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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL AND THE  
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**Strategy for Africa: An EU regional political partnership for peace, security and  
development in the Horn of Africa**

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# HORN OF AFRICA REGION



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## Strategy for Africa: An EU regional political partnership for peace, security and development in the Horn of Africa

### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1. Policy framework.

On 20 March 2006, the European Commission outlined at the 11<sup>th</sup> Summit of Heads of State and Government of IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development) an initial blue print of a strategy for peace, security and development for the Horn of Africa region. This Communication translates the mutual interest and political will to generate regional stability and solidarity and is the product of high-level consultations that have taken place since then, involving all the IGAD countries and other interested regional players such as the League of Arab States and Egypt.

This Communication builds on two important Strategies already being implemented by the EU: the **'European Consensus for Development'** adopted by the European Parliament, the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council and the Commission on 20 December 2005<sup>1</sup> and the **'EU-Africa Strategy'** approved by the European Council on 15-16 December 2005. The former provides an overarching policy framework geared to achieving poverty reduction and sustainable development by following a comprehensive prevention-based approach to state fragility, supporting conflict prevention and resolution, and building peace. The latter underpins EU policy towards Africa by pointing out that *"issues such as peace and security, migration, interconnection or disaster management require primarily regional or continental responses"* and stressing the need to *"develop a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention, which seeks to integrate policies and action in the fields of security, development and democratic governance. The EU should increasingly use regional and national development strategies and instruments to address structural causes of conflict."*

Security and development are important and complementary. Without peace and security, development and poverty eradication are not possible, and without development and poverty eradication no sustainable peace will occur.

This central assumption which underscores the EU-Africa Strategy is particularly relevant in the Horn region. The Horn of Africa is one of the most conflict-prone regions in the world as well as one of the poorest. The protracted border dispute between Eritrea and Ethiopia, the Somalia crisis and the Sudanese and Northern Uganda conflicts all have an impact on the livelihoods of millions of people moving the region away from the Millennium Development Goals' (MDGs).

On the basis of this policy framework, the European Commission is now proposing to set up a **'Regional Political Partnership'** with the Horn of Africa<sup>2</sup>, as a test case for applying the EU-Africa Strategy. The main objective of the Communication is to contribute to reducing the

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<sup>1</sup> JO (OJ C 46, 24.2.2006, p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> Defined in this Communication as including all IGAD countries : Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, Uganda

region's instability, which is a prerequisite for reaching the MDGs. It sets out a comprehensive approach to conflict prevention in the Horn of Africa, tackling in the short to medium term the root causes of instability at both country and regional level and strengthening regional cooperation. It should guide EU external action in the region and the formulation of Country and Regional Strategy Papers.

## **1.2. Why the Horn of Africa is of strategic importance to the EU**

A prosperous, democratic, stable and secure region is in the interests of the countries and peoples of both the Horn of Africa and the EU. However, an uncontrolled, politically neglected, economically marginalised and environmentally damaged Horn has the potential to undermine the region's and the EU's broad stability and development policy objectives and to pose a threat to European Union security

The EU is the most important development partner in the Horn region. It is also one of the main providers of humanitarian assistance. Socio-economic vulnerability and inequities, shortcomings in the human and social rights field, chronic food insecurity, competition for scarce natural resources, poor governance and population growth are underlying features that EU stability and poverty reduction policies, together with regional and international partners, seek to address. Stability in the Horn of Africa is also strategically crucial for EU security. Cross-border dynamics, such as illegal migration and trafficking of arms, drugs and refugee flows, are factors contributing to instability and tensions that spread throughout the Horn of Africa and beyond, and could even reach the EU. The Horn has come under increased international scrutiny in the war against terrorism due to the spreading of religious extremism and ideological influences from neighbouring sub-regions. Prevailing insecurity in the region has also contributed to a culture of lawlessness, banditry, and warlordism. As a result the boundaries between political conflict, criminality and terrorism tend to be blurred.

The EU has also strong economic interests in having a stable Horn of Africa. It adjoins strategically important parts of the Middle East: it flanks the Red Sea waterway, which is crucial for EU trade and supplies, particularly energy; it is a neighbour of Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil producer ; it straddles the Nile basin, which is of central importance to Egypt (whose stability in turn is an important element of Mediterranean and Middle East stability); and it is in close proximity to countries covered by the EU Neighbourhood policy, both in North Africa and the Near East.. Also, the EU is the key international trading partner of the region and there is potential for EU economic interests to grow, if energy supplies and economic growth in the region continue to rise and are adequately managed.

It is important to note that other countries, notably the US, China and India have taken an interest in the strategic importance of the Horn and are investing significant resources there.

## **2. REGIONAL DIMENSION AND DYNAMICS**

### **2.1. Regional interconnections**

The Horn region has particularly **complex regional, political and cross-border dimensions**. These include the confluence of Bantu/Nilotic, Arab, Egyptian and Abyssinian cultures; the large number of wars over secession, autonomy or territorial claims (many of them related to ethnic or religious identity), control of resources and disputed borders; the regional impacts of

population growth, climate change and related pressures on natural resources; the friction fuelled by competition for the water resources from the Nile; the high proportion of nomadic pastoralists, bound largely by ethno-linguistic ties rather than political borders, who are among the most marginalised groups in the region; a culture of militarism and certain vested interests in war economies; and the neglect, underdevelopment and insecurity of border areas in the region. All these factors contribute to instability, conflict, poverty and poor governance, and require regional solutions with cross-border and transnational components that complement appropriate national responses.

The Horn faces not a series of separate conflicts, but a *regional system of insecurity* in which conflicts and political crises, feed into and fuel one another. The current political and ideological environment in the Horn of Africa gives rise to growing polarisation and an entrenched fault line of instability that stretches from Darfur to southern Somalia and has a negative impact on the region as a whole. Regional organisations such as the African Union (AU) and IGAD play a key role in finding sustainable solutions to the challenges the Horn of Africa faces. *Annex I* provides an over view of the existing regional architecture.

An overview of some of the most important regional interconnections of the larger conflicts in the region is provided in *Annex II*. The following conclusions can be drawn:

- Most of the borders are unstable, border regions are prone to conflict of one kind or another and there are a number of contested borders;
- Most of those countries which share a common border also have, or have had in the recent past, difficult inter-state relations which can lead to violence;
- In all of the larger conflicts in the region, there is evidence of states providing refuge, rear bases, military support and diplomatic recognition to groups fighting wars in neighbouring states.

These regional interconnections have manifested themselves in several ways:

- A major recent political development has been the rapprochement between Sudan, Eritrea and the emerging Islamic Courts in Somalia;
- The Ethiopia-Eritrea tensions have spillover effects not only along the common border but also in the internal politics of each country and in the conflicts in Somalia and Sudan;
- Ethiopia has had or continues to have complex relations with many of its neighbours;
- The existing instability in Darfur and southern Somalia has been fuelled by international factors and has implications on neighbouring countries and regions.

## **2.2. Regional cross-cutting issues**

There are a number of important cross-cutting issues common to the crises in the Horn.

**Governance and security:** A crucial issue in reducing instability in the Horn of Africa is to address the mutually reinforcing connections between insecurity, poverty and governance. At the heart of this relationship are communities which feel marginalised in the national distribution of power, wealth and access to natural resources, social services, security and

justice. These communities may over time develop grievances that can lead to violent rebellion. Conflicts in the Horn can be exacerbated by powerful networks of state and non-state actors, such as warlords and the business community, who benefit from war economies – including arms, drugs and human trafficking networks - which they to some extent control and who thus have an interest in maintaining the status quo, thereby increasing the marginalisation of communities and the manipulation of ethnic groupings. In addition, instability and conflict in the Horn of Africa and the violation in some cases of universal rights have been perpetuated by the lack of political space for the peaceful resolution of conflicts, by authoritarianism and militarism, and by the interference of external powers.

**Religious fundamentalism:** Religious fundamentalism is becoming an increasingly important regional issue in view of: (i) weak state institutions in the Horn that make the region a target for fundamentalist groups; (ii) grievances wrought by poverty and conflicts that make the region a potential breeding ground for religious extremism and activism; and (iii) the influence on the region of extremist fundamentalist ideology particularly from certain parts of the neighbouring Middle East.

**Migration, refugees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs):** The Horn of Africa is one of the regions with the highest number of migrants and refugees in the world. Every country in the region is severely affected, as a source of refugees/migrants, as a transit or destination or both. IDPs remain particularly vulnerable and are numerically the most important group, and have also to be factored in as part of the development and insecurity equation. This crisis, which has very strong regional political and security dimensions, is an indicator of political marginalisation and exclusion and is a source of regional instability fuelling the development of inter-state tensions. Refugees are, moreover, vulnerable to exploitation by traffickers and criminal/terrorist networks. Human trafficking to Gulf countries, involving not only refugees but also marginalised and poor communities and the fact that the region is a major entry route to Europe are significant issues.

**Proliferation and misuse of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW):** The problem of proliferation and misuse of SALW is acute throughout the Horn. Wide availability and flow of SALW is partly a consequence of past and present wars in the Horn and in the neighbouring regions (along with third states providing arms to opposition/rebel groups), and is a factor contributing to the presence of warlords, militias, criminal networks, armed crime and violence in the region. It also serves as an enabler of terrorism.

SALW and other trafficking in the Horn have strong inter-regional and global dimensions. Large-scale trafficking of arms thrives between the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes Region, Central Africa, North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula. Consequently, trafficking in MANPADS and other highly sensitive arms across the Red Sea and Gulf of Aden has become a major focus for several EU Member States.

**Security of border areas:** Insecurity and underdevelopment of border and peripheral areas are key elements of regional instability. Borders are permeable and often allow for high levels of insecurity, smuggling/trafficking, violence and environmental degradation.

**Competition for access to Natural resources** such as water, timber and non-timber forest products, fish and fertile land, further negatively impacts on human security in the region, particularly when coupled with population growth and the marginalisation of remote areas. The impact of desertification and climate change will further exacerbate the pressure on natural resources.

*Access to limited water* and environmental protection of water resources have a particularly important regional dimension because the main river basin in the region, the Nile, is a trans-boundary resource shared by ten states, including five of the seven countries of the Horn. Other important trans-boundary rivers, which flow from Ethiopia into Somalia and Kenya, are the Shabelle, Juba and Omo. There are potential regional tensions relating to sharing of the waters of the Nile, particularly between Egypt and up-river riparian states.

*Structural food insecurity* is also a concern, affecting mostly nomadic pastoralists<sup>3</sup> and agro-pastoralists. Depletion of natural resources, drying-out of water holes and degradation of pasture areas, are all causes of ethnic tensions and conflicts in the Horn of Africa. Food insecurity has both cause and effect implications for regional stability. Tackling the political roots of food insecurity is of strategic importance in order to break a vicious cycle of instability generating hunger and vice-versa.

*Pastoralism:* The Horn has a high number of transhumant and cross-border pastoralists, whose communities are often marginalised and alienated. Poor policies have stimulated or tolerated violent conflict amongst pastoralists or between pastoralists and other segments of the population. Pastoralists have been drawn into trafficking, rebellions and increasing levels of violent conflict.

The relation between pastoralist and agro-pastoralist is also critical, with access to land, water and other natural resources vital for agriculture a source of tension.

A significant cross-cutting issue aggravating all these factors is the **demographic upsurge** in the region (*Annex III and IV*). The IGAD region today counts a population of 195 million people; this is estimated to be as high as 480 million people in the year 2050, representing 25% of Africa's total population. This rapidly growing population further increases pressure on limited natural resources and represents a challenge to the region's development and stability.

### **3. A WORK PROGRAMME FOR REGIONAL ACTION**

The work programme addresses the key regional challenges outlined above, focusing on concrete actions and initiatives that need to be taken in order to achieve greater regional political stability.

#### **3.1. Encouraging effective regional political and economic cooperation and integration**

Increasing the capacity and political commitment of the AU, IGAD and other sub-regional organisations to play a key role in regional stabilisation is a high priority in the regional partnership. The EU enhanced partnership with the AU and sub-regional organisations should include the following measures:

1. Enhancement of political and functional cooperation with IGAD by the development of a joint vision and implementation plan focusing on three main areas of

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<sup>3</sup> Agriculture also plays a major role in food security, in countries like Ethiopia for example, and although more of national interest, it has some regional aspects, namely trade-related, which cannot be neglected.



cooperation: (i) peace, security and governance; (ii) pastoralism and food security, and (iii) institutional development.

2. Active involvement of the AU in the Horn and the strengthening of African Capabilities<sup>4</sup>, particularly in building capacities for conflict prevention, conflict mediation and deployment of military peacekeeping and monitoring operations. The establishment of the Eastern African Standby Military Brigade (EASBRIG) as part of the African Standby Force is a positive development in building capacities for the deployment of military peacekeeping and monitoring operations, and the EU could consider support to this initiative as well as building the capacity of the Secretariat of the AU Peace and Security Council.
3. Fostering of regional integration in the Horn of Africa, *inter alia* through the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations. COMESA and the East Africa Community (EAC) are key vehicles for regional integration and should certainly be part of any long-term strategy for building peace in the region. In EC regional and pan-African programmes, particular emphasis will be placed on infrastructure and communications as strategic vehicles for regional integration in line with the Africa Strategy.

In the context of the EU-Africa Infrastructure Partnership, the EU will develop infrastructure and related services as well as interconnections within the Horn and between African regions.

4. In December 2005, the European Council agreed to support African efforts to monitor and improve governance, and to develop a Governance Initiative to support national reforms triggered by the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM). Several countries in the Horn region (Ethiopia, Sudan, Kenya and Uganda) have already adhered to the APRM, and support for the implementation of reforms should be provided through the EU Governance Initiative.

### **3.2. Addressing the key country-level strategic political issues which have regional ramifications**

This part of the work programme prioritises the major strategic country-level political issues which could potentially have the most serious regional impact. A selected number of issues and regional priorities are identified below, and could be considered as items for EU political dialogue with the Horn of Africa.

1. In Sudan, regional supporters and opponents of the peace process(es) and their interests should be identified and factored into dialogue and cooperation. Particular attention should be paid to the regional implications of the Darfur crisis.
2. Cross-border state support for armed groups should be put on the political/diplomatic agenda of the EU and the countries of the Horn region.
3. There should be engagement with initiatives aimed at finding solutions to border demarcation issues, particularly in relation to the Ethiopian/Eritrean border which

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<sup>4</sup> In line with the EU Concept for strengthening African Capabilities for the Prevention, Management and Resolution of Conflicts (July 2006)

has broader implications for the region. The normalisation of relations between Eritrea and Ethiopia is crucial for peace and stability in the Horn.

4. The political approach towards Kenya and Djibouti should be developed and reviewed, taking into account their role in regional stability.
5. For regional stability, “containment” cannot be considered as an option in Somalia; instead, the underlying causes of instability in Somalia need to be addressed. The concerns of Somalia’s neighbouring countries should be taken into account and these countries should play a positive and stabilising role in the Somali peace process. Anchoring Somalia in the regional partnership will be a ‘test case’ for its effective implementation (see *Annex V*).
6. The northern Uganda peace process should take the regional dimensions of the conflict into account, particularly as regards southern Sudan.

### **3.3. Addressing regional cross-cutting and cross-border concerns in the Horn of Africa**

There are several important cross-cutting and cross-border issues that need to be addressed in a systematic way. The Communication proposes EU regional action in three interrelated pillars and outlines in *Annex VI* policy responses to achieve the following objectives:

1. Improved governance and security and enhanced engagement with Political Islam and dialogue between societies/cultures.
2. Enhanced development, trade, security and political participation, particularly in ‘border regions’ and management of migration and refugees and prevention of trafficking and SALW proliferation.
3. Improved policies and programmes to address competition in natural resources including development of regional food security strategies and reduce pastoralist-related conflict, enhanced governance and co-operative management of freshwater resources.

## **4. AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP**

Successful implementation of the measures described in this Communication requires concerted and coordinated action on the part of the EU and IGAD Member States as well as flexibility, responsiveness to dynamic situations and innovative use of available instruments to create incentives for political change. Moreover, this regional political partnership will evolve dynamically, with regular revision and development of common policies and programmes. It will thus make substantial demands on EU/IGAD capacities for coordination, policy development and programme implementation and the following accompanying measures are proposed.

### **4.1. Proposed EU accompanying measures**

- Promote information-sharing and consultation between EU Member States and EU institutions with a view to developing a shared understanding and common approaches as regards the Horn of Africa.

- Maintain and develop effective use of existing EU instruments to support improved coordination and dialogue, including Troika missions, joint EU Council/Commission missions and EU Special Representatives. In particular, the EU could promote the International Partners Forum (IPF) as a forum for dialogue with IGAD.
- Make full use of Article 8 of the Cotonou Partnership Agreement to facilitate and advance dialogue with key actors (national governments, regional organisations). The EU should ensure that Article 8 political dialogue will include a strong focus on regional issues, in particular the regional implications of actions by individual states.
- Promote the micro and meso level of conflict prevention, management and resolution, including non-state actor structures.
- Include discussion of relevant Horn of Africa issues in talks and contacts 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.
- Enhance dialogue and coordination on the Horn of Africa with the USA, Norway, Japan, Canada, Russia and China. In addition, there should be structured dialogue with the UN and relevant agencies.
- Strengthen the mainstreaming of 'human security' approach including human and social rights and gender, demographic issues and the environment (water, coastal zones and forest sustainable management, desertification and adaptation to climate change) into development programmes and promote integration by the partner strategies in the Horn region.
- Dovetail all EU strategies, policies and programmes geared towards countries of the Horn of Africa, to ensure that they take appropriate account of key regional and cross-cutting issues, and contribute effectively to the EU's regional political partnership for the region. In its Country Strategy Papers for the countries of the Horn of Africa, the EU should place particular emphasis on the regional context and analysis as well as an assessment of the root causes of violent conflict.
- When preparing new cooperation strategies with the Horn of Africa and IGAD, the Commission will dovetail EDF 10 country and regional strategies (2008-2013) in support of the Regional Political partnership for the Horn of Africa. Wherever feasible, this will be complemented by support from EU Member States. Governance, natural resources and food security, education and regional integration focusing on infrastructure should be the main areas of cooperation underpinning country and regional strategies.

#### **4.2. Proposed Horn of Africa partners' accompanying measures**

- Debate and promote the regional strategy among Member States, IGAD Secretariat and other policy organs and relevant regional players and civil society organisations in order to obtain a coordinated position and adherence on the part of all stakeholders.
- Regional partners and organisations would have to be open to systematic dialogue at all levels on key regional challenges, e.g. governance, conflict, food security, trafficking and resource sharing, security and religious fundamentalism, and be engaged in identifying drivers of change.

- Promote information-sharing and clarity of the respective roles of regional organisations, Horn of Africa partners, neighbouring countries and key regional stakeholders with a view to developing a shared vision.
- Horn of Africa countries and regional organisations would have to allocate adequate resources for the dialogue and the work programme, and operationalise the format for enhanced dialogue with the European Union.
- Horn of Africa partners would have to address sources of conflict and promote cross-sectoral cooperation such as, for example, the link between conflicts, share of natural resources, pastoralists and food security.
- Implement relevant institutional reforms and Member States' commitments to enable the IGAD Secretariat to function adequately.
- Review and update the IGAD strategy and complete the IGAD sectoral strategy on peace and security.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This Communication implements the Africa Strategy by introducing an EU regional political partnership for the Horn of Africa based on an analysis of the key regional dynamics and problems in the Horn region. The aim of the partnership is to promote peace, stability and development in the region. It provides a political framework for concrete regional initiatives and programmes and for structured and open dialogue between partners at all levels. Implementation of the partnership will commence in 2007 and it will be jointly reviewed after two years to take stock of progress in delivery of the work programme and ensure it is updated and dovetailed to the conditions prevailing in the region.

## 6. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALIVE:	Africa Livestock
AMCOW:	African Ministerial Conference on Water
AMESD:	African Monitoring for the Environment and Sustainable Development
APF:	African Peace Facility
AU:	African Union
CEWARN:	Conflict Early Warning and Response Mechanism
COMESA:	Common Market of Eastern and Southern Africa
CPA:	Comprehensive Peace Agreement
CSO:	Civil Society Forum
DDR:	Disarmament Demobilisation Reintegration
EAC:	East Africa Community
EASBRIG::	Eastern Africa Standby Brigade
EC:	European Commission
EPA:	Economic Partnership Agreement
EPLF:	Eritrean People's Liberation Front
EU:	European Union
FRUD:	Front pour la Restauration de l'Unité et de la Démocratie (Djibouti)
ICG:	International Contact Group (ICG) on Somalia
IDP:	Internally Displaced Person
IGAD:	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IPF:	IGAD Partners Forum
LRA:	Lord's Resistance Army
MANPADS:	Man Portable Air Defence System
MDGS:	Millennium Development Goals
NBI:	Nile Basin Initiative
NDA:	National Democratic Alliance (Sudan)
NEPAD:	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO:	Non-governmental organisation
OECD DAC:	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee
OLF:	Oromo Liberation Front
ONLF:	Ogaden National Liberation Front
RECSA:	Regional Centre for Small Arms and Light Weapons
REFORM:	Regional Food Security and Risk Management Programme
RPF:	Regional Political Framework
SALW:	Small Arms and Light Weapons
SPLA:	Sudan People's Liberation Army
SRRC:	Somali Reconciliation and Restoration Council
SSR:	Security Sector Reform
TFG:	Transitional Federal Government
TFIs:	Transitional Federal Institutions
TPLF:	Tigrean People's Liberation Front