

Keynote speech by Vice-President Ansip at the opening ceremony of the 6th EU- Africa Business Forum

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

Today, we face one simple question. How to provide enough jobs for young people in Africa?

There is no obvious or simple answer.

I can, however, offer a partial answer: Africa's private sector.

It can help to tackle youth unemployment. It can help to provide sustainable quality jobs and create inclusive growth.

By 2035, according to the IMF, sub-Saharan Africa will have more working-age people than the rest of the world's regions combined.

Such a rapid rate of growth should be encouraging for the region.

But how do you create enough jobs to absorb a growing labour force with hundreds of millions of new workers?

We are not just talking about numbers of jobs. They should also be decent and sustainable.

For young people, and here I quote the International Labour Organization, job quality is a major concern – especially in emerging and developing countries.

If it does not satisfy, employment becomes vulnerable. People think about looking for a better life elsewhere with better conditions.

Quality jobs matter – for people, and for a country's development.

This Business Forum will look at areas where the situation could be improved.

Not only how to create the best conditions for long-term private investment, but also how to support jobs for young people – especially women.

By connecting and developing business partnerships: locally, regionally and beyond. By going digital as far as possible. And by developing the right skills, matching them with market needs.

That is why we are all here today.

I often hear the message that money is not always the sole issue.

Yes, investment is vital.

But it has to be targeted and considered to get the maximum benefit.

I mentioned the importance of job support for youth and women.

Both of these themes will run through our discussions today.

There is a long list of how the private sector can help. More access to finance, improving financial and business advisory services, vocational training, mentorship – just to start with.

Our EU's External Investment Plan addresses many issues relevant to Africa. It identifies priority areas for investment, including support for businesses of all sizes, including micro-startups. It focuses on three of our discussion areas: sustainable energy, agriculture and the digital economy.

Briefly, with sustainable energy, Africa has huge potential.

At the moment, its largest source of electricity generation is based on fossil fuels, despite this being the world's most expensive way of producing energy.

Agriculture's importance to the African economy is well known.

If you include post-harvest activities, agriculture-related industry accounts for nearly half of all economic activity in sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa has huge amounts of fertile and unused land. But it spends many billions of euros every year to import food.

Digitisation is reshaping Africa, where about half of the continent's population now owns a mobile phone.

In some countries, more people have access to a mobile phone than to clean water, a bank account or electricity. The explosion in mobile payments has created more financial inclusion than ever before.

But there is still a long way to go.

And it is where Europe can help, with the DSM and our D4D initiative. To invest in digital infrastructure, develop the right skills, help emerging tech startups to grow and scale up; to encourage cross-sector digital services like e-government, e-health and e-agriculture.

It is how we can form a digital partnership between EU and African digital entrepreneurs.

But to succeed in all these areas, we need the involvement and commitment of investors and the business community.

They are the ones taking the opportunities. But most of all: the risks.

That requires political commitment from governments and decision-makers – to create stable and predictable environments that are based on fair competition.

This Business Forum is a chance to find the best ways to work together, to build our economies and create more jobs for our youth – on both continents.

Thank you.

For More Information

[6th EU-Africa Business Forum](#)

[Remarks by President Juncker at the press conference following the 5th Eastern Partnership Summit](#)

President,

Prime Minister,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

And for most of you, dear friends,

The Eastern Partnership is first and foremost a partnership of people. It is about bringing our societies closer together. I was attending all the Eastern Partnership Summits so far, and this was the very first time that leaders, after having read their speeches, because they are in love with their papers, were discussing openly and frankly, not hiding away divergences and differences which may exist. This was the day where we took stock of the progress achieved since we last met in Riga two years ago. But it was also, as Donald said, a time to look forward.

Today's signature of the Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement with Armenia illustrates our commitment. Over the last two years since Riga, we have taken great strides in making the region as a whole more stable. And all sides agree that stability must start at home. The European Union can be helpful, but stability must start at home. That means having a job, having access to education and training, and being able to prosper in a strong economy.

This is what European Union support has been focusing on. Since 2009, we have provided EUR 1.5 billion worth of support to small businesses across the region.

Le commerce, nos relations commerciales créent des emplois et créent la croissance dans les pays avoisinant de l'Union européenne. En 2016, les importations en provenance de Moldavie qui est un pays de plus en plus européen, ont augmenté de 7,7% par rapport à 2015. Grâce à l'accord

historique de libre-échange approfondi et complet avec l'Ukraine, les exportations tout comme les importations entre l'Union européenne et l'Ukraine ont augmenté de 27% entre janvier et août 2017. L'Ukraine fait des progrès remarquables, ne fait pas tous les progrès dans la mesure où nous l'aurions souhaité, mais en règle générale l'Ukraine fait bien les choses. Et donc nous allons poursuivre avec l'Ukraine, au cours des années à venir, sur un plan notamment micro-financier, notre coopération à condition que l'Ukraine respecte un certain nombre de conditions dont elle est d'ailleurs d'accord.

La stabilité est aussi une question de confiance et d'équité. Cela veut dire qu'il faut mener les réformes nécessaires pour renforcer la bonne gouvernance, lutter – et c'est très important, on sous-estime très souvent cet aspect des choses – lutter avec fermeté contre la corruption et garantir le bon fonctionnement des systèmes judiciaires, et des administrations publiques qui sont d'abord au service des citoyens. Et si ces réformes en matière judiciaire, en matière de lutte contre la corruption, sont menées à bon port, cela renforcera la confiance des investisseurs dans toute la région.

Nous avons aussi – nous, l'Union européenne – contribué aux connexions avec les pays du Partenariat oriental – que ce soit celles reliant les uns aux autres comme celles reliant nos pays voisins à l'Europe.

Alle diese Beispiele, meine sehr verehrten Damen und Herren, zeigen, dass die östliche Partnerschaft Ergebnisse liefert. Nicht alle, die wir erwartet haben, aber trotzdem viele auf die wir uns in Riga und bei vorherigen Gipfeln zu verständigen wussten. Jetzt gilt es, die Anstrengungen, die wir unternommen haben, zu verdoppeln und uns auf das konzentrieren, worauf es jetzt ankommt.

Wir haben uns heute auf 20 konkrete Maßnahmen geeinigt, die Sie im Schlusscommuniqué vorfinden werden, weil wir müssen die wirtschaftlichen Beziehungen stärken, wir müssen die Staatsführung stärken in all ihren Aspekten, wir stärken die Konnektivität; und indem wir dies tun stärken wir die Gesellschaften in unserer Nachbarschaft. Mir kommt es sehr darauf an, Herr Tusk hat das schon erwähnt, dass wir mehr junge Menschen aus den Ländern der östlichen Partnerschaft in die Erasmus-Plus Programme einweisen. Wir nehmen uns vor, 80 000 junge Menschen zusätzlich zu den bisherigen in das Programm aufzunehmen.

Also nicht alles ist gut, aber alles ist besser als es mal war.

2017 Eastern Partnership Summit:

Stronger together

The Summit, held at the level of Heads of State or Government, brought together the European Union institutions, represented by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker**, and the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, the 28 European Union Member States, and the six Eastern partners, namely [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Belarus](#), [Georgia](#), the [Republic of Moldova](#) and [Ukraine](#). They were joined by the High Representative of the EU for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy & Vice-President of the European Commission Federica **Mogherini**, the Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes **Hahn** and the Commissioner for Trade, Cecilia **Malmström**.

The Summit participants agreed a [Joint Summit Declaration](#). In the margins of the Summit, a number of agreements were taken forward, including a [new bilateral agreement](#) between the European Union and Armenia; A Common Aviation Area Agreement with Armenia; and the extension of the EU's Trans-European Transport (TEN-T) network to Eastern partners.

"The Eastern Partnership is first and foremost a partnership of people. It is about improving lives in all of our countries, about bringing our societies closer together. It is about standing up for the values, principles and aspirations that people in the European Union and in our eastern neighbourhood collectively share", said the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude **Juncker**. *"At today's Summit we agreed on a set of 20 concrete actions to complete by 2020. Through the Eastern Partnership, the European Union has helped to create 10,000 jobs, train 20,000 people, and provide over 100,000 loans to companies. We have improved access to free legal services, invested in transport links, promoted gender equality, and helped thousands of students to move between Europe and the Eastern Partnership region. As we look to 2020 and beyond, now is the time for even more action. We are on the right track, let us stay the course."*

The full remarks of President **Juncker** at the joint press conference are available [online](#).

EaP bringing tangible benefits for citizens: 20 deliverables for 2020

Changing for the better the daily lives of citizens lies at the core of the Eastern Partnership. Since the last Summit in Riga in 2015, cooperation has been based on four priority areas:

1. **Stronger economy:** economic development and better market opportunities;
2. **Stronger governance:** strengthening of institutions and good governance;
3. **Stronger connectivity:** enhancing connectivity, notably in the areas of transport and energy, as well as environment and climate change;
4. **Stronger society:** increasing mobility and contacts between people.

Under these priorities, the European Union, its Member States, and the partner countries today endorsed twenty deliverables that set out a clear

work plan for the future, to be achieved by the year 2020. These include:

- Broadened outreach and targeted support in particular to grassroots **civil society** organisations;
- **Supporting businesses** and providing **loans in local currencies**, in partnership with key International Financial Institutions;
- Improving the capacity of partner countries to take advantage of the **trade opportunities** with the EU and with each other;
- Reform commitments and specific investments in the area of **energy efficiency**;
- Developing better and safer **transport links** by 2030 with a long-term investment contributing to connecting the partner countries with the EU and amongst themselves;
- A digital package, including concrete steps towards harmonised roaming pricing and **reduced roaming tariffs** among the partner countries, easier and cheaper access to internet through the roll out of national broadband strategies, and support for **job creation in digital industries**;
- A substantial new support package to **youth and education**;
- A comprehensive new communication approach on assistance for the Eastern Partnership, and a stepping-up of **strategic communication**.

The Summit also endorsed a **revised multilateral institutional set-up** for the Eastern Partnership, providing for stronger political guidance and a more results-oriented approach to our cooperation.

The Eastern Partnership: A Partnership that delivers

Since the last Eastern Partnership (EaP) Summit, which took place in Riga in 2015, significant progress has been achieved in relations between the EU and its six partner countries. **Association Agreements including Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Areas** with [Georgia](#), the [Republic of Moldova](#) and [Ukraine](#) have now fully entered into force, opening new opportunities for closer cooperation on tackling key challenges, as well as economic integration and trade. Trade between the three associated partner countries and the EU has significantly increased. The implementation of these Agreements will be guided by the recently updated Association Agendas. Following a set of demanding reforms, visa free travel to the Schengen area was put in place for the biometric passport holders of Georgia and Ukraine, in addition to that with the Republic of Moldova, in place since 2014.

Relations with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Belarus have also advanced. Today, [the European Union and Armenia signed a Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement](#). This new agreement will enable the European Union and Armenia to work more closely together in order to address the challenges we face and to make the most of the opportunities available to us. Good progress has also been made in negotiations of a new framework agreement with Azerbaijan, while relations with Belarus have been advanced through the newly established Coordination Group. Our future Partnership Priorities with all three countries will set a new strategic framework for our assistance. The Partnership Priorities with Armenia have been agreed and Partnership Priorities are also being discussed now with Azerbaijan and Belarus.

The EU and Armenia also today initialled a [Common Aviation Area Agreement](#). It will improve market access for airlines from both sides and provide for better connectivity, resulting in more choice, better services and lower fares for travellers. The agreement, part of the European Commission [Aviation Strategy for Europe](#), will also establish a common regulatory framework, for instance in the fields of aviation safety and security. More information is available [here](#).

In the area of **transport interconnections**, the EU and partner countries agreed [on the indicative maps extending the EU's Trans-European Transport \(TEN-T\) core network to the Eastern Partner countries](#), as a basis to enhance transport connectivity and the identification of common infrastructure priorities. For this purpose, High-Level Understandings have been signed in the margins of the Summit.

Eastern Partnership being shaped by wider society

A number of side events have taken place in the run-up to the Summit, involving civil society, media, businesses, parliaments and other stakeholders. These engagements demonstrate that the EaP goes beyond the inter-governmental relationship and extends to broader society. In the run up to Summit in 2017, the following key side-events were organised:

See: [Eastern partnership Media Conference Factsheet](#)

See: [Eastern Partnership E-partnership Factsheet](#)

See: [Eastern Partnership Civil Society Factsheet](#)

See: [Eastern Partnership Business Forum Factsheet](#)

See: Factsheets on the EU's support to businesses in [Armenia](#), [Azerbaijan](#), [Belarus](#), [Georgia](#), the [Republic of Moldova](#) and [Ukraine](#).

More information:

[Website of the 5th Eastern Partnership Summit](#)

[Joint Declaration of the 5th Eastern Partnership Summit](#)

[Factsheet on the Eastern Partnership's 20 deliverables for 2020](#)

[Eastern Partnership – Focusing on key priorities and deliverables \(Joint staff working document\)](#)

[Factsheet on myths about the Eastern Partnership](#)

[Remarks of the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, at the joint press conference following the 5th Eastern Partnership Summit](#)

[Press Release: New agreement signed between the European Union and Armenia set to bring tangible benefits to citizens](#)

[Factsheet: EU-Armenia Comprehensive and Enhanced Partnership Agreement](#)

[Factsheet: Aviation Agreement with Armenia](#)

Facts and figures on EU relations with: [Armenia](#); [Azerbaijan](#); [Belarus](#); [Georgia](#);

[the Republic of Moldova](#); [Ukraine](#)

Websites of the European Union Delegation to: [Armenia](#); [Azerbaijan](#); [Belarus](#); [Georgia](#); [the Republic of Moldova](#); [Ukraine](#)



[Statement by President Juncker following the attack on the al-Rawdah mosque in Sinai, Egypt](#)

It was with great horror and sadness that I learnt of the tragic attack on the al-Rawdah mosque in Sinai earlier today. I would like to offer my most sincere condolences to the people of Egypt and to President el-Sisi.

I condemn in the strongest possible terms this barbaric and cowardly act deliberately targeting peaceful and innocent people in their place of worship. In these dark moments, Egypt can rightly be proud of the heroic and courageous actions of the security and emergency services on the ground.

Today, Europe stands beside you in solidarity just as you have stood with us in the past. You can count on our support.

[ESMA registers NEX Abide Trade Repository AB as a trade repository](#)

The European Securities and Markets Authority (ESMA), the EU supervisor of trade repositories (TRs), has registered NEX Abide Trade Repository AB as a

TR under the European Market Infrastructure Regulation (EMIR), with effect from 24 November 2017. NEX Abide Trade Repository AB is based in Sweden and covers the following derivative asset classes: commodities, credit, foreign exchange, equities and interest rates.

EMIR introduced provisions to improve transparency, establish common rules for central counterparties (CCPs) and for trade repositories and to reduce the risks associated with the OTC derivatives market. It provides for the obligation to centrally clear OTC derivative contracts or to apply risk mitigation techniques such as the exchange of collateral. It also provides for the direct supervision and the registration of TRs by ESMA as well as the recognition of non-EU TRs.

TRs are commercial firms that centrally collect and maintain the records of derivatives contracts reported to them. The registration of this TR means that it can be used by the counterparties to a derivative transaction to fulfil their trade reporting obligations under EMIR.

In order to be registered as a TR a company must be able to demonstrate to ESMA that it can comply with the requirements of EMIR, including, most importantly, on:

- operational reliability;
- safeguarding and recording; and
- transparency and data availability.

The NEX Abide Trade Repository AB registration brings the total number of TRs registered in the EU to eight TRs, which can be used for trade reporting.

For more details on the list of registered TRs and the derivative asset classes which are covered by the registration, please refer to the following [list](#).