

High-Level Special Dialogue on Migration & Mobility: Leading the way to the 6th AU-EU Summit

CONTEXT

The Africa-Europe Foundation has been co-founded in December 2020 by Friends of Europe and the Mo Ibrahim Foundation, in partnership with the African Climate Foundation and the ONE Campaign and with a multitude of stakeholders from civil society, business, policymaking and the youth sector across Africa and Europe. The purpose of the Africa-Europe Foundation is to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogue and catalyse diverse partnerships that can revitalise Africa-Europe relations for the benefit of their people.

The 6th AU-EU Summit scheduled for mid- February 2022 represents a significant milestone in which to break new ground towards our shared future.

Ahead of this Summit, to facilitate an open and frank dialogue on key, potentially contentious, issues between our two continents, AEF is organising three high-level “Talking Africa-Europe” specials focusing on the priority issues of Climate and Energy (January 20), Migration and Mobility (January 27) and Vaccine Access and Equity (February 3).

PROGRAMME

A point of contention between Africa and Europe for decades, the drivers of intercontinental migration are often misunderstood – which makes managing migratory flows more difficult. Working on a coherent, comprehensive, and shared approach to migration, that aims both to efficiently fight irregular migration and to foster well- managed mobility is key. This debate will look at the best ways to reduce irregular migration, strengthen intra-continental mobility in Africa, and create relevant prospects and accessible routes for regular intercontinental migration.

Questions will include:

- What are the key drivers of both intercontinental and intracontinental migration?
- How can Europe and Africa work together to reduce the factors that lead people to attempt irregular, and often dangerous crossings of the Mediterranean?
- What best practices can be shared to both limit irregular migration and increase mobility opportunities across and within both continents?
- Does the EU Strategy with Africa identify all the relevant challenges and opportunities surrounding internal and external migration?
- How can Europe and Africa work together to foster better work opportunities for young people on both continents?

YouTube links

- [View the debate in English](#)
- [Regardez le débat en français](#)

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

H.E. Mr Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda and Chair of the AUDA-NEPAD Heads of State and Government Orientation Committee

H.E. Mr Kyriakos Mitsotakis, Prime Minister of Greece

DISCUSSANTS (in alphabetical order)

Alexander Betts, Professor of Forced Migration and International Affairs, University of Oxford, and European Young Leader (EYL40)

Nasser Bourita, Moroccan Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation, and Moroccan Expatriates

Ugochi Daniels, Deputy Director-General for Operations at the International Organization for Migration

Bernard Gustin, Chairman of the Supervisory Board at the Elia Group and Co-Chair of the AEF Strategy Group on Transport and Connectivity

Judicaelle Irakoze, President of the board and Executive Director at Choose Yourself, and 2019 European Commission Young leader on Migration

Yasmine Ouirhane, Founder of We Belong Europe and 2019 Young European of the Year

Papa Amadou Sarr, Minister and General Delegate for Entrepreneurship, Republic of Senegal

Jean-Michel Severino, Chief Executive Officer of Investisseurs et Partenaires, and former Chief Executive Officer of the Agence française de développement

Patrick Youssef, Director for Africa at the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)

SUMMARY

27/01/2022 - Migration and Mobility in the Africa-Europe partnership: Leading the way to the AU-EU summit

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- [Κάντε κλικ εδώ για την ελληνική έκδοση](#)

During the second of three high level debates on 27 January 2022 leading up to the [EU-Africa summit on 17-18 February](#), participants discussed the current challenges around migration and mobility, its key drivers, and put forward possible solutions which included updated ways of understanding the issue.

First, there is an obvious need to contextualise this often-emotive issue from the outset.

Over the past 30 years, migration has increased, but not at the same rate as the global population,

Only 27.2% of African migrants live in Europe, and only 12.7% of all migrants in Europe are African. Almost 52% of African migrants move within their own continent. The main driver of African migrations is the look for jobs. Eight out of the ten least accepting countries when it comes to migration are in Europe. At the same time, migrants continue to form a substantial proportion of those who work in health and care services in Europe.

“Migration and mobility have long been at the forefront of dialogue between Africa and Europe,” said Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda. “There are several reasons why Africans migrate to Europe, some of them justified, others not. Whether political, economic, or for reasons of security, all are wrapped up in matters of governance. (9:41)”

“If Africans would be comfortable staying at home in their own countries and allowed to move from one country to another, then some of these problems would be reduced to minimal, (10:18)” he argued.

“But the terms of the debate are broken,” he cautioned, referencing the “dangerous journeys” which continue to cause loss of life and empower criminal networks. (10:44)

“To make progress we must correctly diagnose the root cause of migration, and the most important driver is the imbalance in human capital opportunities between our two continents.” (11:08)

“An effective and humane migration cooperation framework must address the human capital investment gap,”(11:54) he said, recalling that in his view the “migration challenge is a shared responsibility for Africa, Europe, and multilateral agencies”,(12:08) but emphasising the need for these actors to better engage the “civil society and advocacy groups which shape the political debate”. (13:28)

“Policies focused on detention, deportation, and deterrents have not been effective and will not provide a lasting solution - therefore we have to be thinking and acting differently” (16:39)

Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the Prime Minister of Greece, followed on by saying that he was looking forward to the forthcoming EU-African Union Summit and the in-depth discussions on major challenges, which include migration and mobility. He spoke of a need for a change in mentality towards Africa, highlighting that Greece is “connected to, rather than separated from [Africa] through...the Mediterranean”.

“Well-managed migration can have a positive impact on all our societies,”(22:39) he said, “but this presupposes our commitment to fight irregular migration and human trafficking, with an emphasis on disrupting criminal networks.” (22:45)

He listed three priorities when it comes to addressing migration between the two continents.

First, he said the “EU can and should offer legal migration and more opportunities”.(25:34) To illustrate this, he highlighted the shortage of agricultural workers in Greece and how programmes of “organised migration” from Africa could be “a win-win solution”. (25:55)

Second, he focused on the need for effective border protection, combating traffickers, and ensuring better migration management, adding that African countries should be “open to cooperate more constructively on the issue of returns”. (27:13)

“Third, we need to address the underlying causes that encourage people to flee their homeland,”(27:49) he said, noting that African countries have different vulnerabilities including violence, internal upheaval, natural and manmade disasters, and insecurity, and stressing that “our action must be tailor-made” for each unique challenge. (28:39)

He ended by asserting that next month's Summit will help establish bilateral relations and explore avenues of possible cooperation.

“The problem will not be solved unless we engage with our African partners in an honest, equal, and mutually beneficial partnership..., and Greece is determined to contribute to this discussion,” [\(31:50\)](#) he said.

His sentiments were echoed by Arancha González Laya, Member of the Africa-Europe Foundation High-Level Group of Personalities and former Foreign Minister of Spain, who said “Africa and Europe have a joint responsibility to manage migration. Together to support youth skills, entrepreneurship and jobs. Together to open legal avenues for migration. Together to protect borders and combat human trafficking.” [\(1:41:00\)](#)

After an insightful and varied discussion from a range of speakers from both sides of the Mediterranean, including some young migrants who all too often find themselves talked about rather than listened to, the event was closed by Mo Ibrahim, Co-founder of the Africa-Europe Foundation and Founder and Chairman of the Mo Ibrahim Foundation.

“We need to understand the drivers of migration,” he said, adding that one must not confuse migrants with refugees, at which point the issue becomes a “political football”. [\(01:42:43\)](#)

He ended by calling for President Kagame and Prime Minister Mitsotakis to jointly produce a white paper in time for the Summit which would include their concrete ideas as expressed this evening.

“It would be quite wonderful,” he said. “Then we can hope for action.” [\(1:43:58\)](#)

[Synthesis report outlining facts and figures in relation to migration and mobility in Africa and Europe](#)