



“WE WANT FAIR, INCLUSIVE AND
MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL RELATIONS”

Results of the Africa-Europe Civil Society Survey

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PREFACE

Africa and Europe face many common challenges that call for a closer and fairer cooperation. These include dealing with the consequences of the Covid-19 crisis, the successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement, equitable and sustainable trade relationships, legal and safe migration channels, shaping digitalisation, curbing illicit financial flows and corruption, and coming to terms with the colonial past.

With a view to the European Union (EU), we therefore welcome the prominence given to relations between Africa and Europe in the programme of the current Trio Council Presidency of Germany, Portugal and Slovenia. The EU and its member states finally have the opportunity to follow through on rhetoric about a “partnership of equals” with the African continent by launching initiatives for multilateral action.

In the context of the coronavirus pandemic, international cooperation is more vital than ever. It must involve the countries and civil societies in the Global South, and especially the African continent, as repeatedly promised by the EU in its political declarations. But until now, the announced reorientation of the partnership has failed to produce visible results. The most obvious expression of this is that the summit and other recent high-level consultations

between the African Union (AU) and the EU have been postponed several times without clear arrangements to fill these gaps.

From July 2020 to December 2021, VENRO (Germany), Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD (Portugal), SLOGA (Slovenia) and the pan-European NGO network CONCORD work together to provide critical and constructive support to their governments’ Trio Presidency and to other EU institutions like the European Parliament and the European Commission. The EU Presidency Project (EUPP) runs under the slogan “Towards an open, fair and sustainable Europe in the world”. It aims to increase public support for an EU that puts the 2030 Agenda, sustainable development, human rights and solidarity at the centre of its work. The four partners build on the work of the previous EUPP team formed by FOND (Romania), Fingo (Finland), CROSOL (Croatia) and CONCORD (January 2019 to June 2020).

Under the German EU Presidency, and despite corona restrictions, the EUPP partners have shown that close collaboration is possible and necessary. In the second half of 2020, the Digital Africa Forum and the hybrid Africa-Europe conference “Civil Society Driving Change” attracted more than 500 African and European participants.

These events and other actions planned during the EUPP period demonstrate that civil society takes the partnership between the two continents seriously and fundamentally contributes to it.

The results of the Africa-Europe Civil Society Survey confirm this observation. More than 360 representatives of African and European civil society organisations (CSOs) took part in the survey in September and October 2020. It therefore is an insightful snapshot of the views of CSO representatives on the relations between the two continents.

The main findings are clear: cooperation between Africa and Europe could hardly be more important for civil society on both sides. However, the quality of relations is viewed critically – processes like the update of the Africa-EU Partnership are not transparent enough, and they are too far removed from everyday life. Furthermore, opportunities for citizens to voice out concerns and raise suggestions are too limited. But there is a strong desire for greater involvement so that civil society expertise can inform the content and priorities

of the Africa-EU Partnership and other forms of cooperation.

The results of our survey are therefore an appeal to the current Trio Presidency and the European Commission to set in motion an inclusive and systematic consultation process for civil society in the run-up to the AU-EU Summit. This would be an important step towards an equal partnership that brings tangible benefits to the people on both continents.

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NOTES ON METHODOLOGY AND PARTICIPANTS

The EUPP partners commissioned the renowned Allensbach Institute (IfD Allensbach, Germany) to carry out a survey among representatives of civil society organisations (CSOs) in Africa and Europe. The main goal of the survey was to obtain a detailed picture of civil society partnership and cooperation between the two continents. It looked at the importance and value attributed to African-European cooperation, the level of awareness of the Africa-EU Partnership, and the issues which should be prioritised in this partnership.

DISTRIBUTION AND DURATION OF SURVEY

Between 27 September and 6 October 2020, interviewees were contacted online and the survey was sent to them via various intercontinental CSO networks. It should be noted that most of the respondents were members of partner organisations of the EUPP coalition, therefore the results constitute a non-representative sample. The results were evaluated by the Allensbach Institute.

NUMBER AND LOCATION OF INTERVIEWEES

The survey questionnaire was produced jointly by the project partners and the Institute. Three language versions were offered (English, French and Portuguese). A total of 363 interviews were conducted. Of these, 221 were with CSO representatives in Africa and 142 with CSO representatives in Europe. Of those surveyed in

Africa (28 countries in total), 16 percent worked in Kenya, 11 percent in Cameroon, and 6 percent in Ghana. In Europe (11 countries in total), 65 percent of interviewees worked in Germany, 11 percent in Belgium and 7 percent in Portugal.

GENDER BALANCE

In terms of gender distribution, 54 percent of respondents were male, 45 percent female and one percent diverse. On the African continent, 62 percent were male and 38 percent female, whereas in Europe 56 percent were female, 41 percent male and 3 percent diverse.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

There was an even age distribution among the participants. About a quarter were in the age groups of 30-39 years, 40-49 years, and 50-59 years respectively. The remaining quarter were aged under 30 or 60 years and older.

AREAS OF WORK

The survey participants were also asked about their areas of work. Forty-four percent in each case worked on human rights and the environment; 40 percent were employed in youth work; 38 percent worked on gender equality; 33 percent on health; 31 percent on children's rights and 28 percent on peace and fragility (multiple responses possible).

PART 1: ASSESSMENT OF AFRICA-EUROPE RELATIONS

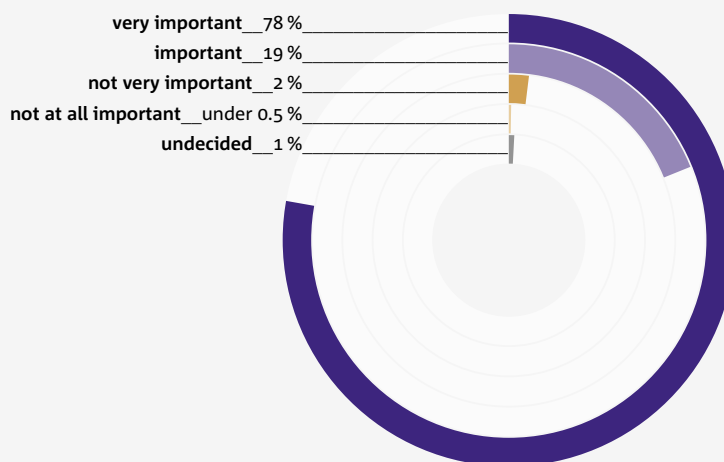
Relations between Africa and Europe have been talked up in recent years by the EU and its member states. On her first trip abroad as European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen visited the African Union (AU) headquarters in Ethiopia in late 2019. In February 2020, a working meeting was held between members of the AU and EU Commissions. Then, in March, the European Commission proposed a new AU-EU strategy.

Yet around one year later, the momentum has faded. The European Commission has not presented any concrete forward-looking projects that would indicate a new quality in relations with Africa. Nor has there been any clear signal from the German EU Council Presidency that would support a move away from unfair trade relations or a human rights based migration policy, for example. Instead, cuts to development funds in the new EU budget and the continuation of outmoded structures through the post-Cotonou agreement show that the AU and EU are a long way from a “partnership of equals”

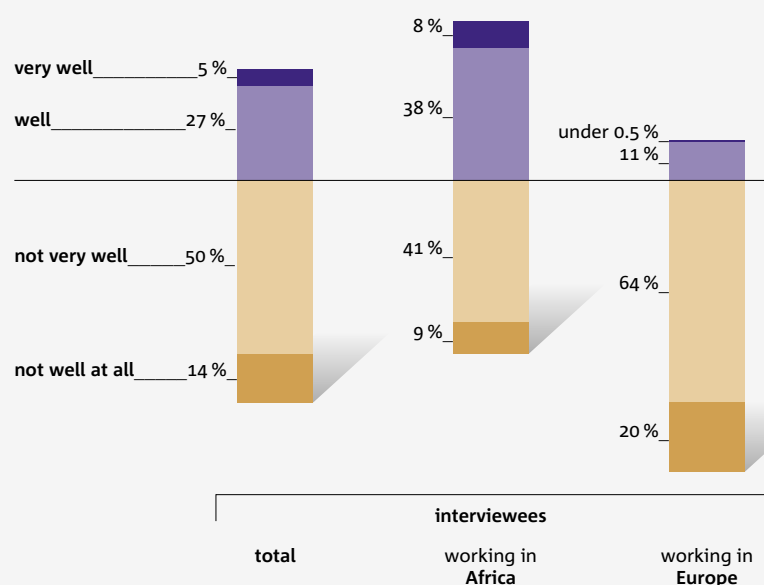
This gap between expectations and reality is also reflected in the first part of the survey results. The basic message from the surveyed representatives of CSOs from Africa and Europe was: African-European cooperation is very important to us, but it is not working so well (yet).

GRAPHIC 1:

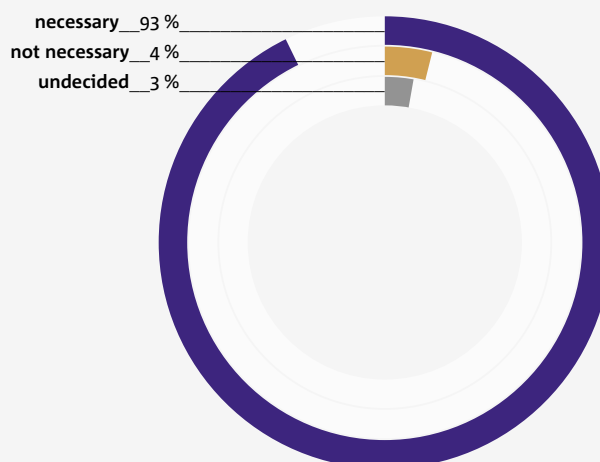
In general terms, how important do you think it is for Africa and Europe to cooperate closely with each other?


GRAPHIC 2:

In your view, how well is the cooperation between Africa and Europe working?


GRAPHIC 3:

Do you think it is necessary to expand the existing cooperation between Africa and Europe beyond its current scope, or don't you think that is necessary?



PART 2:

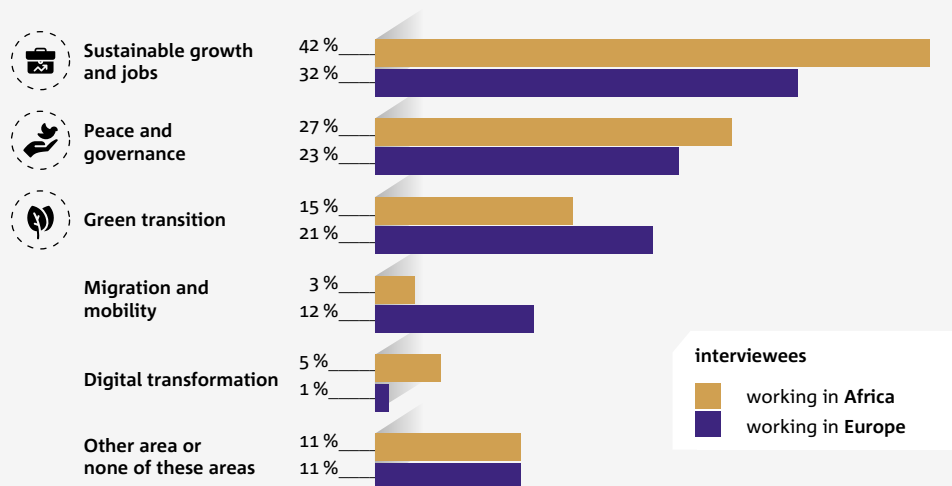
ISSUES AND PRIORITIES

Generally, there is much agreement between CSO representatives from Africa and Europe on the areas that the Africa-EU Partnership should focus on. Respondents share a consensus that sustainable growth and employment as well as peace and governance should be prioritised in the Africa-EU Partnership.

Fair trade relations and inclusive economic growth are particularly important to the representatives who work in Africa. It is notable that the respondents differ in their assessment of the importance of migration and mobility – this area was much less of a priority for the African survey participants than for the European side. However, this could be explained by the prominence given to migration on the political agenda in Europe and the debates on the EU's restrictive migration policy.

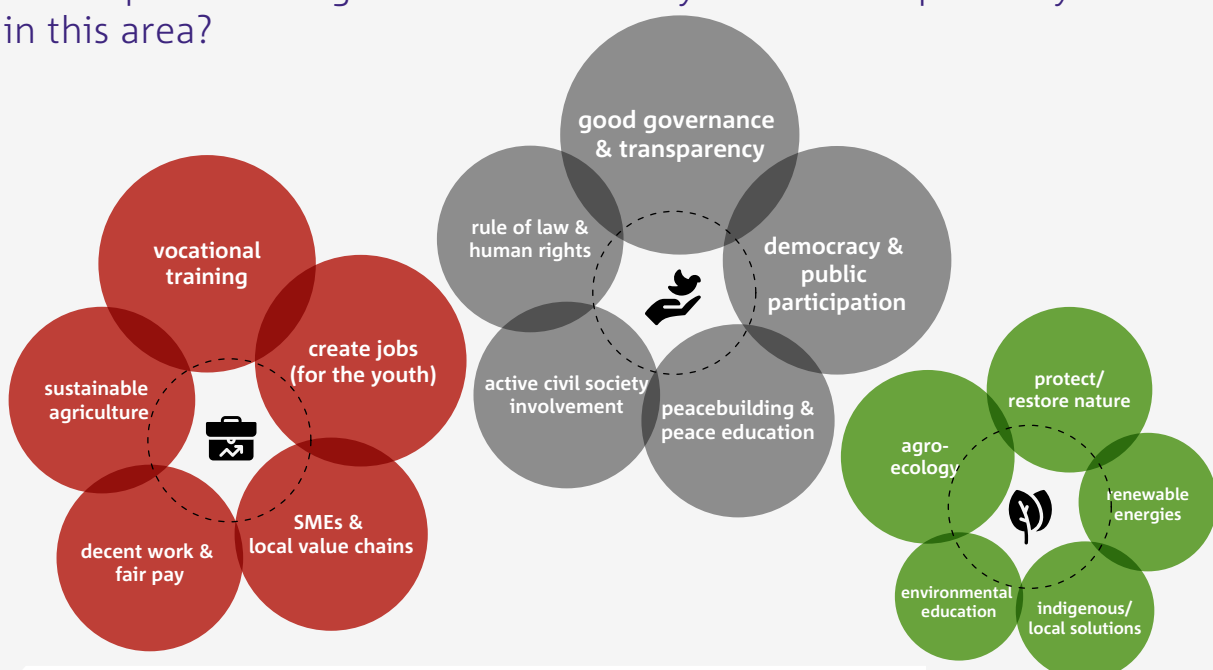
GRAPHIC 4:

The European Commission has suggested a new strategy for its partnership with Africa that identifies five key areas. In your opinion, in which of these areas should the partnership between Africa and the EU be promoted most strongly?



GRAPHIC 5:

Thinking of the area that is most important to you (see graphic 4): What specific changes or measures do you think are primarily needed in this area?



Note: These key words have been extracted from 228 written statements related to the three areas mentioned most (see graphic 4). The five most frequently used terms/concepts per area are presented.

PART 3: STRUCTURES AND PARTICIPATION

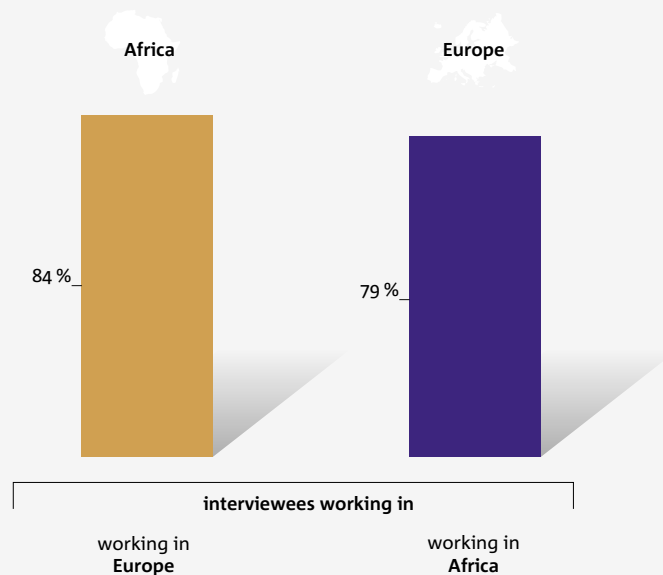
For many years, the AU and EU have sought to deepen their partnership. The consulted African and European CSOs are also generally in favour of closer cooperation between the two continents. Yet there should be more substance to the relationship than political negotiations or trade agreements. Relations thrive on human encounters, cultural exchange, social engagement and open discussions about the shared past, present and future.

A large majority of respondents have previously worked with civil society partners and other institutions on both continents. However, there was little awareness of political processes such as the Africa-EU Partnership. There was a widespread impression that the concerns and interests of civil society are not sufficiently taken into account, and that there is no transparent mechanism for non-state actors to participate and be heard in the context of official African-European consultations.

Almost all respondents expressed the desire to be able to participate more extensively in the Africa-EU Partnership. Steps in this direction that were mentioned included greater involvement in decision-making processes, improved dialogue between civil society and policy makers, and stronger institutionalisation or development of existing consultation instruments. Decision-makers on both continents should acknowledge these suggestions and put some (if not all) of them into practice.

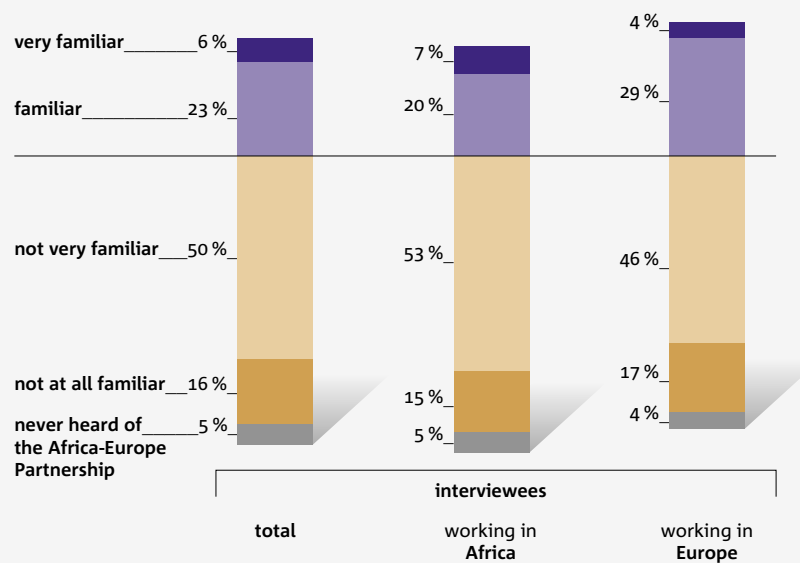
GRAPHIC 6:

Does your work regularly bring you into contact with other civil society organisations or official entities in Africa/Europe?



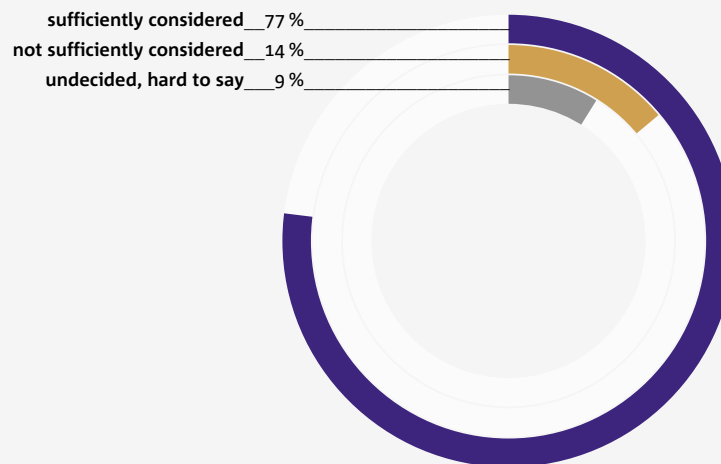
GRAPHIC 7:

The Africa-Europe Partnership between the African Union and the European Union was established in the year 2007. How familiar are you with the issues and goals of this partnership?



GRAPHIC 8:

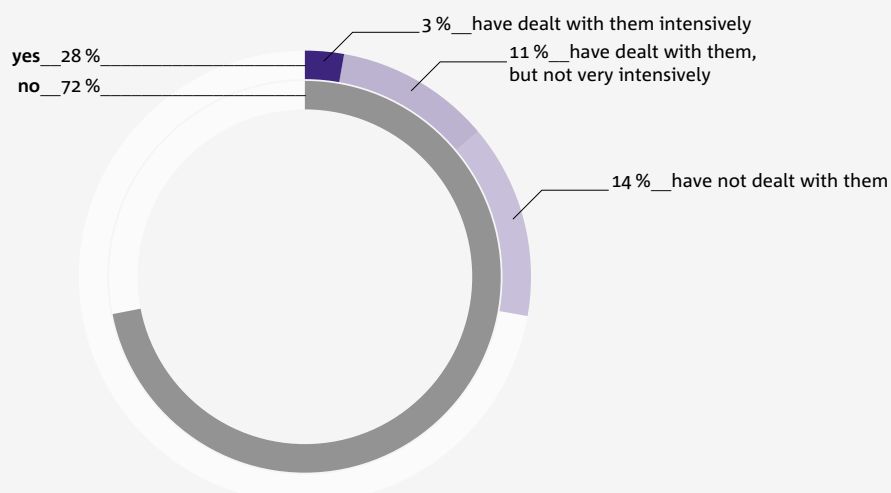
What is your impression: Are the interests and concerns of civil society or civil society organisations sufficiently considered by the Africa-Europe Partnership, or are they not sufficiently considered?



Note: This only includes interviewees that are very familiar, familiar or not very familiar with the issues and goals of the Africa-Europe Partnership (see graphic 7).

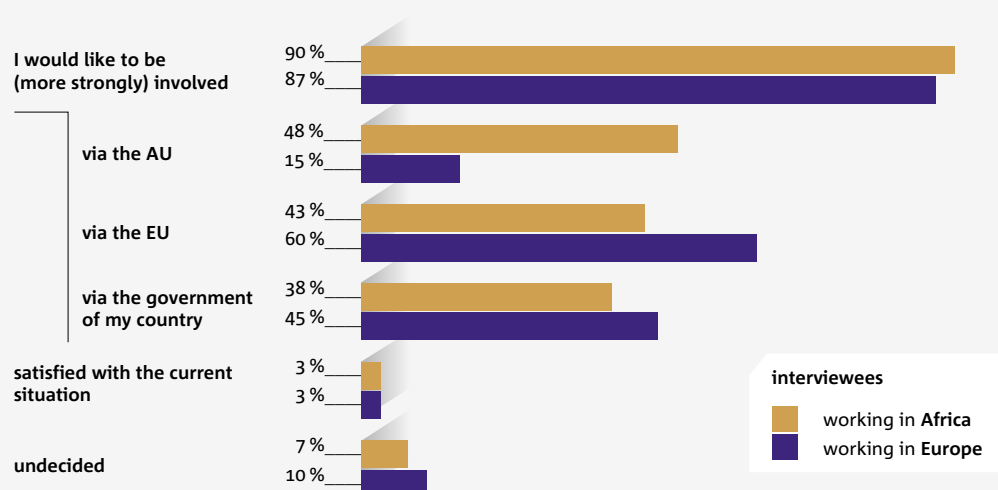
GRAPHIC 9:

Are you familiar with the Africa-EU Civil Society Forum?
Have you ever had any dealings with the Africa-EU Civil Society Forum?



GRAPHIC 10:

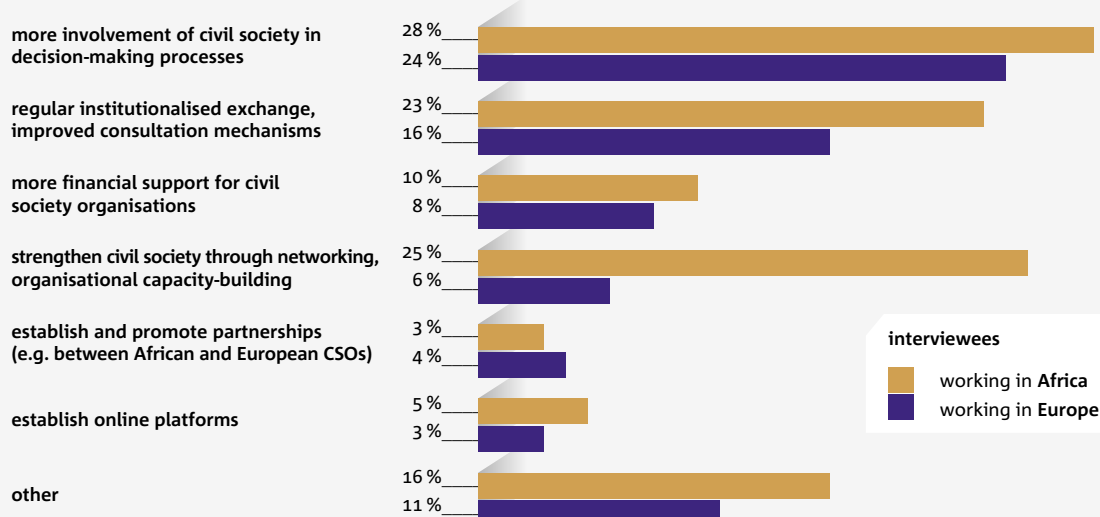
Would you or your organisation like to be (more strongly) involved in the Africa-Europe Partnership via the EU, the AU or the government of your country, or are you satisfied with the current situation?



Note: This only includes interviewees that are familiar with the issues and goals of the Africa-Europe Partnership (see graphic 9).

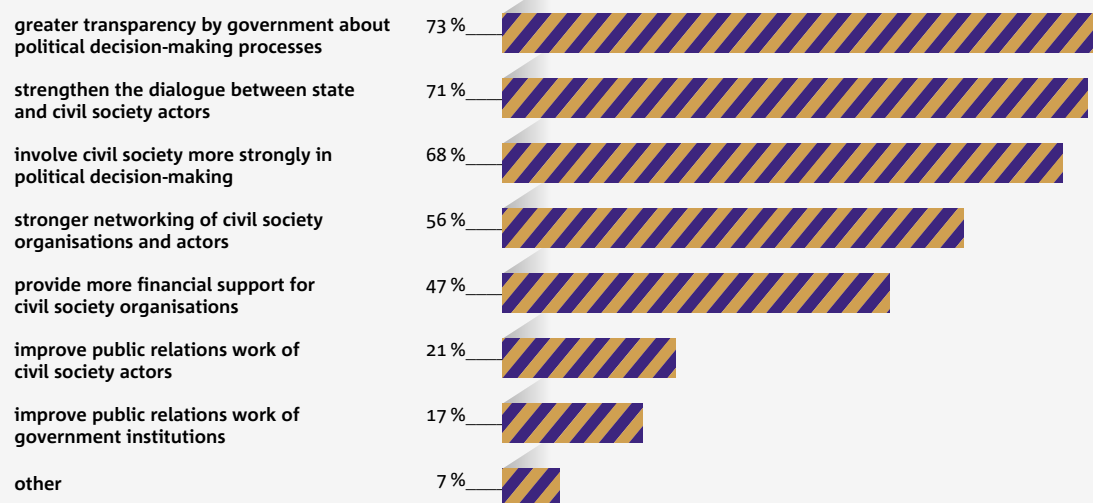
GRAPHIC 11:

In your opinion, how could civil society involvement be strengthened within the framework of the Africa-Europe Partnership (open question)?



GRAPHIC 12:

In your opinion, which measure would most likely help to narrow the gap between political decision-makers and civil society? What might be especially helpful in that regard? (multiple answers possible)



OUTLOOK

The Africa-Europe Civil Society Survey clearly shows that there is a strong desire for fair, inclusive and mutually beneficial relations between our two continents. The Africa-EU Partnership and the next Joint Africa-EU Strategy are key instruments to achieve this. But it requires much more ambition and political will to promote an in-depth dialogue that could eventually lead to a “partnership of equals” based on the people’s most pressing needs.

While responding to the challenges deepened by the Covid-19 crisis, the AU and EU must strive for a genuine partnership that contributes to achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and places human development at the heart of African-European relations. The next AU-EU Summit and the related political processes must therefore build on a broad, comprehensive and transparent consultation process that allows for the meaningful engagement of civil society from both continents.

The EUPP coalition and its partners in Africa and Europe will constantly remind decision-makers on both sides to fulfil their promises. During the Portuguese EU Presidency, the Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD will reach out especially to civil society actors in lusophone African countries. SLOGA will carry the EUPP activities forward during the Slovenian EU Presidency.

ABOUT THE EU PRESIDENCY PROJECT

“Towards an open, fair and sustainable Europe in the World” – the slogan of the EU Presidency Project (EUPP) is a call to action for all of us! We join hands to increase public support for a European Union that puts global solidarity, the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, development cooperation, and human rights at the centre of its work.

EUPP brings together national and pan-European NGO platforms for development and relief representing the current and upcoming EU Council Presidencies. From July 2020 to December 2021, VENRO (Germany), Plataforma Portuguesa

das ONGD (Portugal), SLOGA (Slovenia) and the pan-European NGO network CONCORD closely collaborate to advocate for coherent development cooperation policies and positive change in Europe and beyond.

The four partners pursue the efforts of the previous EUPP cooperation between FOND (Romania), Fingo (Finland), CROSOL (Croatia) and CONCORD (January 2019 to June 2020). The French, Czech, and Swedish national NGO platforms will then take over the project in 2022.

presidency.concordeurope.org



CONCORD is the European confederation of relief and development NGOs. We are made up of 28 national platforms based in EU member states, 25 international networks of development NGOs, and four associated members that represent more than 2,600 NGOs, supported by millions of citizens across Europe. We are a member-led organisation which means that the members give the strategic direction of the confederation.

Founded in 2003 by development NGOs from across Europe, our organisational

name CONCORD is an acronym based on “**CON**federation for **CO**operation of **Relief** and **Development** NGOs”.

We are the main interlocutor with the EU institutions on development policy. We aim to strengthen the impact of European development NGOs vis-à-vis the European institutions and to positively influence the European development policies for a fair, just and sustainable world.

concordeurope.org



Plataforma Portuguesa das ONGD is a private non-profit organisation that represents a group of about 60 Portuguese NGOs.

Created in 1985 by its member organisations, it responded to their need to position themselves as fundamental interlocutors of the Portuguese government and international organisations in the process of building policies in the areas of development co-operation, development education and

global citizenship as well as humanitarian and emergency aid.

The Platform represents and supports Portuguese NGOs at the national and international level, thereby contributing to strengthen civil society's intervention in the areas mentioned above and to empower NGOs in order to create a fairer and more equitable world.

plataformaongd.pt



SLOGA is a Slovenian NGO platform/network bringing together 38 Slovenian NGOs active in international development cooperation, global (citizenship) education and humanitarian aid. The aim of the platform is to connect and strengthen the partnerships among Slovenian NGOs, which are active in and/or are raising awareness of the Slovenian and European public about coherent development and global solidarity.

SLOGA serves as the key national NGO interlocutor for policy-making processes on international development cooperation and international humanitarian aid. As an umbrella organisation, SLOGA focuses on advocacy, capacity development, awareness-raising and information service activities.

In 2015, SLOGA has launched the Coalition 2030 initiative, an informal network with the purpose of promoting Slovenia's responsibility in implementing the SDGs. Since 2015, SLOGA has been engaged as the coordinator of an informal NGO coalition working on migration, refugee and integration issues, with the aim of assuring coherent and coordinated response to the crisis in Slovenia – through joint advocacy activities and appeals to the Government, capacity-building activities and debates with the aim of exchanging information and experience.

SLOGA is an active member of CONCORD, Forus, ALDA, SDG Watch Europe and EADI.

sloga-platform.org



VENRO is the umbrella organisation of development and humanitarian NGOs in Germany. The association was founded in 1995 and consists of around 140 organisations. Their backgrounds lie in independent and church-related development co-operation, humanitarian aid as well as development education, public relations and advocacy. VENRO's central goal is to build a just globalisation, with a special emphasis on eradicating global poverty. The members of

the organisation are committed to implementing human rights and conserving natural resources.

VENRO represents the interests of development and humanitarian aid NGOs vis-à-vis the German Government; strengthens the role of NGOs and civil society in development co-operation and humanitarian aid; and sharpens public awareness of development co-operation and humanitarian issues in general.

venro.org



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