

European Union and the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States commence negotiations on a new Partnership Agreement

The countries in the EU and the ACP represent more than half of all UN member countries and unite over 1.5 billion people. The current partnership, governed by the Cotonou agreement, is one of the longest-standing and most comprehensive framework for cooperation between the EU and developing countries. The current agreement expires in 2020.

To mark the opening of the first round of political negotiations in New York, in the margins of United Nations General Assembly, the EU's Chief Negotiator, Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven **Mimica**, said: *"The partnership between the EU and the countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, is an asset for the EU and multilateralism at large. The revision of the existing agreement is a great opportunity to further deepen the partnership and modernise it in response to global developments such as the UN 2030 Agenda or the Paris Agreement on climate change."*

In turn, Professor Robert **Dussey**, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Togo and Chief negotiator for the ACP Group of States, recalled that: *"The connection between the ACP Group and the EU was established in 1975 in first Article of the Georgetown Agreement, the Constitutive Act of the ACP Group"*. He underlined that: *"the ACP-EU partnership is a valuable and unique achievement that has strengthened bonds between ACP and EU peoples and countries throughout the last 45 years of its existence. The opening of the negotiations today heralds the continuity of trust and confidence cherished by parties to this Partnership"*.

The partnership seeks closer political cooperation on the world stage to tackle major global challenges, aiming to be a shining example of multilateralism as the cornerstone of a rule-based world order. In concrete terms, this will notably mean working jointly towards the Sustainable Development Goals. It will also guide the partnership countries' joint efforts to address pressing challenges such as climate change, migration and peace and security. To have the intended impact, the future partnership will adapt to the new realities in the European Union, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific, taking into account geographical specificities. The future partnership will aim at facilitating strong alliance-building in global forums and address key issues from which current and future generations alike can benefit.

For More Information

[MEMO Q&A on the future EU-ACP partnership](#)

Questions and answers: New ACP-EU Partnership after 2020

What is the Cotonou Partnership Agreement between the EU and African, Caribbean and Pacific countries?

The Cotonou Partnership Agreement is the legal framework ruling relations between the EU and 79 countries in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific (ACP). It is one of the oldest and most comprehensive frameworks of cooperation between the EU and third countries. Signed in 2000 for a period of 20 years, the Agreement unites more than one hundred countries (EU member states + 79 ACP countries) and represents over 1.5 billion people.

The EU-ACP partnership focuses on the eradication of poverty and inclusive sustainable development for ACP and EU countries. It is divided into three key action areas: development co-operation, political dialogue and trade.

[Cotonou Agreement](#) (available in all 24 EU languages)

Why does it need to be modernised and why is this important?

The world has changed considerably since the Cotonou Agreement was adopted almost two decades ago. Global and regional contexts (in Europe, Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific) have evolved significantly – and so have the common global challenges to be addressed and opportunities to be grasped. Thus, the core objectives of the partnership have to be reviewed to adapt to the new realities. The EU is therefore seeking a comprehensive political agreement, setting a modern agenda framed by the internationally agreed sustainable development roadmaps (the UN 2030 Agenda – SDGs, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement, the New EU Consensus on Development, the Global Strategy on EU Foreign and Security Policy, etc.). The coming months will be crucial, as we are about to enter a new era in our relationship with ACP countries. The negotiations will pave the way for new dynamics and cooperation going beyond the traditional development dimension.

What are the potential benefits? What kind of change will a new era of EU-ACP relations bring for people?

Building on the lessons learned during our 44 years of cooperation and making the most of the new context, the future agreement can bring unprecedented opportunities. By setting up a powerful political alliance, the EU and its partners will be in a position to develop solutions to the challenges faced in each region. These include growth and job creation, human development and peace, migration and security issues. Many of today's challenges of a global

dimension require a concerted, multilateral approach, in order to achieve tangible results. In 2015 we set up a successful coalition that ultimately led to the conclusion of the Paris Agreement on climate change. This shows that the ACP-EU partnership has the power to provide valuable responses to global challenges. If we join forces, we can form a majority worldwide, as the EU and ACP countries represent more than half of the UN membership. Together, we can make a difference and set a global agenda in international forums. Under the negotiating directives, the EU's strategic priorities include:

- speeding up progress towards meeting the goals of UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and eradicating poverty in all its dimensions;
- moving inclusive, sustainable and economic development forward;
- building stronger states and societies (through peace, security, justice and fighting against terrorism);
- supporting private sector development and enhancing regional integration;
- promoting and upholding human rights, fundamental freedoms, democracy, the rule of law and good governance;
- managing mobility and migration issues;
- supporting the transition to low greenhouse gas emissions and developing climate resilient economies;
- ensuring environmental sustainability and sustainable management of natural resources.

How do EU and ACP countries intend to achieve these objectives?

Through a new structure better adapted to each region's needs. Our new partnership can act as a powerful tool to strengthen our relations with the countries as a group, as well as with each "region" (namely Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific), and to focus on key tailored priorities. This will also allow for the further development of our "continent-to-continent" relationship with Africa.

The proposed new structure consists of a combination of:

- a common foundation agreement (containing values & principles common to the EU and Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific, and the overarching objectives) at EU-ACP level;
- three strengthened regional partnerships (EU-Africa, EU-Caribbean, EU-Pacific), in the form of specific protocols. These three strong, action-oriented pillars will enable the relevant actors to participate in the negotiation, governance and implementation of the future partnership while respecting the subsidiarity principle.

These three "regions" will manage the flexible regional partnerships

themselves, providing for a greater role for the relevant regional organisations in the establishment and management of the future regional partnerships.

What are the specific priorities proposed towards the African region?

The priorities proposed by the European Union for the EU Africa partnership are to focus on achieving peace and stability, managing migration and mobility, consolidating democracy and good governance, unleashing economic opportunities, reaching human development standards, and addressing climate change. The proposal is fully in line with the outcome of the [African Union-European Union Summit](#) held in November 2017 in Abidjan.

What is the link between the future ACP-EU Partnership and the new Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs announced by President Juncker?

The new [Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#) aims to bring our continents closer together by promoting a substantial increase in private investment from both Europeans and Africans, helping improve the business environment, boosting trade and job creation, while supporting education and skills that will benefit European and African people alike.

It will therefore contribute to the economic agenda of the African regional pillar of the future ACP-EU Partnership will be developed.

Increasing responsible investment in Africa, especially in sectors where the European Union has a value added, is among the EU's key priorities. The new Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs is not a stand-alone initiative. It is part of the wider set of strategic frameworks and a crucial element to deliver on the AU-EU Abidjan Summit Declaration.

What are the specific priorities proposed for the Caribbean region?

The key areas of cooperation for the regional partnership with the Caribbean include addressing climate change, vulnerability, citizen security, good governance, human rights, human development and social cohesion. In the same way, fostering inclusive growth, deepening regional integration and ocean governance as well as reducing natural disasters effects are also high on the agenda.

What are the specific priorities proposed for the Pacific region?

The large number of island nations and their huge maritime territories make the Pacific countries an important player for the EU in tackling global challenges, particularly with respect to their vulnerability to natural disasters and climate change. Other priorities should focus on maritime security, sustainable management of natural resources, good governance, human rights, especially gender equality, and inclusive sustainable growth.

Will regional organisations have a role in the post-2020 partnership?

The growth of regional bodies has been a significant trend since the 1990s.

Across the ACP countries, numerous regional organisations have emerged. Some have become key actors in international relations. The African Union, the Pacific Islands Forum and Cariforum especially have strengthened their respective roles, as have sub-regional organisations in Africa, including ECOWAS and SADC. The EU and the ACP countries will continue to rely on a multi-level system of governance that allows taking action at the most appropriate level (national, regional, continental or ACP), in line with the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity.

Will non-state actors have a role in the agreement?

The EU values structured dialogue and is in favour of a multi-stakeholder approach that includes non-state actors – the private sector, civil society, and local authorities. These partners should be able to work in an enabling environment and have the opportunity to make a meaningful contribution to national, regional and global decision making.

Observer status

The Agreement should include a provision establishing that third parties that subscribe to the values and principles underpinning the Agreement and have an added value in fostering the specific objectives and priorities of the Partnership may be granted observer status.

Who is the EU's chief negotiator?

The EU chief negotiator is Commissioner for International Cooperation and Development, Neven Mimica. Negotiations are carried out in close collaboration with the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini.

Who is negotiating on behalf of the ACP group of states?

The central negotiating group is composed of representatives from the three regions (Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific) and is led by the Hon. Robert Dussey, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration of Togo.

Where are the negotiations taking place?

In the EU and ACP countries.

How long should the negotiations last?

The Cotonou Agreement is due to expire on 29 February 2020. Therefore, the new agreement would need to be both finalised and approved by then.

How long will the new agreement last?

It will be proposed that the future EU-ACP partnership would be concluded for an initial period of 20 years. Three years before its expiry, a process should be initiated to re-examine what provisions should govern future relations. Unless a decision on terminating or extending the agreement is

taken by the Parties, the agreement will be tacitly renewed for a maximum period of 5 years, until new provisions or adaptations have been agreed upon by all Parties. The agreement should also include a “rendez-vous” clause for a comprehensive revision of the strategic priorities, after the expiration of the UN 2030 Agenda.

Are the negotiating directives public?

Yes. The EU negotiation directives are available [here](#).

For more information

[Press release – New ACP-EU Partnership: Chief negotiators agree on economic priorities for future agreement](#)

[Press release – New ACP-EU Partnership: Chief negotiators conclude successful series of regional consultations, culminating with African leaders’ meeting](#)

[Press release – New ACP-EU partnership: EU discusses future EU-Caribbean relations](#)

[Press release – New ACP-EU Partnership: EU and ACP Leaders intensify the regional talks in Samoa](#)

Main topics and media events 1 – 14 October 2018

Overview of the main subjects to be discussed at meetings of the Council of the EU over the next two weeks.

Economic and Financial Affairs Council, Tuesday 2 October 2018

Ministers will receive a presentation by the Commission on its proposal for supervision of anti-money laundering threats and will discuss indirect taxation matters.

Environment Council, Tuesday 9 October 2018

Environment ministers will aim to reach a general approach on CO2 standards for cars and vans, and will hold a policy debate on CO2 standards for heavy-duty vehicles. The Council is due to adopt conclusions on climate change and on biodiversity.

Justice and Home Affairs Council (Justice), Thursday 11 October 2018

The Council is expected to adopt a general approach on the directive on insolvency, restructuring and second chance. It will also discuss the e-evidence package, as well as the issue of mutual recognition in criminal matters and the implementation of the EPP0 regulation.

Justice and Home Affairs Council (Home), Friday 12 October 2018

Home affairs ministers are expected to discuss Commission proposals on the European Border and Coast Guard Agency and on return. They will also exchange views on the Multiannual Financial Framework in the field of home affairs. The Presidency is expected to report on progress on asylum reform.

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Georgia: EIB supports hundreds of small and medium-sized businesses and water projects



- EUR 30m loan is expected to improve access to finance for around 600 SMEs
- This is the fourth EIB Group operation with TBC – the largest bank in Georgia
- Signature of EU grant of EUR 3.25m to support water projects in Georgia

The European Investment Bank (EIB) has agreed to lend EUR 30m to TBC Bank, the largest bank in Georgia, in order to broaden the access to finance of Georgian small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), which represent more than 90% of companies active in the country. The EIB funds will be provided in the framework of the European Union's EU4Business initiative, designed to support SMEs in the six Eastern Partnership countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine). Around 600 Georgian SMEs are expected to benefit from the loan.

The EU bank has signed with the Georgian Ministry of Regional Development and the Georgian water utility company, the United Water Supply Company of Georgia, an Eastern Partnership Technical Assistance Trust Fund (EPTATF) Grant Agreement for an amount of EUR 3.25m. These funds will be used for the financing of specialised professional services to support the utility in the implementation of the EIB Kutaisi Waste Water project.

Under a finance contract dated 15 October 2015, the EU bank made available to

the Georgian Ministry of Regional Development a loan of up to EUR 100m, which will improve the wastewater collection and treatment in Kutaisi. The project is part of Georgia's Water Sector Rehabilitation Program which consists in a series of investments that aim at improving water supply in Kutaisi, Ureki, Poti and Zugdidi and wastewater collection and treatment in Kutaisi, Ureki and Poti (Kutaisi Waste Water project).

EIB Vice-President Vazil Hudák commented: *"thanks to the EIB support, Georgian SMEs will improve their access to longer term finance, which is a prerequisite for their growth and competitiveness. Our fourth loan with TBC Bank is expected to support the development of approximately 600 small and medium size companies, by giving them better access to finance. We hope this will promote job creation and foster the general development of Georgia's economy".* On the grant signature VP Hudak acknowledged the importance of the blending schemes by saying: *"to implement the water sector projects in Georgia in more efficient way, we are combining our lending with EU grants. With today's signature, it is the region of Kutaisi which will benefit from a modern water network and increased quality of water systems, backed by European financing".*

Georgia's Minister of Regional Development and Infrastructure, Maya Tskitishvili, commented: *"The EIB is one of our largest financing partners for infrastructure projects. To date, it has provided around EUR 1.3 billion to support various public infrastructure projects, including roads, municipal amenities and water and wastewater facilities. Today we have signed a grant agreement with the EIB for the financing of the Kutaisi Wastewater Project. Kutaisi is the country's second largest city and this project will enable us to provide better living conditions for the local population. We are currently completing the final phase of preparatory works for the project and the actual construction will commence in 2019. This is the third project in the water sector that is being implemented with the support of our European partners and we hope that our fruitful cooperation will serve as a basis for financing other priority infrastructure projects in Georgia. The support provided by the EU and its Member States through different instruments available within the framework of the Eastern Partnership Trust Fund and Neighbourhood Investment Facility is hugely valued and makes an important contribution to the development of our country."*

"We are proud to have built such a successful relationship with the EIB, TBC Bank's long standing partner. This is already the fourth transaction we have successfully accomplished since the launch of our partnership in 2012, which is a testament to the truly efficient working relationship our respective organisations have formed. This facility will help TBC Bank to further strengthen its leading position in the Georgian small and medium-sized enterprises (SME) segment," stated **Vakhtang Butskhrikidze, CEO of TBC Bank.**

This is the fourth EIB Group operation with TBC Bank and builds upon the fruitful cooperation of the EU bank with this Georgian institution. Since 2011, TBC Bank has on-lent EIB funds for SMEs totalling EUR 85m.

The EIB loan can be combined with portfolio guarantees supporting SMEs which were extended to TBC Bank last year through two instruments also promoted

under the EU4Business Initiative: the InnovFin portfolio guarantee, supporting innovative SMEs, and the DCFTA Initiative East portfolio guarantee, unlocking additional financing for small businesses. The overall objective is to allow TBC Bank to extend financing on favourable terms to a broader group of small and medium-sized companies that would otherwise have limited access to the bank's lending.

In these operations, the EIB has joined forces with the European Union to strengthen economic development in the countries that have signed Association Agreements with the EU – namely Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine – by providing financial and technical support targeted at SMEs in these three countries. The EU supports private sector development in the Eastern Partnership countries by enhancing access to finance for SMEs, improving the business environment and providing advisory services to local businesses.

Speech by Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Vytenis Andriukaitis at the United Nations General Assembly High – Level Meeting on Tuberculosis

Ms President, Excellencies, Distinguished Guests,

I am honoured to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

Tuberculosis remains the world's deadliest infectious disease. It is also preventable and curable. We must strengthen the response and ensure universal access to prevention, diagnostics, treatment and care, including for the most vulnerable.

We welcome the political declaration of this High-Level Meeting as a concise and action oriented document that calls for an accelerated response and renewed commitment. We would like to thank the co-facilitators of Antigua and Barbuda and Japan, for their able leadership in the negotiations

In the European Union, we have countries with very low tuberculosis incidence, close to tuberculosis elimination, and countries with high tuberculosis incidence. Many countries also face additional challenges, including multi-drug resistance and particular vulnerabilities of people infected with HIV and hepatitis. Despite recent progress, especially in the EU, sustained efforts are needed if Europe as a region is to meet the 2030 targets and eradicate tuberculosis.

Tuberculosis continues to affect disproportionately the most vulnerable – the poor, the homeless, and the socially marginalised, including people infected

with HIV. As such, health and social policies must work hand in hand and we must reach those most at risk.

Strengthening public health systems is paramount. Strong health systems and affordable access to health services, including prevention, diagnostics and treatment, should be the cornerstones of the response. We welcome the development of national and regional tuberculosis strategies addressing the challenges and capacities of each country, and acceleration of plans to achieve universal health coverage.

We recognise that multi-drug resistant tuberculosis is a global health threat. Resistance to antimicrobial therapies greatly increases the risk of deaths or serious complications and is associated with much higher treatment costs. We must urgently tackle antimicrobial resistance through a one health approach in human and animal health, ensuring the prudent use of antibiotics.

Investment in research is critical. This involves developing effective and affordable medicines, including those addressing drug-resistant forms of tuberculosis and child-friendly formulations. We also need new rapid diagnostic tools. Crucially, we must invest more in new prevention tools like vaccines and in applied research to scale up existing and new tools for maximum impact. The European Union contribution to research is important. We will continue to invest in this area and will ensure that new tools for tuberculosis are rapidly made accessible to all.

The European Union is at the forefront of the fight against tuberculosis in partner countries. The European Union and its Member States are the largest contributors to the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The support of the Global Fund to Tuberculosis has led to impressive results. During 2017, in countries where the Global Fund invests, 5 million people with tuberculosis were treated and 102 000 people with drug-resistant tuberculosis were on treatment. Tuberculosis is the disease that has seen the greatest impact in relation to investments made and we strongly believe that this should be taken into account in the future. Consequently; thus, we commit to supporting a successful replenishment of the Global Fund in 2019.

Tuberculosis can affect everyone – but every country's capacity to respond might vary.

We must approach this epidemic from all angles – funding, research, prevention, treatment and education. We also need to increase collective action and solidarity with the vulnerable amongst us and those living in low income countries that cannot afford basic services. A multi-sectoral accountability framework, with an appropriate degree of independence, is critical to the success of this declaration.

The European Union will continue to support action to address tuberculosis at home, in the European neighbourhood, and globally, using the financial, technical, and political instruments available to it.

Thank you.