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Towards a Strategic EU-NATO Security Partnership in Africa

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ABSTRACT

Threats from Africa undermine the security of Europe. The European Union and NATO have 22 member countries in common, namely most of EU member states. The fundamental role of the Atlantic Alliance is to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means.

Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, non-state actors and hybrid threats emerged as the major challenges to international security. NATO is evolving in response to new strategic reality, and terrorism and weak states are among the most pressing challenges the Alliance faces. NATO is playing an increasingly important role in crisis management and peacekeeping.

Since the African Union was established in 2001 as the successor to the Organization of African Unity, it faces difficulties in achieving the African ownership in peace and security. The chronic lack of funding and of appropriate military resources, makes the African Union depending on external aid – NATO provides military support, while the EU provides money. NATO cooperates with the AU since 2005, and all NATO-AU activities are coordinated with the EU.

The NATO-EU partnership is complementar and mutual, and is based on common values and strategic interests, and should be strengthened to secure the European southern border, and to guarantee security in the Mediterranean region. Therefore, stronger and permanent NATO-EU partnership in Africa would be desirable. This brief paper investigates the ties between these three organizations, and suggests some recommendations to improve the 'trilateral' relationship to ensure security to their member states.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Since the African Union (AU) was established in 2001¹ as the successor to the Organization of African Unity (OAU)², which existed from 1963 to 2002, the AU faces difficulties in achieving the African ownership in peace and security. The support of external actors, in particular the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO), is fundamental, and should become a strategic partnership.

2. EXTERNAL MILITARY AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR PEACE AND SECURITY IN AFRICA

Hanson gathers that extra-regional interests and actors are potentially playing game-changing rules in African regional security initiatives as defined by their funding, equipment support, and robust force projection in African security operations.³ Since 2005 – AU Mission in Sudan (AMIS), in the province of Darfur – the Atlantic Alliance supports the AU, including the capacity-building of a long-term peacekeeping capability.⁴

Since early days, AMIS has been affected by a lack of funding, depending on the financial benevolence from the AU partners.⁵ By Jan. 2004, the EU and its member states have supported the efforts by the AU to stabilise the situation in Darfur/Sudan with a wide range of measures including financial, personnel and political support, as well as assistance with planning and equipment and technical support.⁶ Canada was one of the key financial contributors to AMIS,⁷ providing

¹ Constitutive Act of the AU, adopted on Jul. 11, 2000 in Lomé.

² The Charter establishing the OAU was signed in Addis Ababa, on May 25, 1963. The African Union, which has now replaced the OAU, was proclaimed on July 11, 2001 in Lusaka after ratification of the Constitutive Act by more than 44 of the 53 Member States of the OAU. The Durban Summit of July 9, 2002 launched the African Union.

³ Kobena T. Hanson (ed.), *Contemporary Regional Development in Africa* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 218.

⁴ NATO, NATO assistance to the African Union, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8191.htm (unless otherwise noted at point of citation, all URLs cited in this article were accessible on Apr. 25, 2019).

⁵ UN News Center, Annan urges donors to bolster expanded African Union efforts in Darfur, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=14391#.VhflxWY3jI>.

⁶ EU Council Secretariat, EU support to the African Union Mission in Darfur-AMIS, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eu-support-amis-darfur/pdf/01012008_factsheet_eu-support-amis-darfur_en.pdf.

helicopters, fuel, equipment – Ottawa also loaned 105 armoured vehicles – and much-needed technical assistance through the deployment of military personnel and civilian police officers. The the British government provided as well support to the mission.⁸

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), a regional organization, failed in its attempt to establish itself as subregional peacekeeping solution in the region. Financial depending on external aid has distressed ECOWAS: the Senegalese troops deployed in Liberia by the Economic Community of West African States Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) were brought in with some financial support from the US.⁹ The mission was also affected by corruption and organized looting.¹⁰ Lack of funding prevented ECOWAS to intervene along the Guinea-Liberia border in 2001.¹¹ Hanson gathers that there there is a huge distance between ECOWAS declared aspirations and institutional operational capabilities.¹²

ECOWAS is a regional group of fifteen West African countries established in 1975 with the the Treaty of Lagos;¹³ it also serves as a peacekeeping force in the region since member nations signed in 1981 a Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence.¹⁴ In this context, in 1990 ECOWAS established ECOMOG to intervene in the civil war in Liberia (1989-96).

NATO is currently supporting the AU Mission in Somalia (AMISOM, 2007-present) through strategic air-and sealift.¹⁵ AMISOM makes manifest the limits and the financial dependence of the AU peacekeeping missions by the EU contributions. According to the government of Kampala, the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) troops deployed in Somalia under the AU mission, have not received their wages for five months.¹⁶ Brussels pays allowances for all AMISOM troops in Somalia through the African Peace Facility (APF), an instrument established in 2004, in response to a request by African leaders, that constitutes the main source of funding to support the activities of the AU and of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in

⁷ Government of Canada, Canada Supporting Peacekeeping in Darfur: Past, Present, Future, http://www.canadainternational.gc.ca/sudan_south_sudan-soudan_soudan_du_sud/assets/pdfs/supporting.pdf.

⁸ Arvid Ekengard, *The African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS): Experiences and Lessons Learned* (Stockholm: FOI Swedish Defense Research Agency, 2008), p. 22.

⁹ Adekeye Adebajo, *Liberia's Civil War: Nigeria, ECOMOG, and Regional Security in West Africa* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner, 2002), p. 107. See also Mitikishe Maxwell Khobe, "The Evolution and Conduct of ECOMOG Operations in West Africa", in *Monograph No. 44* (February 2000): *Boundaries of Peace Support Operations: The African Dimension* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies-ISS, 2000).

¹⁰ Stephen Ellis, *The Mask of Anarchy: The Destruction of Liberia and the Religious Roots of an African Civil War* (London: Hurst & Co., 2001; 2nd edition).

¹¹ Adebajo, p. 234.

¹² Hanson, p. 218.

¹³ ECOWAS, *Rivesed Treaty* (Abuja: ECOWAS Commission, 1993; reprint 2010), <http://www.ecowas.int/wp-content/uploads/2015/01/Revised-treaty.pdf>.

¹⁴ ECOWAS, Protocol Relating to Mutual Assistance on Defence, done in Freetown on May 29, 1981.

¹⁵ NATO, NATO assistance to the African Union.

¹⁶ Office of the President of the Republic of Uganda, UPDF Clarifies on Payment, <http://www.mediacentre.go.ug/press-release/updf-clarifies-payment>.

the area of peace and security, with an overall amount of more than EUR 2,7 billion since early days.¹⁷

The limits of the financial self-sustaining of the AU have been highlighted since its first peacekeeping operation in Burundi (AMIB 2003-2004; 2007-2008) – the total budget of the mission, which amounted to 134 USD million, was mainly supported by the EU, USA, UK and South Africa.¹⁸ The Nouakchott Process on the Enhancement of Security Cooperation and the launched in 2013 calls on the EU and other international stakeholders to provide external financial and technical support.¹⁹

3. THE EURO-AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) has been set up in 2002 by the AU and the RECs to prevent and resolve conflicts.²⁰ In 2009 the AU established the Early Response Mechanism (ERM) to give the APF the flexibility it needs to quickly respond to crises across Africa, by endowing the AU, RECs and Regional Mechanisms (RMs) with a source of immediate funding for actions aimed at the prevention, management or resolution of crises. The APSA has been for many years heavily dependent on donor funding and the EU support.²¹

The APF, which was established at the AU Maputo Summit in 2003,²² and has its legal basis on the Cotonou Agreement of 2000,²³ is financed by the European Development Fund (EDF). The long-term goal of the APF is to enable the African institutions to ensure peace and security on their own without external assistance.²⁴ So far, the APF has supported 14 African-led Peace Support Operations (PSOs).

¹⁷ European Commission, DG International Cooperation and Development, African Peace Facility, https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/regions/africa/continental-cooperation/african-peace-facility_en.

¹⁸ Festus Agoagye, *The African Mission in Burundi. Lessons learned from the first African Union Peacekeeping Operation* (Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies-ISS, 2004), pp. 13, 15.

¹⁹ AUC-PSD, Report of the Commission of the African Union on the follow-up to the relevant provisions of the Declaration of the summit of the member countries of the Nouakchott process of 18 Dec. 2014.

²⁰ AU, The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), <http://www.peaceau.org/en/topic/the-african-peace-and-security-architecture-apsa>.

²¹ ECA, *The African Peace and Security Architecture: need to refocus EU support*, Special Report No. 20, (Luxembourg: EU, 2018), doi:10.2865/466192.

²² Council Decision No 3/2003 of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers of Dec. 11, 2003 on the use of resources from the long-term development envelope on the ninth EDF for the creation of a Peace Facility for Africa, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22003D0003\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22003D0003(01)&from=EN).

²³ The agreement, signed between the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries and the EU in 2000, rules the political, commercial, cooperation and development relations between the two blocs, whose closer ties began in 1975 with the Lomé agreement. The Cotonou Agreement will expire in 2020.

²⁴ European Commission, DG International Cooperation and Development, African Peace Facility.

According to the Africa-EU Partnership data, dependence of AU peace and security initiatives on European funding is reflected in the contribution of the EU through the APF financial overview under EDF, the amount of which has more or less doubled in 2014-2020 compared to previous period.²⁵ The APF may cover allowances for the troops, salaries for civilians, logistical, transportation, medical, communication costs but in no way can it fund military equipment, arms, ammunition or military training, that are mostly provided by NATO.

The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership is based on the Joint Africa-Europe Strategy (JAES)²⁶ adopted at the 2nd EU-Africa Summit held in Lisbon in Dec. 2007, and reconfirmed as a priority at the 4th Summit in Brussels in Apr. 2014. The move came a few days before the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon²⁷ amending the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC). Even if the Lisbon Treaty gives greater coherence and visibility to the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and creates the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the establishment of a Common European Defence is a long-term objective.²⁸ The EU Global Strategy, adopted in June 2016, defines peace and security as one of the vital interests of the EU – it also links internal and external security.²⁹

An independent assessment of the implementation and results of the APF conducted by an external consortium of security experts between 2012–2013 concludes that the EU support provided through the APF has been a game changer.³⁰ Nevertheless, the capacity of African countries to resolve continental conflicts is limited by chronic lack of resources, and therefore depends on external funding. African states and institutions do not always have the capacity to intervene in crises and external support is still essential. The dependence of external funding – EU and its Member States – is stressed by the special report drafted by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) in 2018.

²⁵ ECA, p. 10-11.

²⁶ The Africa-EU Partnership, The Joint Africa-Europe Strategy. A Joint Africa-EU Strategy, http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/eas2007_joint_strategy_en.pdf.

²⁷ Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC), signed on Dec. 13, 2007, in *Official Journal of the European Union*, OJ C 306, Dec. 17, 2007, pp. 1–271.

²⁸ EUR-LEX, The EU's Common Security and Defence Policy, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:ai0026>.

²⁹ Federica Mogherini, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy* (Bruxelles: EU, June 2016).

³⁰ Robin Poulton, Eduardo Trillo & Leon Kukuk, *The European Union's EDF Programme. Part 1 of the African Peace Facility Evaluation. Reviewing the Procedures of the APF and Possibilities of Alternative Future Sources of Funding. Final report* (Brussels: IBF International Consulting, 2017), p. 10.

4. THE NATO-EU STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

In 1993 the Treaty of Maastricht introduces the CFSP as the "second pillar" of the EU.³¹ In 1999 the Treaty of Amsterdam increases powers of the European Parliament to enact the CFSP.³² Although the Amsterdam Treaty does not provide for a common defense, it enhances the EU responsibility in peacekeeping.

According to the NATO-EU Declaration of Dec. 2002, the European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP)³³ benefits from the EU access to NATO's planning capabilities. In 2005, when a EU-led force was deployed in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Operation Althea), the Alliance provided planning, logistic and command support for the mission.³⁴ The Strategic Concept approved by the Allies at the Lisbon Summit (Nov. 2010) strengthens the NATO-EU strategic partnership in crises, conflicts and post-conflict situations.

Europe tackles security threats emanating from North Africa, including terrorism and religious extremism, drug trafficking, people smuggling, and arms proliferation.³⁵ Massive intrusions of individuals in Europe, from the in the Sahelo-Saharan region, is a main security issue.³⁶ These threats have an impact on the EU security:³⁷ in 2018, the Western Mediterranean became the most frequently used route into Europe – the number of detections in 2018 doubled for the second consecutive year, scoring a new record.³⁸ Bauer and Hartley stress the role of the EU in determining the stability of the Mediterranean region in the post-Cold War era.³⁹ But stability and security are hard to be achieved without cooperation.

In the Euro-Mediterranean Region, the Atlantic Alliance in running since 2001 an anti-terrorism and maritime security operation.⁴⁰ NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue started in 1994, and currently involves seven non-NATO regional states: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania,

³¹ EUR-LEX, Treaty of Maastricht on European Union, <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=uriserv:xy0026>.

³² Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty of the European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts, signed on Oct. 2, 1997, in *Official Journal of the European Union* OJ C 340, Nov. 10, 1997, pp. 1-414.

³³ NATO, NATO-EU: a strategic partnership, http://www.nato.int/cps/eu/natohq/topics_49217.htm.

³⁴ NATO, Peace support operations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

³⁵ AIV, *The Future of NATO and European Security*, No. 106 (The Hague: AIV, 2017), pp. 7, 56.

³⁶ FRONTEX, Western Mediterranean Route, <https://frontex.europa.eu/along-eu-borders/migratory-routes/western-mediterranean-route>.

³⁷ AU-EU 2017 Summit Final Declaration, AU-EU/Decl.1(V), http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/31991/33454-pr-final_declaration_au_eu_summit.pdf.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Jurgen Brauer and Keith Hartley, *The economics of regional security: NATO, the Mediterranean and Southern Africa* (Amsterdam: Harwood Academic Press, 2000).

⁴⁰ NATO Maritime Command (MARCOM), Missions, <https://mc.nato.int/missions.aspx>. At the NATO Warsaw Summit in July 2016, NATO announced the transformation of Active Endeavour counter-terrorism mission in the Mediterranean to a broader maritime security operation. The new operation was codenamed Operation Sea Guardian (OSG).

Morocco, and Tunisia.⁴¹ Allies agreed to consider requests for financial assistance in support of Mediterranean partners' participation in the Dialogue. The NATO-EU partnership operates also in the Horn of Africa (counter-piracy Operation Ocean Shield, 2008-2016).⁴²

The EU acknowledges that its role as an international security provider has quickly grown, but that peace and security around the world can only be effectively achieved within a multilateral system and in partnership with other actors, such as the AU and NATO.⁴³

NATO cooperates with the AU since 2005,⁴⁴ and all NATO-AU activities are coordinated with the EU.⁴⁵ NATO and the EU currently have 22 member countries in common – most of the EU member states,⁴⁶ except Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Malta and Sweden.⁴⁷ In accordance with the Treaty, the fundamental role of the Atlantic Alliance is to safeguard the freedom and security of its member countries by political and military means.⁴⁸ NATO is playing an increasingly important role in crisis management and peacekeeping. All member states are responsible with the aid of other allies and operations through financial or military aid. Therefore, stronger and permanent NATO–EU partnership in Africa would be desirable.

A report by the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) recommends that in the future years, military interventions in conflict areas outside the treaty area, including Africa, should be carried out in close cooperation between the NATO and the EU.⁴⁹ The AIV believes that the Atlantic Alliance should develop a southern strategy given its security interests in the region, while the ECA finds that the EU strategy in supporting the African Peace and Security Architecture lacks a long-term vision.⁵⁰

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The chronic lack of funding and of appropriate military resources, makes the AU depending on external aid. NATO provides military support (airlifting, expert support, personnel training assistance), while the EU provides money. Therefore, at present time seems hard to achieve a

⁴¹ NATO, NATO Mediterranean Dialogue, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_60021.htm?

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ EUCAP Sahel Niger, Promoting peace and security-EU moving forward with its multilateral partners, https://eeas.europa.eu/csdp-missions-operations/eucap-sahel-niger/52863/promoting-peace-and-security-eu-moving-forward-its-multilateral-partners_fr.

⁴⁴ NATO, Cooperation with the African Union, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_8191.htm?

⁴⁵ William T. Van Atten, "NATO in Africa", *Militært Tidsskrift*, 137. årgang - No. 1 (Apr. 2008) s. 58-60.

⁴⁶ EU, EU member countries, <http://europa.eu/about-eu/countries/member-countries/>.

⁴⁷ NATO, NATO Member Countries, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/nato_countries.htm.

⁴⁸ NATO, Operations and missions: past and present, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_52060.htm.

⁴⁹ AIV, Recommendation 10, p. 64.

⁵⁰ ECA, § 62, p. 33.

African ownership in the field of security. Threats from Africa as a whole undermine the security of Europe, which is guaranteed by the Atlantic Alliance. The NATO-EU partnership is complementary and mutual, and is based on common values and strategic interests, and should be strengthened to secure the European southern border, and to guarantee security in the Mediterranean region.

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