

Africa-Europe Alliance: European Commission committed to a sustainable African agri-food sector

The [Task Force for Rural Africa](#) has delivered its [final report](#), an agri-food and rural agenda for the new '[Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs](#)' unveiled by President Jean-Claude Juncker in the 2018 State of the Union.

According to the recommendations of this Task Force, comprising a group of African and European experts, Africa and the EU should develop a partnership operating at three levels: people to people, business to business, and government to government. It would institute a multi-stakeholder dialogue at all levels, starting locally, and enable a closer connection between African and European societies, business communities and governments.

Launched in May 2018 by the European Commission, the Task Force was set up to provide advice on strengthening the Africa-Europe partnership in food and farming. The European Commission will ensure follow-up and implementation of several actions recommended by this group of experts to support the development of African agri-food sector and rural economy.

Building on some of the short-term recommendations made by the Task Force, the European Commission will start implementing the following projects:

- Twinning and exchange programmes between African and European agricultural bodies: the Commission has just launched a Pilot Vocational Education and training initiative with Africa of €5 million. Additional funds from the EU budget will be made available for other twinning programmes for rural women's organisations, farmer organisations and cooperatives, businesses and public entities with their peers.
- AU-EU Agribusiness platform: recognising the key role the private sector can play for structural transformation in Africa, the Commission proposes to set up a platform to link European and African businesses. This platform is expected to help identify challenges and opportunities for private investment and trade between the two continents.
- Innovation hubs: to support 'agripreneurs' and the African agri-food sector, innovation hubs can be established or strengthened with the aim of applying practical knowledge. These hubs would bring together national research, higher education systems, farmers, their organisations and the private sector to facilitate –amongst others- digital innovation and skills development.

The report is a landmark in the process towards more cooperation between the EU and Africa in the agri-food sector, identifying four strategic areas of action for the medium to long term:

- i. job creation,
- ii. climate action,
- iii. sustainable transformation of African agriculture and
- iv. development of the African food industry and markets.

To make this an open and inclusive process, the Commission will launch an online consultation to gather direct feedback from African stakeholders on the Task Force's strategic approach and on the state of play of the agri-food trade and cooperation between our two continents. The outcome of this consultation will feed into the third AU-EU agricultural ministerial conference in

Rome, planned for June 2019. Effective follow-up will also be ensured through the setting-up of an implementation group composed of ministerial and private representatives from both Africa and the EU. The group will be presented at the ministerial conference in Rome.