

EU and African Union Commissions step up their cooperation to support young people, jobs and peace



This 9th Commission to Commission meeting of the two organisations was co-chaired by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker** and the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Moussa **Faki Mahamat**, with the participation of all African Union Commissioners and 16 European Union Commissioners.

The two sides had agreed on a set of priorities at the [November 2017 AU-EU Summit in Abidjan](#) and today the two Commissions took stock of progress made to chart the way forward.

At this occasion, European Commission President Jean-Claude **Juncker** said: *"We met today to translate words into concrete action. We launched programmes worth €400 million to support, amongst others, African youth – which is all the more important, as 60% of Africa's population is under 25 years old. The future of the world depends on the good cooperation between Europe and Africa."*

African Union Chairperson Moussa **Faki Mahamat** added: *"Multilateralism is the only response to today's global challenges in an increasingly polarised world. The AU-EU partnership is based on shared values and shared responsibilities and offers a unique platform to address common challenges linked to peace, security and sustainable development on both our continents."*

Key outcomes of the meeting:

The two commissions discussed their cooperation to enhance resilience, peace, security and governance, including support to African peace initiatives such as the G5 Sahel joint force. In this regard, the two sides signed a **Memorandum of Understanding** reinforcing the existing cooperation in the area of peace and security. In addition, they agreed to continue and consolidate the important work made by the **AU-EU-UN task force on migration**.

The parties committed to **invest in economies and people** by stepping up existing cooperation on agriculture and agribusinesses and the digital economy, and dedicated themselves to continue the active engagement with

youth in the Africa-EU partnership in innovative and meaningful ways.

In the context of the AU-EU partnership, the EU made available an additional **€400 million** towards **continental and regional projects**. These include support to institutional capacity building of the African Union Commission and regional integration on the continent, as well as **support to young people**. The assistance will facilitate the continental mobility of young people, for example through reinforcing exchange programmes among African universities, and enhancing the recognition of qualifications and the harmonisation of higher education in Africa.

Background

The EU and Africa have progressively built a solid strategic and political partnership, whereby they go beyond donor-recipient relations towards reciprocal commitments. The two Commissions of the European Union and African Union are committed to be active players and real engines of this Partnership, which is today more relevant than ever in a fast evolving global environment.

This partnership is based on shared values and interests, enshrined in the Joint Africa-EU Strategy (JAES, 2007). At the 5th AU-EU Summit last November African and European leaders have demonstrated their mutual commitment in a stronger relationship adapted to a rapidly changing global landscape, and have identified strategic priorities for 2018-2020.

For More Information

[Factsheet 'European Commission and African Union Commission step up their cooperation to support young people, jobs and peace'](#)

[Pan-African Multiannual Indicative Programme](#)

[Factsheet 'EU's key partnership with Africa'](#)

[Joint Africa-EU Strategy](#)

[Africa-EU Partnership](#)

Security Union: Commission welcomes agreement on its proposal to tackle illicit cash flows

The reinforced rules complement the EU's anti-money laundering rules and form part of the European Agenda on Security and work to fight the financing of terrorism. Today's decision was taken following a final round of negotiations

this evening in Brussels.

Putting tighter controls on large cash flows strengthens the capacity of the EU to tackle money laundering, fight terrorism and organised crime, making it harder for terrorists and criminals to finance their activities. Cutting off the sources of financing is one of the most effective ways to stop potential terrorist attacks and criminal activities in the EU and worldwide.

Welcoming the political agreement, Pierre **Moscovici**, Commissioner for Economic and Financial Affairs, Taxation and Customs, said: *"We are going further than ever before in the fight against money laundering and terrorism, with the aim of ensuring a safer society. We are responding to the expectations of our citizens, who are understandably outraged by the criminals and terrorist activity on our soil. I welcome today's agreement to curb the circumvention of cash controls at the EU's external borders."*

While the measures agreed today will help to ensure that illicit cash flows cannot find their way to criminals operating in the EU, they do not impose any restrictions on levels of cash payments in Member States.

The main elements of the new rules will:

- **Tighten cash controls** on people entering or leaving the EU with €10,000 or more in cash;
- Enable authorities to **act on amounts lower than the declaration threshold** of €10,000, where there are suspicions of criminal activity;
- **Improve the exchange of information** between authorities (Customs and Financial Intelligence Units) and Member States;
- **Extend customs controls to cash sent in postal parcels or freight shipments, to prepaid cards and to precious commodities** such as gold, which are not currently subject to customs control..

Background

Current rules on the movement of cash in and out of the EU, known as the 'Cash Controls Regulation', apply since 2007 and are an integral part of the EU's Anti Money Laundering (AML) and Terrorist Financing (TF) framework. Under this legislation, travellers entering or leaving the EU are legally obliged to declare amounts of cash valued at €10,000 or more (or its equivalent in other currencies or bearer negotiable instruments) to customs authorities. Today's agreement extends this obligation to commodities such as gold and prepaid cards.

Recent events have shown that terrorists have managed to find ways to circumvent the rules on cash controls. Criminal organisations whose illicit activities generate large volumes of cash should not be able to take advantage of loopholes in the current system to move and launder their money.

Next steps

The provisional agreement must now be formally approved by the European Parliament and the Council of the EU. Following approval, the regulation will be published in the EU's Official Journal and enter into force 20 days

later.

For more information

[FACTSHEET: Security Union – A Europe that protects](#)

[MEMO on the Commission's proposal to update EU rules on cash controls \(December 2016\)](#)

[Commission web page on cash controls](#)

Remarks by Commissioner Moscovici at the European Semester Spring Package press conference

Bonjour,

Si je devais à mon tour résumer en deux phrases ce paquet, je dirais qu'il représente la sortie de la crise et la normalisation économique.

Mais aussi, un rappel à tous que les efforts doivent continuer si nous voulons consolider et renforcer les avancées de ces dernières années.

Le symbole principal de la normalisation, c'est la proposition de mettre un terme à la procédure de déficit excessif à l'encontre de la France. Nous le faisons parce que la trajectoire de réduction des déficits est forte et claire – la correction est nette pour 2017 (avec un déficit à 2.6%) et durable sur 2018 et 2019.

C'est un moment important pour la France, la fin de 9 longues années de procédure qui est pénible, et d'efforts budgétaires qui ne sont jamais faciles à imposer et à supporter mais qui sont nécessaires. Je ne vous le cache pas, c'est aussi un moment symbolique pour l'ancien ministre des finances français que j'ai été, pour le commissaire que je suis aujourd'hui de voir ainsi se clôturer aujourd'hui ce chapitre du déficit excessif français. Et donc je veux marquer là une satisfaction toute particulière.

C'est aussi une bonne nouvelle s'agissant de la deuxième économie de l'Union et de la zone euro. Après la décision qui améliorerait la position de la France dans la procédure de déséquilibres macro-économiques, j'y vois la confirmation d'un rééquilibrage du socle au sein de la zone euro qui est la condition pour la stabilité de notre monnaie commune.

Le second signe de normalisation est la situation de l'Espagne, pour laquelle nous adoptons aujourd'hui un avis budgétaire « *broadly compliant* » pour 2018, ce qui vient confirmer que l'Espagne passera nettement sous 3% de déficit

cette année, comme tous les autres pays de la zone euro. C'est la première fois, je le rappelle, que les 19 pays de la zone euro sont sous 3% depuis que cette monnaie unique existe. C'est une autre page de la crise qui se tourne. Et nous devrions voir la fin du chapitre des procédures pour déficit excessif si les choses se confirment comme nous le souhaitons,

Le rapport de convergence que nous adoptons aujourd'hui – en parallèle de la Banque Centrale Européenne – sur les pays non membres de la zone euro illustre le fait qu'après dix années de crise, notre union monétaire peut à nouveau regarder sereinement la perspective d'élargissements à venir.

Cependant nous sommes conscients qu'il faut tirer les enseignements de la crise – et nous garder de toute précipitation car actuellement aucun des pays concernés ne remplit les critères prévus par les traités. Continuons donc ensemble le travail de préparation, dans un bon état d'esprit avec une perspective qui est ouverte.

Enfin, le contexte apaisé sur le front de la croissance nous permet de concentrer notre attention sur des questions structurelles importantes pour la cohésion de notre union. Il y a bien sûr les questions sociales, Marianne en parlera, simplement cette Commission est tout entière derrière elle pour marquer l'importance des questions sociales.

C'est le cas de la lutte contre les pratiques de planification fiscale agressive.

Sept Etat-membres font l'objet de considérants spécifiques, dans le sillage des analyses que j'ai présentées ici des rapports pays en février. Les changements nécessaires dans ces pays pour lutter contre ces pratiques relèvent de réformes profondes, et expliquent la place de ces questions dans nos recommandations. C'est une première ! Ca n'avait jamais été fait auparavant et c'est une nouvelle illustration de notre volonté de lutter contre non seulement la fraude et l'évasion fiscales mais aussi les pratiques de planification fiscale agressive, d'optimisation fiscale.

Notre approche dans ce domaine comme pour d'autres, est faite d'encouragement et de dialogue, j'en veux pour preuve le fait que ces Etats membres, les sept, nous ont présenté des mesures nouvelles pour répondre aux problèmes identifiés, certaines plus convaincantes que d'autres. Il ne s'agit pas de pointer du doigt tel ou tel pays, tel ou tel gouvernement, mais bien de souligner les efforts accomplis et d'identifier les défis encore à relever.

Mais la reprise qui s'est désormais muée en croissance robuste, nous sommes dans une phase d'expansion et non plus de reprise, ne doit pas nous conduire à baisser la garde: après tout, pour certains Etats membres, nous devons nous en souvenir, la crise de 2009 a trouvé ses origines dans des erreurs de la politique économique menée lors des années de boom.

L'enjeu principal est donc le bon calibrage des politiques budgétaires dans et en dehors de la zone euro.

Keeping in mind that prevention is always better than cure, the Commission

has today adopted decisions concerning two Member States whose expansionary fiscal policies – at a time of already very strong economic growth – are for us a source of concern.

We address a warning today to both Hungary and Romania on the existence of a significant deviation from the adjustment path toward the medium-term budgetary objective in 2017.

For Hungary, we propose that the Council recommend that the country take measures in 2018 to correct this significant deviation.

And for Romania, which is already [subject to a significant deviation procedure](#), we recommend that the Council issue a decision on non-effective action and a renewed recommendation to take measures in 2018 and 2019, again to correct the significant deviation.

We have also adopted reports today on Belgium and Italy, under Article 126.3 of the Treaty, which experts of the Pact know well – these reports review compliance with the debt criterion of the Treaty, examining all relevant factor and we have done that in all years since we are in office as a Commission.

In the case of Italy, our analysis suggests that the debt criterion should be considered as currently complied with, notably as Italy was found broadly compliant with the preventive arm of the Pact in 2017.

For Belgium, as there is no sufficiently robust evidence to conclude that Belgium did not comply with the preventive arm requirements, the report could not fully conclude as to whether the debt criterion is complied with. So we will need to continue to observe the situation closely but we had a very positive dialogue with the Belgium government and I hope that this will go on.

For both countries, we will reassess compliance with the preventive arm of the Pact on the basis of the ex-post data for 2018, to be notified in Spring 2019.

Lastly, we have today made public our review of the application of flexibility within the rules of the Pact introduced by this Commission in January 2015, immediately after its entry in function, a little over three years ago and subsequently agreed by the Council. The review shows that our key objectives have been met, as we now have a predictable and transparent framework in place, allowing the Commission to apply the existing rules of the Pact in a country-specific and balanced manner.

The flexibility allowed under the Pact has allowed us to strike a good balance between the objective of ensuring prudent fiscal policy and the proof of it is that the EDP is almost over, while stabilising the economy and supporting growth and we are in this phase of expansion so I think the guidance with flexibility was right, that is always better to dialogue and convince than to punish and constraint. Our spring forecast shows that public debt and deficits have declined, while economic activity has picked up since

2016.

Et maintenant je passe la parole a Marianne pour vous expliquer les aspects sociaux du paquet.

New rules on data protection for EU institutions agreed

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On 23 May 2018, representatives of the Council and the Parliament agreed on a new regulation on the handling of personal data by EU institutions and other EU bodies. The new rules are aligned with the general data protection regulation (GDPR) which enters into force on 25 May 2018.

The new provisions will apply to data processing by Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies. They will increase the protection of personal data and ensure a free flow of that data between the institutions and the different bodies, insofar as it is necessary.

The new rules on data protection for EU institutions further update the Union's data protection regime. It is an important signal for citizens: tighter rules on data protection are for everybody, including the EU institutions themselves. I am pleased that we could agree on these a couple of days before the general data protection regulation enters into force on 25 May.

Tsetska Tsacheva, Bulgarian minister of Justice

As in the GDPR, the new regulation provides for a number of principles to be followed in the processing of data and a number of rights guaranteed to individuals whose data are collected. These include, for example, the right of individuals to access, correct or delete their personal data. In line with the GDPR, institutions and other bodies must also ensure that they provide transparent and easily accessible information on how personal data is used, and foresee clear mechanisms for individuals to exercise their rights.

The new legal instrument also reconfirms, clarifies and enhances the role of

data protection officers within each EU institution and of the European data protection supervisor. The objective is also to try to simplify the procedures in this field.

In line with the agreement reached by the co-legislators today, processing of personal data by the Union agencies in the field of law enforcement and judicial cooperation (e.g. Eurojust) is covered by the regulation through a specific chapter. The rules in this chapter are aligned with the Law Enforcement Directive. More specific rules can also be laid down in the founding acts of these agencies to take into account their particular circumstances. Europol and the European Public Prosecutor's Office are, for the time being, excluded from this regulation. A review will be conducted by the Commission in 2022.

After confirmation of the political agreement reached today by representatives of the Council and the Parliament, the text will undergo linguistic revision and subsequently be formally adopted by the two institutions. The new rules will then apply as of Autumn 2018.

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G7 Leaders' Statement on Venezuela

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We, the G7 Leaders of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, the United States of America and the European Union, are united in rejecting the electoral process leading to the May 20, 2018, Presidential election in Venezuela.

By failing to meet accepted international standards and not securing the basic guarantees for an inclusive, fair and democratic process, this election and its outcome lack legitimacy and credibility. We therefore denounce the Venezuelan Presidential election, and its result, as it is not representative of the democratic will of the citizens of Venezuela. The Venezuelan government has missed the opportunity for an urgently needed political rectification.

While the regime of Nicolas Maduro solidifies its authoritarian grip, the people of Venezuela continue to suffer human rights abuses and serious

deprivation, causing increasing displacement which is affecting countries throughout the region□.

We stand in solidarity with the people of Venezuela and call on the Maduro regime to restore constitutional democracy in Venezuela, schedule free and fair elections that can truly reflect the democratic will of the people, immediately release all political prisoners, restore the authority of the National Assembly and provide for full, safe and unhindered access by humanitarian actors.

We remain committed to supporting a peaceful, negotiated, democratic solution to the crisis in Venezuela and to support the Venezuelan population through humanitarian assistance.

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