



KREISKY  
FORUM



An open discussion organized within the framework of the partnership  
*Schwarzenbergplatz Forum*  
between the Austro-French Center and the French Embassy in Austria

## **How realistic is a new partnership between Europe and Africa ?**

**7 June 2022, 19h00-20h30**

Discussion in English

Bruno Kreisky Forum für internationalen Dialog, Armbrustergasse 15, 1190 Vienna

To many observers, the relationship between the EU and Africa over the years has shown an increasing “fatigue” with mutual recriminations and misunderstandings standing in the way of a future oriented, mutually fruitful cooperation. Trade relations have stagnated, and African countries have increasingly looked to other partners, mainly China, to provide much needed investments. Migration, the issue of access to Covid vaccines, and most recently the war in Ukraine have been added to the list of irritants. Both sides have become increasingly aware that a new approach was needed. This perception set the tone for the latest edition of the EU – Africa summit, which took place in Brussels on 17/18 February after a hiatus of five years. On an optimistic note, the outcome document defines a joint vision for a renewed partnership.

It is not the first time that a new start in the relationship between the two continents is announced, but it is difficult to avoid the impression that lofty proclamations were not translated into real progress and that giving substance to cooperation across the board would require far greater engagement. A partnership of equals cannot rely on the interests and preoccupations of either side, but would require a meeting of minds and shared commitment to a common agenda. It is therefore not surprising that expectations for the last summit meeting were rather modest. What is different from previous meetings, however, is the EU’s willingness to go beyond declarations and put a substantial investment package with a price tag of €150 on the table as part of its new Global Gateway initiative. Even if this is at least partly motivated by the perceived need to counter China’s advance into Africa, it still indicates a clear willingness to work on concrete projects in the areas of energy, transport and digital infrastructure, sustainable growth and jobs creation, health and education.

The question is how this new vision will be implemented, and even more so to what extent African partners see it as a credible offer from the European side. Five days after the summit, Russia invaded Ukraine, the world entered a new ‘dis’-order. We will look at possible changes in European Africa-policies and what Africa’s outlook might be. France will be looking at the lessons from their turn as chair of the EU, while Austria is preparing a comprehensive Austrian Africa strategy. In this seminar we want to discuss how the relationship and its prospects are perceived on both sides in light of the last Summit outcome and what will be needed to overcome the manifold obstacles to implement this new agenda.

### **19h00 Opening**

Gilles Pécout, Ambassador of France to Austria

Dietmar Schweisgut, Secretary General, Austro-French Centre for Rapprochement in Europe

**19h10 Interview**

Toni Haastrup, Senior Lecturer International Politics at University of Stirling, Co-Editor of  
“Routledge Handbook on EU-Africa Relations”

**19h20 Panel discussion**

Thierry Vircoulon, Associate Research Fellow, Sub-Saharan Africa Center, IFRI  
Stéphane Gompertz, Ambassador (ret.), Member of Advisory Board at The Bridge Tank  
Irene Horejs, former EU ambassador to Niger and Mali  
Margit Maximilian, Journalist, ORF Austria

Moderation: Georg Lennkh, Member of the Board, Bruno Kreisky for International Dialogue

20h30 *Vin d'honneur* offered by Gilles Pécout, Ambassador of France to Austria