

# ECONOMY AND CONVICTIONS

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## THE FUTURE OF EUROPE IS IN AFRICA



## EUROPE-AFRICA : A WIN-WIN SITUATION

*The unbreakable bond that has always existed between Africa and Europe, though sometimes tumultuous and often misunderstood, permanently ties the two continents together and is well-rooted in History, geopolitics, as well as more personal interests. Nonetheless, it also goes back to a particular, more emotional, attachment, with which the colonial past continues to burden the two continents. Subsequently, since it suggests an interdependence brought on by their economic and geo-strategic interests, it generates complex and ambivalent relationships.*

### **The first steps towards a much-needed partnership renewal: the reestablishment of commercial balance**

Africa and Europe are undoubtedly well-acquainted due to Memory, but also due to their partnership and long-lasting commercial relations. The European Union and its Member States are Africa's main commercial partner. In 2021, the value of transactions increased to reach 288 billion euros, as opposed to 225 billion in 2020. In comparison, in 2021 the exchange of goods between the USA and Africa rose to around 26.7 billion euros for American exports and 37.5 billion for imports, in other words a total value of 64.2 billion euros.

The global volume of these transactions hides, though not very effectively, a structural imbalance that hampers Africa's performance. This is because, if it demonstrates clear dynamism in terms of affairs, the commercial deficit still heavily weighs in favour of the European Union. For this reason, the comparison of respective imports of goods speaks for itself. In 2021, 65% of goods imported in the EU from Africa were base products, while 68% of exported goods from the EU to Africa were manufactured products.

The ambition of sovereignty and development that is mutually beneficial implies reconsidering the partnership between Europe and Africa, not only in the light of its history, which leans towards invariably perceiving Africa as an outlet for European companies, but also by keeping a clear view of re-establishing transactional balance, as well as better industrial distribution on both continents. Those at the forefront of the two continents must therefore be able to symmetrically produce on their land and have access to their respective markets of over 500 million consumers (Europe) and 1.2 billion consumers (Africa) with the future African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

### **The winning tandem: Constructing and sharing a common vision**

Material diplomacy of the infrastructures implemented in Africa by other international powers now clashes with diplomacy based on security, and what has for a long time been described as public aid towards development. Therefore, where Europe invested capital, which had an unclear immediate impact, countries such as China built roads and supported infrastructural projects, having an effect that was surely harmful to the continent's public debt, but which guaranteed them a favourable opinion in the public eye.

However, in the tandem that reunites them, Europe and Africa fortunately have experience in dialogue and communication. In the hope of reinventing an efficient, durable new deal, it is essential that, on the one hand, Europe stops being perceived as the continent whose success is a thing of the past and, on the other, Africa frees itself from the label "continent of the future." This necessary reinvention of the partnership in the light of the immediate challenges of the time is especially urgent considering the current geo-strategic context threatening the two continents' security, for Europe in terms of energy, and for Africa in terms of food.

Within this context, the renewal of a strong cooperation would allow the continents to trace new investment paths that would make possible both a large-scale remodelling of global supply chains and the securement of strategic resources for the European Union, as well as the industrialisation and revival of strategic sectors in Africa, such as the oil sector.

**This strategy, however, implies taking into account everything that is at stake for both continents. Linked by geographic proximity, Europe and Africa are like Janus, the Roman god of beginnings and endings: two faces on the same head, yet facing the opposite way. While global equilibria and paradigms are being redesigned, it is up to these two continents to define their journey, giving Janus new faces that cohabit and, above all, are capable of sharing the same vision, with their development and common interests in mind.**



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# WHY DO WE NEED TO REVIVE THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN EUROPE AND AFRICA?

*The version of Africa during the Cold War followed the colonized version of the continent, while the strategic positions of the former tutelary powers were still very much maintained. In this way, it became a sphere of influence, a territory, a preserve, a playing field where conflicts unfolded by proxy. The bipolarisation of the world immobilized the great geostrategic challenges. Subsequently, the new democratic avenues following the fall of the Soviet Union, the creation of the European Union, and the opening to the East under the auspices of German reunification, carried Europe's strategic neglect regarding Africa well into the mid-2000s. Then, little by little, "Africa, land of economic opportunities" replaced "Africa, land of disaster and pity." On the one hand, this was due to huge investments from China, which came to Africa in search of outlets for its products and to do business, and on the other, the African economic growth that entered a continuous cycle under the effect of favourable public politics and promising internal dynamics (demography, urbanisation, raw materials, and economic diversification supported by a digital boom).*

**The African continent imposed itself as a land of opportunities. In turn, this motivated Europe to engage in a fruitful dialogue and a mutually beneficial partnership.**

The Africa of hope, while relative, is making its way onto the geostrategic playing field with significant assets. It has arable land, fresh water, and demographic vigour, with a mainly young population, while, on the other hand, that of Europe is getting older.

Africa can be a staging post for growth but also, and above all, a lever to maintain European quality of life (balance of social security, economic productivity, innovation, etc.). Its sun potential and renewable energy reserves are significant. For a strategic marriage, the continent is able to contribute a sizeable "dowry", so to speak.



**And how about the other potential partner?**

Europe has strategic advantages over other areas of influence in the running for a partnership with Africa. First, there is the geographical proximity. Africans live, more or less, in the same time zones as Europeans. We wake up, work, and go to bed at the same time. Neither continent lags behind the other, which is crucial! Then, there is the historical, cultural, and linguistic proximity between the two continents, constituting, therefore, a community that is likely to strive towards common goals.

The Mediterranean and geopolitical perspectives along with the union between Africa, the Mediterranean, and Europe in a "vertical" context, illustrate this community with a common destiny that should be structured around both sides of the Mediterranean.

Finally, it is important to note that large powers tend to prioritise their close neighbours. Besides, China and Japan are focused on their goals to integrate Asia and Australia in the South. This is also the case with the US and Canada, who are focusing on Latin America with border and economic unions, development banks, strategic intellectual structures (think tanks, universities, research centres), etc.

Therefore, Europe has competitive advantages. Nevertheless, it must adapt and make an effort in several areas to engage a lasting and mutually beneficial partnership with Africa.



European countries must, once and for all, combine the vital essence of their integration and unity. They must work together, think together, have a driving force (Franco-German axis), but also be a team. It will not be easy, but it is a necessity. We must free ourselves from relationships between a single country and a whole continent (France - Africa or Italy - Africa). Europe comes as a package, and this will be essential to establish.

Europeans must then comprehend Africa's internal dynamics and complexity. They must avoid clichés and keep in mind that the continent is undergoing constant change, with a young population that is shaking things up, which will do so more and more! They must engage in supporting the continent's unity, the reinforcement of its Institutions, its regionalisation, and its projects of integration through infrastructures: roads, energy, and communication. Finally, they must establish security as a main paradigm of action, while never forgetting what determines it, such as the effectiveness of the State, the efficiency of security and intelligence devices, as well as satisfying the needs of the people.



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**If the challenges in terms of security and the construction of prosperity led Africa and Europe to take each other's hand and to strengthen themselves internally in order to share their respective resources in an optimal way, we would be entering into an interesting stage in our shared history.** This last aspect, made up of, until now, blood and recrimination, would therefore enter into a mutually advantageous cycle. **What we need are visions and leaders to acknowledge this and have the courage to lead the people in the right direction.**

# SOVEREIGNTY: THE RETURN TO GRACE?

For several reasons we would have rather avoided, the war in Ukraine has had a profound effect on Europe, Africa, and the relationship between the two continents.

## 1/ It poses the question of sovereignty, and there is no way around it.

This topic, which has been swept under the rug for a long time (notably under the effect of the digital mirage that only dreamed of doing away with borders, a legacy carried over from the past) returns, manu militari, to the foreground. **Territorial demarcation between States is suddenly restored, both because it traces the tangible limits within which their legitimate sovereign prerogatives are exercised**, and because it has no effect unless it is recognized by other sovereign States. As a result, this contributes both with power and discretion, to global equilibrium. As of 24 February, the importance of geography has become clear as day: whoever strives to exercise power geopolitically, whoever desires to try their hand in geostrategy, can all but ignore the borders traced around us by both history and geography.



2/ The recent events are rich in teachings, starting with this paradox: **the most ardent defenders of Ukrainian sovereignty seem, curiously, to forget that this notion is imperatively applied within the European Union**, to the point that certain heads of state or government leaders openly criticise the behaviour of their counterparts in telephone conversations with their peers, or they readily meddle in national energy policies, which they know are the subject of delicate arbitration between parties.

Under these circumstances, Africans should shape their sovereignty depending on the vision they have of their future. History has caused them to be particularly susceptible to the stigmas of colonisation, another reason to look objectively upon a conflict that is trying to justify war crimes in the name of imperial nostalgia; another reason to use large-scale, international organisations such as the United Nations, not to blindly align with their former colonisers' positions, but looking towards ensuring the durability of their independence and sovereignty.

3/ In this sense, **it is a matter of great urgency: the Black Sea blockade is preventing the export of grains, on which a significant part of the Middle East and Africa depend for their survival**. This conflict, of which no one knows the end date, adding to a pandemic that has yet to be fully contained, as well as to increasingly catastrophic weather events, feeds the threat of famine.

And famine leads to uncontrollable migration due to desperation. Africa should—in close cooperation with Europe, since, geographically, it would be the first point of refuge—prepare itself for the most likely scenarios involving massive migration that neither the United States nor China would be capable of absorbing.



4/ In terms of security, per se, Africa should assimilate the risks associated with the envy attracted by a region whose demography and natural resources now place it at the forefront of the global scene. From this perspective, it will be up to them to determine the most suitable alliances to consolidate their future. **To a certain extent, it boils down to choosing between calling on Wagner-style mercenaries to fight against the guerrilla or signing long-term agreements with other stable, trustworthy governments.**

Furthermore, since 24 February we have been witnesses to the central role played by digital technology in the Ukrainian people's remarkable capacity for resistance on the battlefield. Their courage is sure to be the main ingredient, but their legendary superiority in the development of cutting-edge software is the best explanation for the exemplary use of 'strengthened' telecommunications networks (the StarLink system in particular) or drones, portable surface-to-air missiles (manpads), and other military systems that are formidably effective against enemy weapons. What's more, the latter are apparently less sophisticated or are handled with less skill. Once again, Africa could draw inspiration from this and take advantage of its resourcefulness proven over several years regarding the implementation of mobile networks, virtual payment methods, etc., that contributed to its development.

**Ultimately, the restoration of sovereignty and borders as guides rather than obstacles to transactions can be interpreted as a return to the most prevalent, if not the most stable, system in terms of maintaining relationships between human communities.**

**Within the framework of the advances projected at a global level, Africa, the continent where the precursors of our species took their first steps, have plenty of assets to push for their own strategic autonomy, all while reinforcing that of Europe, with which they share a bond.**

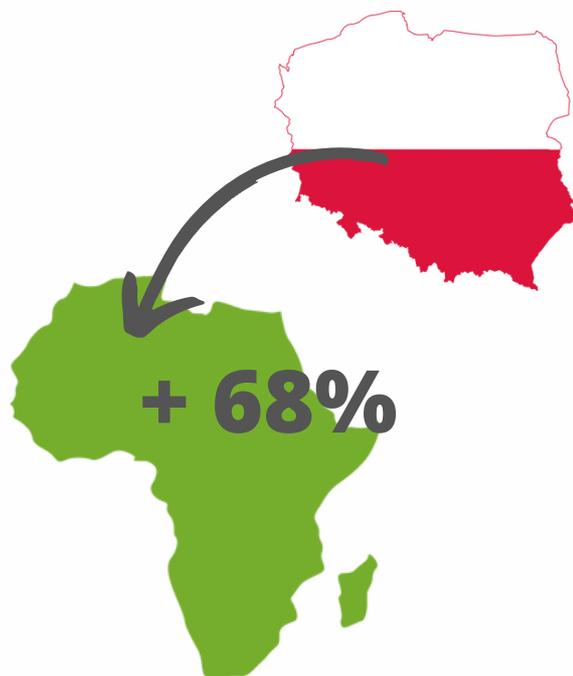
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# THE NEW PATHS OF POLISH INVESTMENT IN AFRICA

For a long time, Western Europe, most notably France, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Germany, and Portugal, imposed themselves as the main partners of Africa. As a result, the spotlight was taken off the whole central and Eastern zone, which, at that time, was concentrated on its European integration and catching up with the economic backlog brought on by the Soviet era.

However, when the African and European continents started redefining the perimeters of their partnership and intensifying their transactions, as shown by the recent AU-EU Summit held on 17 and 18 February 2022 in Brussels, countries such as Poland, unscathed by historical damage on the continent and equipped with a top-quality industrial and technological network, as well as a resilient economy, stepped up as the new European investors to support the African continent's development.



## 1/ The new face of the European-African partnership: The emergence of Poland

Present in Africa, judged as too far away and a prisoner of the poverty cliché, **Poland has been involved sporadically, but now seems to have seized a strategic position on the continent. The extent of its commercial potential is also notable, as it is increasingly viewed as a genuinely viable market.**

The expansion of Polish companies began to accelerate as of 2011. Between 2012 and 2015, exports to the continent increased by almost 68%. This new partnership between Africa and Poland was consolidated in 2013 when the Polish Minister of Finance launched a program called "Go Africa", whose objective was to support Polish companies in their development efforts on the African continent.

Furthermore, aiming to develop its commercial relations, Poland decided to extend its diplomatic network by creating new embassies. It also coordinated a strategic link with certain countries in Northwest Africa which were potential industrial hubs, such as Morocco and Algeria.

Finally, the new African policy in Poland was set in stone when a Council of investors was formed in Africa, consequently demonstrating the country's ambitions on the continent.

## 2/ Accelerating Polish investments to support Africa in its main challenges

While the COVID-19 pandemic crisis has highlighted the issue of sovereignty, Africa single-handedly tackled all digital, technological, industrial and nutritional challenges.

According to the International Monetary Fund, half of the most dynamic economies in the world will be in Africa in the next two decades. What's more, its GDP will increase by 6 to 7% per year.

Additionally, between now and 2050, the African population will have doubled, increasing from 1.2 billion inhabitants to 2.4 billion. 50% of the global population under 25 years of age will also be in Africa. This increase in population will be accompanied by a growing middle class, which will lead to a proportional increase in food availability.

**In this context, Polish companies can participate in the modernisation of agriculture.** For this reason, certain Polish companies have already signed contracts to build silos in Tanzania, hoping to store 250,000 tonnes of grains and corn. This involves Feerum, a company that specialises in providing storage equipment for grains by offering agro-industrial complexes, and Araj, whose offering consists of creating complexes made up of facilities for drying and storing grains.

**What's more, the Russian-Ukrainian war has also exposed how much Africa depends on wheat imported from both countries.** In a press release on 25 March 2022, the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) noted that almost 25 African countries import over a third of their wheat, while 15 of them import more than half. Poland could help Ukraine to overcome logistic obstacles brought on by the Russian blockade of the Black Sea ports, in this way avoiding a food crisis such as the one suffered by Africa in 2008.

**In the context of building the Africa of tomorrow, Poland is in a good position to be the new face of the partnership between the two continents.**



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# PRESS RELEASE

FAIRVALUE CORPORATE & PUBLIC AFFAIRS ANNOUNCES A NEW PARTNERSHIP IN POLAND, WITH THE AGENCY PEŁKA & PARTNERS



From a geostrategic as well as an economic and commercial point of view, this partnership inaugurates a new stage in the commitment of FairValue Corporate & Public Affairs on the Polish territory and strengthens its offer thanks to the complementarity of its expertise in public affairs, corporate communication and business strategy with that of the agency Pelka & Partners specialised in marketing, advertising and public relations.

In a context where the Russian-Ukrainian war has accelerated the process of reconfiguration of the main poles of profitability towards Central and Eastern Europe, Polish economic actors, companies and organisations, now occupy a strategic role whose unavoidable place is bound to be reinforced both in Europe and in the world.

**Anne Mazoyer-Jankowska, President and Founder of FairValue Corporate & Public Affairs declares :**

***" The war and the shift of the geopolitical centre of gravity from Western to Central and Eastern Europe, confirm Poland's economic leadership: as the European Union's sixth largest economy, the country is becoming more than ever a strategic area for european and global companies due to its impressive economic development built on solid foundations, an unparalleled resilience to the global economic crises of the last few years, a highly qualified workforce as well as the dynamism and strength of its industrial and technological ecosystems, which are recognised throughout the world.***

*The synergies resulting from the alliance between Pelka & Partners and FairValue Corporate & Public Affairs will be essential for the market in order to contribute to the development of Polish and international companies, and thus help them to cope with the current and future upheavals. This partnership with Pelka & Partners is part of the continuation of our development strategy in Poland initiated in 2020. "*

**Elżbieta Pełka, CEO and Founder of Pelka & Partners, explains :**

*" With the Polish economy currently facing the challenges created by the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, development is the best form of response. The partnership with FairValue Corporate & Public Affairs is based on the combination of our respective know-how to better support Polish and international companies in creating new communication, marketing and advertising strategies that effectively raise brand awareness and directly support their business performance.*

***Crises can also be a development lever to reposition and launch new brands on the market by building new bridges between nations and strengthening European and international cooperation. "***

For more information : [www.fairvaluecc.com](http://www.fairvaluecc.com) / [www.pelkaipartnerzy.com](http://www.pelkaipartnerzy.com)

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