



CONCEPT NOTE

European Union – African Union 3rd Ministerial Meeting

Civil Society and Youth Forum

Side Event

Tuesday 20 May – Wednesday 21 May, 2025

VIRTUAL EVENT

1. INTRODUCTION AND POLITICAL CONTEXT

On 21 May 2025, the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) will celebrate their 3rd Ministerial Meeting, in preparation for the 7th AU-EU Summit, due to take place in Q4 2025. This sequence marks the beginning of new political mandates at both the EU and the AU, as an important moment of convergence and renewed partnership between both continents. With this in mind, the Ministerial will be the first time the new AU and EU political leadership meet their respective counterparts. The Ministerial will be an opportunity to track progress made since the 2021 Ministerial and 2022 Summit, using the [Joint Vision for 2030](#) as a policy compass. The ministerial will have dedicated roundtables to discuss in the objectives of prosperity, people, peace and security, and multilateralism under the Africa-Europe Partnership with the view charting a joint path ahead, for the AU-EU Summit and beyond.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) and young people have a critical role to play in the success of the Africa-EU partnership's future, and the continued engagement of both these stakeholders is central to the EU-AU Joint Vision 2030. A similar commitment to CSOs and Youth organisations can be found in the Samoa agreement, signed in November 2023, which includes Africa as the geographically largest and most populous region in this agreement. In order to engage young people and CSOs in a structured and meaningful way as part of the Africa-Europe Partnership, it is proposed to host a virtual event forum with these actors from across the region to exchange on their region's challenges and finding solutions together.

Both the European Union and African Union are committed to fostering further meaningful dialogue and collaboration between civil society and youth organisations in Europe and Africa, in particular with new joint mechanisms and structures currently being developed. Recognising the invaluable role these stakeholders play in promoting sustainable



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development, the EU and AU would jointly organise a virtual CSO-Youth Forum to discuss the agenda of the EU-AU Ministerial and provide the opportunity for selected CSO-Youth Forum participants to represent the EU and AU CSO-youth constituencies in the Ministerial as rapporteurs.

This event aims to amplify the voices of civil society and youth representatives, strengthening the critical people-to-people dimension of the EU-Africa partnership. This event could serve as a constructive example for future outreach as part of the AU-EU Civil Society and Youth Engagement Mechanism, currently under joint preparation by both institutions.

In order to drive positive engagement with CSO-Youth actors, it is essential that civil society and young people are offered a meaningful opportunity for exchange with EU and AU decision makers. This will take shape through CSO-Youth rapporteurs being invited to present the forum's conclusions to decision makers (EU Commissioners, AU Commissioners, African and European Ministers, other). Following the Joint Steering Committee meeting of 09 April, it has been decided by both the EU and the AU that CSO-Youth representatives will briefly present the conclusions of their CSO-Youth Forum to the plenary of the EU-AU Ministerial, and that they would be observers at the opening and closing sessions of the Ministerial. This important moment for exchange will foreground the Minister and Commissioner's discussions in the Ministerial as a critical opening slot to give a vision to ministers on CSO-Youth discussions, allowing decision-makers to take their conclusions into consideration in the meeting that follows. This underlines the importance of CSO-Youth inputs in the Africa-Europe Partnership.

2. OBJECTIVES

- **Provide a platform for exchange on the agenda of the Ministerial:** facilitate dialogue between civil society, youth representatives, Africa and EU decision-makers to exchange best practices, propose recommendations, and generate innovative solutions to global challenges.
- **Present conclusions to EU-AU Decision Makers:** following the forum, rapporteurs will present conclusions to the Ministerial's plenary. As agreed in the Joint Steering Committee meeting of 09 April, it has been decided by both the EU and the AU that CSO-Youth representatives will briefly present the conclusions of their CSO-Youth Forum to the plenary of the EU-AU Ministerial, and that they would be observers at the opening and closing sessions of the Ministerial (5 minutes total – with 2.5 minutes allocated to each EU and AU rapporteur). The structure of CSO-Youth Forum would mirror agenda items of the Ministerial, namely:



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- Prosperity
- People
- Peace and Security
- Multilateralism.

At the Ministerial, roundtables will be organised for ministers to debate these topics jointly. The same format of roundtables will be devised for the CSO-Youth representatives in their respective forum.

- **Enhance understanding:** Increase participants' understanding of the EU and Africa region's work on strengthening interregional partnerships, including under the EU-AU Joint Vision 2030, the Global Gateway Strategy and the Samoa Agreement, alongside with the development of civil society and youth engagement mechanisms.

3. FORMAT

The forum is principally a virtual half day event. The first takes a 'forum' format where moderators will facilitate participants in the preparation of CSO-Youth recommendations for the EU-AU Ministerial, namely:

- Prosperity
- People
- Peace and Security
- Multilateralism.

Participants would be divided into policy roundtable groups to discuss these areas and prepare conclusions.

The second section of the event would take place during the 21 May Ministerial Agenda. As agreed in the Joint Steering Committee meeting of 09 April, it has been decided by both the EU and the AU that CSO-Youth rapporteurs will present the conclusions of their CSO-Youth Forum to the plenary of the EU-AU Ministerial, and that they would be observers at the opening and closing sessions of the Ministerial. This would give decision-makers policy conclusions for reflection at the beginning of the Ministerial on 21 May.

In advance of the virtual event on the 20 May, a briefing session will take place one week before the event to give participants inspiration and a space to ask questions on format and content of the event. It is likely that this will take place on the 13, 14, 15 May (date tbc).



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- **Participants**

In terms of participants, it is envisaged that a maximum of CSO-Youth attendees could attend the event virtually. Within the bounds of the technical facility currently being used by the European Commission, and to enable active participation of all representatives, it has been decided that numbers should be capped at around 70 maximum. Following agreement between the EU and the AU, this would be broken down as follows:

1. EU Nominees 35 CSO-Youth participants total
(exact breakdown to be decided among EU institutions)
2. AU Nominees: 35 CSO-Youth participants total
(Exact repartition and breakdown to be decided and nominated by African Union)

The EU is currently exploring possible technical assistance modalities to finance the travel of the rapporteurs appointed and a small number of African Union officials (max 5) to participants travel from around the African and European regions to Brussels.

The Participants who travel to Brussels be supported by transportation for all activities related to the forum and will also be covered for meals during their stay. The EU will not reimburse participants travelling for their visa applications but will make consular assistance available through the European External Action Service. Understanding the challenging framework and timelines to deliver visas for travellers, it is not guaranteed at this stage that all applicants will be successful in obtaining a relevant visa.

- **Preparation of Joint Declaration**

The delivery of a CSO-Youth Joint Declaration is an important undertaking and preparations for these begin already well in advance of the event beginning onsite. This process begins around 7 days in advance of the event with participants being invited to participate in a poll activity online to express their interest on which policy areas they would like to present at the forum. This would then inform the breakdown of participants at the policy roundtables for the forum. A short webinar, hosted jointly by AU and EU moderators, to discuss the forum in advance and the results of the poll, would allow CSO-Youth participants to start reflection on their positions to present at the forum. Participants would also be able to ask questions to organisers in advance of the event.

At the plenary session of day one of the event, participants will then debate the substance of the priorities and transform them into conclusions. Participants will prepare a short joint



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declaration of EU-Africa CSO-Youth Forum, in line with agenda items of the Ministerial, namely:

- Prosperity
- People
- Peace and Security
- Multilateralism

EU and AU official colleagues onsite will work together to prepare this draft as a collaborative effort. The drafting and synthetisation of this document is a considerable undertaking and requires input and validation from the young participants. The conclusions can be used as a valuable document for a photo opportunity and adds considerable legitimacy for the young people and CSO's work after the event. As agreed in the Joint Steering Committee meeting of 09 April, it has been decided by both the EU and the AU that CSO-Youth representatives will briefly present the conclusions of their CSO-Youth Forum to the plenary of the EU-AU Ministerial, and that they would be observers at the opening and closing sessions of the Ministerial. The format of the document is to be agreed by EU and AU officials jointly in advance.

Delivering this task operationally demands significant time investment from EU and AU officials. The consultation process to prepare this declaration begins well in advance of the event, with preparatory meetings organised in advance of the forum in order for young people to consider and explore what the recommendations might be, allowing them to arrive with speaking points as recommendations prior. This ensures that the joint conclusions are inclusive and structured.

- **Presentation of the CSO-Youth Forum Conclusions to Ministerial**

For each policy area, a youth / CSO rapporteur will be appointed. These representatives will make a short presentation on their area of expertise (e.g. Climate Adaptation or Multilateralism) and present this in a 2-minute slot to the decision makers in plenary of the EU-AU Ministerial. Rapporteurs will be introduced by the EU-AU officials coordinating the CSO-Youth Forum with a short summary of how the event was set up.



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4. PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Tuesday, 20 May 2025

LOCATION: Virtual, Webex Platform (TBC)

Time	Session	Details
13:00 – 13:15	Opening Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Welcoming remarks by moderators: EU and AU officials- Introduction to the objectives of the event- Setting the tone for engagement, inclusivity, and active participation
13:15 – 13:45	Presentation on the EU-AU Prosperity Agenda	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Overview of the EU-AU economic cooperation and priorities- Key challenges and opportunities for inclusive, sustainable growth
13:45 – 15:00	Policy Roundtables	<p>Participants will be divided into policy roundtables groups to discuss key priorities and formulate joint recommendations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Peace and Security- Multilateralism- Prosperity-People <p>Each roundtable will appoint a rapporteur who will present the policy conclusions of their roundtable</p> <p><i>Facilitators will guide discussions and take note of key action points and conclusions for declaration.</i></p>
15:00 – 15:30	Coffee Break	<p><i>During the coffee break, AU and EU moderators can coach/discuss with rapporteurs on the substance of their intervention.</i></p> <p><i>Facilitators will start to synthesise conclusions from their roundtable into recommendations for the Joint Declaration.</i></p>

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15:30 – 16:00	Plenary Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of key recommendations by rapporteurs from each roundtable (2 minutes each) - Group discussion on refining proposals for rapporteurs to present on the following day
16:00 – 16:15	Concluding Session & Next Steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary of outcomes and next steps for Day Two with rapporteurs - Closing remarks from moderator and EU official
16:30-17:00	Follow-up Coaching session with CSO-Youth Rapporteurs	Discussion with CSO-Youth rapporteurs on their interventions on the following day. This will help them synthesise and nuance the input for presentation to Ministerial

During the evening of the 20 May, participants will prepare a joint declaration of the event. Rapporteurs as will coordinate inputs and validate document.

Day Two – Wednesday, 21 May 2025 Council of the European Union, Brussels

Time	Session	Details
09:25-09:30 AM	CSO-Youth Forum Rapporteurs Presentation*	Abridged Choreography*
OPENING Circa 09:00 – 10:30 AM		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of Joint Recommendations by Rapporteurs to EU-AU Decision Makers (2.5 minutes each). - As rapporteur, each representative will give a summary and respective perspective of CSOs-Youth from Europe and Africa in their presentation, not as a personal reflection. - CSO-Youth Rapporteurs remain as observers in opening session and closing session of Ministerial.
CLOSING 17:30-18:00		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - CSO-Youth Rapporteurs remain as observers in opening session and closing session of Ministerial. Rapporteurs will not be present during roundtables
		<i>*More detailed sequencing to follow.</i>