

COMMON STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK AND ACTION PLAN
FOR AFRICA-EUROPE COOPERATION
IN AIR TRANSPORT

A. Introduction:

Cooperation between Africa and Europe in air transport is on the eve of a new start. It is not only due to the common will of both continents to collaborate but it is also a need. The traffic evolution and the multiplication of exchanges at world level mean a substantial growth of the air transport activity. However, today both continents are facing a different reality while their destinies are closely dependent. Beyond these divergent realities, there is indeed a strong solidarity which cannot be forgotten. Both continents cannot turn the back on the other: on the contrary, they need each other more than ever. The joint initiative to launch an ambitious action plan is the response to this need: it shows the will of Europe and Africa to strengthen their links in order to ensure an air transport of quality, not only between them but also within the African continent, as a condition of its own development. It is all the more needed in the context of the current economic situation.

In Europe, the liberalisation of air transport had good results. Since 1992, the European Union has set up an air transport single market which enables any airline of a Member State to operate without restriction. More than 15 years after the entry into force of the internal market, there are more than 750 million of passengers transported in the enlarged Union in 2007. The number of intra-Community routes increased by more than 40%. The number of airlines increased by 25%, in particular with the emergence of low-cost companies (which account for almost 30% of the capacity for the transport of passengers within the Union) and new routes have been opened at lower prices. Henceforth, air transport is more democratic: all citizens have access to it and more regions are covered. This opening without precedent was not done without regulation: in addition to the common competition rules and the passengers' protection, drastic measures were taken to guarantee the highest security and safety level. This model is in full expansion and is spreading to numerous partners with whom agreements were or are being negotiated.

The African continent gave itself a similar objective with the Yamoussoukro Decision on the liberalisation of air transport markets in Africa (1999). This continental agreement in aviation aimed at liberalising completely the African skies by 2002. Its objective was to abolish all restrictions, in particular on the traffic rights and capacity between two cities.

The ambitious objective remains a priority for Africa. To avoid the partition of air transport in Africa, the implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision is more than ever needed. It has to be developed gradually in order to be a success.

Indeed, the potential of development of air transport in Africa is very important. It is all the more needed for Africa as numerous states of the continent are wedged, while the communication network via surface is limited, due to the lack of financial resources on the one hand, and because of the existence of wide inhospitable areas (deserts, tropical forests, mountains) on the other. Whereas it accounts for only 4% of the world traffic and has a particularly weak intra-African traffic, the air sector generated 430,000 jobs in Africa (companies, airports, suppliers etc...): ways exist to give the continent a modern and

accessible air transport which increases the interconnectivity between the states. The EU can contribute to achieving this.

This common strategic framework and the action plan fit fully into the EU-Africa common strategy adopted in 2005 and the joint EU-Africa Partnership established in Lisbon in December 2007. There is limited intra-African mobility without adapted infrastructures and safe and high-quality air transport can contribute substantially to enhancing mobility, and to facilitating sustainable economic growth, trade and regional integration. As shown by the first common seminar on aviation between the EU and Africa in September 2006, it is essential to develop new ways for a deeper cooperation and to go beyond the exchange of information to concentrate on new concrete initiatives.

B. Common Strategic Framework

(1) Policy and financing framework for cooperation in aviation sector

The European Community policy framework concerning the provision of development cooperation support to the aviation sector in Sub-Saharan Africa is outlined in 2 main documents covering aid for the transport sector : 'Promoting Sustainable Transport in developing countries' of July 2000 and 'Interconnecting Africa : the EU- Africa Infrastructure Partnership' of October 2006. These 2 documents cover respectively the principles and strategy agreed for promoting sustainable transport, and the strategy for promoting interconnectivity in Africa – both include specific sections on aviation.

Development Cooperation financing for programmes in the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP), including those in Sub-Saharan Africa, is largely provided through the European Development Fund (EDF), in the framework of the Cotonou Convention. The programming of funds is agreed every five years, with the period 2008-2013 being covered by the 10TH EDF. The use of the resources (which are provided as grants) is programmed at the national, regional and intra-ACP level, on the basis of EC cooperation strategies and priorities identified by the beneficiary States and regions.

For the infrastructure sectors (transport, water, energy, ICT), the EU-Africa Infrastructure Partnership has been established to promote enhanced coherence and coordination of infrastructure investment at continental level. A new instrument, the Infrastructure Trust Fund (ITF), has been set up to combine together EC and EUMS grant funding with the technical and lending capacity of the EIB, and EU Development Finance Agencies, in order to promote increased co-financing of major continental/regional infrastructure projects in Africa.

Cooperation programmes with the countries of North Africa are funded under the European Neighbourhood Policy Instrument (ENPI). The EUMS also provide support to the aviation sector under their bilateral programmes, and the EIB provides loans from its own resources.

Finally, exchange of best practices and sharing of expertise with DG Energy and Transport in the European Commission is also valuable, including some potential funding for technical assistance and studies.

(2) Possible future EU-Africa cooperation in the aviation sector

Historically although transport infrastructure has been a major sector for EDF support in Sub-Saharan Africa ("SSA"), aviation has only accounted for a very small part of this as African partners have preferred to use EDF grant funds for roads. This is probably explained by the fact that air transport infrastructure can often be funded by concessional loans or commercial sources – for example, the European Investment Bank (EIB) has provided significant loan funding for air navigation equipment in SSA.

Reflecting this, there are only a few ongoing EDF interventions in the aviation sector (for instance, under 9th EDF intra-ACP funding, an allocation of €0.75m has been included under the Project 'EU -Africa Partnership on Infrastructure - preparatory activities', approved in 2007, for assisting the AU to implement the Yamoussoukro Decision and to develop a common external aviation policy for Africa).

Under the 10th EDF, the main potential sources of EC development cooperation funding in grant form for aviation are the regional programmes. All of the three 10th EDF Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs) already finalised for Africa, namely those for West Africa (WA), East and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (ESA-IO), and SADC and Southern Africa, include references to the aviation sector and indicate in a general way that some support could be provided, in particular to improve air safety, for example via regional safety oversight organisations. The RIP for Central Africa remains to be finalised but is expected to include similar 'provisions' to the other 3 RIPs.

However, the RIPs are indicative documents and at this stage it is not possible to know whether the provisions for possible support will translate in to agreement on operational projects, and what form and scale those projects might have. That will be determined by the ongoing programming dialogue at the level of the Regional Organisations (RECs) mandated to represent the countries of each region. The mandated RECs for the West Africa (WA) RIP are ECOWAS and WAMU, for East and Southern Africa and Indian Ocean (ESA-IO) the RECs are COMESA, EAC, IGAD, and IOC, while the SADC Secretariat is responsible for the SADC RIP. For Central Africa, the mandated RECs are CEMAC and CEEAC.

There is also a possibility of support under the 10th EDF Intra-ACP Strategy Paper and Multiannual Indicative Programme (2008-2013). As regards the Infrastructure Trust Fund, a number of projects have already been approved, and subject to decisions on priorities for transport infrastructure projects in Africa and follow up by project financiers (EIB, and other lending agencies), it is possible that air transport infrastructure projects will be financed by the Fund. Other relevant potential EC and EU sources for financing could play a role, such as, EASA, ENPI for North Africa, EIB, European Union Member States bilateral aid and the EU aviation industry.

(3) Africa's policies and plans for the aviation sector

Great progress has been made recently in developing Africa-wide policies and plans for developing the aviation sector. In particular, the First Session of the AU Conference of Ministers for Transport in Algiers in April 2008 adopted some key policy orientations for all transport modes, including aviation, and also a 'Plan of Action 2008-2012 ' for air transport.

The Plan defines the activities to enable attainment of AU objectives in the sector, as well as identifying the lead bodies for these activities, and the other institutions involved.

The four main objectives adopted under the Plan are:

- The implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision of 1999.
- The development of a Common African Civil Aviation Policy.
- Strengthening Civil aviation Security and Safety.
- Strengthening inter-African and International cooperation.

These objectives were reconfirmed at the AU Conference in Addis in February 2009.

(4) Developing a permanent EU-Africa strategic dialogue:

The African Union is one of the key partners of the European Union. Thus, the AU encourages the strategic dialogue between both continents, but also with and between the Regional Economic Communities (REC). It leads the general policy and ensures the continental approach of the partnership. Accordingly, the political dialogue on the adoption of genuine air cooperation is based above all on the relation between the AU and the EU. This cooperation should be strengthened in key sectors like safety and security, market regulation policy, environment, air traffic management and satellite navigation.

An outline approach to develop a joint action plan is set out below. The actions in the key sectors identified aim at strengthening the African continental and regional entities, as well as the national structures when the responsibilities remain at State level.

C. Action plan for concrete cooperation

C.1: Aviation policy and economic regulation:

Objectives

Africa is committed to develop a comprehensive aviation policy framework, and to make the Yamoussoukro Decision a tangible reality. Based on its experience, the European Union can provide its support and give information, in particular on best practices. It can also contribute to set up appropriate institutions and strengthen the policy dialogue on this subject.

Three top priorities should be sought:

- Effective Establishment of the institutions for the Implementation of the Yamoussoukro Decision.
- Support for integration efforts in the current framework of bilateral air services agreements between Europe and Africa.
- Establish a regular AU-EU forum of discussion to address issues of common interest.

Actors

- European Union: European Commission, Member States and interested partners
- Africa: African Union Commission, AFCAC, Regional Economic Communities and interested partners.

Activities

- (1) In the short term, a key priority is the **operationalisation of the Executive Agency** of the Yamoussoukro Decision, which shall support and coordinate the efforts towards a regulatory harmonisation. The EU will provide its assistance and its expertise. To this end, the EC has already made available a **support of 750,000 €** to the AU.
- (2) Moreover, in order to take into account the new European situation, confirmed by several judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union, it is of high priority to find a **solution on the question of the European Community designation**. The AU and the EU commit themselves to deal with this question as soon as possible and find a satisfactory solution. The **question of the designation of the African airlines will also be tackled** in agreements between the European Community and the African states or the economic cooperation regions, like the agreement signed by the European Community and UEMOA.
- (3) **An AU-EU cooperation committee on air transport will be created** to address the issues of general interest in aviation. It will take stock of the achievements made and will propose future actions. This committee will meet at least once a year alternatively in Europe and in Africa. It will deal with any question raised by one of the parties with a view to contributing to its resolution, including the problems raised by behaviour or practices that are considered anti-competitive. The committee will be co-chaired by the African Union Commission and the European Commission.
- (4) The two parties also commit themselves to define by 2010 a **precise list of objectives to be reached** within the framework of their cooperation: this list will detail the common actions and will draw up a timetable. It will be updated periodically and will be used as a working basis in the AU-EU cooperation committee.

This cooperation aims at laying the foundations of a much closer structural relation of long duration: it must establish a **closer air transport relationship**.

To this end, ambitious and sustainable objectives can be defined:

- **Development and evolution of the executive Agency** of the Yamoussoukro Decision which will become the authority responsible for the economic supervision of the liberalised air transport industry in Africa.
- **Assistance to the adoption of an appropriate regulatory environment**, which would cover the main measures for an African aviation internal market (traffic rights, tariffs, licences, supervision by the authorities, mutual recognition etc.) and the measures for the quality of services, in particular the passengers' rights.
- **Assistance to the development of competition rules** and the set up of a dispute settlement mechanism, on the basis of the experience gained in the global air agreements between the European Union and the third countries.
- **Assistance to the development of a common aviation policy for Africa**.

C.2: Air safety:

Objectives:

As regards safety, the main goals are:

- To reduce significantly the accident rates in Africa (currently, according to the ICAO, they are approximately 8 times higher than the world average, the rate of losses of human lives being 11 times higher than the world average);
- To roll back the average nonconformity rates of the African states with the standards and practices recommended by the ICAO to average levels close to the world average (currently, nine of the ten states having the strongest nonconformity rates are African states);
- To reduce the number of African airlines affected by the EU list of banned airlines (currently, the operators from more than 10 African states are on this list).

The principal way of achieving within a reasonable time these ambitious objectives is the creation of regional agencies of supervision of air safety. This objective, which already appears in the Libreville Resolution, is included in the ICAO's "Comprehensive Regional implementation Plan for aviation safety in Africa". Moreover, in this matter, the EU benefits from a concrete experience with the creation of the European Air Safety Agency (EASA).

At the national level, it is also necessary to strengthen the civil aviation authorities, in particular by encouraging the creation of autonomous authorities (as recommended in particular by ICAO and the AU).

The European Commission and the African Union Commission support the full and complete application of the international ICAO'S safety standards and agree to set up a mechanism of preliminary information on EU list of banned airlines. Both parties will endeavour to define a coordination mechanism.

Actors:

This dialogue on safety must commit all stakeholders as well as the European Commission and the EASA on the European side, the AFCAC, the Regional Economic Communities, the African COSCAPs, the regional agency of air safety of East Africa (CASSOA) and the states concerned on the African side.

Activities:

In order to encourage the improvement of safety, the European Commission can offer its expertise. To this end, the following actions could be developed:

- **Dialogue on the regulations** and the coordination in the international forums.
- **Support for the harmonisation at the regional, then continental, level of the applicable rules for safety.**
- Support for the creation of regional safety oversight agencies.
- Cooperation to **strengthen the Directorates General of civil aviation of African States**, in particular in staff training and funding.
- **Establishment of a pre-warning mechanism** on the EU list of banned airlines informing on proven deficiencies. This mechanism will apply simultaneously to the

national structures and the regional or continental entities concerned. Thus, the national and/or sub regional African authorities (COSCAP, air safety regional Agency of and/or the Regional Economic Community according to the situation in the sub-region concerned) will be able to contact the airlines concerned and envisage the upstream corrective measures, in coordination with the AFCAC and the AU.

C.3: Air Traffic Management

Objectives:

The air traffic management must concentrate on the fast improvements which can be made to increase the performance of air transport. In the short term, support to the changes in the navigation trajectories to optimise routes can deliver immediate results. In particular, a project like the existing AIRE program could be developed. This program puts together the airlines and ATM service providers and aims at identifying the most environmental friendly routes and procedures.

In the longer term, the implementation of a Single Sky for Africa is the key objective for which the principles of the Single European Sky could be useful, in particular in terms of optimisation of the management of airspace and flows and planning of a new navigation infrastructure, in accordance with CAC standards.

In the meantime, a consistent system of fees and charges should be developed at continental level.

Actors:

Industrial cooperation is of primary importance: beyond the European Commission, it is crucial to commit manufacturers and actors at the level of the airports or air navigation services providers. For the AIRE program, SESAR Joint Undertaking could play a crucial role. On the African side, ASECNA, Roberts FIR, African Union Commission and Regional Economic Communities are the primary actors.

Activities:

On the basis of a mission of identification of the changes required in the trajectories to optimise the flow and to reduce the impact on the environment and fuel consumption, **a study could be launched to define the methods to develop the concept of a single open and controlled airspace**, first at a regional level and subsequently at continental basis. Later on, projects will have to plan **the needs in navigation infrastructure** (communication, navigation and supervision) and to define the implementation modalities. Pilot experiments will feed the process which will be discussed within the EU-UA cooperation committee. The extension of a regional cooperation like ASECNA or EUROCONTROL to other regions and the best way to achieve similar results will be studied.

C.4: The navigation aids

Objectives:

Europe has developed a system of navigation by satellite, EGNOS, which benefits in particular to air transport, both for navigation and the optimisation of the routes, and for the approach procedures. The current satellite cover of the system includes Africa. The sole development of complementary infrastructures on the ground could allow the extension of EGNOS services to the African continent, allowing, for example:

- The cover of areas currently not equipped with the traditional aid instruments (VOR, DME)
- The economic opening-up of airports and isolated regions, by making regional airports accessible to national, intercontinental and intra-African flights.
- Facilitated exchange with Europe, through the harmonisation of operational flight procedures that integrate the services offered by satellite-based augmentation systems between Africa and Europe.
- Savings on investments at local level, by reducing drastically the need of ILS-type ground facilities in the airports, and consequently, their maintenance costs;
- Savings obtained by the choice of optimised routes and fewer diversions
- Vertical guidance of greater precision (i.e. safer) at the time of the airport approaches
- Positive and very substantial repercussions in other sectors, such as the rail transport, agriculture and the territory planning.
- Reduction of costs and greater reactivity for humanitarian interventions..

Actors:

The African countries, in particular through the African Union, the European Union, through the Commission and its Member States, other European organisations as the European space Agency, ICAO through its African regional organisations, ASECNA, Roberts FIR, have to combine their technical skills and their financial resources to make this extension a reality.

Activities:

A detailed implementation plan for the EGNOS extension, dealing with the measures to be undertaken, their financing and their governance, would be produced by the end of 2009.

C.5: Environment:

Objectives:

Environment is nowadays at the heart of air transport concerns. In particular, the growth of the sector must go along with emission reduction measures adapted to the reality of the countries concerned. The concrete measures in the field of air traffic management contribute to find solutions, in particular in terms of modernisation of air traffic management, improvement of the airport infrastructures and application of new operational practices. Existing mechanisms are available for an immediate improvement of environmental measures.

Actors:

A dialogue with all partners is needed, including the African Union, AFCAC, the Regional Economic Communities and the industry. On the European side, the European Commission, AESA and industry will have to be involved.

Activities:

This dialogue must result in a valuable exchange of views on the practices and the subjects of common interest. It should also strengthen the cooperation within the international forums.

In terms of cooperation,

- The European Union could provide **support to the improvement of the environmental performance of air operations** of all operators in the African airspace, on the basis of the European experience. It will define the needs for modernisation of the ATM, airport infrastructures and operational practices.
- In the medium term, cooperation could also be developed **to improve the access to the clean Development mechanism** ("Clean Development Mechanism/joint implementation (CDM/JI)") with the view to modernise the fleet and to reorganise the operations to improve the airlines environmental performances.

C.6: Security:

Objectives:

Security has become an essential element of aviation. It requires a careful follow-up by the airlines but also by the actors of the airport platforms (as well for the protection of the aircraft as for the screening of passengers, luggage and cargo). Mechanisms for an increased cooperation are possible and have to be discussed, on the basis of the developments at world level encouraged by ICAO. They require a detailed analysis of the needs and the rules.

Actors:

The European Commission has gained a great expertise, on the basis of the application of the European regulation on security. The experience of audits in the European airports and of cooperation with the national authorities is very instructive, in collaboration with airports and airlines. On the African side, AFCAC, the national and regional authorities, but also airports and the AFRAA are primarily concerned.

Activities:

- **Ad hoc audit groups of security inspectors could be set up** to identify the needs for an increased security and the problems in the implementation.
- **Pilot experiments could then be undertaken in some specific airports** at the request of the authorities concerned.
- **Training seminars** could be organised under the authority of the European Commission as from 2010.

- Support for the **implementation of the AU Addis Ababa Declaration** on aviation security in Africa.

C.7: Infrastructures

Objectives:

Infrastructures are the principal economic and social development vector. Air transport also requires that important efforts are made for its adaptation and its modernisation. It is particularly true for the airports, other related infrastructure and their connection with the environment.

Actors:

The AUC, RECs, AFCAC, African States and interested stakeholders. The European Commission and the European Investment Bank are among the major development cooperation actors able to help meet these infrastructure needs.

Activities:

The Member States and the economic regions of the African Union commit themselves **to identify air transport projects considered to be of the highest priority for financial support.**

D. Conclusion

The actions presented in this common strategic framework and action plan are conceived to contribute to the efficiency and the long-term growth of the air transport sector in Africa. They also aim at strengthening the exchanges between the two continents. The proposed air transport partnership between Africa and Europe can help to tackle the major issues such as safety, liberalisation of trade, environmental protection and security: thus the partnership can help to address the most urgent needs to encourage the development of this mode of transport and the economic and social growth of Africa. This document makes possible to simultaneously develop a permanent structured dialogue -which effectiveness will be assessed at constant periods-, and a focus on concrete projects at the most appropriate levels (regional communities, economic communities and Member States). Efficiency will be the leading criterion for the implementation of this plan. A first assessment will be made at the time of a forthcoming conference between the UA and the EU to be held in 2011.
