



MEMORANDUM of UNDERSTANDING

on the establishment of a partnership between the Commission of the European Communities and the Commission of the African Union to foster twinning and exchange

1. *Having regard to* the 'EU Strategy for Africa: Towards a Euro-African pact to accelerate Africa's development' (SEC(2005)1255),
2. *Having regard to* the European Commission's Decision of 1 June 2006 laying down rules on the secondment of national experts to the Commission (C(2006)2033), its Decision on the secondment of Community officials (C(94)3895) and its Decision on the rules governing the official traineeships scheme of the European Commission (C(2005)458),
3. *Having regard to* the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which was adopted in 2000 and entered into force in 2001, and the 'Vision, Mission and Strategic Framework' of the African Union adopted in 2004,
4. The Commission of the European Communities and the Commission of the African Union hereby establish a partnership to foster twinning and exchange (hereinafter referred to as 'the Partnership') with the aim of strengthening the institutional ties between the two institutions.

A. OBJECTIVES

5. Through the Partnership, the European and African Union Commission express their wish to develop and structure their cooperation in the exchange of professional experience.
6. The overall objective of the Partnership is to strengthen the institutional ties between the European Commission and the Commission of the African Union.
7. The specific objectives are to:
 - increase understanding of the functioning and policies of the respective institutions;
 - foster better collaboration between the institutions;
 - enhance the effectiveness of both the European Commission and the Commission of the African Union.
8. The objectives of the Partnership will be achieved through:
 - exchange of officials;
 - secondment of trainees.

B. PRINCIPLES AND SCOPE

9. The Partnership will be based on the following general principles:
 - respect and mutual understanding of the respective strengths, organisational structures, mandates and institutional capacities of both institutions;
 - reciprocity of action and commitment.
10. In view of the temporary nature of their work and their particular status, seconded officials and trainees should not take responsibility on behalf of the European Commission or the African Union Commission for the exercise of their public law prerogatives.
11. Seconded officials and trainees shall remain in the service of their employer throughout the period of secondment and shall continue to be paid by that employer.
12. Officials and trainees may be seconded to work in all policy areas of mutual interest, including: migration and diaspora issues, peace, security and political issues, legal, environment, fisheries, agriculture, regional policy, customs, trade, infrastructure, energy, health and consumer protection, employment, education and research, statistics, Information Society and Media human resources and financial management.
13. Secondment shall be effected by an exchange of letters between the Director-General for Personnel and Administration of the European Commission and the Permanent Mission of the African Union.

C. AREAS OF COOPERATION

C 1. EXCHANGE OF OFFICIALS

14. The rights and obligations of European Commission officials seconded to the African Union Commission are set out in the European Commission's Decision on the secondment of Community officials (C(94)3895).
15. Officials seconded by the African Union Commission will be considered 'cost-free Seconded National Experts (SNEs)' by the European Commission, meaning SNEs whose secondment does not entail any costs to the latter. The rules governing their secondment and their obligations towards the European Commission are set out in the European Commission's Decision of 1 June 2006 laying down rules on the secondment of national experts to the Commission (C(2006)2033).
16. Periods of secondment may not be less than three months nor more than two years.

C 2. EXCHANGE OF TRAINEES

17. Trainees exchanged between the two Commissions will be considered 'atypical trainees' and special provisions for their employment conditions will be agreed by both sides.
18. Periods of traineeship may last a minimum of three (3) and a maximum of five (5) months.

D. ARRANGEMENTS

19. Within the context of the Partnership, a dialogue between the European Commission and the African Union Commission will be developed through regular bilateral meetings, where matters linked to the implementation of the Partnership will be discussed. Senior-level meetings will be held once a year between the Member of the European Commission responsible for Administrative Affairs and/or Development or a representative designated by her/him, and relevant officials from other Commission departments with an interest in development issues, on the one hand, and the Deputy Chairperson of the African Union Commission, or a representative designated by her/him, on the other, in order to review the progress of work and discuss policy, technical and operational issues in an effort to further the objectives of the Partnership.
20. The focal points for the Partnership will be the Director-General for Personnel and Administration and the Director-General for Development in the European Commission, on the one hand, and the Chief of Staff of the African Union Commission on the other. The focal point will coordinate between the respective departments.
21. Regular and ad hoc meetings may be held between officials of the two parties, with notification to, and, as far as possible, the participation of, liaison officials; these meetings will cover practical matters of cooperation, in particular the implementation of projects, participation in committees, groups and working parties and the preparation of documents.

E. FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK

22. Any financial contribution will be made from existing envelopes under the European Development Fund (EDF) in accordance with relevant EDF rules and financial provisions. In the case of any complementary contribution being made from the general Budget of the European Communities, the provisions of the Financial Regulation [(EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002 of 25 June 2002] and its implementing rules should be applied.

F. DURATION

23. The Partnership enters into effect on the date of signature of this Memorandum and is for a four-year period. The content of the Partnership is to be reviewed after two years.

Done at Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 2 October 2006.

**For the Commission of the
European Communities**

**For the Commission of the
African Union**

Siim KALLAS
**Vice-President for Administrative
Affairs, Audit and Anti-Fraud**

Patrick MAZIMHAKA
Deputy Chairperson