

From the Treaty of Rome to Cotonou: Continuity and Change in the Governance of EU-Africa Relations

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This is the draft version of a chapter published in Haastrup, T., Mah, L., and Duggan, N. (Eds.) (2020). [The Routledge Handbook of EU-Africa Relations](#) (pp. 59-69). New York: Routledge. DOI: 10.4324/9781315170916-8; ISBN 9781138047303; 9781315170916.

Relations between the European Union and Africa have been governed by a series of institutional arrangements, which have been important in shaping the interregional relationship. In the 1950s, the founding texts of the EU already included provisions for an 'Association' with countries in Africa that had 'special relations' with some of the European member states. Subsequently, new mechanisms were devised to manage those relations, reflecting developments of different nature in Europe, Africa and the wider world. This chapter provides a long-term and comprehensive assessment of the institutional frameworks governing EU-Africa relations, from the 1950s Rome Treaty to the 2000s Cotonou Agreement. It takes stock of how the set of institutions, rules, narratives and practices that govern those relations have evolved historically, examining their origins, nature and effects. In that endeavour the analysis considered how key actors dynamically interacted within these institutional frameworks and their main contexts to shape concrete

policy outcomes. The primary goal was tracing major patterns of continuity and change. Since EU-Africa relations have been organized over time by several distinct policy frameworks (some reviewed in other parts of this volume), the geographical scope of this chapter, regarding the African side, was circumscribed to the sub-Saharan sub-region, which for most of the period analysed here structured the main of its relationship with Europe as part of the broader Africa, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group. The remainder of this chapter considers what have been the principal arrangements governing those delineated relations: the Rome Treaty (1957-1963), the Yaoundé Conventions (1963-1975), the Lomé Conventions (1975-2000), and the Cotonou Agreement (2000-2020).

The Rome Treaty arrangements: an unilateral Associationism

The origins of the formal relationship between the EU and Africa date back to the very creation of the European Economic Community (EEC) by the 1957 Treaty of Rome. Despite their relative decline and the strong decolonization pressure of the post-Second World War context, some of the European founding member states still had colonial ties when the Rome Treaty was negotiated (Mayall 2005). This was especially the case of France, which among the Six founders had kept the widest colonial interests and presence, mainly in Africa. These links were perceived as important for economic and politico-diplomatic reasons, buttressing the country's status and influence in the world. Moreover, the ideology of Associationism, defending the complementarity between metropolises and colonies as well as the mutual benefits deriving from their economic and political 'cooperation', remained very influential in French soil. Not unrelated to this vision of *Eurafrique*, notions of solidarity and moral responsibility towards Africa were equally very common among some European political parties and wider public opinions (Grilli

1993: 1-4). As the process of European economic integration had important external implications, France sought to protect its privileged relations with its dependencies. Paris wanted to prevent the creation of the EEC as a customs union to affect its colonial trade arrangements. It also hoped to share the burden of its aid, which was seen as useful for countering separatist and pro-communist impulses in Africa. The other member states were reluctant to follow France's associationist plans. Strong opposition came from West Germany and the Netherlands, which had a more open and globalist outlook, while being fearful of neo-colonial accusations and unwilling to shoulder the costs of joint aid. Faced with France's firm insistence, these objections were ultimately overridden by the priority given to European reconciliation and reconstruction, as well as through some concessions (Lister 1988: 1-18; Twitchett 1978: 1-15).

The Rome Treaty provided for an Association between the EEC and the colonies and overseas territories of Belgium, Italy, France, and the Netherlands, with the stated purpose to "promote the economic and social development" of these dependencies and to "establish close economic relations between them and the Community as a whole". This Association system was based on three main elements: trade, financial aid and formal relations. Its reciprocal trade preferences meant that the privileged access existing between metropolises and colonies was maintained, but also extended to all other members of the Association. Aid was allocated through the specifically established European Development Fund (EDF), with contributions from all Six member states and administered by the European Commission (EC). Even if relatively small, EDF was disbursed in the form of grants and supplemented the bilateral aid from the EEC countries. Moreover, the Association was given a legal-based nature and celebrated for a (renewable) period of five years. This institutionalization of the relationship between the EEC and the Associates suited particularly well France's position, since it contributed for preserving the country's

'special relations' in Africa, while lightening some its burden in a potentially enduring way. Simultaneously, this Europeanization of colonial bilateral ties meant that they became interlinked with a wider system of governance, involving a multitude of actors with different perspectives, requiring compromises (Grilli 1993: 8-14; Lister 1988: 19-20; Twitchett 1978: 17-31).

The Association had a unilateral nature, since it was defined solely by the EEC and imposed on the Associates. As dependencies at the time, the associated countries had no choice over whether to join the Association and were not involved in its implementation in any meaningful way. Moreover, despite the declared intention to be mutually beneficial, the Association's emphasis on economic development (contrasting with its silence on political aspects) did nothing to dispel the perception of a 'collective colonialism', that could render independence in Africa more difficult (Lister 1988: 13-14, 18). Part of this discontent was related to the exclusive features of the Association. Its preferential trade discriminated against third parties, which posed a question of legality under GATT's liberal principles and raised criticism particularly among non-associated developing countries with competing exports to European markets. These discriminatory features were tolerated by the USA due to the Association's peripheral economic and political importance as well as Washington's Cold War strategy of containment. European post-imperial relations were broadly perceived as maintaining Western influence in the Third World (Grilli 1993: 11-13; Mayall 2005: 296-297). In just a few years the majority of the Associates became independent and most favoured the preservation of close links with the EEC. This preference reflected the conservatism and Europe-oriented feelings among many leaders in Francophone Africa, who wanted to avoid the uncertainties of independence by maintaining the support from the EEC. Although the Association's economic results were

not impressive, such multilateral support was seen as less overtly involved with politics and with less colonial overtones than direct cooperation with ex-metropolises. In retrospect, the fact that associationist ties managed to survive decolonization further underlines the significance of the Rome Treaty arrangements (Lister 1988: 10, 20-31; Twitchett 1978: 33).

Yaoundé: a negotiated and contractual Associationism

The wave of decolonization that swept across the African continent in the early 1960s created an urgent need to rethink the nature of the Association. Such reassessment led to the 1963 Yaoundé Convention of Association between the EEC and a group of 18 countries, essentially former French colonies in Africa, known as the Associated African and Malagasy States (AAMS).¹ This move coincided with a period marked by increased attempts at foreign policy cooperation among Western European countries, partly spurred by the ambiguous French Gaullist vision of Europe as a 'third way', independent of the superpowers. Simultaneously, with the setting up of its agricultural and commercial policies over the 1960s, the EEC was giving steps towards becoming a more cohesive and visible external actor. On the African side, despite the spread of Pan-African ideas the continent was mostly divided among different blocs of countries. Efforts such as the 1963 Organization of African Unity proved largely unable to displace the much more significant links between African states and their external sponsors. Moreover, preference was given to more national political and economic strategies in Africa (Clapham 1996: 106-113). Modernization Theory ideas, favouring market-centred notions of development, also

¹ Celebrated for a five-year period, the Yaoundé Convention was renovated in 1969 (Yaoundé II) without major changes and for a similar duration of time.

formed part of the contextual factors that inspired the Yaoundé system (Holland and Doidge 2012: 23-24). In many ways a continuation of previous institutional arrangements, Yaoundé introduced some changes that triggered new dynamics in Europe-Africa relations.

One key innovation of Yaoundé was its recognition of the political equality of the newly independent Associates. The Convention's preamble expressed the desire to maintain the Association on the basis of "complete equality and friendly relations". This formal parity was particularly cherished by AAMS leaders, keen to ascertain their freshly won national sovereignty and on the defensive due to the criticisms of Eurafricanism by anti-imperialist and Pan-African movements (Grilli 1993: 18). Unlike the Rome Treaty arrangements, Yaoundé was freely negotiated, given contractual status and subjected to ratification by all parties. This novelty did not prevent EEC member states from controlling the negotiations, which end result reflected essentially a compromise among their differences, facilitated by the EC. Even so, during the discussions the AAMS tried to exert some pressure by appealing to the honour and moral integrity of the Six (Lister 1988: 36-37; Twitchett 1978: 80-82). To facilitate the processes of negotiation and implementation of the agreement, joint institutions were also created in which the two sides were represented on an equal footing. Again, this departure was not without important limits as such institutional structure mirrored the EEC's one and decision-making power rested mainly with the European side. Simultaneously, it was a symbol of parity between the two parties as well as a useful framework to promote dialogue and mutual awareness (Twitchett 1978: 109-113, 139-140).

The Yaoundé system displayed much continuity with previous arrangements also in its economic provisions. Crucially, it preserved preferential reciprocal trade relations between the EEC and the AAMS. However, instead of aiming at a sort of wide Eurafrican trading area as under the Rome Treaty, Yaoundé provided for bilateral free trade areas between the EEC and each of the associated countries. Moreover, the Associates were free to organise their commercial relations, both with each other and third countries. These changes were partly an adaptation to the new independent status reached by the Associates. But they were equally an attempt to make Yaoundé more conform with GATT rules as well as an answer to the criticisms of neo-colonialism and divisiveness levelled in particular by some African Commonwealth countries (Grilli 1993: 19-20; Twitchett 1978: 121-5). Following the failure of the British application, several of these Anglophone African states ended up signing their own association agreements with the EEC, even if with less far-reaching features than Yaoundé (Twitchett 1978: 90-93, 145-146). Also the requirement of trade reciprocity was often criticized as being ungenerous from the European side, but it was supported by the AAMS as a token of their legal parity with the EEC. In part to compensate for the lower level of trade preferences granted, Yaoundé increased the volume of aid channelled through the EDF (Lister 1988: 40-55; Twitchett 1978: 97-109, 124-137).

As was the case under the Rome Treaty, the main achievements of the Yaoundé system were chiefly political. Contrasting with its limited economic results in general, Yaoundé was able to preserve the Eurafrican Association by adapting it to the post-colonial era (Lister 1988: 55; Twitchett 1978: 137-140). From a unilateral form of Associationism the relationship evolved to a negotiated one, more attentive to norms of sovereign statehood and legal equality. Although patently short of overcoming significant power imbalances and enduring forms of dependence, Yaoundé's innovations created precedents, laying the

ground on which future agreements between Europe and Africa built. Yaoundé was distinct in providing for a common contractual basis for interactions between countries located in the two sides of the North-South divide. It established a multilateral institutional framework with a level of stability favouring the development of a complex relationship between the two parties, along a region-to-region format (Holland 2002: 28). Despite the signs of greater openness and less exclusiveness, Yaoundé remained narrowly focused in Francophone Africa and a very special relationship, linking the Associates in an alliance with Europe and the West, not with the socialist or developing world (Lister 1988: 45). Simultaneously, such asymmetrical entente, rooted to a large extent on colonial legacies, was not immune to an important degree of paternalism, mainly of French inspiration. Indeed, despite the efforts towards greater parity, Yaoundé inaugurated a pattern of interactions based to a large extent on a clientelist paradigm, with many reverberations in subsequent arrangements.

Lomé: the rise and erosion of a unique 'partnership'

The first EEC enlargement, from the original Six to the Nine, in 1973 opened the door to a reformulation of the Europe-Africa relationship. Britain was interested in protecting its Commonwealth ties, which went well beyond the African continent and were marked by a more liberal disposition than was the case in Francophone contexts. EEC countries such as the Netherlands and West Germany used the prospect of British membership as an opportunity to press for a more open and broader system than Yaoundé. In that endeavour they gathered the EC's support, which was eager to expand its bureaucratic tasks in this domain at a time when the EEC members had made new efforts to advance their international profile (Holland 2002: 32-33). At first the extension of Yaoundé was met with

hesitation by AAMS and Commonwealth countries in general. However, the dissatisfaction generated by the gradual erosion of trading preferences, the lack of options and desire to obtain whichever benefits were made available, together with weaker divisions in Africa and a sense of Third Worldist solidarity, contributed to allay qualms and some convergence. As a result these countries decided to emphasize their shared interests in order to jointly negotiate with the EEC, later forming what became known as the ACP Group (Lister 1988: 61-70; Ravenhill 1985: 77-85).

Although the EEC was initially seeking a mere extension of Yaoundé, broader international developments forced the Europeans to be more accommodating towards the ACP. The 1973 oil crisis raised concerns in the industrialized world about raw material supplies and stimulated the developing countries' willingness in using their 'commodity power' to push for their cherished New International Economic Order (NIEO). European states felt particularly vulnerable due to their high dependency on imported oil and other commodities. This atmosphere of uncertainty reinforced the EEC's interest in having good economic and political relations with Africa, while strengthening the ACP position in the negotiations with the EEC (Brown 2002: 46-52; Grilli 1993: 25-27). In 1975 the Nine EEC members and 46 ACP countries, comprising virtually all of black Africa as well as some small states in the Caribbean and the Pacific, signed the first Lomé Convention.² The new convention committed its signatories to "establish, on the basis of complete equality between partners, close and continuing co-operation, in a spirit of international solidarity" and create "a new model for relations between developed and developing States". In fact, both sides were interested in stressing Lomé's novelty and difference vis-à-vis past narratives and practices. Thus, the rhetoric of an 'equal' partnership replaced the use of

² The ACP signatories comprised 37 African countries (most Anglophone and Francophone states in sub-Saharan Africa as well as a few countries with no colonial ties to the Nine), six from the Caribbean and three from the Pacific. The Asian ex-colonies of Britain (some with large or diversified economies) were excluded from Lomé.

the term Association and greater visibility was given to notions of North-South solidarity as well as political 'neutrality' (Lister 1988: 58-59; Twitchett 1978: 149).

In terms of substance, some of the main innovations of Lomé I were the abandonment of trade reciprocity and the introduction of STABEX. Non-reciprocal concessions meant that ACP countries were merely obliged to treat EEC exports at least as favourably as exports from other developed states. In turn, STABEX was a compensatory scheme, financed totally by the EEC, providing an element of security to ACP export earnings, even if with some restrictions. The amount of aid was increased in nominal terms in comparison with Yaoundé II and the ACP were involved in its administration, but final decisions remained with the EEC. This financial assistance was presented as more 'generous' than other aid programmes as well as 'non-political', that is, allocated regardless of the politics of the recipient countries (Brown 2002: 58-62; Grilli 1993: 27-34; Lister 1988: 76-95). Rather than neutral Lomé was in reality politically discreet, as it sought to distance itself from colonialism and superpower rivalries, claiming a sort of 'middle way' while being closer to the USA (Lister 1988: 189-192). Part of these new measures echoed NIEO demands for special treatment and greater assistance to developing countries, which had been influenced in some measure by Dependency Theory ideas favouring protectionist and state-led development strategies (Holland and Doidge 2012: 24-25).

On balance, Lomé I included elements of both change and continuity with past institutional arrangements. While representing more of a negotiated scheme, taking on board some of the ACP concerns, its fundamental elements were still set by the European side. Indeed, despite an expanded geographical scope, that went beyond former imperial areas, the new convention remained greatly based on the historical legacies of some EEC members and with a strong focus on Africa. Simultaneously, this larger and more diverse framework

brought with it new challenges in terms of intra- and inter-group relations. The overall significance of Lomé I was the object of a lively debate. While more positive perspectives looked at it as an important step away from colonialism towards increased interdependence (Gruhn 1976), more critical viewpoints emphasized the continuities with past patterns of engagement describing Lomé as a neocolonial device (Galtung 1976) or as a form of “collective clientelism” (Ravenhill 1985: 22). Regardless of which interpretation might appear more accurate, Lomé did privilege the ACP Group over other EEC developing partners, while granting the ACP more than they managed to achieve elsewhere (Brown 2002: 27; Mayall 2005: 298). Furthermore, it proved to be a resilient framework, remaining the main institutional mechanism structuring the EEC/EU-Africa relationship for 25 years.

Despite its longevity, following an initial phase the Lomé system started to stagnate. The Lomé Convention was renegotiated four times and continuously attracted new members.³ However, throughout the framework’s duration no major new measures were introduced and its results ended up generating disappointment. This gradual loss of impetus reflected the weakened ACP position and the evolution of EEC/EU priorities. From the late 1970s, the economic deterioration and deepening debt, especially among African countries, increased their dependency on the West and diminished the efficacy of moral arguments depicting them as ‘victims’. Also with the worsening of the global economic situation and the growing influence of neoliberal views, European attitudes towards the relationship became in general less enthusiastic and more demanding (Grilli 1993: 36-40). The late 1980s and 1990s saw increased pressures for economic and political liberalization globally. The rise of the Washington Consensus led to the application of structural

³ The Convention was renewed in 1979 (Lomé II), 1984 (Lomé III), 1989 (Lomé IV) and 1995 (Lomé IV-bis) between the EEC/EU and 58, 65, 68 and 70 ACP members respectively. Lomé II and III were very similar to the original convention.

adjustment programmes in most African countries. Simultaneously, the GATT Uruguay Round threatened ACP preferences, while the Cold War's end diminished the strategic relevance of the Third World, leading to drastic cuts and political conditionalities in Western aid. At European level, steps towards greater economic integration through the Single Market programme raised fears of an introspective 'fortress Europe'. Moreover, the Southern and Northern enlargements brought in new member states with few interests in ACP countries. Whereas the fall of the Berlin Wall triggered new political ambitions in Brussels, the foreign priorities of the newly born EU centred on its 'near abroad'. These trends were necessarily reflected in Lomé's renegotiations.

Unlike its predecessors Lomé IV was celebrated for ten years, with a mid-term review after five years. This extended duration was meant to provide extra stability, but it was also indicative of a certain 'Lomé fatigue'. For the first time explicit economic and political conditions were introduced in the Convention. A significant proportion of EDF aid was directed towards structural adjustment support, which led to a reduction of funds targeting long-term development. Moreover, Lomé IV included a human rights clause stipulating that development "entails respect for and promotion of all human rights". In the following years several African countries saw their aid suspended for political reasons, a move condemned by the ACP (Brown 2002: 73-114; Lister 1997: 108-131). The Lomé IV mid-term review expanded political conditionality and EU control over aid resources. Respect for human rights, democratic principles and the rule of law were made "essential elements" and a "suspension clause" was inserted stating expressly that non-observance of these conditions could lead to sanctions. Apart from that, EU development objectives were explicitly included in the Convention, hence increasing the European influence over Lomé's policies. Moreover, the mid-term revision introduced a phased programming allocating funds in two tranches, with the second one subject to a successful review of

progress. This more flexible and performance-based system was criticized by the ACP for reinforcing the possibility of conditionalities and undermining Lomé's founding principles (Brown 2002: 115-138).

Overall, the evolution of the Lomé framework shows a gradual shift from an emphasis on equality, solidarity and neutrality to a greater accent on European objectives, efficiency and conditionality. This trend towards less generous, more conditional and politicized terms meant that the initial rhetoric of an equal partnership and new model for North-South cooperation lost further ground. It also implied that the relationship became less unique and special, with the ACP moving down in the EU 'pyramid of privilege', overtaken by Eastern European and Mediterranean countries over the second half of the 1990s. By that phase, against Lomé's poor development results in general and the liberalizing pressures stemming from the newly created World Trade Organization (WTO), increasing doubts were being raised about the adequacy of such system of cooperation and its future (Crawford 1996; Holland and Doidge 2012: 65-66).

Cotonou: a failed attempt to revitalize the EU-ACP 'partnership'?

The expiry of the Lomé Convention at the turn of the century offered the opportunity for a new overhaul of EU-Africa arrangements. Although the view about the need to reform was widely shared, the ACP side was less keen on far-reaching changes than the EU in general. Reflecting their own weaknesses, the ACP countries were mainly interested in preserving the benefits of Lomé and their identity as a group. In Europe, a main divide was initially visible between those who wanted to retain special ties and those who instead wished to 'normalize' relations with their developing counterparts (Carbone 2013: 744). For the more revisionists, in particular, a key argument for change was the need to conform to

WTO rules. The preservation of trade preferences for the ACP required securing special waivers, that were depicted by some as increasingly unworkable. The final compromise among those different European views represented an intermediary position, which largely defined the outcome of the subsequent negotiations to replace Lomé. Following lengthy and intense discussions, the Cotonou Partnership Agreement was signed in 2000 by the then 15 EU member states and 77 ACP countries (Babarinde and Faber 2005). Among the latter was South Africa, which had joined Lomé in 1997 as a qualified member only.⁴ While building on the experience of previous arrangements, the new EU-ACP agreement introduced several changes to the Lomé *acquis*. Cotonou was celebrated for a 20 years period, with provisions for reviews each five years. Its main stated goals were “reducing and eventually eradicating poverty consistent with the objectives of sustainable development and the gradual integration of the ACP countries into the world economy”. This new focus on poverty, linked to other dimensions, reflected changing European priorities and broader international debates emphasising holistic development approaches (Holland and Doidge 2012: 26-27, 71).

Despite the expressed commitment to poverty reduction, the initial EDF allocation for Cotonou represented no increase in real terms. Seeking to promote greater efficiency Cotonou simplified its management procedures and financial instruments, dropping the old STABEX and SYSMIN mechanisms to the disappointment of the ACP countries. More explicit criteria for the allocation of resources were also introduced, based on recipient needs as well as performance. A new programming system, comprising jointly designed plans but with financing decisions reserved to the EU, became the tool to target interventions to specific countries and make regular adjustments. Yet some of the main innovations brought about by the Cotonou Agreement were arguably in the domain of

⁴ Full Lomé membership was denied to South Africa on the argument that its economy was superior to most ACP countries.

trade. The existing non-reciprocal trade regime applied to the whole ACP Group was to be replaced by reciprocal free trade agreements, the so-called Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs), to be concluded with six regions (four in Africa, one in the Caribbean, and one in the Pacific) by the end of 2007, in order to comply with WTO rules. This gradual trade liberalization along regional lines was based on the understanding that regional integration would facilitate a smoother integration of the ACP countries into the global economy. Notwithstanding the introduction of a liberalization principle, Cotonou provided for the preservation of non-reciprocal trade for all least developed countries (LDCs). Such economic differentiation represented a further departure from the uniform regime of Lomé, that acknowledged the ACP diversity but also had divisive implications (Carbone 2017: 300).

Cotonou also reinforced the political dimension of the EU-ACP relationship. Political dialogue became a more central feature and was turned into a third 'pillar' of cooperation, alongside the traditional aid and trade dimensions. Seeking "to exchange information, to foster mutual understanding, and to facilitate the establishment of agreed priorities and shared agendas", dialogue was expanded to new issues such as peace and security, migration, and governance. Although the idea of partnership was given great prominence, political conditionality continued and was even extended to new aspects. During the negotiations the EU had tried to include good governance as another of the 'essential elements', but this proved highly controversial. Eventually, good governance was added as a "fundamental element", implying that "serious cases of corruption" could still lead to sanctions as a "measure of last resort". Simultaneously, the "consultation procedure" was strengthened, including the possibility of external arbitration. Moreover, in contrast to the essentially government-to-government approach of Lomé, Cotonou gave a new emphasis to the involvement of non-state actors. This innovation was viewed by EU representatives

as important in building democracy within ACP states, but was resented by ACP governments as interference (Bretherton and Vogler 2006: 122).

According to Carbone (2017: 300-301), the Cotonou Agreement represented a “fundamental break” with the past. While preserving the partnership model and the twin pillars of aid and trade, it promoted a new type of cooperation combining trade liberalization and politicization. Yet this contractual and comprehensive nature, linking different dimensions in novel ways, was unparalleled at the time, making of Cotonou a ‘unique agreement’ just like the Lomé Convention had been (Holland and Doidge 2012: 78). Subsequently, the first review of Cotonou in 2005 introduced some amendments, mainly to the political pillar. Reflecting the post-9/11 context and EU’s global ambitions, the revised agreement gave a new emphasis to security aspects (Hadfield 2007). New clauses were included on terrorism, mercenary activities, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and weapons of mass destruction, which was added as a new “essential element”. Concurrently, the review clarified the modalities for political dialogue and the consultation procedure. These changes were described as an attempt to rebalance an ineffective and unfairly weighted process favouring the EU (Holland and Doidge 2012: 80; Mackie 2008: 148). In the domain of aid, apart from an expressed commitment to the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, the review introduced more flexibility into the aid disbursement process, increasing the EU’s powers over its use.

The second review of Cotonou in 2010 emphasized issues such as regional integration, climate change, state fragility and aid effectiveness, while giving more attention to cooperation in international fora and the role of ACP national parliaments. Greater significance was accorded to the continental dimension of Africa, recognizing the African Union as a key interlocutor in peace and security matters. Moreover, seeking to put

political dialogue on a more equal level the review stipulated that “the principles underlying essential and fundamental elements” should apply equally to both the ACP and the EU. The two sides, however, disagreed on aspects related to sexual discrimination, illegal migration, and the ICC (Bartelt 2012). These amendments and disagreements echoed in part the interregional relationship’s changing environment, one in which the relevance of the EU-ACP framework started to be challenged. The EU’s Eastern enlargements brought in a wide range of new member states devoid of affinity with Europe’s post-colonial legacies and more oriented towards other geographies. Moreover, the ACP as a group was given a less prominent place in the new institutional arrangements of the Lisbon Treaty, which ambitions to foster the EU’s external role were hindered by the subsequent economic and political crises in Europe. On the ACP side, this period was marked by rapid economic growth (especially in Africa), increased heterogeneity among its members, the reinforcement of sub-regional dynamics and enduring difficulties to act as a collective group. Simultaneously, the emergence of new global players and different forms of cooperation in the South provided new options to ACP countries, beyond old partners such as the EU.

Against this backdrop, the final review of Cotonou in 2015 was called off. Instead, the EU launched a public consultation on the future of the ACP-EU cooperation post-2020 and an evaluation of the first 15 years of Cotonou. The EU’s self assessment pointed to progress on aspects such as poverty reduction, trade flows, peace and security, while recognizing weaknesses in relation to political dialogue, human rights, migration, and non-state actors involvement. Limitations were also admitted on dealing with the growing heterogeneity and regionalization trends in ACP countries, the agreement’s institutional set-up, and cooperation in multilateral fora. Independent evaluations emphasized also difficulties such as the limited ownership of aid, the mainly rhetorical commitment to human rights and

politicization/securitization of the relationship, as well as the tensions generated by the controversial EPA negotiations (Carbone 2013: 746-749). Besides these implementation gaps and controversies, the emphasis on sub-regional dynamics and emergence of parallel policy frameworks (such as the separate strategies for Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific) led to a gradual and relative dilution of the EU-ACP 'partnership'. As the trade and political pillars of Cotonou were largely 'regionalized', EU-ACP cooperation was *de facto* reduced to a mostly development tool. Thus, over time the Cotonou Agreement lost momentum and was not able to revitalize the EU-ACP relationship (Bossuyt et al. 2016). Such evolution did not imply a loss of importance of EU-Africa relations, but the latter's governance became more separated from the ACP framework (Adebajo and Whiteman 2012).

Conclusion

The long-term evolution of the EU-Africa relations governance system considered in this chapter displays unsurprisingly many changes, but also important continuities. From the 1950s Rome Treaty to the early twenty-first century Cotonou Agreement, the institutional frameworks governing such relations widened in terms of membership, increasing their geographical reach and heterogeneity. While the initial arrangements only involved the Six West European founding members and a small number of essentially Francophone territories in Africa, the Lomé Convention significantly expanded such spatial scope and diversity by bringing in the more liberal outlook of Britain and its ex-colonies in Africa, the Caribbean and the Pacific. The trend continued under Cotonou leading to a framework of more than one hundred members and increased heterogeneity, especially within the EU due to the accession of a large number of Eastern and Central European states with no significant ties to Africa, but also within the ACP owing in particular to the distinct economic

performance of its members. This evolution entailed scale advantages as well as additional coordination challenges. In general, the interests and perspectives of the EU side predominated. The key role of France and Britain, the balance between 'regionalist/globalist' and 'traditionalist/revisionist' viewpoints, as well as the EC's contribution, were some central intra-EU aspects, which this chapter could not deepen. Similarly, the Francophone/Anglophone divide, the growing effect of sub-regional dynamics, and the greater room for manoeuvre in recent times due to the rise of alternative partners, represented major determinants internal to the African/ACP side. Ultimately, despite their gradual opening, the frameworks governing EU-Africa relations continued to express a regional preference and exclusive features.

European contextual factors too played a central part in moulding the EU-Africa governance evolution. Post-war decline and retreat, the endurance of Eurafrikan norms, as well as the EU's deepening and widening, were among the most important factors. The successive waves of EU enlargement, in particular, had an important impact as they brought in new member states that changed the EU's politics and policies, including towards Africa. This was especially the case with the so-called British and Eastern enlargements. On the African side, post-colonial legacies, the role of Pan-African ideas, together with the ups and downs of the continent's economic situation also helped shaping developments. To be sure, these endogenous circumstances were not unrelated to wider and powerful global processes, such as the Cold War, GATT/WTO liberalization rounds, the spread of Modernization, Dependency and Neoliberalism ideas, the post-9/11 security atmosphere, the BRICS' emergence, as well as UN development initiatives. Yet this interplay between endogenous and exogenous dynamics has not always received adequate attention in the Europe-Africa relations literature (Farrell 2015). For instance, the attachment of some African ruling elites to their ex-metropolises and the reliance on the EU

that many passages of this chapter alluded to can be better understood when the international relations of African countries are related to their specific national and regional contexts. Thus, there is much to be gained in this area from linking different levels of analysis and bringing together the insights from different bodies of literature, disciplines and traditions.

Over time, the nature of EU-Africa governance arrangements evolved from 'Associationism' to 'Partnership'. Based on ideas of 'complementarity' and 'friendship' between Europe and Africa, the initial steps given by the Rome Treaty and Yaoundé sought in a bold and narrow way to help preserve economic and political ties. In a period of superpower competition and European weakness, this Eurafrican Association emphasized economic dimensions and used 'soft' tools, such as preferential trade, development aid and legal-institutional mechanisms. Reflecting the colonial legacies of some of its members, this original institutionalization implied a degree of multilateralization of such 'special' links. Moreover, despite its limited economic results, it crucially defined the template for subsequent arrangements, along a donor-recipient pattern. Lomé tried to move the relationship towards a more balanced and solidary 'partnership of equals', that could represent a new model for North-South relations. While it managed to introduce some innovative and more generous practices that contributed for Lomé's distinctiveness and uniqueness in the world, the relationship remained asymmetric. Besides, the Lomé's system soon stagnated and evolved towards a more EU-centred arrangement, particularly with the introduction of conditionalities. This greater post-Cold War interference and poor development results fed disappointment. Cotonou represented an attempt to revitalize the 'partnership' by following a holistic approach combining development goals and political dialogue, on an increasingly diversified range of issues. However, its differentiated trade liberalization and politicization did not work to stop the partnership's erosion and relative

marginalization. Still, some features of the EU-ACP framework continued to be valued, such as its contractual nature, comprehensive scope and joint institutions. Overall, this evolution of EU-Africa arrangements reveals an incremental process of institutionalization, that appears to have been driven by the sort of path dependencies, calculations, cultural norms, and discursive structures that New Institutionalism insights would help illuminate.

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