



# Monthly Topic December 2006



## EU Strategy for the Horn of Africa A regional partnership with local ownership

Arms trafficking, human rights violations, ethnic conflicts, border disputes. These are just a few of the problems that plague the Horn of Africa. They sweep across the region, leaving in their wake a population in abject poverty, and unstable regimes on the margins of the market economy. Political neglect and economic marginalisation are likely to fuel existing conflicts which could engulf the entire region. The European Commission has adopted a new “EU Strategy for peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa” which tackles the root causes of instability and outlines concrete initiatives for structured dialogue between partners.



The Dabaab refugee camps on Kenya’s north-eastern border now host some 160 000 refugees. Somalis are fleeing their country as the Islamic militia – known as the Union of Islamic Courts – stretches its rule far beyond Mogadishu. The swell of fleeing Somalis is straining the resources of a country already hit by severe drought this year, threatening millions with starvation. Inter-clan fighting over water and pasture in the north of Kenya has exacerbated the suffering in the country and echoes ethnic tensions in other parts of the Horn.

The EU will work closely together with the African Union and sub-regional organisations such as the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) – the seven-country regional development organisation of eastern Africa – to implement the new regional strategy. But the drive for change must come from within. The success of the new strategy depends greatly on political will and ownership.

Working closely together with regional organisations, common policies will be

revised regularly. In talks with key stakeholders in the wider African and Arab region, particularly Egypt, the Arab Gulf States, the League of Arab States and Central and East Africa, the EU will discuss relevant Horn of Africa issues to promote a structured and open dialogue at all levels. Interaction with key partners will allow the EU to address issues of crucial importance to stability in the region, and will allow for dialogue with national political Islamist movements.

## A vested interest in a stable Horn of Africa

The EU Strategy on the Horn of Africa is being introduced against a backdrop of hopes for regional integration and long-term peace. A stable Horn of Africa is in the interests of the countries that make up the region and the EU. Illegal immigration, trafficking of arms, drugs and refugee flows place the Horn’s precarious political institutions under pressure, and could even affect the EU.

The Horn of Africa is of significant strategic importance: it lines the Red Sea waterway and the Gulf of Aden, two major shipping lanes used for the transport of Persian Gulf oil. It also neighbours Saudi Arabia, the world’s largest oil producer, as well as EU partner countries covered by the EU Neighbourhood Policy. The EU is an important trading partner for the region’s seven states, and wants to foster regional integration in the Horn of Africa through

the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA), bilateral trade deals which are aimed at liberalising the economies of the EU’s ACP partners. By reforming border controls and trade tariff regimes, the EU hopes to increase cross-border trade and remove the incentive for trafficking and corruption. The EU is investing heavily in infrastructure to encourage and improve trade among the region’s nations and reduce their dependence on European markets.



# Doing more for pastoralist communities

According to UN figures, 12 million pastoralists in the Horn of Africa are suffering from drought. The traditional rules of clans of livestock keepers often clash with the formal institutions of the state. Bound by ethno-linguistic ties rather than political borders, pastoralists have no access to organised markets, and are among the most marginalised groups in the region. Rapid population growth will likely worsen the situation: in 2006, the population stands at 195 million, by 2050, experts estimate up to 480 million people will inhabit the Horn of Africa.

The new EU strategy draws particular attention to the plight of pastoralist communities. It will strengthen its relation with the African Union and IGAD to develop a joint implementation plan focusing on pastoralism and food insecurity.



Pastoralism – Somalia  
Photo credit: FAO

## Ethnic tensions, chain reactions

In Djibouti, where 60% of the population is ethnic Somali, smouldering tensions have exploded into armed conflict in the past; Arab militias in Sudan's Darfur province have driven hundreds of thousands of black Africans from their homes, sparking a vast humanitarian crisis which continues to this day. The EU will identify regional supporters and opponents of the peace process in

Sudan, and try to establish a dialogue of cooperation, with particular attention for the Darfur crisis.

Conflicts at the Horn of Africa threaten to spill across into neighbouring countries and may have disastrous consequences for the entire region. Warring parties in Uganda and Sudan have supported each other, in search of gains in their own territory.

Small arms and light weapons have proliferated as a result of porous borders and a lack of capacity to enforce the rule of law. The Strategy for the Horn of Africa aims to find solutions to border demarcation issues, which have repercussions for the region. It will address the issue of weak cross-border controls and support bilateral initiatives to improve the monitoring of borders.



Refugees camp – Kenya  
Photo credit: EC/EuropeAid

### EU Strategy for peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa:

[http://ec.europa.eu/comm/development/body/tmp\\_docs/com2006601\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/comm/development/body/tmp_docs/com2006601_en.pdf)

### Press release

<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/06/1441&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

### FAO "Pastoralism in the new millennium"

<http://www.fao.org/docrep/005/Y2647E/y2647e00.htm>

### DG Trade "Economic partnership agreements: means and objectives"

[http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2003/december/tradoc\\_115007.pdf](http://trade.ec.europa.eu/doclib/docs/2003/december/tradoc_115007.pdf)