major achievements have been made on *Peace & Security*, with the first joint meeting of EU Political and Security Committee and the AU Peace and Security Council on September 2008, the launch of Amani Africa / Euro-Recamp training cycle for the African Stand-by Force, the agreement on the new African Peace Facility (APF), involving €300 million, and an enhanced cooperation between EU-AU situation centres.

Initial progress on substance has also been made on *energy*, with the visit of EU Commissioners Michel and Piebalgs to Africa, resulting in a joint EC-AUC Statement on actions in favour of energy access and services in Africa plus energy security. On *climate change*, the two parties issued a Joint Africa-EU Declaration, ahead of Poznan UNFCCC.

There are, however, some *constraints and challenges* ahead, of which we can name a few:

- a) Need to *move quickly* from process to concrete action & deliverables, from diplomatic to expert level (in joint expert groups), *and* from a Commission to a more Member State-driven dynamic
- b) Need to *keep the political momentum and deliver concrete results*, particularly in three defining moments: by the next Troika Ministerial to be held in Luxembourg on the 28th April 2009, by the 2009 mid-term review of the Action Plan (under Swedish presidency of the EU), and by the 2010 3rd Africa-EU Summit
- c) Need to *better involve* a multitude of actors: the Member States (AU / EU), the African Regional Economic Communities (RECs), the European and Panafrikan Parliaments, the Economic and Social committees (EESC, ECOSOCC), other international partners (particularly the United Nations, The African Development Bank and the International Financial Institutions), and the existing EC Delegations in Africa
- d) Need to *go beyond institutions* and better integrate civil society, the private sector and the local authorities
- e) Need to *finance the implementation architecture* (eg. participation of civil society; experts)
- f) Need to *establish clear a implementation roadmap* for the eight partnerships: identify actors, (financial) resources, calendars, deliverables (Commissions, Member States, other actors)
- g) Need for *JEGs to address all agreed priority actions* (eg. not migration to the detriment of employment)
- h) Need for *EU Member States to increase their financial commitments to Africa* in line with international commitments established by the agreed documents such as the Paris Declaration (2005), the Accra Conference on aid effectiveness (2008) and the Monterrey and Doha meetings on financing for development (2002 and 2008)
- i) Need for *EU Member States to address the regional and continental dimension* of the Partnership, beyond bilateral cooperation
- j) On the *AU side, need to mobilise Member States* beyond South Africa and North African countries in steering the thematic partnerships
- k) Need for *African partners to deliver own contributions* at policy, regulatory, and financial levels, amongst others.

In conclusion, the Africa-EU partnership is ambitious and substantial in its contents and has established an innovative working method (division of labour). Simultaneously it entails a very challenging timeframe and the difficulty of involving multiple stakeholders. In order to ensure its success, the political ambition must be matched with the necessary resources and there is a need to make the «people-centred» dimension an effective reality.