



Following Europafrica's interview with the then African Union's Representative to the EU, H.E. Mahamat Saleh Annadif, Europafrica posed the same questions to Mr. Philippe Darmuzey, Head of the Unit "Panafrikan Issues & Institutions, Governance & Migration" at the European Commission. Mr. Darmuzey's written reply to them is published in Issue 36 of the Europafrica e-bulletin (English) and on the Europafrica.net website in July 2010.

Europafrica: In your view, what is the main added value of the joint strategy in comparison with Africa's other strategic partnerships, for instance with China?

Mr. Darmuzey: There is no comparison. The Africa-EU strategic partnership is unparalleled in the world – something worth bearing in mind three months before the third Summit of Heads of State and Government of the two continents which is scheduled to take place in Libya in November. The 27 European and 53 African leaders will certainly grasp the opportunities offered by this strategic meeting between the two continents. Despite, or even because of, the global crisis, they will have a chance to put a political vision and joint responses to current and future challenges before the one and a half billion people of the 80 European and African countries. What is new about our relations and the main added value of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy is that international crises or disagreements about a particular issue or about a particular country or conflict no longer lead to irreparable rifts, but are the subject of dialogue between experienced partners. We do not always agree, of course, but our discussions are frank and "obstacles" and "frustrations" are not allowed to override the mutual interests of the two continental groups, which now deal with one another on an equal footing even though our relations continue to be uneven in terms of resources and facilities. The message that leaders will send to their peoples from the November Summit will be one of finding answers to the crisis. It will provide the forum, long awaited in both continents, for key talks about Africa as a factor of growth for Europe and Europe as a factor of growth for Africa through its enterprises and investment. The scope of our relations is broad-ranging enough to provide full-time work for all our workers in future years. It is not worth spending time on whether the other partners are doing better or worse than we are. The fact that Africa has diversified its partners is to be welcomed as is the fact that other emerging players, including China, Brazil and India, are playing their part in international efforts to develop infrastructure and build capacity in Africa; this is in everyone's interest, including Europe. These new players all have their own contribution to make, and while that contribution may sometimes be competing it is often complementary. There is little doubt, however, that our respective initiatives would be better coordinated, more consistent and more effective if trilateral cooperation were to be improved.

The partnership with Europe continues to be the most ambitious, the most comprehensive and the most flexible. The pioneering, complex and multi-faceted framework that surrounds its achievements in the short term means, however, that too little is known and has been explained about these achievements.

- **Going beyond past geographical boundaries and fields of cooperation**

Mr. Darmuzey: The Africa-EU partnership transcends the thinking and stereotypes of the past and recognises the growing political, economic and geo-strategic interdependence of the two continents. Failure is now out of the question and our continents have to rally together in the mutual interest of their peoples. The partnership is a new starting point for two groups of partners whose relations have up to now been patchy, at odds and competing.

The joint strategy decided in Lisbon offers a framework, which is unique because it takes an approach based on shared values, where the principle of equality is in particular rooted in reinforced political dialogue. Relations between Africa and Europe now go “beyond” the African continent: they cover all international issues and global challenges; “beyond” development issues: dependency on aid and the unilateral nature of the donor-beneficiary relationship is no longer the main issue; “beyond” the (executive) institutions which provide them with a structure: unconditional priority is now being given to the many actors of civil society, the private sector and the democratic representation of people, as symbolised by the strong ties that have now been forged between the Pan-African Parliament and the European Parliament.

This is a multi-faceted partnership with its eight thematic areas: peace and security, democratic governance and human rights, trade, regional integration and infrastructure, Millennium Development Goals, energy, climate change, migration, mobility and employment, science and information and communication technologies, and space. No other partnership with Africa has such a broad and varied range of cooperation, combining the local, national, regional, continental and global levels.

- **The emergence of the AU and the enlargement of the EU has provided a continental dimension**

Mr. Darmuzey: No other partnership covers the continental dimension that the African Union and the European Union have developed and shared as a result of their respective processes of political and economic integration. This relationship between continents is unparalleled as it brings together two groups of countries, organised around their respective political unions, accounting for almost half the members of the United Nations. The added value of this political and cultural diversity is undeniably greater than the drawbacks entailed in the multiplicity of players to be rallied together. There is nevertheless a high price to pay in comparison with other decision-making processes linking Africa to a single partner state whose flag and actions are more visible and whose conditionalities, albeit real, are less explicit.

- **A joint strategic vision**

Mr. Darmuzey: Through the joint strategy and its three-year action plan, Europe and Africa have provided themselves with a genuine long-term strategic vision whose most successful tool is political dialogue where substantial results have been achieved. This dialogue covers political questions and responses to the common global challenges such as crises, security and terrorism, as well as climate change, energy access and security, the new world governance and Africa’s future role in the multilateral bodies (G8, G20, UN). As far as peace and security are concerned, this systematic, institutionalised and regular political dialogue has now achieved a level of maturity making it possible to address the issues of crises and wars and the links between security and development in Africa and Europe without the ideological stumbling blocks, sensitivities and intransigence of the past. This dialogue, gradually stripped of diplomatic formalities and geared more towards action (EU financial support in this area is €1 billion in the period 2008-2013), has also been extended to sectoral policy issues and the new areas of cooperation already included in the 2008-2010 action plan, for instance science and technological progress, the information society, migration, mobility and employment issues and democratic governance and human rights. The 2011-2013 action plan which the Heads of State

will adopt at the Summit in November will build on these advances, targeting them better and limiting their number, if necessary by abandoning anything which is not working, but without ruling out new initiatives if they are likely to provide a new Euro-African added value.

From the point of view of the added value of the partnership with Europe, Ambassador Annadif noted that action by “China is geared to a number of priority sectors which are visible” to peoples, chiefly infrastructure, without conditionalities in contrast to cooperation with Europe. I should like to add a few firm figures to this somewhat partial picture. EU development cooperation in Africa is chiefly in the form of grants, with very few loans. The EU provided Africa with €19 billion of official development aid (ODA) in 2008. By comparison, and although China’s volume of aid for Africa has increased greatly in absolute terms, it continues to be well below EU levels. Although China does not supply numerical data, if its undertakings under FOCAC 2006, whose action plan covers the period 2007-2009, are broken down yearly, its ODA to Africa would be some USD 2 billion per annum. The FOCAC 2009 action plan for 2010-2012 suggests that commitments are capped at USD 4 billion per annum. It can be concluded from this that EU aid volumes continue to be more than five times higher than those of China.

As for the infrastructure provided by China, we have to welcome the fact that it is “visible” to the peoples of Africa. Europe, which has long played a leading role in this sector, continues to do so with financial commitments which are still considerable, totalling €5.6 billion just for the period of the 10th EDF (2008-2013). At Africa’s request, however, it has diversified the way in which the partnership works and increasingly supports African budgets directly. This budgetary aid covers, for instance, health and education expenditure or the economic reform plans decided by the country. A hospital or a school coming under a national budget may be built with EU aid but without the EU label being visible to the ordinary citizen. However, they represent essential investment for Africa’s future development. The joint website www.africa-eu-partnership.org offers an overview of the many concrete and visible initiatives launched since the Lisbon Summit in the eight thematic areas of cooperation listed above.

Looking now at EU-Africa trade, its global volume in 2009 was some €209.2 billion, in comparison with €62.5 billion for trade between China and Africa. Here again, EU-Africa trade, still in the lead, continues to be three or four times greater than trade between China and Africa, even though that trade has been growing apace. Moreover, the duty- and quota-free market access granted by China to Africa’s LDCs is 60% in 2010 and is to increase to 95% “progressively” (no date given). By way of comparison, the duty- and quota-free market access, which the EU has granted to Africa’s LDCs, is already 91.3%.

The Europeans invited China to the Africa-EU Summit in 2007. The Europeans were not invited to the China-Africa Summit in 2009. Europe is now willing to talk frankly and openly about its strengths and weaknesses with Africa’s other partners. Is the reverse true? Visibility, conditions: perhaps a closer look by all three partners is needed?

The conclusion, Ambassador Annadif noted, is that each partnership has to be located in its own context and in the context of globalisation: we agree.

Europafrica: Do you think that the joint Africa-EU strategy has helped to improve relations between the two continents?

Mr. Darmuzey: Lisbon helped us to move off together in the right direction; the joint strategy helped both continental partners to work together to find credible answers to the challenges of the 21st century and the issues raised by the new international situation, its new actors and the new world governance which the crisis has shown is so urgently needed. Their combined intercontinental weight has meant that Africa and Europe have been able to open up new areas for political cooperation: joint stances in the bodies of the United Nations or the main world conferences, for instance climate change before and probably after Copenhagen, the

Millennium Goals on which we are working together on a joint declaration for the high-level meeting scheduled for September in New York, and other themes which are on the agenda of our eight partnerships.

The joint Africa-EU strategy has meant that **Europe has made Africa one of its strategic partners** (the EU has entered into only seven other high-level partnerships of this type, all with individual states). The creation of the European External Action Service should help to consolidate this dynamic. This trend had already been anticipated in the institutional framework for our relations when the first “integrated” EU Delegation to the AU was opened in Addis Ababa in 2008. This political gamble on the future has already enabled the EU to help the AU step up its political action in Africa and in the global arena. The decision in June 2010, as a result of the ongoing consultation introduced by the joint strategy, to recognise the continental level and the African Union in the revision of the Cotonou provisions is a major step forward. Over and above the joint meetings of institutions (for instance the meetings of the two Political and Security Committees and the annual meetings of the two Commissions thereafter), formal and informal contacts between experts, diplomats and ministers have also proliferated. The frequent invitation now extended by the Africa Group of the EU Council to the Bureau of African Ambassadors in Brussels is a very significant example. Ambassador Annadif has attended several such meetings with his African counterparts and the same is happening in Addis Ababa where Koen Vervaeke, Head of the EU Delegation, is regularly consulted by his counterparts on the AU’s Committee of Permanent Representatives. The permanent and structured relations between the Pan-African Parliament and the European Parliament, and their interactions with national parliaments and with the EU and AU political executives, have made a crucial and successful contribution, despite the obstacles and the few resources initially available.

Many **concrete initiatives** have been successfully launched. We report on them regularly on the partnership’s official site (see above). The many initiatives to place the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) on an operational footing which are visible in the field and financially supported by a flagship instrument, the African Peace Facility (APF), are often cited. Many others are under way, however, and look set to succeed provided that they combine joint political resolve, clear African leadership and adequate capacity for their implementation.

The joint strategy has had a far-reaching and enduring impact **within the European Commission**. Africa is no longer just for the “developers”. A new inter-service culture has grown up between 25 Directorates-General which have not had Africa as part of their mandate in the past. The fourth meeting of the two Commissions in Addis Ababa last June reflected this development and was attended by Presidents Barroso and Ping and 18 Commissioners, all actively involved in evaluating activities and selecting the priorities for the forthcoming Summit. Commissioners Barnier (internal market), recently in Addis Ababa, and Piebalgs (development), attending the AU Summit in Kampala at the end of July, have helped to intensify these contacts. Too little progress has yet been made, however, with the review of the various frameworks and instruments of cooperation with Africa managed by the European Commission for which the joint strategy provides. A start has nevertheless been made, especially regarding the EDF programming review exercises. The principle of ownership and joint management of cooperation by African partners (countries and regions) means that they must play an active part in this process which cannot be unilaterally reformed by European officials and which is in place until 2013.

Looking **beyond the institutions**, the joint strategy is still having too little impact. The commitment of the Member States on both sides is not as yet equal to the partnership’s vision as is the very late emergence of the African Regional Economic Communities which are a key link in Africa’s economic and political stability and integration. On the EU side, the joint strategy framework needs greater commitment if progress is to be made with the division of labour and policies and coordination made more consistent in order to bring about a major increase in terms of visibility and political impact for the “EU family”. On the African side, progress needs to

be made in the debate on political, institutional and economic integration: if the Africa-EU action plan is to be achieved, it is important for the principle of subsidiarity to be better applied in order to decide which measures are better carried out at continental (AU) or regional (REC) level; the African institutions (AUC, Pan-African Parliament, Courts, Agencies) also need to be provided with the necessary competences, capacity and resources.

Lastly, the place of **civil society and the private sector** is not yet equal to the ambitions of Lisbon and the potential offered by the strategy. Representatives of civil society on both continents are still too much in the background and the complex and one-sided nature of their representation has not yet enabled them to achieve the necessary dynamic. The institutions cannot and must not be allowed to stand in for the representatives of civil society, but can support them. On the eve of the third Summit, the large number of joint events involving non-institutional actors that are on the drawing board (youth forum, civil society forum, union organisations, cultural exhibition, Nyerere university network, research and information society, business forum and various events connected with the private sector) nevertheless shows an ongoing dynamic which is likely to gain momentum.

Europafrica: In your view, what are the main challenges that the joint strategy is facing at the upcoming Summit (from a political and institutional point of view)?

Mr. Darmuzey: The political ambition of the Lisbon Declaration should not be forgotten as the third Summit approaches. Many of the partnership's main innovations are still being under-used. Sirte offers a major opportunity to correct these weaknesses and speed up practical initiatives: in political terms, there is a very wide scope for action that could be exploited in our cooperation in the multilateral bodies in New York and Geneva and in the international forums. The Summit in Libya will be a test of our ability to convert intentions into joint Europe-Africa positions between the MDG Summit in New York and the Cancún Summit on climate change. Another challenge will be to give civil society and the private sector a more central role. Lastly, the third Summit should look at some new fields, such as renewable energies, where Africa and Europe could have a mutual interest.

Over and above joint challenges, Africa faces a particular challenge: in a partnership which is egalitarian and without taboos, the EU can play its part only if, in return, Africa effectively shoulders its full responsibility. Africa therefore needs to speak with a single voice if a credible alliance (New York, Cancún, Vienna) is to be forged with the EU in a context in which a clear-cut mutual interest replaces the assistance relationship of the past.

The forthcoming Summit will take place in a global context strongly marked by the impact of the financial crisis, the repercussions of the food crisis (already stressed by Ambassador Annadif), and the developments following on from economic, climatic and environmental disasters. This will influence the themes targeted for discussion by the African and European leaders. There is no doubt that economic growth, job creation, integration, investment and participation by the private sector will be on the agenda of the Heads of State.

Lastly, there is the question of the institutional operation of the Africa-EU strategic partnership. It is important to adapt the architecture by which the joint strategy and the action plan is implemented: on the African side, the AU Commission does not on its own have the capacity needed to implement all the strands of the partnership. It has to continue along the path on which it has already embarked to improve its capacity through institutions such as the Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the African Development Bank (AfDB) and the coordinating and implementing agency NEPAD. The African Union has also launched crucial work on subsidiarity and a better division of work between the regional (RECs) and sub-regional organisations, on the one hand, and the AU Commission, on the other.

This leaves the question of “the progressive establishment of a pan-African financial support programme” (text of the joint strategy), commonly known as the “pan-African envelope”. Major efforts need to be made here to pursue the joint exercise launched in October 2009 at a joint seminar on the resources allocated to the joint strategy. This seminar highlighted the limits of a purely financial approach which was not underpinned by a realistic analysis of the real weaknesses of implementation, needs, and the possibility of focusing this new instrument on initiatives with a pan-African added value, while avoiding any duplication with existing resources. On the EU side, multi-annual programming instruments mean that specific additional finance cannot be allocated before 2013 or a new financial perspective drawn up. In the meantime, it is essential to pursue work to think about the political purpose, the management and the complementarity of this instrument, and in particular to examine viable initiatives that it could support, with contributions from the Member States of both continents. With this in mind, and to facilitate the operation in the short term of the innovative institutional architecture of the joint Africa-EU partnership, one solution considered at the last ministerial political dialogue was to set up a technical support mechanism for the implementation of the joint strategy. In addition to its purely administrative and logistical tasks, this secretariat, financed by all the parties involved, would set a major pan-African precedent for more holistic future arrangements.

Europafrica: Many observers consider that the first Action Plan is too ambitious, something that has been detrimental to its implementation. What do you suggest for the next Action Plan?

- **Keep on course, channel ambitions and make results visible**

Mr. Darmuzey: Options for the next Action Plan 2011-2013 have already been jointly examined in April at ministerial level, and the proposals are very clear: channel efforts and resources into areas and initiatives which are working and/or attracting a critical mass of actors, resources and joint Euro-African resolve; allocate the political, human and financial resources needed on both sides of the partnership to new initiatives if they are promising and of mutual interest. Focus on levels of cooperation and questions which have a continental/regional and global scope and added value. Speak progressively with one voice on a larger number of issues in international forums.

- **Greater participation, greater communication**

Mr. Darmuzey: Communication is a key issue. We have to explain to the people of both continents what Europe and Africa can do if they pool their energies in their mutual interest. The media and communications have a major role to play. The editorials of the morning of 1 December 2010 must not lead with the story that nothing new has come out of Tripoli. In Lisbon, 80 Heads of State decided on a joint strategy, an action plan and issued a political declaration, while speaking frankly about some sensitive issues. The press focused in particular on the sensitive points, with little or no coverage of the Summit’s successes and the pioneering dimension of the partnership relations. Communication has to be part and parcel of joint work in 2011-2013. It is essential to pass on better information on both continents, in simple language, on the concrete issues that the joint strategy will make it possible to address in better ways in future years.

The Heads of State and Government of both continents will have an opportunity to launch a dialogue with civil society and the private sector on the problems of **Africa as a factor of growth for Europe and Europe as a factor of growth for Africa through its enterprises and investment**. They will come to the third Summit in Libya in particular with the intention of finding sustainable solutions to the major changes which will inevitably bring their peoples, their internal markets, their enterprises, their cultures and their youth closer together in a Euro-African demographic nucleus which will have a population of 2.5 billion in 2050.