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The Sixth EU-African Union (AU) Summit was held in Brussels, the capital of Belgium, on 17-18 February, under the shadow of the critical Ukraine agenda. The Summit, attended by EU and AU Member States at the level of presidents and prime ministers, was convened a year and a half after the originally planned date, October 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Summit was chaired by President of the European Council Charles Michel and the President of Senegal and the current Chairperson of the AU, Macky Sall. The main objectives of the Summit were solidarity, security, sustainable economic development, human rights, women's rights, environment, climate, protection of biodiversity, establishment of the rule of law and the fight against inequalities. In this context, updating the partnership, emphasis for multilateralism, providing of vaccine supply to Africa, implementation of the Africa-Europe Investment Package, a part of the Global Gateway Investment Package, energy transition, digital transformation, migration, security, education and innovation were on the agenda of the Summit. On the last day of the Summit, leaders settled on the publication of the final statement of the Sixth EU-AU Summit, titled "A Joint Vision for 2030".¹

In this analysis, the relations between the EU and Africa will be briefly explained by embracing a historical perspective. After that, the issues agreed at the Summit, particularly the improvement of cooperation and technology transfer, will be examined. In the next section, the relations between Turkey and Africa, which progressed intermittently since 1965, but has proceeded consistently closer with the launch of African initiative after 1998, will be discussed in all its dimensions. In the conclusion part, the importance of sustainable development and regional security, which are the main issues of the contacts with Africa, will be mentioned; it will be questioned which areas the AU should focus on in order to solve the problems specific to the continent; and whether Turkey and the EU's policy in Africa and their relations established with the AU contradict with each other will be discussed.

¹ European Union Council, "6th European Union – African Union Summit: A Joint Vision for 2030", 18 February 2022, Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2022/02/18/sixth-european-union-african-union-summit-a-joint-vision-for-2030/> on 27 February 2022.



The Epoch of EU-AU Summits and Transformation of Partnership

There are two starting points for the EU's dialogue with the African countries. The first of them corresponds to the aftermath of World War II when African countries one by one declare their independence following the demise of the European colonial Empires. While the first declaration of independence dates back to the beginning of the 20th century, specifically to South Africa's independence in 1910, many African states gained their independence from Great Britain, France, Belgium and Spain in the 1960s, and at the end of the 1970s, the contemporary political map of Africa started to take form.

The second starting point was the signing of the Treaty Establishing the European Economic Community, also known as the Treaty of Rome in 1957. Part 4 of the Treaty, "The Association of Overseas Countries and Territories" (from Article 131 to Article 136), constituted the legal basis for Europe's relations with African states. Accordingly, Africa has transformed into a continent where relations on trade and aid would be started, and its economic and social development would be facilitated within the scope of "special relations" from the point of view of European countries.²

Although this Treaty was criticised by the then leader of Ghana Kwame Nkrumah calling it a neo-colonialist agreement in reference to the Treaty of Berlin that was signed in 1885³, the start date of early European-African relations goes back much further. On 25 May 1963, Heads of States and Governments of 31 African states signed the Charter that established the Organization of African Unity (OAU) in Addis Ababa. OAU aimed "to promote the unity and solidarity of the African States, to coordinate and intensify their cooperation and efforts to achieve a better life for the peoples of Africa, to defend their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence, to eradicate all forms of colonialism from Africa and to promote international cooperation, having due regard to the Charter of the UN and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights."⁴ In this sense, it could easily be asserted that the foundation of OAU was an initiative that simultaneously sought integration with Western values and had pan-Africanist goals. EEC and Associated African States and Madagascar signed the Yaoundé Convention in 1963 and revised it in 1969. By this, the goods and products of the European Community would freely enter into the markets of the African signatory states without being restrained by customs barriers

² European Commission, "The Treaty of Rome", 25 March 1957, Retrieved from https://ec.europa.eu/archives/emu_history/documents/treaties/rometreaty2.pdf on 7 March 2022.

³ Wojciech Forsysiński and Achiri Emmanuel, "EU-Africa Relations: Towards a New Comprehensive Strategy with Africa: Between a Rock and a Hard Place", *Przegląd Strategiczny*, 13, 2020, pp. 61-78.

⁴ "OAU Charter", *African Union*, 25 May 1963, Retrieved from https://au.int/sites/default/files/treaties/7759-file-oau_charter_1963.pdf on 8 March 2022.



(taxes, quotas, etc.).⁵ The successor of Yaoundé, Lomé Convention⁶ was signed between the EEC and 71 African, Caribbean and Pacific states on 1975 to fortify the relations developed with association agreements signed with Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania and to institutionalise the economic dialogue into the political sphere. In other words, African countries were represented by African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) until the establishment of the AU. Updates of the Lomé Convention (II, III, IV) aimed to modernise it through extending it towards trade and political relations. Before the 1990s, the African economy depended on import substitution industrialisation but then transformed into export-led industrialisation.⁷ This also meant that the African economy started to integrate with global trade relations and was ready to carry the extent of the relations with the global world, especially with Europe, through a higher league. Therefore, African leaders desired to reach an agreement with the EU as “equals” by considering the new position of the African continent in the interdependent global economy.

Since its establishment in 1999, the AU has become the continent’s most advanced international organisation with its 55 Member States. The AU, which suspended the membership rights of Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Sudan, which are ruled by military coups, is an international organisation that 51 countries are having the rights coming from active membership. Despite having a Council (Executive Council of the AU is similar by decision-making), a Parliament (Pan-African Parliament), a court of justice (African Court of Justice), a committee of permanent representatives (Permanent Representatives’ Committee of the AU), a commission (AU Commission) and an economic and social committee (Economic, Social and Cultural Council – ECOSOCC) as such in the EU, it is hard to argue that AU is as economically and politically integrated as Europe. The Summit between the two Unions, which was first held in Cairo, the capital of Egypt in 2000 is the most substantial meeting of EU-AU relations. After that, both parties have agreed in Cotonou, the capital of Benin, on a new type of comprehensive partnership expanded towards new areas from economic cooperation and political dialogue to security, climate

⁵ “Convention d’association entre la Communauté économique européenne et les États africains et malgache associés à cette Communauté”, *CVCE*, 20 July 1963, Retrieved from https://www.cvce.eu/en/obj/the_yaounde_convention_20_july_1963-en-52d35693-845a-49ae-b6f9-ddbc48276546.html on 7 March 2022.

⁶ “ACP-EEC Convention Signed at Lome on 28 February 1975”, *ACP*, 28 February 2011, Retrieved from <http://www.acp.int/sites/acpsec.waw.be/files/Lome-Convention-I-en.pdf> on 7 March 2022.

⁷ Annita Montoute, “Historical Foundations of the ACP-EU Relationship”, in A. Montoute and K. Virk (ed.), *The ACP Group and the EU Development Partnership*, (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan), 2017, pp. 1-32.



change, migration, organised crimes and gender issues in 2000.⁸ The agreed goals were followed in line with Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), announced in Millennium Summit of the UN.⁹ However, this partnership agreement had a validity of 20 years and thus should have been accomplished so that it was updated with new progressive steps when it expired. With the AU's entrance into force in 2002, its predecessor OAU was deactivated. The relations between the AU and the EU was officially transformed into a partnership relationship with the second meeting held in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal, in 2007.

At that Summit, the Joint Africa-EU Strategy and Action Plan were put into practice. The EU-AU Summit, which was last held in Abidjan, the former capital and largest city of Cote d'Ivoire, with the theme of "Investing in youth for a sustainable future" on 29-30 November 2017. The latest one, which was scheduled to be held in 2020 and could be convened in February 2022 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, could also be interpreted as the update of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement.

Headlines and Outputs of the Sixth EU-AU Summit

For the EU-AU Summit, leaders of both Unions' Member States met in the shadow of the Ukraine crisis, "vaccine apartheid" and "discriminatory" travel restrictions. The common goal of both Unions was to put an end to the recession in regional relations due to the pandemic, to utter a common voice in the strict environment due to the conflicts that happened in the Sahel Region, and to reach a consensus on new opportunities to be used within the scope of the partnership. Although the decisions taken were accepted by most African leaders, it seems difficult to claim that some demands from African countries were fully met.

The leaders reiterated their commitment to act together around the norms of the UN and international law. They accentuated that they would work together to reduce global inequalities, strengthen solidarity, ensure international cooperation, fight against climate change, achieve 2030 Sustainable Development and "AU Agenda 2063" targets around the emphasis on multilateralism. While emphasising the importance of the realisation of Africa's energy transformation for the industrialisation of the continent and meeting the energy deficit, the EU stated that Africa's efforts will be supported at the UN Climate Change Conference to be hosted by Egypt in 2022. On the other hand, it was also among the headlines that were confirmed that the adherence of AU-EU Memorandum of

⁸ Stephen Kingah, "The Revised Cotonou Agreement Between the European Community and the African, Caribbean and Pacific States: Innovations on Security, Political Dialogue, Transparency, Money and Social Responsibility", *Journal of African Law*, 50(1), 2006, pp. 1-13.

⁹ Konrad von Moltke, "Implications of the Cotonou Agreement for Sustainable Development in the ACP Countries and Beyond", 2004, (Winnipeg: International Institute for Sustainable Development),



Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance, which was agreed in 2018 within the framework drawn by the African Peace and Security Architecture. In this context, the EU has committed providing support for adequate training, capacity building and equipment and assistance to law enforcement for strengthening the capacity of African-led Peace Support Operations to combat terrorism, instability and conflicts. Finally, it was reached to a mutual understanding that Peace Support Operations will be authorised by the UNSC, cooperation will be strengthened to find perpetual “African solutions” for asylum seekers, refugees and vulnerable migrants in need of international protection and the work of the AU-EU-UN Tripartite Task Force will be revitalised.

The most controversial discussion topic of the Summit was probably Africa’s struggle with the COVID-19 pandemic and the “vaccine” issue. South African President Cyril Ramaphosa frequently stated that “*vaccine apartheid*” was applied to Africa by the West, also to express that Africa had to fight the pandemic alone and was subjected to travel restrictions with a discriminatory behaviour regarding the supply of vaccines.¹⁰ Since the vaccine’s widespread usage in developed countries, African leaders’ demand from companies to waive their patent rights on COVID-19 vaccines has not yet yielded results. Director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) John Nkengasong underlined that methods such as waiving of patent rights and technology transfer could be a solution for eradicating the inequality in the global health system and that lessons should be learnt from the millions of people who lost their lives due to the 10-years delay in Africa’s access to HIV medicines, in a statement he gave to *Reuters* on 25 February 2021.¹¹ The vaccination rate in Europe is almost 71% of the population, while it is currently 12% of people in all Africa.¹² Although the death rates from COVID-19 are lower than those of Europe, approximately 40 million people in Africa are struggling with extreme poverty due to the economic damage caused by inadequate access to vaccines and financial aids.¹³ Regarding the demand proposed by the AU for the waiver of patent rights both before and at the Summit, the EU again remained “silent” and offered alternative solutions.

¹⁰ Cyril Ramaphosa, “Cyril Ramaphosa Says the World Must End Vaccine Apartheid”, *The Economist*, 8 November 2021, Retrieved from <https://www.economist.com/the-world-ahead/2021/11/08/cyril-ramaphosa-says-the-world-must-end-vaccine-apartheid> on 26 February 2022.

¹¹ “African Union Backs Call to Waive IP Rights on COVID-19 Drugs”, *Reuters*, 25 February 2021, Retrieved on <https://www.reuters.com/article/uk-health-coronavirus-africa-idUSKBN2AP1D1> on 24 February 2022.

¹² “Africa Needs to Ramp Up COVID-19 Vaccination Rate Six-fold”, *UN News*, 3 February 2022, Retrieved from <https://news.un.org/en/story/2022/02/1111202> on 27 February 2022.

¹³ Ashleigh Furlong, “Vaccine Access Puts EU and Africa at Odds Ahead of Summit”, *Politico*, 13 February 2022, Retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/vaccine-access-eu-africa-summit-coronavirus/> on 23 February 2022.



The consensus was reached on many alternative scenarios regarding vaccines and health at the Summit. The first of these was the donation of 450 million doses of vaccine, which the EU has committed to supply to Africa in cooperation with the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT) by mid-2022. It was stated that the delivery would be made with the 3 billion dollars fund donated by the EU to Covax and worth approximately 400 million doses of vaccine. Meanwhile, it was also announced that 425 million euros would be transferred to Africa by the financial sources of Team Europe to increase the vaccination rate, to distribute the vaccines adequately and to support the training of medical teams. However, the most significant development in the field of health at the Summit was the EU's decision to transfer mRNA vaccine technologies to Africa. Vaccine production centres, supported by the WHO and planned initially in 2021, will be established in Egypt, Kenya, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and Tunisia. In addition to that, the EU will provide financial support for know-how, quality control and human capital and will send assistance, where needed, with the necessary licences.

To mitigate the macroeconomic effects of the crisis from COVID-19 on the African continent, EU and AU leaders supported the creation of a common framework for improvements that go beyond the Debt Service Suspension Initiative. They also called for greater voluntary contribution by the EU Member States, with the goal of 100 billion dollars-worth liquidity support to countries in need. African leaders also shared their satisfaction with the special drawing rights (SDRs) worth 55 billion dollars to be allocated to Africa, while 13 billion dollars will be funded by EU Member States.¹⁴

Another important topic of the Summit was the announcement of the EU's instruments for the sustainable development of Africa within the scope of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals and the 2063 AU Agenda. The Africa-Europe Investment Package, which is a part of the Global Gateway Investment Package that assembled against China's One Belt One Road Project and planned as an initiative worth at least 150 billion dollars, comprised of investment, health and education. The package aims to invest in the following areas:

- investment in energy, transport and digital infrastructure in line with the Programme for Infrastructure Development in Africa Priority Action Plan (PIDA PAP) II,
- a fair, equitable and just energy transition that concerns specific and diverse trends in access to electricity,

¹⁴ European Union Council, "European Union – African Union Summit, 17-18 February 2022", 18 February 2022, Retrieved from <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2022/02/17-18/?cldee=c2FyYS5hbHZzYWtlckBuaG8ubm8%3D&recipientid=contact-171f554b1e83ec118137005056b718c1-7f0385be77bf40ffac75c3fc0bb6b12a&esid=32f55640-448b-ec11-8139-005056b718c1> on 19 February 2022.



- green transformation within the scope of the Paris Agreement,
- digital transformation to increase digital entrepreneurship and skills,
- improving young entrepreneurship in Africa, increasing investment opportunities for businesses, variegating sustainable growth and employment opportunities,
- facilitating transport and ensuring the effectiveness of connected transport networks.

The other topic of the Summit was the fight against money laundering. Accordingly, it has been decided that Illicit Financial Flows (IFF) will be combatted, domestic tax base erosion and profit shifting (BEPS) will be brought under control, and cooperation on tax transparency will be strengthened. Therefore, the EU has officially announced that it will support the AU to develop its strategic capacity in the fight against different types of IFFs such as money laundering, terrorist financing, fiscal governance systems and corruption on funds.

Finally, the objectives of the joint AU-EU Innovation Agenda were emphasised. Hereunder, it was stated that scientific cooperation among researchers will be supported to transfer technology, knowledge-based expertise and develop a common technology. In this context, it was agreed that people-to-people cooperation will be strengthened, the number and the capacity of partnerships between universities will be increased to build the future from now on, and African countries will be included in the Erasmus+ Programme to African nationals benefit from exchange programmes. Additionally, investments will be made to achieve an inclusive and equitable “quality education”, including the promotion of vocational education and training at the regional level.

Turkey’s Relations with African Union: Do the Policies of the EU Contradict with Turkey’s?

Turkey’s relations with Africa do not have a long history. There are many reasons behind this. However, two of them show a remarkable significance, among others. First, in the transition period from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic, Turkey undoubtedly left an important impact behind itself on Africa to develop the hope of struggle for independence. Yet, in the face of its historical legacy in North Africa, Turkey has undergone a paradigm shift in the context of its foreign policy, as well as its radical and democratic transition. Therefore, the first reason was that Turkey withdrew from its imperial legacy and supported an anti-expansionist foreign policy around Western values, shaped by the apophthegm of founder leader of Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, “peace at home, peace in the world”. This process, by all means, was not a phenomenon in itself, but a reflection of both a social and institutional paradigm shift. While creating a breathing space that would transform the society with a secular-nationalist and modernist approach, institutions that would accelerate the nation-building process were being transformed in



accordance with this superstructure.¹⁵ While this priority brought about a narrowing and restructuring in the field of foreign policy, it led Turkey, which was a new Republic, to be effective in the near abroad.

The second reason derived from the need to take a position in the international system, which turned into a bipolar structure after World War II. In this direction, Turkey implemented a strategic alliance policy with the Atlantic axis by becoming a member of NATO in 1952. At the same time, in parallel with Turkey's attribution itself as a European state, there was no need to develop an approach to the Third World, apart from the NATO alliance.¹⁶ Africa, with certain exceptions, took a place in the Non-Aligned Movement by adopting a third way within the rules of the bipolar world. Thus, relations between Turkey and the African continent could not be started for a long time.

The first break occurred in the mid-1960s. Turkey declared that it would launch an African initiative in 1965 in scope of the changing attitude towards Africa, Asia and Latin America. The motivation behind this was undoubtedly the Cyprus issue, which turned into a firm and concrete foreign policy priority. With the declaration of independence of many African states in the 1960s, the representation of the continent in the UN had considerably increased. This was a significant development since the theses of the Cyprus and First President of Cyprus Makarios III were supported by the newly-established African states in the UN General Assembly which meant that Turkey's thesis had come nought and that the atrocities of the Greek Cypriots had been tolerated. Thereupon, Turkey established goodwill delegations consisting of journalists, politicians, diplomats and academics and decided to pay visits the newly independent states in Africa, Asia and Latin America. In this context, three of the seven established delegations visited African countries. The first group paid visits to Algeria, Morocco, Mauritania, Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone and Senegal; the second group did Cameroon, Gabon, Congo, the Central African Republic and Chad; the third group did Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania, Malawi, Madagascar, Sudan, Libya and Tunisia.¹⁷ Although the most prominent motivation behind these initiatives was the Cyprus issue, these visits cannot be reducible to the need posed by it. It was stated in the program of the 30th government of Turkey, of which Süleyman Demirel was prime minister, that the first steps would be taken for political, economic and cultural rapprochement with the Non-Aligned countries of the Third World, especially with the "fraternal" states, to stamp out the negative image of

¹⁵ William Hale, "Turkish Foreign Policy Since 1774: Third Edition", 2013, (Routledge: Abingdon), p. 41.

¹⁶ Melek Fırat, "Türkiye-Afrika İlişkilerinin Tarihsel Arka Planı ve Afrika Açılımda Sivil Toplum Kuruluşlarının Rolü", Uluslararası Türk-Afrika Kongresi, *TASAM*, 2007, Retrieved from <https://tasam.org/Files/Icerik/File/13b80a8a-623f-4c1d-b7bd-6e83fdddde142.pdf> on 9 March 2022.

¹⁷ Melek Fırat, "1960-71 Arası Türk Dış Politikası ve Kıbrıs Sorunu", 1997, (Ankara: Siyasal Kitabevi), pp. 170-172.



Turkey.¹⁸ After all, the speech of the then Foreign Minister of Turkey Hasan Esat Işık added into the archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, presents the gist:

“I would like to emphasise that three of the seven goodwill delegations we detached to several countries of the Third World, which three of them went to Africa, and that close attention is taken not to leave any African country that have not contacted, as a result of the regional division among them. The duty of goodwill delegations is not merely depended to Cyprus issue, but the activities of these delegations also performed a positive effect, such as giving new impetus to the sincere and close relations that we have been trying to establish between us and the newly-established countries of Africa. We hope and wish that these constructive activities, which we expect from the goodwill delegations, will also affect the good relations we have been upholding with Asian and Latin American countries in the same direction. Likewise, we strive to be represented in as many countries as possible by increasing the numbers of countries where our current Embassies are assigned, as in Africa, in these two continents.”¹⁹

Therefore, the Cyprus issue served an outstanding opportunity for Turkey to launch an initiative towards the Third World countries. Turkey received the results of these efforts at the UN General Assembly held at the end of 1965. In the voting session held at the General Assembly, the leading figures of the Non-Aligned Movement withdrew their support for Makarios. From that moment on, Turkey has again reduced the interest it showed in its relations with African countries. Especially with the Cyprus problem falling off the agenda, domestic political developments in Turkey, and finally the end of the Cold War, a paradigm shift took place in Turkey's foreign policy. Therefore, the importance of the African continent has decreased considerably.

Due to Turkey's redesigning its foreign policy priorities depending on regional issues, relations with Africa almost came to a halt. This process continued until 1998, after the institutionalisation of the new international system and finally, the African Initiative Action Plan was launched. This plan embodied a long-term program aiming to strengthen ties with the countries defined as Sub-Saharan Africa which means the African countries except the North African ones. Turkey launched this initiative with the motto “African

¹⁸ Baskın Oran, “Turkish Foreign Policy, 1919-2006: Facts and Analyses with Documents”, 2010, (Utah: University of Utah Press), p. 477.

¹⁹ “Dışişleri Belleteni: 1964-1965 Sayı 1-15”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Document 1(5), 1965, Retrieved from <http://diad.mfa.gov.tr/diad/belleteni/1964-1995-sayi-1-15.pdf> on 9 March 2022, p. 565.



solutions for African problems”.²⁰ Within this scope, Turkey commenced diplomatic contacts with 48 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.

One of the other milestones was the developments that happened in 2005. As specified in the Outcome Document of the 2005 World Summit, the UN launched a ten-year capacity-building program in close consultation with the AU, considering the needs and priorities of Africa.²¹ The then Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan announced that Turkey declared 2005 as the “African Year” and decided to pay visits to African countries.²² These visits also included the aspiration for establishing the commercial relations between Turkey and African countries and mutual investments under the wings of TİKA (The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency). In return, Turkey obtained the status of “observing member” at the AU on 12 April 2005 and the accreditation for permanent representation at the AU on 5 May 2005. At the tenth Ordinary Session of the AU Summit, which took place in Addis Ababa from 31 January to 2 February 2008, Turkey became a strategic partner of the AU. On 18-21 August 2008, the first The Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit was held in İstanbul with the theme of “Cooperation and Solidarity for a Common Future”. 50 African countries, except Lesotho, Swaziland and Mozambique, attended the meeting.

After the completion of the African Initiative Policy successfully, Turkey and the AU launched a new type of relations titled “African Partnership Policy” in 2013. Turkey aims to improve its bilateral relations with Africa based on equal partnership and mutual benefit, with the Africa Partnership Policy, which is the product of an integrated understanding that contains the activities of public institutions, private sector, NGOs and humanitarian aid organisations. High-level visits and exchanges are one of the most important components of the Partnership Policy. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan has visited 30 African countries so far, including his Prime Ministry. Turkey increased the number of its Embassies in Africa from 12 in 2002 to 43 in 2021. Likewise, African countries increased their Embassies in Ankara to 37, while it was only 10 before 2008.

Progress in relations between Turkey and Africa is not just concerning diplomacy. There are also significant rises in trade and investments. For example, the trade volume with the African continent increased to 25.3 billion dollars in 2020 from 5.4 billion dollars in 2003;

²⁰ “Turkey-Africa Relations”, *Ministry of Foreign Affairs*, Retrieved from <https://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-africa-relations.en.mfa> on 14 March 2022.

²¹ Patrick Hayford, “A Special Partnership with the UN: An African Perspective”, *United Nations*, Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/en/chronicle/article/special-partnership-un-african-perspective> on 14 March 2022.

²² “Erdoğan: “Turkish Government Has Declared 2005 As African Year””, *Hürriyet*, 2 March 2005, Retrieved from <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/erdogan-turkish-government-has-declared-2005-as-african-year-300602> on 14 March 2022.



while it was only 1.35 billion dollars in 2003 and reached approximately 10 billion dollars in 2020 with Sub-Saharan African countries. Turkey gained more than 21 billion dollars from the sales of export items to Africa in 2021. This amount corresponds to 9.4% of Turkey's total exports in the same year.²³ While the projects carried out by Turkish contracting companies in Africa have reached 71.1 billion dollars, 19.5 billion dollars of this was consolidated in Sub-Saharan African countries. In 2021, Turkish foreign direct investments (FDI) to Africa amounted 6,5 billion dollars. By considering close ties between Turkey and African countries, Turkey has established 45 joint Business Councils so far. The third and most recent meeting of the Turkey-Africa Economic Forum was held in İstanbul between 21-22 October 2021. It is a platform where prominent representatives of the public and private sectors come together and exchange opinions on developing the relations between the Turkish and African private sector and on establishing Public-Private Partnerships.

When examining the situation of Turkey's trade with African countries, it is noteworthy that trade relations, with a few exceptions, are maintained within the scope of "import-based growth". In other words, it might be seen that Turkey follows a "trade deficit" policy in its trade with African countries. While imports with Sub-Saharan African countries are mostly based on raw materials and particularly gold, Turkey exports manufactured goods to these countries. Trade with developing countries is mostly carried out through exports and imports of products in similar sectors.

Egypt is Turkey's primary export partner in Africa.²⁴ According to 2021 figures, Turkey's exports to Egypt amounted to 4.5 billion dollars. Turkey is the third (6.2%) country to which Egypt exports and the fifth (4.9%) country to which it imports.²⁵ While automobiles (10.6%), iron products (5.7%), petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (4.1%) are mostly exported from Turkey to Egypt, Turkey imports mostly propylene and olefin polymers (14.2%) and petroleum oils and oils obtained from bituminous minerals (7.6%). Libya and Morocco follow Egypt in the export ranking of Turkey. Libya is one of the countries where Turkey has the least trade deficit (20 million

²³ "Monthly Foreign Trade Statistics Tables – February 2022", *Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade*, Retrieved from <https://www.trade.gov.tr/statistics/foreign-trade-statistics/monthly-foreign-trade-statistics-tables-february-2022> on 15 March 2022.

²⁴ "Mart Ayı Dış Ticaret İstatistik Tabloları: En Fazla İhracat Yapılan 20 Ülke", *Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade*, 4 April 2022, Retrieved from <https://ticaret.gov.tr/istatistikler/bakanlik-istatistikleri/dis-ticaret-istatistikleri/mart-ayi-dis-ticaret-istatistik-tablolari> on 5 April 2022.

²⁵ DG for International Agreements and European Union, "Mısır Pazar Bilgileri", *Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade*, Retrieved from <https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/5f0d69cc13b8769ff05749b4/MISIR%20%C3%BCIke%20profil.pdf> on 5 April 2022, pp. 12-13.



dollars).²⁶ On the other hand, Turkey is the second country to which Libya exports the most (20.1%) and imports (15.4%). Jewellery (6.7%) and furniture (6.3%) are mostly exported items from Turkey to Libya, while the imports of gold (78.5%), iron powder and blooms (6.4%) and copper and copper scraps (5.9%) are drawing attention. This information explicitly indicates that Turkey carries out its trade relations with Libya based on raw material import.²⁷ Despite them, Morocco is a trading partner that Turkey achieved trade surplus. While automobiles (6.4%), iron products (6.2%) and vehicle parts are mostly exported from Turkey to Morocco. On the other side, automobiles (19.8%), animal products unsuitable for consumption (15.5%), minerals and chemical fertilizers containing nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium (14.7%) and natural calcium phosphate, natural aluminium calcium phosphate and phosphatic chalk (10.3%) are imported from Morocco. In terms of trade with Sub-Saharan African countries, Rwanda is a country that has started to attract the attention of Turkish investors in recent years. While imports from Rwanda swelled by 29436.6% between 2019 and 2020, it was almost absolutely based on gold imports (99.8%).²⁸ This rate also made Turkey the country to which Rwanda exports the most (21%). On the other hand, Turkey exports yeast (11.6%), plastic hoses, pipes and fasteners (7.9%) the most to Rwanda.

The second of the Turkey-Africa Partnership Summits was held in Malabo, the capital of Equatorial Guinea, between 19 and 21 November 2014. The most important advance of this summit is the approval of “The 2015-2019 Joint Implementation Plan”, which would implement a 5-year program covering joint projects in many different fields such as trade, investment, peace, security, education, culture, rural economy, agriculture, energy and transportation. The “2015-2017 Joint Implementation Report” was published at the Turkey-African Union Ministerial Review Conference hosted by Turkey on 11-12 February 2018. In the report, it was emphasised that an agreement was reached with Djibouti for the establishment of a Turkish Special Economic Zone, which would encourage Turkish investors and provide assistance for the development of the country and East Africa, and Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreements were signed with 45

²⁶ DG for International Agreements and European Union, “Libya Ülke Profili”, *Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade*, Retrieved from <https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/5ec9782b13b8764f4402f1d7/Libya.pdf> on 5 April 2022.

²⁷ DG for International Agreements and European Union, “Fas Ülke Profili”, *Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade*, Retrieved from https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/5ef5c31a13b8762b38e2fc14/FAS-%C3%9Cİke%20Profili_2021.pdf on 5 April 2022.

²⁸ DG for International Agreements and European Union, “Ruanda Cumhuriyeti Ülke Profili”, *Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade*, Retrieved from https://ticaret.gov.tr/data/5b885d78af23be7c5c10c5fa/Ruanda%20%c3%9cİke%20Profili_Kas%c4%b1m%202021.pdf on 5 April 2022.



African countries.²⁹ The Third Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit was held in İstanbul on 16-18 December 2021. “Turkey-Africa Partnership Joint Action Plan 2022-2026”, which outlines the concrete steps to be taken by Turkey, the African Union and its Member States, was adopted by the leaders. The contracting parties stated that they would sustain the cooperation on the following topics:³⁰

1. Peace, security and governance,
2. Trade, investment and industry,
3. Education, STI skills, youth and women development,
4. Infrastructure development and agriculture,
5. Promoting resilient health systems.

In addition, a memorandum of understanding was signed between Turkey and the Secretariat of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) on cooperation. Accordingly, leaders reached a consensus on the development of a new and more comprehensive procedure for news investments and trade by embracing the priorities of sustainable growth and African development in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the AU 2063 Agenda targets. It was also stated that the next summit would be hosted by Africa 2026.

Turkey’s contacts with Africa within the scope of partnership also include financial, cultural and humanitarian aid. Among these are TİKA, AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency), Yunus Emre Institute, Turkish Maarif Foundation, Anadolu Agency and Kızılay (Turkish Red Crescent) are the first examples that come to mind. TİKA has established 22 Program Coordination Offices in the continent. The Turkish Government also provides scholarships to African students. These scholarships are given to African students studying both in Africa and Turkey. More than 14,000 African students have benefitted from graduate, post-graduate and doctorate scholarships since 1992. Finally, it is worth noting that Turkey has taken important steps long before the EU-AU Summit, based on its relations with Africa, which it has been trying to develop in recent years and has intensified since October 2021. The support that Turkey has provided to 45 countries since the first day of the COVID-19 pandemic drew attention. Turkey announced

²⁹ Zuhâl Demirci, “Türkiye’nin Afrika Birliği’ne Katkısı Ortak Uygulama Raporu’nda”, *Anadolu Ajansı*, 12 February 2018, Retrieved from <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/turkiyenin-afrika-birligine-katkisi-ortak-uygulama-raporunda/1061256> on 15 March 2022.

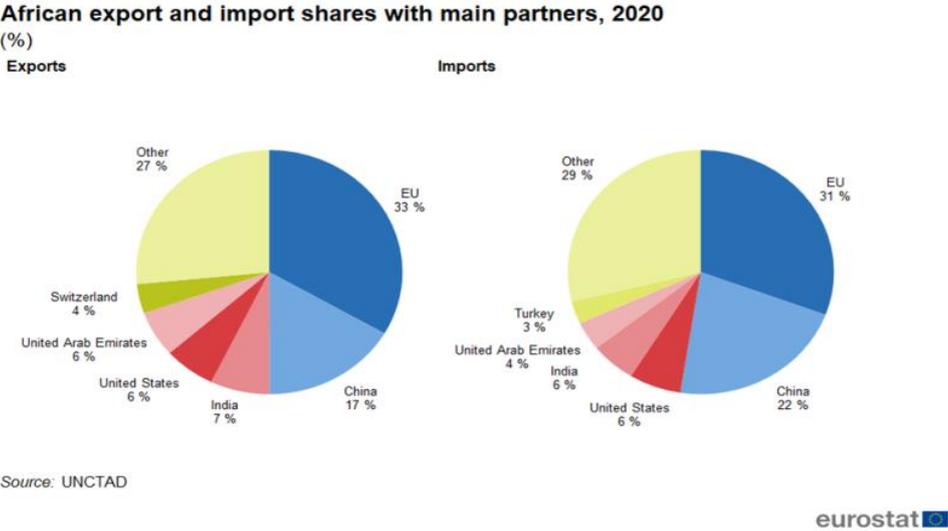
³⁰ “Declaration of the Third Africa-Türkiye Partnership Summit: Enhanced Partnership for Common Development and Prosperity”, *African Union*, 18 December 2021, Retrieved from https://au.int/sites/default/files/newsevents/reports/41270-rp-E_Africa-Turkiye_Summit_2021_Declaration.pdf on 15 March 2022.



that it donated 10 million doses of vaccine to be used in Africa and signed 37 cooperation agreements with 25 African countries in the field of health at the Third Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit Health Session.³¹

Besides humanitarian aid and cooperation for struggle against social problems in Africa, the EU enhances the number of sectors in trade. As indicated in the Graph-1 below, the EU is the largest trade partner of Africa. While the 33% of African exports and 31% of African imports from non-African countries were from the EU. Based on the data from 2021, the most importer EU countries from Africa were Spain with approximately 27,5 billion euros, Italy and France with 24 billion Euros³². The EU countries that export the most to Africa are France with 24 billion euros, Germany with 23 billion euros and Spain with 18 billion euros. In reference to these two stats, the EU Member State that draws the most attention is Spain, as 15.2% of its imports and 17.2% of its exports with extra-EU are delivered to Africa. However, the trade relations of EU Member States, especially the ones which located in the Mediterranean, with Africa are noteworthy. In addition to that, 19.9% of Portugal’s, 19.5% of the GCASC’s, 18.2% of Malta’s and 14.7% of Greece’s imports came from Africa. The main motivation for the EU Member States located in the Mediterranean is undoubtedly that the logistics costs of imported and exported goods decrease when provided from Africa.

Graph-1: African Export and Import Shares with Main Partners, 2020



³¹ “Donation of 10 Million Doses of Vaccines Underway”, Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Health, 20 December 2021, Retrieved from <https://www.saglik.gov.tr/EN.86905/quotdonation-of-10-million-doses-of-vaccines-underwayquot.html> on 15 March 2022.

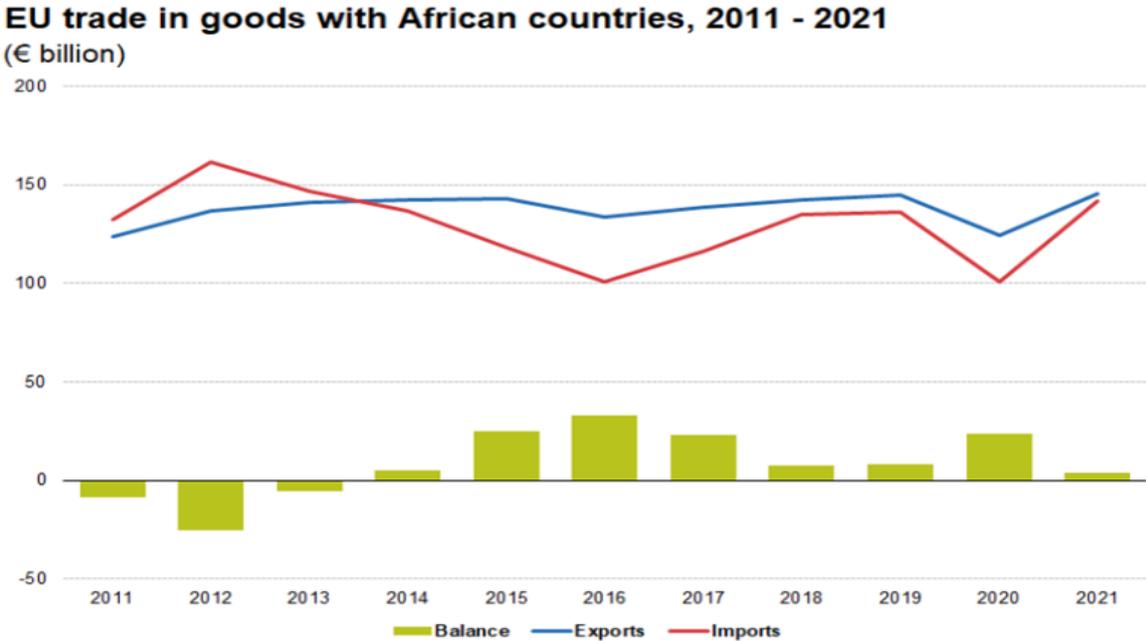
³² Eurostat, “Export of Goods to Africa by Member State, 2021”, European Commission, 16 February 2022, Retrieved from 6 April 2022.



Source: UNCTAD, Eurostat

The balance sheet of trade between the EU and Africa for the period between 2011 and 2021 is shown in the Graph-2 below. According to that, while imports from Africa were higher than exports to Africa before 2014, exports exceeded imports after this year. There are many outcomes to be drawn from this chart. The first of these is that the EU has surplus in its trade with Africa. While Belgium with ~6 billion euros, Sweden with ~1,8 billion euros and Germany with ~1,7 billion euros are among the countries having the highest surplus; Spain with ~9,2 billion euros, Italy with ~6 billion euros and Greece with 0,8 billion euros are leading the EU Member States in thinking of trade deficit with Africa.³³ A second outcome is that there has been a significant drop in data of 2020 due to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Europe. It seems that the gap between imports and export has narrowed considerably in 2021, when the effects of the pandemic began to dissolve, and the EU’s economy started the rebound.

Graph-2: EU Trade in Goods with African Countries, 2011-2021



Source: Eurostat (online data code: Comext data code : DS-018995)



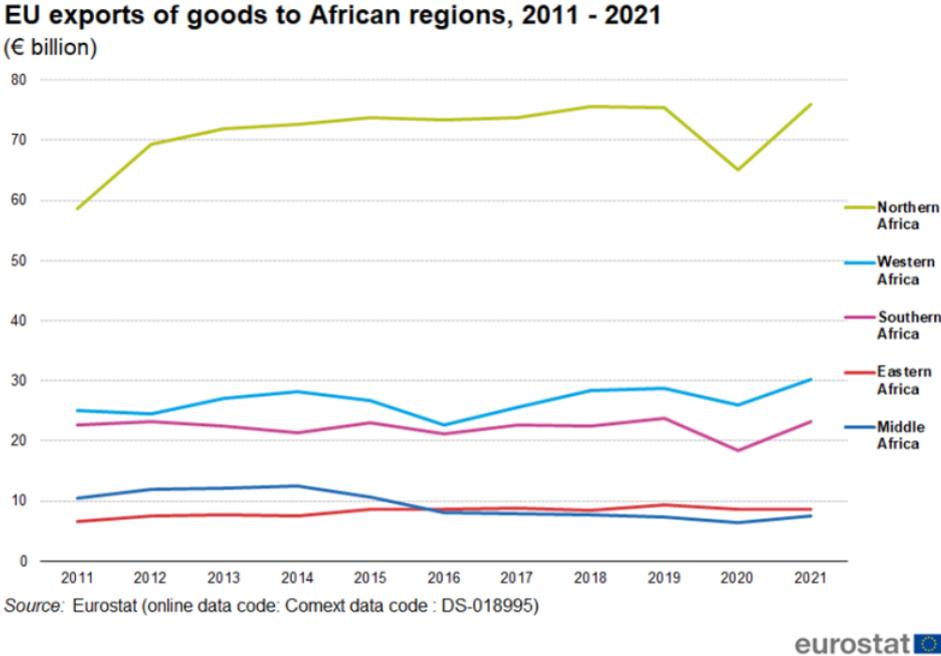
Source: Eurostat

³³ Eurostat, “Trade in Goods Balance with Africa by Member State, 2021”, European Commission, 15 February 2022, Retrieved from [https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Trade in goods balance with Africa by Member State, 2021.png](https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=File:Trade_in_goods_balance_with_Africa_by_Member_State_2021.png) on 6 April 2022.



Another significant point that draws attention in the trade relations between the EU and Africa is the product groups. According to the data from 2021, 68% of the units exported by the EU are manufactured goods, while 65% of the imported ones are primary goods (food and drink, raw materials and energy).³⁴ Therefore, the EU carries out its trade with Africa on the basis of imports of raw materials and exports of manufactured products. In addition, it is useful to draw attention to which regions of Africa the EU's export and import (Graph-3 and Graph-4) are concentrated, besides the information of their increase in recent years. While there is a very stable indication in exports and more than 75 billion euros were exported to North Africa, it might obviously be noticed that exports to other regions of Africa are much lower. However, a fluctuating trend is perceptible in imports.

Graph-3: EU Exports of Goods to African Regions, 2011-2021

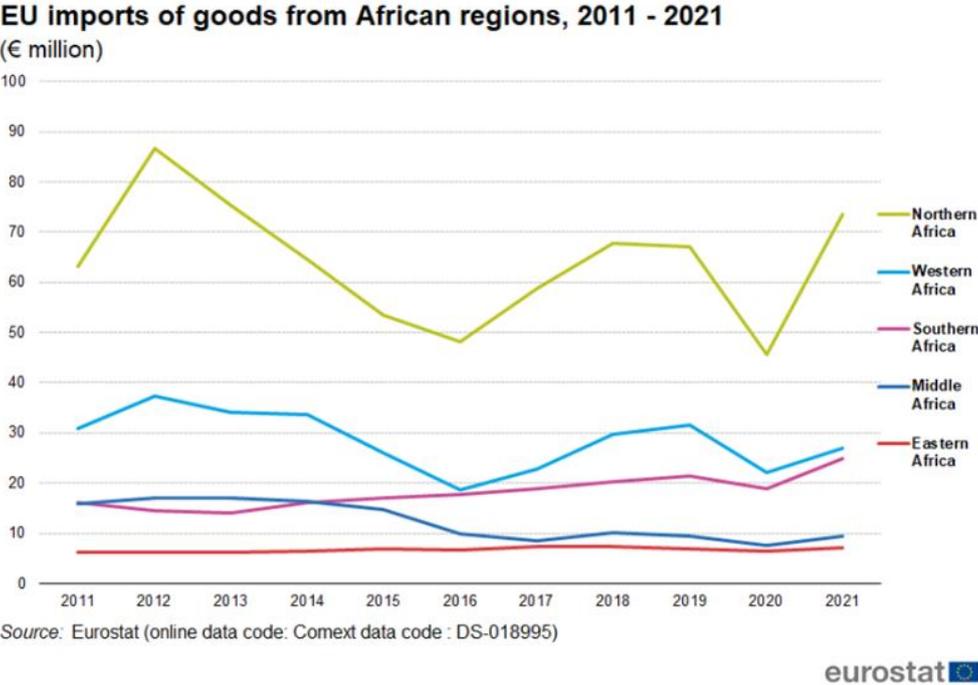


Source: Eurostat

³⁴ Ibid.



Graph-4: EU Imports of Goods from African Regions, 2011-2021



Source: Eurostat

In Conclusion: “The Proof of Success Lies in a Whole Social Structure Being Changed from the Bottom Up”³⁵

According to the Groundswell Report published by the World Bank, it is estimated that by 2050, 216 million people, mostly from Africa, will be forced to migrate due to water scarcity, soil infertility, sea-level rise and global warming as a whole.³⁶ Focusing on the local and regional problems of Africa as well as green and digital transformation, and striving for the “reverse transformation of inequality” are important steps for the early solution of the problems that humanity is likely to experience in the future. In this sense, although the decisions taken at the Summit can act as a bridge from today to the future, the fact that the EU insists and even turns a deaf ear to demand of AU Member States for waiving vaccine patents is one of the factors that reduce hope.

³⁵ Frantz Fanon, “The Wretched of the Earth”, 1963, (New York: Grove Press), p. 35.

³⁶ “Groundswell Report: Climate Change Could Force 216 Million People to Migrate Within Their Own Countries by 2050”, World Bank, 13 September 2021, Retrieved from <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2021/09/13/climate-change-could-force-216-million-people-to-migrate-within-their-own-countries-by-2050> on 25 February 2022.



However, a very important agreement was reached on 16 March 2022. The EU, South Africa, the US and India had been negotiating for several weeks over the removal of intellectual property rights over COVID-19 vaccines, and they finally compromised on a text to be submitted to the members of the World Trade Organization (WTO). Accordingly, they have compromised to waive patents on those “developing countries which have not exported more than 10% of the COVID-19 vaccine doses in 2021, especially in accordance with the condition laid down by the US due to the possibility of China taking an advantageous position with the waiver of patents.”³⁷ This means that countries that meet the requirements may be allowed to use a patented coronavirus vaccine without the consent of the patent holder company.³⁸ This agreement covers only patent rights on vaccines for now. Yet, it is mentioned in the text that a revision will be made within six months for therapeutic and diagnostic products. There are two options for the agreement to enter into force, three and five years. Although this is not a finalised document yet, it is stated that the consultation process continues among the EU Member States. However, European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA) published a press release that criticised the draft proposal of WTO. EFPIA’s Director General Nathalie Moll stated that “The draft proposal from the WTO completely undermines the very research-ecosystem that gave us vaccines to protect citizens against COVID-19. It seeks to solve a vaccine production issue that no longer exists, while at the same time, diverts attention and urgently needed effort away from the real barriers to global vaccine equity.”

Although there is a quite positive canvas, this is a sign of insecurity on the African side due to the historical heritage. On the other hand, when the topics discussed at the Summit are taken into account, it might be observed that the targets are determined around an enhanced and comprehensive partnership with Africa, technology transfer, support for twin transformation and social development. This indicates the signs of a return to growth, which is not merely an economic and commercial partnership between the EU and the AU but also aims at combined development towards a sustainable economy, political dialogue and cooperation for security, refugee, education, health and political stability.

Hence, it is quite possible to expect that the metamorphosis of the relations between the EU and the AU into a new type of enhanced partnership with the slogan of “building the future from today” will become concretised. At the same time, the fact that most of the agreed points address concrete targets such as the European Green Deal, digital

³⁷ Léa Marchal, “Quadrilateral Agreement at WTO on Waiver of Covid-19 Vaccine Patents”, *Agence Europe*, 17 March 2022, No: 12912.

³⁸ Ashleigh Furlong, “Compromise Reached on COVID-19 Vaccine Intellectual Property Rights Waiver”, *Politico*, 15 March 2022, Retrieved from <https://www.politico.eu/article/compromise-reached-on-covid-19-vaccine-intellectual-property-rights-waiver/> on 17 March 2022.



transformation, Sustainable Development Goals and AU 2063 Agenda also supports this view. However, the institutional capacity of the AU and Africa's own capability to find solutions for Africa's own problems are undoubtedly the most important factors for the achievement of these targets. In this context, it can be better understood how accurate Turkey's African initiative, especially since 1998, is. Africa's ability to find solutions for Africa's problems with its own resources can only be possible with its integration into the global economy around "equal sovereignty", but priorly by the enhancement of the quality of its social resources. In this respect, a relationship model that is only based on economic and political dimensions, but also permeates culture, technology and diplomatic interaction will prominently be beneficial for both parties.

Therefore, any initiative that will assist in good governance and sustainable development in the continent will provide the opportunity to achieve significant outcomes both in the short- and long term. First of all, it primarily depends on supporting the AU's struggle for democracy against leaders, whether elected or not, who violate the rule of law, undermine vested social rights and endanger internal peace. It's the only way to have an environment in which the AU could increase its "right to speak" on the conflicts, hunger, poverty and regional tensions as a unique representative of the African people can be created throughout the continent. Secondly, based on the fact that Africa is the most crucial region for the realisation of Sustainable Development Goals, the support and investment programs that both the EU and Turkey are making and committed to supplying the vital needs of the region are among the most important developments. Education programmes and technology transfers that are intended to be fostered for the development of human capital in Africa, besides finding solutions to the current problems of Africa, have the vision of saving the future of the continent.

The third point, which in a sense, reflects the summary of this analysis, was said by Zeray Yihdego: "However, if the AU proves to be but a toothless lion, lacking the strength to impact national, regional and international policy and practice the dream of a better, more secure future for Africa may be lost."³⁹ In other words, the AU needs to increase its institutional capacity and intervention power to implement the programs, particularly the AU 2063 Agenda, which are planned to change the unfortunate destiny of the region. This can only be possible by providing suitable conditions for boosting more dialogue and more effort to build a common future. From this point of view, it is substantial that Turkey follow a mediation activity that will facilitate diplomatic traffic in the region and help to resolve conflicts through Embassies and maintain the emphasis it put to Africa.

In conclusion, it does not seem possible for a contradiction to occur between the EU's initiative and Turkey's interests, as Turkey does not feed a desire to monopolise its

³⁹ Zeray Yihdego, "The African Union: Founding Principles, Frameworks and Prospects", *European Law Journal*, 17(5), 2011, pp. 568-594.



presence as a foreign investor in Africa. Turkey and the EU are not in a struggle over sharing markets in Africa. Their vantage point and capacity of action are quite different from each other. Owing to the fact that Turkey is a candidate country of the EU and a customs union partner, it is a country that has converged towards the European model of governance. Therefore the EU and Turkey's efforts to engage with African partners may converge on the basis of common values, norms and practices. The presence of the EU economy in the region is also valid at the level of the Member States. It can be stated that especially France, Germany and Belgium have a significant presence in the regions where Turkey is trying to develop its relations. However, a competitive encounter with Turkey is rare, as the presence of these countries is more concentrated on mining, agriculture, industry, technology and telecommunications. On the other hand, Turkey's presence in the continent is mostly generalised in the construction, infrastructure, furniture, small machinery, textile and finance sectors which have also political effects on the bilateral and regional relations. This basically reveals that Turkey should pay attention to the monopolisation threats posed by China and India in the continent. The Chinese monopoly, which has started to materialise particularly in the textile, finance and infrastructure sectors especially in the poor Sub-Saharan African countries, is among the most important obstacles to Turkey's influence in the region. In summary, the fact that Turkey and the EU's actions in Africa are separate and not coordinated does not imply a conflict of interests between the two actors since they share common thoughts for the future of Africa and common concerns to deal with the problems of the people living in the African continent.

