

# **Joint declaration by the European Union and Morocco for the fourteenth meeting of the Association Council**

1. The European Union and the Kingdom of Morocco, having met today in the Association Council, declare their wish to give a new impetus to their strategic, multidimensional and privileged relationship, an impetus consistent with their mutual expectations and the challenges of today's world, by developing a true 'Euro-Moroccan partnership for shared prosperity'.

2. Building on a partnership of equals in place for half a century, Morocco and the EU have made considerable progress to the benefit of the shared interests of both parties.

3. Linked not only in objective terms by interests born of geography and history, the two partners are joined by the shared values to which they both have chosen to subscribe. From mere neighbours, the European Union and Morocco have thus become true partners in their common vision for the future of the Mediterranean and beyond.

4. The two partners are mindful of the fact that their regional and global environment is confronted by ever more complex challenges, but also by new opportunities which will decide the future of the Euro-African and the Euro-Mediterranean area, particularly in terms of economic and human, inclusive and fair development, innovation and sharing of knowledge, protection of the environment and sustainable development, justice, security, intercultural dialogue, mobility and migration, human rights and good governance. As one of the pillars of this regional area, the EU-Morocco partnership is more necessary than ever to respond to such challenges. Its political stability and the many reforms carried out by it make Morocco one of the European Union's key partners in the region. Furthermore, a convergence of views on numerous issues has made it increasingly possible for the European Union and Morocco to develop suitable responses to issues together, in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals.

5. The partnership will aim at further deepening bilateral relations, on the basis of common ambitions and the development of each one of the parties; it will also aim at strengthening regional and Euro-African cooperation and supporting effective multilateralism.

6. In order to do so, they intend to make full use of lessons learned from their past cooperation, build on the progress made in their relationship and further deepen their partnership to make it more efficient and effective, while taking into account the opportunities and potential arising from the advanced status awarded in 2008. They will make the best possible use of the flexibility offered by the European Neighbourhood Policy.

They welcome the retreat held in Skhirat on 3 and 4 June 2019, dedicated to reflecting on the future of the partnership and they intend to draw from it in planning that future.

Building on their common experience, they commit themselves to protecting the partnership which unites them, strengthening its resilience and stability and ensuring its continuity in case of difficulties, particularly through early consultation, strengthened coordination and use of the working structures established under the partnership.

7. In line with this objective, the European Union and Morocco will work to define a new framework for relations, one that is comprehensive and resilient. They intend to act in accordance with the principles which have always guided their partnership (solidarity, mutual respect, co-ownership, shared responsibility, mutual trust, transparency, clarity, differentiation) and the following guidelines which will structure their relations for the coming years:

8. At bilateral level, the 'Euro-Moroccan partnership for shared prosperity' will be based on four structural areas: an area of convergence of values, an area of economic convergence and social cohesion, an area of shared knowledge, and an area of political consultation and of enhanced cooperation on security, and on two key horizontal fields in which specific operational actions will also be carried out, namely cooperation in the field of the environment and the fight against climate change, and cooperation in the field of mobility and migration; these actions will reinforce each other.

The four structural areas are the following:

- An area of convergence of values, based on the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Moroccan constitution and the international commitments of the two parties. The aim of this area will be to facilitate an alignment around the partnership's founding and guiding principles, namely democracy, the rule of law, good governance, justice, efficiency, responsibility and transparency of institutions, human rights and fundamental freedoms, particularly the freedom of assembly, the freedom of expression (including that of the press), and the rights of women and young people, equality between men and women, the fight against hate speech, intolerance, stigmatisation and discrimination as well as the protection and exchange of personal information and the right to privacy. Particular attention will be paid to developing the opportunities available to young people. The two partners will work to ensure the development of a resilient, inclusive, dynamic and open society, in which civil society plays its role to the full.
- An area of economic convergence and social cohesion. This area will be based, in particular, on the implementation of the economic strand of the Association Agreement. This will involve making better use of the possibilities offered by the bilateral trade relationship, the relaunching of negotiations for a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Agreement (DCFTA) on the basis of the expected benefits for both parties, the gradual move towards regulatory convergence, close bilateral cooperation regarding customs, good fiscal governance, the protection of personal data and a strengthening of the connectivity of physical and digital infrastructures. The two parties will seek to establish gradual economic integration between Morocco and the EU as well as inclusive, fair and sustainable development capable of reducing social and territorial disparities, including by means of EU-Moroccan interregional cooperation programmes. To this end, use will be made, in particular, of exchanges of good practices regarding social dialogue in order to create more socio-economic opportunities (including by developing the social economy), for young people and women especially. This area will strengthen the integration of value chains, through better industrial integration, the development of reciprocal productive investments

(including by means of the European External Investment Plan), the promotion of competitiveness, entrepreneurship and innovation, the green economy, support for the transformation of the Moroccan economy and consultation on financial matters, through actively relaunching regular economic dialogue.

- An area of shared knowledge. This area will promote in particular higher education, training (in particular professional training), sustainable employment, scientific research, innovation and technological transfers, and mobility for students and researchers. All existing and future instruments and mechanisms (Erasmus +, PRIMA, Horizon 2020, Horizon Europe, etc.) will be mobilised. These are regarded as the priority cooperation areas for developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation. The area will also be dedicated to intercultural promotion and to bringing peoples together. In view of the area's importance for gaining a better mutual understanding, it should focus on strengthening exchanges on cultural policies and industries, cultural entrepreneurship, heritage conservation, training in the artistic sectors, the organisation of cultural and artistic events, as well as cooperation in the fields of copyright, archives, libraries, museums, cinema, animation, and sport.
- An area of political consultation and of enhanced cooperation on security, at bilateral, regional and international level. This area should make it possible to strengthen the strategic dialogue, political consultation and operational cooperation on common internal security challenges. These include combating organised crime networks, terrorism, and in particular the financing of terrorism, violent radicalisation and the return of foreign fighters, illicit trafficking in drugs and arms, as well as police cooperation, the training of security forces and judicial cooperation, all in compliance with international law, including human rights and the rule of law. In this regard, priority will be given to the sharing of information and experiences. In the same vein, both parties intend to develop common approaches in the area of external security, in particular vis-à-vis the Sahel, West Africa and other regions of interest, including the possibility for Morocco to take part in European Union civilian or military peace-keeping operations.

The two key fields in which specific operational measures will also be carried out are:

- Cooperation on protection of the environment and the fight against climate change. Given the urgency, and in compliance with the two parties' international commitments, this cooperation will in particular target renewable energies, energy efficiency, biodiversity and the sustainable use of natural resources, and will take account of rural development. It will also cover ocean governance, the WestMED Initiative, the protection and restoration of marine and coastal ecosystems, and in particular the conservation of the Mediterranean and the opportunities provided by the blue economy and the circular economy. In accordance with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the partners will target the ambitious implementation of the nationally determined contributions, the establishment of a framework which can promote clean growth and ensure the transition towards a low-carbon and climate-resilient economy and the implementation of the 'Katowice Rulebook'. Likewise, South-South, trilateral cooperation on the environment and sustainable development will be encouraged.
- Enhanced consultation and balanced cooperation on mobility and migration. This consultation will be based on the 2013 Mobility Partnership, in compliance with national powers and the full implementation of Morocco's national strategy on migration and asylum. The management of migration requires joint and sustained efforts by Morocco, the European Union and its Member States in the framework of

an approach that is comprehensive, humane and respectful of human rights, and envisages concerted action to deal with the root causes of irregular migration. The prevention of and fight against irregular migration, against trafficking in human beings and in migrants, and their protection, including through communication and by raising awareness of the risks tied to irregular migration, stepping up the management of the sea and land borders, mobility, in particular improving the mobility of professionals, legal migration, return, readmission and reintegration, visa facilitation and the development of mutually beneficial human exchanges, in particular for students, young workers and young volunteers, will form part of the objectives pursued.

9. Above all, the EU-Morocco partnership intends to listen to and work for the benefit of citizens. Inter-parliamentary cooperation will also be strengthened in order to make it a driving force of the partnership.

10. Over the years, cooperation at bilateral level and the development of shared values has been coupled with a growing convergence of views on regional, continental and international issues. Externally, that closeness must from now give rise to synergies, allowing for a concerted EU-Moroccan stance in these areas.

11. Both partners, who share a common attachment to multilateralism and the role of the United Nations, agree on the need to respond pragmatically to the profound changes in the nature of contemporary conflicts and to the new security challenges posed by terrorism and non-State actors. They are determined to maintain an ongoing dialogue oriented towards action to promote a renewed multilateralism and agree, in this regard, to engage in joint activities at the United Nations to foster international peace and security. Aware of the importance of responding to the challenges facing Africa, they undertake to promote initiatives to foster peace on the continent, particularly with regard to peacekeeping, mediation and crisis management, seeking to encourage the development of a comprehensive approach combining the security dimension and human development.

12. The two partners agree that many international activities and initiatives by the Kingdom of Morocco concerning the preservation of the environment and the climate, intercultural or inter-faith dialogue and combating terrorism and extremism are significant contributions on which to build joint responses in the context of responsible multilateralism. These issues, among others, will form an integral part of the renewed partnership and be the subject of closer concertation within the relevant multilateral fora, with the aim of reaching joint positions reflecting the vision of the Sustainable Development Goals.

13. This attachment is also expressed in their joint support for regional cooperation, both through the Arab Maghreb Union and bilateral dialogue between neighbouring countries in the Maghreb and through their involvement in the bodies which bring together European and North African countries, such as the Union for the Mediterranean and the '5+5 Dialogue'. In this connection, the European Union and Morocco welcome the 'Summit of the Two Shores - Forum for the Mediterranean' initiative, which draws on civil society to revive the momentum of cooperation in the Western Mediterranean on a new basis. The partners emphasise the as yet untapped potential for growth and development which regional cooperation holds for the prosperity of the Maghreb. They agree that resolving the disputes and tensions affecting the region would play a very positive role in this regard and would favour the development of their partnership. They reaffirm their support for the efforts made by the UN Secretary-General to continue the political process aiming to reach a just,

realistic, pragmatic, lasting and mutually acceptable political solution to the issue of the Western Sahara, based on compromise in accordance with the UN Security Council resolutions, and in particular Resolution 2468 of 30 April 2019. The EU welcomes the serious and credible efforts led by Morocco, to this end, as reflected in the abovementioned resolution, and encourages all parties to continue their engagement in a spirit of realism and compromise, in the context of arrangements which accord with the aims and principles set out in the United Nations Charter.

14. In a Euro-African area which is increasingly diversified and often fragmented, the policy of trilateral cooperation is aimed primarily at the development of the African continent, especially in the Sahel and West Africa. To the extent which the convergence of their respective aims justifies, efforts will be made to promote the complementarity of the two partners' policies and to establish joint initiatives and projects. In this regard, the Kingdom of Morocco's return to the African Union, together with its action to further the development of a new model of South-South cooperation, is of great importance in that it reinforces the opportunities for trilateral cooperation between the EU, Morocco and their partners on the continent. With a view to supporting better Euro-African cooperation, and promoting Africa's development, security and stability, Morocco and the European Union agree to step up their consultation and coordination on issues of joint interest within the framework of EU-Africa Dialogue, the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs and the post-Cotonou process.

15. The joint political declaration is intended to give direction to EU-Morocco relations for the years to come and within the framework of the EU's financial perspective. Priority will be given to Morocco's participation in the European Union's agencies and programmes.

This declaration will be implemented in a flexible manner, in line with the ambitions of both parties. It paves the way for the forthcoming definition, from 2020, of the strategic priorities for EU-Morocco cooperation, which will be adapted in the light of the planned discussions between the two parties and feed into that cooperation. Based on the expected development of their partnership, the EU and Morocco will continue the joint process of reflection on redefining the contractual relationship between them. The aim of this discussion will be to reflect, in the context of the European Neighbourhood Policy, the progress achieved in their relationship and the resulting diversification of the scope of their cooperation, and to meet the need for clarity and stability in relations between Morocco and the EU. The EU and Morocco welcome the holding of the retreat in Skhirat on 3 and 4 June 2019, since this informal and innovative process should make it possible to reactivate, from the autumn of 2019, the Ad hoc Working Group on Advanced Status to continue the reflection process begun.

16. In line with the pioneering tradition of EU-Moroccan relations, this partnership for shared prosperity is intended to be a dynamic example which can be used by partners who share the same level of ambition. It is therefore an important milestone in Euro-Mediterranean rapprochement, which is crucial for addressing current and future shared challenges.

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