

**Press release: Tuesday 28 September 2010**

## **White paper outlines future of higher education cooperation between Europe and Africa**

An international consortium of African and European higher education organisations has today (28th September) published a White Paper outlining a series of recommendations for strengthening higher education cooperation between the two continents, both as a response to global challenges and to contribute to African development.

The publication was launched today at the Belgian Senate with an event gathering around 150 European and African education and development stakeholders. It tackles a number of key issues relating to the future of Europe-Africa cooperation in higher education, including the need to develop more sustainable and efficient university partnerships and research collaborations (for example through joint research programmes). It also recommends concrete measures to increase the mobility of European students and staff to Africa, and for reducing 'brain drain'.

The paper is based on the outcomes and findings of a major two-year (EC-funded) project, led by the European University Association and the Association of African Universities, "Access to Success - Fostering Trust and Exchange between Europe and Africa". In an 'agenda for future action', it outlines a series of key recommendations for different groups of stakeholders, including governments, universities, development agencies, and the European and African Unions respective Commissions. Amongst the key recommendations, it states that:

### **Governments should:**

- Prioritise higher education as a part of their development strategies, and invest accordingly
- Support the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership as a strategic policy instrument and strengthen role of higher education within it
- Develop concrete measures to mitigate brain drain (in particular measures to improve the situation of students, academics and institutions rather than simply regulating academic movement, which can potentially limit personal freedom)
- Collect and publicise data on higher education (as better data is required to enhance evidence-based decision making in higher education policy).

### **Universities in Africa and Europe should:**

- Integrate development cooperation into the overall institutional internationalisation strategy
- Develop more innovative partnership models as a means to strengthen both Europe/Africa and Intra African collaboration (e.g joint programmes and degrees)
- Develop strategies to mitigate the risks and impacts of academic brain drain and engage the diaspora (Good governance/management and in particular transparent human resources policies are of key importance, but improved working conditions, career development programmes and social benefits for university staff are also important).

### **Development cooperation agencies should:**

- Enhance coordination, collaboration and exchange between agencies (in particular share practice and ensure better visibility and understanding of programmes)
- Develop joint European projects as a means to enhance efficiency and impact
- Consider reciprocity in student and staff exchange (outgoing European mobility to Africa should be encouraged)
- Embed mobility in collaborative frameworks, in order to prevent brain drain
- Promote and fund mobility within Africa, between African universities.

### Regional and national university associations should:

- Enhance understanding and exchange in the area of graduate and specifically doctoral education (for example by developing collaborative projects)
- Establish inter-regional dialogue between university associations and universities to contribute as active stakeholders to the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership.

### African Union Commission and European Union Commission should:

- Include a framework for Africa-Europe higher education exchange and collaboration within the Africa-EU Strategic Partnership and promote it extensively to the academic community
- Support regional higher education integration in Africa through bi-regional university cooperation
- Establish a multi-stakeholder (including universities, donors, agencies and students) dialogue platform that facilitates communication, sharing of best practice, identification of synergies and promotion of initiatives
- Base university exchange and cooperation programmes on mutual benefits (university exchange and cooperation can only be successful if beneficial for both Northern and Southern institutions. This includes the facilitation of two-way academic mobility and general cost coverage under partnership programmes and should be accounted for in European Union and African Union funding programmes)

These recommendations will be timely, given the upcoming 3rd Africa-EU Summit (taking place from 29 – 30 November 2010 in Libya) and the various initiatives launched in the framework of the Africa-EU strategic partnership.

### Ends

A full copy of the White Paper 'Africa-Europe higher education cooperation for development: meeting regional and global challenges' is available on request or from the EUA website: [www.eua.be](http://www.eua.be)

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### **Notes to editors**

- This two-year (EC-funded\*) project "Access to Success - Fostering Trust and Exchange between Europe and Africa" was carried out by an international consortium of African and European higher education organisations: The European University Association, the Association of African Universities, the Flemish Inter-University Council for Development Cooperation, the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions, the European Access Network, and the European Students' Union.

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