

# The Future of EU-AU Green Trade: challenges and opportunities of the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

Local EYE May 17-19th, 2024

Rapporteur: Saad El Babidi

Location: University of Bologna - Campus di Forlì & Zoom (Hybrid)

Date: 19/05, h.11-13.00 CEST, TH R.1 A ground floor, 296 seats

Registration link to participate remotely:

<https://site.unibo.it/eye-forli/en/agenda/debate-on-the-eu-africa-free-trade-agreement-with-a-focus-on-climate>

## Concept Note

### 1. BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

The relationship between the European Union (EU) and African Union (AU) has seen significant evolution since December 2007 with the launch of the Joint Africa-EU Strategy. The EU and have held six Summits to bolster their relationship. Africa's strategic importance for Europe has notably grown over the past two decades. Being wary of the link between stability and economic growth, the priorities shifted from aid to more strategic issues such as energy and mineral security, supply chain overstretch, counterterrorism, climate change and migration.

Climate change and environmental degradation are factors interplaying with this geopolitical shift. They pose significant existential threats to both Europe and Africa. Africa is responsible for less than 10 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, however, it is the continent which is the least able to cope with the negative impacts of climate change. In recognition of this pressing issue, it is imperative for both European and African markets to devise comprehensive internal and external policies aimed at fostering resource efficiency while minimising adverse environmental impacts.

Indeed, there are budding common interests in renewable energy expansion and an ambitious global green recovery narrative. Central to this endeavour are initiatives such as the EU Green Deal and the implementation of a border carbon adjustment mechanism. Nonetheless, it is essential to view these measures within the broader context of potential international collaborations, particularly through the formation of "Green Alliances". Such alliances naturally encompass entities like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), reflecting a shared commitment to sustainable development and environmental stewardship.

The AfCFTA is a positive development that could potentially unify Africa's interests towards Europe and vice versa making them more coherent. With its political clout and relevance for Africa's economic development, the EU could concentrate its efforts on encouraging AfCFTA's implementation by deepening the understanding of the AfCFTA's instruments and establishing Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs).



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## 2. RATIONALE

The event is expected to address the EU-AU primary trade partnership benefits and issue a call to action for the establishment of green funds accessible to governments, alongside the creation of a youth green entrepreneurship fund to facilitate direct access to resources and boost the transition towards sustainable energy. Discussions on renewable energy will emphasise the importance of educating young people about trade opportunities and empowering them to seize these opportunities and confront challenges. The example of Namibia's leadership in green hydrogen production will be explored, with a focus on leveraging its use and production while considering pricing concerns.

Furthermore, the event will take into consideration the inclusion of voices from young people across Africa and Europe to delve deeply into the multifaceted challenges and opportunities inherent in EU-AU Green Trade. They will articulate their perspectives alongside distinguished speakers, including representatives from the agricultural sector. They will shed light on the importance of sustainable agrifood systems, emphasising the need to combat the overshadowing of small farmers, and to have an enabling environment for young people that want to invest in the agricultural sector. We will also discuss the importance of decent jobs and fair pay, as well as considerations for human rights. Moreover, the event will explore crucial topics such as green transport, emphasising the importance of efficient infrastructure in reducing emissions, both maritime and on land.

Looking forward, reinvigorated trade and investment need to become central to EU-AU relations if this partnership is to prosper. This shift in focus will require working together to strengthen multilateralism and support the implementation of initiatives like the European Green Deal and AfCFTA. Although challenges remain, including perceptions of potential negative economic consequences of the EU's internal transition, harnessing opportunities presented by AfCFTA for green trade could provide a way forward.

A crucial aspect of the event will be a call to change mentality, emphasising the need to "BUILD FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS." Towards the conclusion of the event, participants will be invited to contribute their insights and recommendations, which will be collated into a unified document. This collective input will serve as a valuable resource for informing future policy decisions and fostering greater collaboration between European and African stakeholders in the pursuit of a sustainable and prosperous future for all.

## 3. MAIN OBJECTIVE

The main objective is to significantly contribute with practical solutions to the global dialogue on the future of EU-AU Green Trade and the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) from the Youth lens Dialogue approach.

### SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

1. To raise awareness on the challenges and opportunities of the EU-AU Green Trade and AfCFTA.
2. To foster active youth participation in discussions about EU-AU Green Trade and AfCFTA.
3. To develop youth-led initiatives that promote green trade between the EU and AU.



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4. To facilitate a youth-focused dialogue on the implications of AfCFTA for sustainable development.
5. To encourage the adoption of innovative green practices in trade, influenced by youth perspectives.
6. To enhance the understanding among young people about the intersecting impact of trade policies and environmental sustainability.
7. To build capacity and skills among young leaders to effectively contribute to policy-making in regards to EU-AU Green Trade and AfCFTA.

#### 4. EVENT SPONSORS

- University of Bologna

#### 5. MAIN CONTRIBUTORS

- The event will be moderated by a representative from One Hour for Europe ITALIA with the Y-IDEA project, ensuring a balanced and insightful dialogue.
- AfCFTA Youth Advisory Council (ICOYACA)
- BRICS South Africa
- The Economic Development, Tourism, Trade, Industry, Mining (ETTİM) Department of the African Union
- YEW Global

#### 6. AGENDA

**\*Online**

Time (CEST, CAT)	Topic	Speaker*	Remarks
11:00-11:10	Moderator welcome and intro	Mandilulame Manjezi (BRICS SA) and Serena Garufo (OHFE ITALIA)	Event background, context and objectives
11:10-12:00	Panel discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Robine Okello (African Union ETTİM)*</li> <li>- Emolot Allan David (Independent Continental Youth Advisory Council to the AfCFTA)*</li> <li>- Esther Shakela, Office of the President, Republic of Namibia</li> <li>- Siyabonga Ngwekazi (Culture and Creative Industries, University of South Africa)*</li> <li>- Fredrick Frimpong (Founder of Farming In Africa)*</li> <li>- Kaoutar El Frayji, International Development Professional*</li> </ul>	Approx. 10 min each



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12:00-12:30	Q&A		<p>Questions/interactions with the audience</p> <p>(Share code with people on screen for sending recommendations)</p>
12:30-13:00	Recommendations		<p>The speakers on site//moderators help the audience to write recommendations</p>

### 7. PROMOTION

This event will be promoted by the Y-IDEA & OHFE Social Media Department (posts on Instagram and the Website, email campaign, print material), as well as other organisations involved in the organisation of this event.

### 8. OUTREACH METHODS

We will reach out to speakers for our event through connections within our organisations first and follow this up by researching other fitting speakers and contacting them through their

provided mails. Connect with the youth representatives of the University of Bologna to reach out to the youth diaspora and invite them to the event.

### 9. POST-EVENT VIEWING

Interesting clips of the webinar will be shared through our social media channels. Use the roll ups to make pictures and share online.

#### Official hashtags for EYE Forli:

Facebook: Punto Europa di Forli; Instagram: @puntoeuropa; X: @PuntoEuropa;

Official hashtags: #EYEFforli | #UseYourVote | #Usailtuovoto | #EUelections2024 | #EU2024

<https://www.onehourforeurope.it/en>

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