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EU – Africa Relationships: Resetting the Agenda for a New Relationship of Long-Term Friendship

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For the Secretary General of the Italian Banking, Insurance and Finance Federation and Professor of Political Economy Paolo Garonna, the war in Ukraine which started on February 24th 2022 led to a significant crisis in Europe-Africa relationships despite the relative success of the previous European-Union-African-Union Summit which occurred on February 17th and 18th. Indeed, Many African countries refused to condemn the behavior of Russia in Ukraine at the UN nor voted for its suspension from the Human Rights Council, showing crucial disagreements with the EU. Besides, some African countries hope for help coming from Europe to face the adverse effects of the war in Ukraine on their continent. Nevertheless, he admits the war in Ukraine changed the way the EU usually sees the continent below the Mediterranean, now that energy is a vital sector making Africa relevant in terms of a geo-strategic trade and investment partnership.

To address these potentially devastating evolutions, Mr. Garonna proposes to take the following actions:

- (1) Develop new conceptual foundations for the relationship on a peer relationship of trust and dignity instead of development support and technical assistance.
- (2) Create a strong alliance at the global level in support of multilateral institutions consistent with the joint commitment to Sustainable Development Goals.
- (3) Sign a joint commitment to support the Euro-Mediterranean and the Afro-Mediterranean dimensions of economic social and financial integration.
- (4) Negotiate a long-term friendship package responding to the most pressing and urgent needs of both African and Europeans.

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1 Introduction

On 17-18 February 2022 the European Union (EU) and the African Union (AU) held in Brussels their 6th Summit issuing a stilted declaration, "A Joint Vision for 2030", through which they intended to renew their partnership, respond to the most pressing needs (vaccines and pandemic, growing indebtedness, the net zero transition, migration, the channeling of SDRs towards the countries most in need, etc.)(see Final Declaration, EC 2022). The EU put on the table 425 ml. Euros to ramp up the pace of vaccination, an Africa-Europe Investment Package of 150 bl. Euros for the 2030 green new deal and the 2063 AU development agenda, and additional packages for health and education, official development aid (ODA), peace and security, migration, etc. A strong joint commitment was boasted emphasizing the relaunch of multilateralism, strengthening trade and financial cooperation, supporting employment and SMEs, engaging in science and culture cooperation, etc.

Alas, there was no time for celebrations and self-complacency. Only a few days later, on 24th of February, Putin launched his war of aggression against Ukraine. Under the bombs, missile strikes, tanks devastations and humanitarian atrocities, the EU-AU good intentions underwent an unanticipated and shocking reality check. The war changed everything. It represented a watershed, including for EU-Africa relations.

The African economy and population bore the brunt of the devastating (direct and indirect) consequences of the war. Think of the rise in energy and commodity prices, the bottlenecks in supply chains and energy, the blockage of grain imports and food insecurity, risk of abrupt economic slowdowns, inflation and unemployment, shifts in monetary policies and rising interest rates, the impact of sanctions. Falling on top of precarious equilibria and difficult adjustments underway, those shocks created in Africa enormous risks of greater instability and conflict, with probable huge spillovers of migration pressures, impoverishment and humanitarian catastrophes.

The longer-term and indirect consequences of the war were even more concerning. The blow to the 2021 revival of multilateralism, of which the EU-AU agreement was probably the last example, has affected the role and place of Africa in the global exchequer. The wave of reforms of multilateral institutions that was launched just before the war has been frozen, or worse. Global governance appeared to be weaker and fragmented, torn apart by rivalrous blocks, subject to growing pressures for alignment on one side or the other in a conflicting multipolar disequilibrium. The focus of attention has been diverted from the North-South axis towards the East-West one. Africa risks drifting further away from the developed world affected by growing technology, trade and finance divides. Its quest for more strategic autonomy, more self-sustaining and sustainable development leaves place to a growing vulnerability to global shocks and protectionism, higher dependence on ODA, on support tied to taking side in a more polarized and unstable geopolitical setting.

It is time therefore to raise fundamental and pressing questions. Where do we stand in the EU-AU relationship? A realistic assessment is needed. Where do we go from here? There are serious threats of further divides, instability and conflicts, but also new opportunities for partnership, economic and financial integration, political dialogue and cooperation. What implications for Europe, its future, its external projection, its stabilizing role? What can Europe and Africa do to face up to the challenges of their present and future relationship?

We will argue in this paper that we need a reset and a bolder forward-looking and innovative new partnership.

2 The EU-Africa relationship in crisis and under the test of the crisis

The dramatic change in the context has casted straight away a negative light on the significant achievements reached in the lively and innovative period of international policymaking from the fall of Donald Trump to the outbreak of the Ukrainian war. The response to the pandemic (a genuinely exogenous and global public good -or rather "bad"-), and the recovery of US leadership gave rise to an impressive array of policy openings and break-throughs, both at the global and regional level, in many different domains: health and finance (the vaccination targets and the G-20 Task Force), food security (the Matera Declaration), the unprecedented issuance of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) by the IMF, the investment on science and technology that led to the production of vaccines in record time, the agreements on BEPS (base erosion and profit shifting) and the global tax reform (OECD), the commitments to netzero and nature-positive transitions at the COP 26 (climate change) and COP 15 (biodiversity), the mobilization of the private and the financial sectors, not to speak of the bold advances in EU integration with the SURE and Next Generation EU programs. It appeared as if a new impetus in the political leadership of globalization would open the way to effective reforms of multilateral institutions that had been deadlocked for decades, from the UN to the IMF quotas, from WTO to WHO, financing for development and better coordination in monetary and macroprudential policies. The threats posed to people, planet and prosperity by climate change, health security, biodiversity and inequality became intensively and urgently perceived, and were supported by youth movements around the globe. A vibrant international community of governments, business, civil societies and other stakeholders went on stage setting a train in motion to revitalize and reform global governance. New lifeblood was injected into globalization, or better to make globalization more inclusive effective and fairer. This new globalization drive - it was thought- should have been capable of lifting all boats, gaining popular support and trickling down into greater peace and security, more consideration for human rights, a greater appeal of liberal democracy and the rule of law.

But then came the 24th of February 2022. The Russian aggression crashed this hopeful mood and brought about devastating repercussions. Most notably on the EU-Africa relations. The outcome of the previous week EU-AU summit immediately changed meaning shifting from the half-full glass to the half-empty one. As a matter of fact, no concrete action plan had been decided at the Summit with concrete targets and deliverables. Efforts to secure access to vaccines fell short of financing health infrastructure, sharing technologies and know-how and manufacturing medicines and vaccines in Africa, and thus contributing to the strategic autonomy of the continent. In addressing the mounting problems of debt sustainability and balance of payment disequilibria experienced by several countries in Africa, the proposed solutions did not go beyond reliance on the Common Framework for Debt Treatments, which is still not operational, rather opaque and on the whole inadequate, as the IMF Managing Director recognized at the IMF Spring Meetings in April 2022 (see also Gaspar, 2022). Of the SDR allocation, 55 bl. \$ have been channeled to countries most in need, of which only 13 bl. from the EU (the Team Europe program). We are therefore well short of the 100-bl. In SDRs committed to reach developing countries, and even further from defining how those resources should be spent in support of Africa. In comparison, the resources pledged by G7 countries in support of Ukraine are much more considerable and clearly targeted: 19.8 bl.\$ only in 2022, not to speak of arms support and the granting of EU candidate status.

It is not surprising then that there is a strong sense of deception in Africa given previous commitments, and concern that the EU, and the West, attention will in the foreseeable future turn away from the global South, and Africa, to focus on the war and on security in Eastern Europe. Ambitious plans to reform UN, IMF, WTO, WHO, etc. have been frozen by the war; the gloomy prospect then is that those multilateral institutions, representing the backbone of development efforts, institutions that were already struggling in the past for relevance and effectiveness, will be in the future even more marginalized and sidelined. We are holding breath to see whether the commendable efforts by UNSG Guterres to enable wheat to be shipped out of Ukraine will be successful avoiding famine and a humanitarian catastrophe in Africa.

Are we on the eve of a Europe-Africa conflict? Not yet. But the Europe-Africa joint vision, the renewed partnership, the enhanced cooperation for peace and security, the common commitment to multilateralism that were voiced until only a few weeks ago, before the war, look now more like the dreams of the past than concrete prospects for the near future.

A tangible sign of this growing coldness in the relationship can be drawn from the African votes at the UN General Assembly condemning the Russian invasion (see Table 1 at the end of the document) and to suspend the membership of Russia in the Human Rights Council (Table 2) during an emergency special session on Ukraine: in the latter case, out of the 42 African votes, 21 were abstentions, 10 against and only 11 in favor. The resolution was in the end adopted with a large majority (93 yes, 58 abstention and 24 against), but it is somewhat surprising that facing a blatant violation of the principles of territorial integrity and inviolability of borders, to which African states have always paid the utmost attention, the General Assembly did not express unanimous condemnation.

Clearly the fracture distancing Europe and Africa has not been caused only by the war or by Russian sympathies. Rather, the war has unveiled deeper incomprehension and resentment that must be carefully analyzed. The African reaction to the war reflected past mistakes prejudice and missed opportunities on both sides of the equation. At the same time the war has shown vividly how much Europe needs Africa and Africa needs Europe. It is a question of mutual interest, but also of shared prospects and values.

3 Europe needs Africa: partnership through crisis

On the European side, this crisis has meant a wakeup call and a quantum change in the way we look at Africa. Traditionally, the African narrative has been based on images of instability, tribal wars, endemic corruption, big governments and fledgling markets, religious fundamentalism. This view has stirred in the public opinion a natural reticence couched in terms of fear of contagion, foreignty, unreconcilable values (and therefore identities), distance. I admit that the conventional view has also promoted solidarity, sympathy, compassion, pushing towards technical assistance and development aid.

The traditional view is not the way Europeans look at Africa now in the present crisis (see Murphy, 2022). The war drives Europe to rapidly reduce its dependence on Russian oil and gas. This means looking for alternative suppliers and/or accelerating the transition to renewable energy. The latter implies significant investment in green technologies, such as solar panels, wind turbines, batteries, etc., that in turn demand minerals and metals to produce. Those critical raw and mineral materials can be found in many places, including Russia and China, but Africa is a convenient source for reasons of both

proximity and geo-strategic interest. In Africa we find significant reserves of natural gas and fossil fuel to bridge the gaps created by the need to decouple from Russia. Africa is linked to Southern Europe via pipelines and electricity grids. It can be the basis for investment projects in infrastructure to produce there renewable energy, green hydrogen and Liquified Natural Gas (LNG) that are exportable and transportable by sea or pipeline.

In the RE-Power-EU, the ambitious renewable energy plan of the EU, Africa is identified as a priority source of renewable energy and an essential and critical partner for the net-zero transition.

Energy has been a crucial sector for having a new look at Africa in terms of a geo-strategic trade and investment partnership. But it is not the only sector: think of agricultural production (e.g. grain), trade and food security, tourism and professional services, demography and labor market mismatches, technology and education, etc.

The new "Strategic Compass for Security and Defense" (see EU 2022) was endorsed by European leaders on 24 March amid Putin's war of aggression to Ukraine. Part strategy, part action plan, the Compass spells out EU security and defense ambitions for the next 5 to 10 years. In the Compass great emphasis is given to partnerships, among which the strategic cooperation with Africa, and in particular the AU, figures prominently. This cooperation is already in place, but the EU wishes now to strengthen it, making it a "more robust and balanced security partnership with African partners" "based on political dialogue and operational engagement". It will involve "closer operational ties with regional and sub-regional organizations" ..., and enhance "its efforts to support African-led initiatives that contribute to peace and security on the African continent ...". The political dialogue component of the partnership is also highlighted in the Compass, including the promotion of the "implementation of the AU human rights compliance framework" and the strengthening of the "trilateral cooperation between the EU, the UN and the AU, as well as ... coordination between the African and the EU member States in the UN Security Council". In the Compass a long paragraph is devoted to strengthening cooperation with the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) "notably in the field of conflict prevention and crisis management". Note that it is also envisaged to develop "closer operational linkages with the OSCE in the Western Balkans, the eastern neighborhood and Central Asia", i.e. the whole pan-European region.

To conclude, Europe thanks to the war is definitively moving out of the "charity paradigm" (see Murphy), the conventional storytelling that limits EU interest in avoiding spillovers, damage (and migration) control, minimizing interdependence and keeping Africa at a safe distance. It is entering instead a new paradigm based on equal partnerships, mutual interests and joint prospects for shared prosperity and stability.

4 The symptoms of the EU Africa crisis

So far, the difficulties in the Africa relations have not erupted in open confrontation, but they are brooding under the ashes. Nevertheless, the evidence is compelling and should not be neglected nor underestimated. Let us look deeper and examine a few symptoms.

The reluctance of Africans to engage with Europe: why? Recognizing that the Europe Africa relationship is in crisis is probably the most useful collateral benefit of the war in Ukraine. For too long we have pretended that all is well and indulged in diplomatic niceties. This is the wrong approach. There are

deeply rooted sentiments of mistrust and mutual neglect that must be carefully analyzed and discussed. On the other hand, finger pointing at each other's multiple mistakes, feeding acrimony and the blame game, or passing the buck to one another, will not be helpful either.

Understanding the long history and tradition of mutually beneficial exchanges, the cultural cross-fertilizations, the interdependent identities that characterize the two continents is an excellent starting point to rebuild confidence. But history, culture and identity can be also exploited to penalize diversities, highlight conflicts of interest, take advantage of common enemies to overcome internal disunity, etc. Populist leaders are quite skillful in manipulating public opinions with techniques and communication based on history and identity. History, culture and identity cannot be ignored either, because there are deep sensitivities involved in cross country relations. Not only rational arguments but also psychological perceptions play a role. A few recent examples are provided below illustrating the complexity of the matter.

Asking help at the time of crisis. Is it enough? At a conversation organized by ECFR in June 2022 on "Europe and Africa in a time of crisis", Bankole Adeoye, Commissioner at the AU for political affairs, quoted the marriage vows to elaborate on the concept of partnership. "...for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, ... till death do us part ...". His point was that you do not call a friend only "in a time of crisis". You build a friendship by giving and taking, sharing prosperity and adversity, growing together through the ups and downs of life. The policy focus on short-term interest conveys a message of opportunism and segregation. "I need you now, but later? Probably not." Business partnerships that must be pragmatic and focused are increasingly developed having the long-term in mind, for instance in networking for efficient and trustworthy supply chains or for responsible investment and sustainable finance. Policymaking should do the same. Partnerships should be built around packages with a longer-term perspective. Mutually beneficial business, trade and investment agreements should be seen in the framework of a longer-term and structural relationship of market integration and policy cooperation.

Pragmatic economic relations "trickle down" to produce a free market economy, better democratic governance and convergence in values. Do they? Economic cooperation and integration is the strongest basis for promoting peace and security. On this assumption the EU started its journey in the post WWII period and became ever more integrated from the economic financial and political standpoint, leaving behind the endemic conflicts of the past centuries. After the fall of the Soviet Union, on the basis of the same assumption, the West engaged with Russia hoping that growing economic and business interdependence would gradually eradicate the antagonistic feelings of the cold war and support the Russian transition towards the market economy and pluralist democracy. Unfortunately, events turned out in a different direction, the regime became ever more illiberal and authoritarian, and now after the aggression against Ukraine there is a war. What went wrong? I do not believe that the basic philosophy of the argument, and therefore engaging with Russia then, was wrong. We should probably have engaged more and better. The flaw in the reasoning lies in the "trickle down" part. There is not, and there cannot be any automatism. No invisible hand between economic progress and political reforms. That is why into any process of technical economic and financial cooperation there should be also a component of policy dialogue and the promotion of good governance reforms. Dedicated efforts must be put in place to produce the convergence of values, the enforcement of human rights and the rule of law. Investment in social capital and social infrastructure is as essential as investment in competitiveness and productivity growth.

International cooperation should focus on technical assistance and transfer of know-how. Should it? In a technical assistance relation, seniority plays an important role: those who know and have experience must transfer knowledge to those who do not and are willing to learn. The division of roles between teachers and learners is clear-cut and well recognized. But does this division of roles exhaust intercontinental relations? Does it capture the essence of the relationship between sovereign countries and even more democracies? And does it represent the hard core of the Europe-Africa relationship? I doubt it. When the dialogue concerns government policies, the performance of institutions, the application of shared values (such as those inscribed in the UN Charter or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights), any rigid top-down mechanism does not work effectively. Countries and peoples do not like to be preached. Peer and joint relationships of mutual learning and teaching, of bidirectional exchange, have proved to be much more appropriate effective and accepted. This point is particularly important in the case of Europe-Africa relations, where the legacy of the colonial past and of imperialism still stirs emotions. Besides, in matters of democratic performance and effective governance there are solid values and principles that reflect centuries old thinking and experience. But there are no immaculate teachers and naïve pupils. What would have happened if Macron had lost the elections in 2022? What about Trump's America and the populist Governments that preceded Draghi in Italy? The democratic peace theory has robust bases of analysis and evidence but should be applied with great tact and humility to the Europe - Africa relationships. Effective international leadership should highlight the fact that the fundamental values underpinning international law and multilateralism, like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, belong now to the whole global community, and not only to the enlightened West or the advanced democracies. These considerations should be kept clearly in mind in pursuing the idea of a "Global Alliance of Democracies" and in the proposal of an "OECD-Africa partnership" (see OECD 2022).

Commitment to values, consistency and long-term investment in international "social capital". The issue of "double standards" is deeply resented in international relations, particularly in North-South relations. In practice, it is difficult and often controversial to distinguish between the consistent application of the same principles or standards in different situations (which is not only legitimate, but also necessary), and the opportunistic manipulation of such standards to fit conveniently specific cases and interests (the double standards syndrome). That is why commitment to values and adherence to international law should be pursued rigorously, with no exception and in full transparency. It should also be well communicated and publicized so that perceptions and opinions can be positively and widely influenced. In this context the commitment to multilateral dialogue and the support of multilateral institutions like the UN appear particularly important and appreciated by developing countries. It should not be, and be seen, as an affair for sunny days, or an occasional flirt, but a consistent and determined long-term investment in "international social capital". On this score, we must recognize that the credibility of the western world has been seriously undermined in the past and must now be repaired and strengthened. Oscillating and opportunistic support, the practice of unilateralism, the growing strength of populist tendencies in the political arena, lukewarm support for the UN and the other multilateral forums have accompanied and overlapped with the slow and cumbersome procedures of multilateralism, the complexity of international politics and multipolar equilibria, the difficulty of reaching consensus and moving on the global agenda. Europe should take the lead in making an explicit and long-term investment in multilateralism, and not sparing any effort to make it work better. This means also financing, but not only financing: political attention, focus, respect for the heads of those institutions should lead to regaining credibility and authority on the global exchequer. Europe's soft power and consensual leadership should give it an advantage, at the time when the Anglo-Saxon world has great difficulties in accepting supranational mechanisms, sharing sovereign powers, and is often tempted by the option of going alone (think of Brexit, the question of the appellate body at the WTO, or the International Criminal Court, etc.).

The return of the Non-Aligned Movement? Whereas Sweden and Finland change course and join NATO, and Switzerland -the champion of the neutrality principle- adopts the sanctions against Russia and engage actively as a member of the UN Security Council, the trend in Africa goes the other way around. In the developing world, and Africa, the justification adopted by many of the countries who voted no (4 out of 5 were non-aligned countries) or abstained (28 out of 35) in the resolution condemning Russia for its aggression against Ukraine made (implicit or explicit) reference to the principles of non-alignment. This attitude has raised several questions and eyebrows. Does this prelude to the revitalization or even the strengthening of the so-called Non-Aligned Movement? This country grouping plaid a fundamental role at the time of the cold war. The movement was not formally structured as an organization with secretariat and statute. It did not work as a voting block at the UN or other intergovernmental mechanisms. But it used to be, and still is, highly influential in multilateral organizations and the UN. It claims to represent the voice of the developing countries; it involves 4 to 5 billion people, nearly 60% of the world population. I do not believe that we are at the eve of a new wave of non-alignment tendencies, as we are not back to the bipolarization or cold-war confrontations of the past. The world has become now multipolar and more complex that in the cold war. The EU, and the West, have been keen to reassure the developing world that they do not seek to establish iron curtains or rigid demarcations (see on this Gwamaka Kifufwe). But many African countries fear that we might be drifting exactly in that direction and want to do their best to avoid it. Jack Sullivan, US national security advisor, clearly stated: "Competition does not mean confrontation or conflict. We are not looking to divide the world into rival blocks and make every country choose". It is noteworthy and positive that the majority of the former non-aligned countries voted at the General Assembly in favor of the resolution, among them Indonesia, the G20 chair in 2022. However disappointed the EU might feel, it should be very careful not to fall into the trap of considering any country that hesitate to stand by her in the clash against Russia as an adversary or a friend of the enemy. It should also reflect on how skeptically her appeals to ethical principles resonate with African countries, understand the widespread preconceptions of her potential partners, and strive to regain credibility and moral authority in the long-term. India's foreign Minister expressed very well a view that appears to be quite popular with her African partners: "Europe has to get out of the mindset that Europe's problems are the world's problems, but the world's problems are not Europe's problems".

5 The Missing Link: The Euro-Mediterranean

The "Great Sea" has always been, and is, the natural bridge between Europe and Africa, as well as Europe and Asia. The Mediterranean can be considered in fact as part of Europe and at the same time part of Africa, and all countries and peoples along its shores have both Europe and Africa in their interests, identity and future prospects. The Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi at the 2021 Meeting of the Conferenza Episcopale Italiana called for the Mediterranean to become "a laboratory of peace, tolerance, prosperity, at the center of Europe". **At the center of Europe**, not in its periphery or at its borders. "Africa is engraved …in the identity of France" (and Europe – we should add) stated Emmanuel Macron in 2017, explaining that the two sides needed to "reinvent their relationship" based on a "pax mediterranea".

Unfortunately, EU policies did not evolve in the last two decades in that direction. On the contrary, I believe the Mediterranean represents the greatest black spot and missed opportunity of the EU external policy, which has given a severe blow to the EU Africa relationship. After the launch of the Barcelona process, which was named the "Euro-Mediterranean Partnership" program, great hopes were raised that the southern dimension of European integration would acquire a new centrality. But progressively that perspective has been first downplayed and diverted, and then eventually abandoned. The so-called "enlargement fatigue", i.e. the populist response to widespread migration and identity concerns, plaid in that context a significant role. This was a serious geopolitical mistake, as it was a mistake not to invest in the Turkish EU candidacy. Those mistakes with a hindsight have become more and more apparent through time and weigh heavily now on the severity of the present crisis. They undoubtedly have had an impact (negative) on the growing divides, instability and conflicts that characterized events in the Mediterranean since the turn of the century. The fading out of the Euro-Mediterranean perspective left a vacuum that has been filled by dangerous and heterogeneous trends: the resurgence of neo-ottoman aspirations, the re-kindling of antagonistic Islam, the activism of Russia and China expanding their spheres of influence and projecting their "model" of illiberal and authoritarian regimes, the growing reticence of the US to get involved, the internal conflicts and the social unrest in the region not finding a constructive outlet, the deteriorating economic situation feeding unemployment, public and private debt overhang, sluggish growth and faltering productivity, not to speak of terrorism, wars, human trafficking and social upheavals.

The war in Ukraine not only represented a climax in European conflicts but had a negative spillover on the Mediterranean. Indeed, the war has the potential to become a watershed in the Euro-Mediterranean relations. With negative but also positive implications. The EU in fact is eagerly looking there for alternative sources of energy to diversify its imports away from Russia. The growing threat of illegal immigration requires collaboration with the southern shore of the Mediterranean. Whereas we might have feared that the focus of attention turning eastwards, the South and the Mediterranean would be forgotten and marginalized, this was not the case. Gradually the tide that had drowned the great hopes of the 1990's has started to tilt towards a reset or a promising new beginning of Euro-Mediterranean and Africa-Europe relations. Those fledgling signals must be encouraged. Certainly, the situation in the Mediterranean to-day has greatly deteriorated and is not what it was 30 years ago. But not everything is lost. Several factors point in a promising direction: the growing trade and investment interdependence, the presence in the region of European entrepreneurs, particularly southern European entrepreneurs and SMEs, the outreach of the EU financial sector, the technical scientific and educational linkages, the proximity factor in the design and geostrategic redesign of global value chains, the pharaonic new projects for the doubling of the Suez Canal. Summing this up, I believe the potential is still there for the Euro-Mediterranean area to play a central role in European integration, not only in terms of damage control for containing irregular immigration, promoting energy diversification and responding to other short term European preoccupations, but also more positively for creating a long-term perspective of Euro-Mediterranean social economic and political integration aimed at shared prosperity, stability and a common future.

Two are in my view the critical new frontiers that we should work on to give the Mediterranean a new centrality in the European integration process: 1. The reopening of the EU accession process, which could (and should) extend also to the southern Mediterranean dimension; and 2. The strengthening of the organizational architecture of the Euro-Mediterranean institutions.

6 The EU enlargement towards the Mediterranean

The historic decision of the European Council to grant candidate status to Ukraine, Moldova and de facto Georgia has overhauled the EU enlargement philosophy of the last 20 years. This is a very welcome change and marks a discontinuity with the geopolitical mistakes of the past (see Garonna 2021, and Garonna Delneri Seganti eds. 2021). Enlargement objectives, procedures and processes should be defined having in mind the role and status of the EU in Europe and the world, her authority and credibility as an international player and her strategic autonomy. This was not the case until now. The EU has wasted time and has been conditioned by the petty concerns of medium range powers preoccupied to lose relative importance in the club, or by the nationalistic obsessions of quarreling neighbors.

On the correct premises, the EU is geared to expand. It is an expanding power and should behave accordingly. Her capacity to attract provides a powerful and peaceful transformative drive for the upholding of the free market economy, liberal democracy and the rule of law. Her stability and prosperity enable a standard of living and a model of societal organization that has no equal in the world (see also Morina).

Clearly the enlargement makes more evident the flaws of the EU governance mechanisms and calls therefore for accelerating fundamental changes in such mechanisms. The Conference on the Future of Europe has highlighted those problems and indicated many ways to correct them. It has therefore set in motion a process of federalization of Europe that will lead, hopefully in a not-too-distant future, to a common foreign policy, a federal budget, a single energy policy, a common defense (see CEP 2022). The war in Ukraine has rung the alarm bell: the time for moving the agenda onwards is now. What is at stake is the EU strategic autonomy, the security and prosperity of the European citizens that individual member states going alone are unable to provide. Also, the global role that the EU can and should take is at stake. It appears now clearly that it is not the enlargement that has prevented and will prevent the EU from having a strong and viable governance structure. That was all along an excuse. The US works well with its 50 states; the EU in its present structure would not work efficiently neither with only a handful of members.

Naturally, both the enlargement and the federalization of Europe cannot be taken for granted. There is still stubborn resistance. The missteps that accompanied the granting of candidate status to Georgia and the "total fiasco" of the EU-Western Balkans Summit in June 2022 show how difficult and uncertain is the road ahead (see CEPS 2022). But the direction of travel is clear and the vision of the future we need is defined.

The Euro-Mediterranean should be fully included in this direction of travel. The South, and Africa, should not be forgotten. Here is how the enlargement mechanism goes: the process starts with a country (its government but with the widespread support of public opinion and representative institutions) demanding accession to the EU. This request should not be formulated lightheartedly. It involves in fact not only prospective benefits (the European way of life), but also costly and painful adjustments. Ukrainians have shown their determination and attachment to the European values by putting their lives at stake in the battlefield. As far as the Mediterranean is concerned, I am not sure that at the moment there are countries, governments and public opinions that can demonstrate such credible aspirations. But the situation might change. And the EU should do her part: it should clearly say that Euro-Mediterranean countries are welcome to apply, that there is place in the EU membership for Euro-Mediterranean candidates that qualify.

This is not what European institutions, the Commission and the Council, have done in the last two decades. They did their best to convey an opposite view and discourage in all possible ways accession aspirations (this stand was particularly harsh and myopic in relation to Turkey). The approach was at its best bureaucratic, top down, box ticking. The impression it gave was that only candidates had something to gain from accession, which was a view quite popular with member Governments and public opinions hegemonized by populist and nationalistic sentiments. This attitude generated mistrust and deterred Governments and electorates in aspiring countries from facing up to the challenges of the adjustments required. This must change. The approach should be supportive, encouraging, empathic. It should convey the message that the EU wants to embrace new members and is ready to support them in the reforms necessary to qualify. It is also a question of narratives and widespread misconceptions. For instance, the idea that accession is bound to take a long time (see among others Sapir, 2022). Did it take long for Romania and Bulgaria to qualify? How about Cyprus and Malta? Did it take long for Greece and Italy to comply with the strict Maastricht parameters? Besides, the transformative power should not only be put at work before the accession, but also afterwards, when the participation to the community of EU members stimulates the lengthy changes in the mindset and the convergence in the practices that membership entails.

A special role in the pre-accession and accession process will have to be played by young people and youth movements, because it is their future at stake, and because the demography is favorable to give more voice to youth in the Euro-Mediterranean and in Africa. At the moment the only way that seems open to the European aspirations of youth appears to be through emigration, including irregular emigration, i.e. the dream of starting a new life across the other side of the Mediterranean. We should clearly tell young people that there is another way, a better way. The Commission has a special responsibility in this process and should change its approach. It should engage with countries having European aspirations or candidate countries and provide support to encourage them to reform and qualify. In a recent paper (see Ayadi, Garonna and Svilanovic 2022), drawing on an idea of President Macron, it was suggested to establish a "political community of European candidate countries", where countries who have European aspirations or are on their way to accede would be provided support advice and incentives (including economic incentives) to adopt European standards and engage in structural reforms. This would create an anti-chamber for the enlargement where candidate country governments, and civil society organizations, could interact among themselves and with EU member countries, share experience, identify best practice, learn and train. As all professors know, before getting to the season of exams, there must be a much more intense and rewarding period of learning and teaching, which require a mutual commitment and investment, and building trust.

7 The architecture of Euro-Mediterranean institutions

The EU should also make sure that a consistent effective and comprehensive array of institutions are in place to provide not only opportunities for peer dialogue and policy exchanges, but also economic financial and political support to the Euro-Mediterranean. Several institutions operate in the pan-European space that can provide a useful role in that direction. They should be fully utilized, strengthened and if necessary reformed.

The EBRD is the multilateral development bank not only for Eastern Europe, but also for the Euro-Mediterranean. Based in London, open to a fruitful and constructive relationship with the private sector (banks and capital markets), the EBRD should strengthen its role to finance infrastructure and SMEs

and help Euro-Mediterranean countries to develop their own banking and capital markets intermediaries (see the EIB, EBRD and World Bank report 2022). It was suggested that the EBRD should receive voluntary contributions of SDRs from EU countries to be channeled to the priority liquidity and investment needs of the region.

The OSCE, even after the outbreak of the war, remains an important player in the security architecture of the pan-European region. It has already developed important programs in the Euro-Mediterranean, and probably could do more. Obviously, it will have to adjust to the war and post-war situation, becoming to the extent possible a peacebuilding and peer dialogue actor.

The Union for the Mediterranean has still to overcome its original sin of having been designed and built more as an alternative to the enlargement, than a complement to it. There should be no major difficulty in adapting its mission to include also the support and preparation for EU accession of the relevant countries, those that are willing to join and engage in the corresponding reforms (see the UfM Annual Report 21).

What we miss in this architecture is a Pan-European and Euro-Mediterranean Monetary Fund that, working closely with the IMF, would be capable of providing liquidity and support for the balance of payment adjustments and public debt restructuring of the countries in the Euro-Mediterranean. The European Stability Mechanism could evolve to play this role, but would have to be substantially reoriented and reformed in its membership, programs, mission and mandate.

For all those institutions and possibly others, partnership with the corresponding bodies in the pan-African institutional space should be promoted and encouraged (for instance the African Development Bank, the African Union, etc.).

8 Euro-Mediterranean and Afro-Mediterranean integration

It should be made clear that the Euro-Mediterranean perspective is not an alternative or a competitor to pan-African integration. On the contrary. The EU should be a strong supporter of the continental pan-African integration of all countries, including Northern Africa. It should provide support for the African integration of the Euro-Mediterranean countries. The ultimate aim is to support in all possible ways the overall Europe-Africa intercontinental integration. The two dimensions, therefore, the Euro-Mediterranean and the Afro-Mediterranean are complementary and synergic, and the "Great Sea" represents a bridge to bring the two together.

We should add that the direction of integration should not necessarily go from Europe to the Euro-Mediterranean and Africa. i.e. North to South. It could, and should, be bidirectional, therefore also from South to North, from Africa to Europe. We could even imagine the possibility of EU countries on the northern shore of the Mediterranean aspiring to African membership and accession to the African Union. Why not? If "Africa in engraved ... in the identity of France", as Macron said, and in the identity of Europe (I would add), why shouldn't a few EU countries wish to engage in a pan-African integration process? Already, France, Italy and the EU are highly involved in security operations in Africa to fight against terrorism and prevent the spreading of conflict. Those interventions if some EU countries became members of African institutions would appear more peer and more friendly. I believe that if Italy became a full and active member of the AU, it could give very useful contributions, and would greatly benefit by being directly involved in peer dialogue and cooperation under the aegis of pan-African institutions.

9 A long-term friendship package to reset the agenda of Europe-Africa relations

When we think of Europe-Africa relations the current narrative leads us to argue in terms of technical assistance and billions of euros for development aid. We must change that narrative. The most important contribution that Europe can give Africa is in terms of support for African integration, in the direction of pan-African continental comprehensive integration, but also in terms of the Euro-Mediterranean and Afro-Mediterranean frameworks. It is well known that efforts aimed at pan-African integration and the AU process have taken the EU as a model. This is so for trade and investment, economic cooperation and monetary union, but also for security, international relations, energy, agriculture, social policy and other matters. This approach does not exclude or underplays the importance of technical advice and aid. Instead, it suggests that aid and technical transfers should be placed in a broader and more peer process of Europe-Africa economic social and political integration.

European support is of fundamental importance because African countries by themselves do not have the resources (both economic and political resources) for moving onwards on the road to pan-African integration. The same rational in the 1950's had the American support for European integration, and the Marshall Plan. Therefore, the EU should take the initiative and propose a new package aimed at building a long-term friendship and mutually beneficial partnership. What should there be in such a package?

Of course, economic and financial resources. The right amount and the most appropriate format of delivery. Starting from the volume of resources pledged in the past and not yet delivered. But as we said, money is not enough, nor is probably the first and most important component. Friendship cannot be merely bought at a sufficiently dear price in the political ODA market. The most essential component of the package is the mutual recognition that Europe and Africa need each other and the importance of peer dialogue and policy exchanges. Joint action at the global level is also important. Europe and Africa, being more committed to multilateralism and international dialogue than other continents, could make an effort and commit to coordinate their action and initiatives in multilateral fora such as the UN, the IMF/WB, and the specialized multilateral agencies, funds and programs, such as FAO, ILO, WHO, WTO, UNDP, the Conventions on climate change and biodiversity, etc. etc. They could also engage together in an enhanced and constructive dialogue with the private sector and the civil society organizations of the two continents.

In a recent paper (see Ayadi, Garonna and Svilanovic) a recovery and resilience plan, and fund, specifically targeted to Africa, and financed at least in part by the EU, were proposed. The purpose of the plan would be not only to provide assistance and financial support, but to make sure that the two continents join forces and succeed in the twin transitions (green and digital) in which both are embarked, and to ensure also that the commitments taken towards net-zero and nature-positive outcomes are consistent and well-coordinated with one another in a synergic and ambitious common strategy.

10 Conclusion

The war in Ukraine has been a watershed for Europe-Africa relations. It provided a litmus test on the state of mutual relations at the time of an unanticipated and unprecedented crisis. The outcome of the test was disheartening: the relationship between Europe and Africa is in deep crisis. It reflects old

and new entrenched divides. It shows social, economic and political fractures that interact and overlap fomenting mutual mistrust and misunderstandings. But the war has also shown how much Europe needs Africa, and Africa needs Europe, and therefore the potential, which is huge, for engaging in a close long-term friendship relationship. Such a friendly compact could be of great mutual benefit and represent a powerful drive for better international relations and global governance.

The scars of the past, and the present, must be addressed seriously from both ends, with honesty and determination. This implies a constructive discontinuity with the past and the resetting of the agenda, based on a few broad and structural conditions. I would sum them up under four headings:

- A new narrative and conceptual foundation for the relationship based rather than on development support and technical assistance on a peer relationship of trust and dignity, and the recognition of the great value of the friendship for shared prosperity, stability and social development;
- A strong alliance at the global level in support of multilateral institutions, consistent with the joint commitment to Sustainable Development Goals, and a common effort to achieve in-depth reforms of the global governance arrangements inspired by universal values (like the UN Declaration on Human Rights) and the principles of the UN Charter;
- A joint commitment to support the Euro-Mediterranean and the Afro-Mediterranean dimensions of economic social and financial integration as a bridge to supporting pan-European and pan-African continental integration and the Europe-Africa ties;
- A new Long-Term Friendship Package responding to the most pressing and urgent needs of both Africans and Europeans that should include European support for recovery and resilience in Africa contributing to financing investment in infrastructure, the climate and nature-positive transitions underway. It should also support the diversification of energy sources and the exploitation of renewables, the modernization of the economy and the digital transition, collaboration on migration issues, energy and security, collaboration on conflict prevention and resolution and on the fight against terrorism, etc.

Money naturally is an important component of the package, as without sufficient financial resources and support the African, and European, development and stability objectives would not be achievable, and progress in the relationship would not be attained. But in the friendship relationship money is not the only thing, and indeed is not the most important thing. Europe is already the most generous donor and partner in technical assistance to Africa. And between Europe and Africa there is not simply a question of redistribution of existing resources, solidarity, bridging the gap between the haves and have-nots, transfer of technology and know-how. That old narrative must be changed. The decisive component of the Europe Africa compact must be the joint commitment and partnership to create value, new wealth and prosperity, and work together in the two continents and in the global exchequer to bring about peace stability and good governance.

Joining forces, strengthening dialogue and exploiting the great potential inherent in the European and in the the African growth capacity, and the even greater capacity that can be unleashed by working together, should lead to more integrated market economies, more open societies and more effective and accountable institutions. Europe and Africa together: "... for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health ... till death do us part...".

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Table 1: Votes at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on the resolution condemning Russia's invasion of Ukraine



Table 2: Votes at the UNGA to suspend Russia's membership in the Human Rights Council





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