

# ***The 2015 Valetta Summit on Migration and the Limits of Conference Diplomacy in EU-Africa Relations\****

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*7th European Conference on African Studies, Basel, June 2017*

*Panel P039 'Still Relevant? The European Union in Africa'*

## ***Abstract***

Although the first EU-Africa Summit (Cairo, 2000) inaugurated a political dialogue, it was in 2005 that the EU formulated its 'Strategy for Africa' as a single agenda for the continent to continent engagement. Since then there have been regular Summits but also Summits dealing with specific themes only. Thus, in November 2015 the Valetta Summit was held to advance well-managed migration between the two continents and strengthen the fight against irregular migration. The paper will argue that the Valletta Summit failed to have any tangible results, being rather a repetition of previous engagements undertakings in other fora (e.g. the Rabat and Khartoum political processes). The apparent inability to handle the irregular migratory waves effectively, necessitating even a military naval operation in the Southern Mediterranean, begs the question if conference diplomacy at summitry level is still the best way to approach the pressing issues in the EU-Africa engagement. It will be examined by referring to some of the problems associated with this kind of diplomacy, including summit fatigue, donors' fatigue, and unnecessary duplication of efforts. The paper concludes with proposing that when dealing with specific issues it might be preferable to move from multilateral to plurilateral diplomacy and engage only those region/s and states which are directly concerned.

## **I. Introduction – The advantages and limitations of summitry – The role of summit and donors' fatigue**

Conference diplomacy, especially at the level of summitry diplomacy, is said to be one of the great inventions of the post-World War II period.<sup>1</sup> It seemingly keeps all parties and all stakeholders involved happy and content. Heads of state and government from lesser states are excited at the prospect of rubbing shoulders with the good and mighty (even though they may occasionally be pushed aside as the PM of Montenegro so vividly experienced<sup>2</sup> during a recent meeting of NATO leaders),<sup>3</sup> the good and mighty are offered a global podium to put forward the merits of their agenda, the media is thrilled for covering yet another world event (often

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\* Please note that this is still work in progress and that all arguments may have not been fully explored.

<sup>1</sup> Generally, see D.H. Dunn (ed.), *Diplomacy at the Highest Level – The Evolution of International Summitry*, Macmillan, London, 1996; J.-R. Legney-Feilleux, *The Dynamics of Diplomacy*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder Co., 2009, Chapter 10.

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<sup>2</sup> See <http://www.nbcnews.com/storyline/trumps-first-foreign-trip/trump-pushes-montenegro-s-prime-minister-nato-summit-n764966>

<sup>3</sup> See the Meeting's agenda at: [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/events\\_143956.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/events_143956.htm)

bringing it directly to households),<sup>4</sup> while the public opinion is full of anticipation that pressing problems and challenges will be tackled and solutions will be found. Even though the end result might be disappointing and a waste of time, presently, conference and summit diplomacy (for the purposes of this paper these terms will be used interchangeably even though there are differences between them) covers almost all fields of foreign relations: from health and the environment to peace, security and arms control to economic liberalization and free trade, etc.

In 2004, the death of ‘the era of global conferences’ was announced<sup>5</sup> but, as in the case of Mark Twain, it was greatly exaggerated. However, this does not mean that summitry does not face any problems. One of them is no doubt the so-called ‘summit fatigue’, namely the holding of an unsustainably large number of summits, either among the same group/s of states or in the same sphere/s. The meetings of the G7, G8 and G20 could serve as an example of the former,<sup>6</sup> while summits on free trade or on the environment as examples of the latter.<sup>7</sup> ‘Summit fatigue’ is often associated with the so-called ‘donors’ fatigue’. This is a manifestation of the fact that the commitment of funds invariably takes place during multilateral summits, irrespective of whether they are held solely for the purpose of pledging financial support<sup>8</sup> or whether they address other matters as well. The former summits are interest for two reasons. First, because which states are pledging what is not always made public.<sup>9</sup> Second, because vast amounts are often committed, which begs the question whether they will actually be released and spent for the earmarked purposes. For example, the total amount pledged for Afghanistan during the Brussels Conference held in October 2016 under EU auspices reached 15.2 billion USD.<sup>10</sup>

The combination of summit fatigue and donors’ fatigue is perhaps best exemplified in the case of Palestine. Thus, in October 2014 participants at the Cairo Conference committed the amount of 5.4 billion USD for its infrastructure.<sup>11</sup> Two years later, France invited dozens of states to

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<sup>4</sup> The mass media has been regarded as one of the three main reasons for the emergence of modern summitry, see D. Reynolds, *Summits: Six Meetings that Shaped the Twentieth Century*, Basic Books, London, 2009.

<sup>5</sup> See United Nations, Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations – Civil Society Relations, *We the peoples: civil society, the United Nations and global governance*, UN Doc. A/58/817, 11 June 2004, p. 71 (the Cardozo Report), at: <https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/0611report.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> For the evolution of the G7 type of summitry, see E. Murlon-Druol, ‘The Rise of Summit Diplomacy’ in W. Hofmeister and J. Melissen (eds), *Rethinking International Institutions: Diplomacy and Impact on Emerging World Order*, Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung / Netherlands Institute of International Relations, Singapore / The Hague, 2016, 1.

<sup>7</sup> See Council of Foreign Relations, “Overcoming Rio+20’s ‘Summit Fatigue’”, 22 June 2012, at: <https://www.cfr.org/interview/overcoming-rio20s-summit-fatigue>

<sup>8</sup> E.g. the Oslo Humanitarian Conference on Nigeria and the Lake Chad Region was hosted on 24 February 2017 by Germany, Nigeria, Norway and the United Nations with the participation of 24 states, 20 global and regional organisations, and civil society’s representatives, see the Conference’s website at: <http://oslohumanitarianconference2017.org/welcome1.cfm>

<sup>9</sup> In the Oslo Conference, two unnamed states indicated they would pledge substantial contributions, see The Guardian, ‘Donors pledge \$672m at Oslo summit to avert famine in Nigeria and Lake Chad’, 24 February 2017, at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2017/feb/24/oslo-donor-conference-raises-672m-for-nigeria-and-lake-chad-food-crisis>

<sup>10</sup> See European Council, “Brussels Conference on Afghanistan, 04-05/10/2016”, at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2016/10/05/>

<sup>11</sup> See BBC News, “Donors pledge \$5.4bn for Palestinians at Cairo summit”, 12 October 2014, at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-29586636>

the Paris Donors' Conference due to take place on 17 December 2016 for the purpose of raising funds to support the Palestinian Authority.<sup>12</sup> The event was apparently an off-shoot of France's Middle East Peace initiative encapsulated in the Paris Joint Communiqué of 3 June 2016.<sup>13</sup> The event was postponed. When it took place on 15 January 2017, nominally it dealt with peace in the Middle East, even though the situation in Syria was not discussed. More than 70 states and international organisations participated but the final Communiqué did not even mention the possibility of future funding for Palestine.<sup>14</sup> However, one cannot but wonder if participants had any recollection of the donors' conference, which had been held in Paris exactly 10 years earlier and where very readily the then 70 participating states had promised to make available the 5.6 billion USD sought by the Palestinian Authority.<sup>15</sup>

## **II. Is summitry the best way to conduct the EU – Africa diplomacy? Evidence from the Valletta Summit of November 2015**

It follows that, next to summit and donors' fatigue, one might add two other problems of summit diplomacy, namely duplication of efforts and lack of remembrance. While it has been argued that serial summits "seem particularly well suited for purposes of negotiation",<sup>16</sup> evidently this argument may not hold for all summitry. This submission will be examined in the context of the Valetta Summit, which was called by the European Council in April 2015<sup>17</sup> and was held on 11 and 12 November 2015 in Malta between, on the one hand, the EU and its Member States and, on the other hand, African states. It was a monothematic summit: it only concerned migration and, in particular, how to advance well-managed migration between Africa and Europe and how to strengthen the fight against irregular migration.<sup>18</sup>

The Valetta Summit was one of the many high-level conferences taking place between the EU and Africa. If one wanted to categorize them, they would be regarded as institutionalized multilateral summits.<sup>19</sup> For many years now, EU-Africa summits have become the standard means of conducting inter-regional diplomacy at the highest level. They are part of what is

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<sup>12</sup> See Consulat Général de France à Jérusalem, "France outlines plan for Palestinian donors summit", at: <https://jerusalem.consulfrance.org/France-outlines-plan-for>

<sup>13</sup> See France Diplomatie, "Middle East Peace initiative - Joint communiqué (Paris, June 3, 2016)", at: <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/israel-palestinian-territories/peace-process/initiative-for-the-middle-east-peace-process/article/middle-east-peace-initiative-joint-communique-03-06-16>

<sup>14</sup> See France Diplomatie, "Conference for peace in the Middle East (15 January 2017)", at: <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/israel-palestinian-territories/peace-process/initiative-for-the-middle-east-peace-process/article/conference-for-peace-in-the-middle-east-15-01-17>

<sup>15</sup> See The Guardian, "Paris donor nations pledge billions for Palestinians", 17 December 2007, at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2007/dec/17/france.israel>

<sup>16</sup> See J. Melissen, *Summit Diplomacy Coming of Age*, Discussions Papers in Diplomacy, Netherlands Institute of International Relations, 2003, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup> See Special meeting of the European Council, 23 April 2015, Statement, point 3(g), at: <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/04/23-special-euco-statement/>

<sup>18</sup> More than 40 Heads of State and Prime Ministers attended the Summit, for the list see [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valletta\\_Summit\\_on\\_Migration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Valletta_Summit_on_Migration)

<sup>19</sup> Generally, see R. Feinberg, "Institutionalised Summitry" in A.F. Cooper, J. Heine and R. Thakur (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2013, 303-318.

rather euphemistically called the ‘Africa-EU Strategic Partnership’<sup>20</sup> and are organized every three years. The next one (it will be the fifth) should take place in Abidjan, the capital of Cote d’Ivoire, on 28-29 November 2017. Its central theme shall be ‘Youth’. Mainly due to Africa’s demographic trends,<sup>21</sup> the EU treats this topic as a priority, because it is closely connected to migration, security and employment, areas of central focus for the Partnership.<sup>22</sup> Moreover, it directly affects the bilateral relationship given that migration has always been one-directional: from Africa to Europe.<sup>23</sup> The prominence of migration is evident from both the First Action Plan (2008-2010)<sup>24</sup> and the Second Action Plan (2011-2013)<sup>25</sup> adopted to implement the Partnership. In the current Action Plan (called ‘Roadmap 2014-2017’), migration was relegated from a self-standing priority and was integrated in the priority area of human development.<sup>26</sup> However, the fact remains that migration from Africa, especially the mass illegal/irregular migratory waves, has dominated and will continue to dictate the terms of the inter-regional dialogue.<sup>27</sup> The military naval operation in the central southern Mediterranean Sea dubbed ‘Operation Sophia’ is a stark reminder.

Given the above considerations, it may come as a surprise that this paper argues that the Valletta Summit reveals the limitations of summit diplomacy and questions whether summitry is the best way to approach the continent to continent engagement. This argument is based on two considerations. The first consideration is that the Valletta Summit and the adopted Action Plan<sup>28</sup> did not achieve any tangible results to justify its holding. It was mostly a repetition of previous

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<sup>20</sup> See Council of the European Union, *The Africa-EU Strategic Partnership - A Joint Africa-EU Strategy*, Lisbon, 9 December 2007, 16344/07 (Presse 291), at: [http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/97496.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/er/97496.pdf). For current information, see <http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/en>

<sup>21</sup> See in detail, Eurostat and African Union Statistics Division, *The European Union and the African Union: A Statistical Portrait*, 2016 edition, at: <https://www.tralac.org/images/docs/11346/the-european-union-and-african-union-a-statistical-portrait-2016-edition-eurostat.pdf>

<sup>22</sup> Under the umbrella of the Joint Africa EU Strategy (JAES), supra note 20, the Lisbon EU-Africa Summit of 2007 established eight thematic partnerships, one of them being the Partnership on Migration, Mobility and Employment (MME).

<sup>23</sup> Recent migratory waves from certain EU states to specific African states (e.g. from Portugal to Angola, on which see L. Åkesson, ‘Moving beyond the Colonial? New Portuguese Migrants in Angola’, *Cahiers d’Études africaines*, LVI (1-2), 221-222, 2016, pp. 267-285, and from Portugal to Cape Verde, on which see ‘Moving South: Analyzing the development potential of the new Portuguese migration to Angola and Cape Verde’ at: [http://www.globalstudies.gu.se/digitalAssets/1476/1476825\\_the-new-portuguese-migration-to-angola-and-cape-verde.pdf](http://www.globalstudies.gu.se/digitalAssets/1476/1476825_the-new-portuguese-migration-to-angola-and-cape-verde.pdf), does not alter this reality.

<sup>24</sup> At: [http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/jaes\\_action\\_plan\\_2008-2010.pdf](http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/jaes_action_plan_2008-2010.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> At: [http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/03-jaes\\_action\\_plan\\_en.pdf](http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/03-jaes_action_plan_en.pdf)

<sup>26</sup> See paras 36 and 37 of the Roadmap, at [http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/2014\\_04\\_01\\_4th\\_eu-africa\\_summit\\_roadmap\\_en.pdf](http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/documents/2014_04_01_4th_eu-africa_summit_roadmap_en.pdf)

<sup>27</sup> Generally, see T. van Criekinge, ‘The EU-Africa migration partnership: the limits of the EU’s external dimension of migration in Africa’ in M. Carbone (ed.), *The European Union in Africa: Incoherent policies, asymmetrical partnerships, declining relevance?*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 2013, 258-282.

<sup>28</sup> For the Action Plan and the adopted Political Declaration, see <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2015/11/12-valletta-final-docs/>

engagements and undertakings, principally in the context of the European-African Ministerial Conferences of the Rabat and Khartoum Processes. The latter, inaugurated in November 2014 during the Italian EU Presidency<sup>29</sup>, aspires to formulate a continuous political dialogue for improved cooperation on migration and mobility between the Horn of Africa (the eastern migratory route) and Europe, while addressing specifically trafficking in human beings and migrants' smuggling.<sup>30</sup> The Rabat Process is much older (it was launched in July 2006) and concerns the western migratory route to Europe. Fifty-five European and African states together with the European Commission and ECOWAS take part.<sup>31</sup> Its purpose is to devise and implement initiatives on, inter alia, legal and irregular migration as well as on migration and development at a bilateral, sub-regional, regional and multilateral level.<sup>32</sup> The two Processes run in parallel: a day before the Khartoum Process was inaugurated, the Fourth Euro-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development of the Rabat Process took place and adopted the Rome Declaration and Programme for 2015-17.<sup>33</sup>

The second consideration is that the Valetta Summit was rather redundant given the existence of many, different and often overlapping transactions between the two sides, which, directly or indirectly, concern migration. Over and above the Rabat and Khartoum Processes, these transactions, some of which are conducted at a high level, include:<sup>34</sup> (a) the regular meetings between the two sides which are conducted using the form of troika;<sup>35</sup> (b) the annual College-to-College meetings between the EU and the AU Commissions;<sup>36</sup> (c) the bi-annual AU-EU

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<sup>29</sup> See Declaration of the Ministerial Conference of the Khartoum Process (EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative), Rome, 28 November 2014, at: <http://italia2014.eu/media/3785/declaration-of-the-ministerial-conference-of-the-khartoum-process.pdf>

<sup>30</sup> See <https://www.iom.int/eu-horn-africa-migration-route-initiative-khartoum-process>

<sup>31</sup> See <https://processus-de-rabat.org/en>

<sup>32</sup> European Commission, "Fact Sheet - The European Union's cooperation with Africa on migration", 22 April 2015, at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-15-4832\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-15-4832_en.htm)

<sup>33</sup> See [http://italia2014.eu/media/3775/fr\\_declaration\\_prog\\_rome\\_final\\_27\\_11\\_2014.pdf](http://italia2014.eu/media/3775/fr_declaration_prog_rome_final_27_11_2014.pdf) The Fifth Euro-African Ministerial Conference should take place in early 2018 to develop the cooperation programme for the period 2017-2020, see <https://processus-de-rabat.org/en/in-action.html>

<sup>34</sup> Note that the regular summits organized by individual EU states and African states are not included here; some of them are important events for many African states, e.g. the Africa-France summits (the 27th Summit took place in Bamako, Mali, on 13-14 January 2017 with over 30 African leaders in attendance, see <http://www.africanews.com/2017/01/13/security-democracy-top-france-africa-summit/>). See also such events as the Second German-African Business Summit (GABS) held from 8-10 February 2017, in Nairobi, Kenya, see <http://www.safri.de/gabs/> Finally, the Commonwealth Summits are also not covered.

<sup>35</sup> On the EU side it consists of the current and incoming EU Presidencies, the European Commission and the Secretariat of the European Council and on the African side it consists of the current and outgoing AU Presidencies and the AU Commission.

<sup>36</sup> The first key theme of the 8<sup>th</sup> Meeting (Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, 7 April 2016) was migration, see European Commission, "Press release, African Union Commission and European Commission meet to address shared EU-Africa challenges," 5 April 2016, at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-16-1226\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-1226_en.htm). See further, "Joint Communiqué between the African Union Commission and the European Commission at their 8th College to College Meeting", 7 April 2016, at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_STATEMENT-16-1301\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_STATEMENT-16-1301_en.htm). Migration also featured prominently during the 7th Meeting (Brussels, 22 April 2015), see para. 21 of the Joint Declaration, at: [http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/declaration-eu-africa-c2c-20150422\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/declaration-eu-africa-c2c-20150422_en.pdf).



Human Rights Dialogue;<sup>37</sup> (d) the meetings held to implement the Cotonou Agreement between the EU and the ACP countries;<sup>38</sup> and (e) the consultations in the context of the European Neighborhood Policy as regards the countries of North Africa.<sup>39</sup>

It could be counter argued that these considerations are invalid because, on the one hand, at the time there was an urgent need to address a specific situation and, on the other hand, the Valetta Summit did not have any deliverables of significance. In particular, the urgent need was explained by the European Council in April 2015 in these terms: “The situation in the Mediterranean is a tragedy. The European Union will mobilise all efforts at its disposal to prevent further loss of life at sea and to tackle the root causes of the human emergency that we face, in cooperation with the countries of origin and transit...”.<sup>40</sup> The deliverable was the launching of the EU Trust Fund for Africa to stabilize and address the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in the continent. Regarding the urgent need to tackle irregular migration and smuggling of people in the Mediterranean, the EU had already launched in May 2015 the aforementioned ‘Operation Sophia’ as a military action,<sup>41</sup> which was sanctioned by the UN Security Council in October 2015.<sup>42</sup> As regards the Trust Fund for Africa, the European Commission had already created it on 9 September 2015<sup>43</sup> and endowed it with 1.8 billion Euro coming from the EU’s own financing instruments (the European Development Fund), while the

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<sup>37</sup> During the last (12<sup>th</sup>) Dialogue, which took place on 10 January 2017 in Brussels, migration was not discussed (see the Joint Communiqué at: [https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/170110\\_communique\\_-\\_final\\_for\\_print\\_0\\_0.pdf](https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/170110_communique_-_final_for_print_0_0.pdf)) but it was addressed during the 11<sup>th</sup> Dialogue held in Kigali, Rwanda on 24 November 2015, see para. 6 of the Joint Communiqué, at: <http://www.africa-eu-partnership.org/sites/default/files/userfiles/11th-au-eu-human-rights-dialogue-joint-communicue.pdf>. The African delegation comprises the AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, the President of the African Court on Human and Peoples’ Rights, members of the African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights, etc.

<sup>38</sup> See the ACP-EU Dialogue on Migration and Development; it is based on Article 13 of the Cotonou Agreement, which states that “...migration shall be the subject of in depth dialogue in the framework of the ACP–EU Partnership”. For the text of the Agreement, as amended, see [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/03\\_01/pdf/mn3012634\\_en.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/intcoop/acp/03_01/pdf/mn3012634_en.pdf)

<sup>39</sup> See European Commission, *Communication on the New Partnership Framework with third countries*, June 2016, COM(2016) 385.

<sup>40</sup> See Statement, *supra* note 17, point 1.

<sup>41</sup> See Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/778 of 18 May 2015 on a European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED), [2015] OJ L 122/31. If not prolonged, Operation Sophia will expire on 27 July 2017. From a legal perspective its activities are not without problems, see G. Naldi and K. Magliveras, “Operation Sophia: Policing the Mediterranean the EU Way” [2017] 25 *Sri Lanka Journal of International Law* (forthcoming).

<sup>42</sup> See UNSC Resolution 2240, 9 October 2015, (2015) 54 *International Legal Materials* 958.

<sup>43</sup> The ‘Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration in Africa’ forms part of the second implementation package of the European Agenda on Migration, see European Commission, “Press Release - Refugee Crisis: European Commission takes decisive action”, Strasbourg, 9 September 2015, at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-15-5596\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-5596_en.htm). The European Agenda on Migration was adopted in May 2015, see Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, COM(2015) 240 final, 13 May 2015.

total contribution by the EU and EFTA Member States was a paltry 81.3 million Euro.<sup>44</sup> It follows that there was no real reason to launch it during the Valletta Summit other than a public relations exercise showing to the world at large what the EU is doing to fight the root causes of poverty and migration in Africa. It is a well-known fact that the EU is one of the largest institutional benefactors, if not the largest. Therefore, it does not need to hold a summit bringing together the heads of state and government from two continents to announce that already committed funds will go to finance the Trust Fund. To do so somehow defies the whole meaning and purpose of summitry.

### **III. If other states and regions use summitry as a means to pursue diplomatic relations with Africa why not the EU as well?**

Summitry is an unquestionable reality in international political transactions. It is diplomacy at the highest possible level and its advantages have been praised. According to a commentator, “summitry is a democratic invention and not one much liked by dictators”.<sup>45</sup> Notwithstanding the validity of this argument, it is interesting to note that Africa does have many a non-democratic regime but at the same time it is very well versed in summitry.<sup>46</sup> And not only with the EU but also with other states (individually) and with other regions (collectively). Post-colonial Africa has had long-standing relations with some of them, e.g. the first Afro-Arab Summit, an initiative of the Organization of African Union, took place in 1977,<sup>47</sup> while relations with others (e.g. Korea) are recent. Just to give an overview of the multiplicity of summits which have become institutionalized (the EU excluded),<sup>48</sup> the following took place during the period 2012-2015 (in chronological order): the Third Africa-Korea Forum (Seoul, South Korea, October 2012);<sup>49</sup> the Third Africa-South America Summit (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, 20-22 February 2013);<sup>50</sup> the Fifth Summit of the Tokyo International Conference of

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<sup>44</sup> See European Commission, “Press release - President Juncker launches the EU Emergency Trust Fund to tackle root causes of irregular migration in Africa”, Valletta, 12 November 2015, at: [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-15-6055\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-15-6055_en.htm). Since then EU funding has gone up to 2.5 billion Euro and commitments by individual European states to 152 million Euro, see [https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/factsheet\\_ec\\_format\\_eu\\_emergency\\_trust\\_fund\\_for\\_africa\\_2017.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/factsheet_ec_format_eu_emergency_trust_fund_for_africa_2017.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> See P.R. Weilemann, ‘The Summit Meeting: The Role and Agenda of Diplomacy at its Highest Level’, *NIRA Review*, Spring 2000, Vol. 7, No. 2, pp. 16, 19.

<sup>46</sup> See, inter alia, the African Union Commission’s Report on Multilateral Cooperation with respect to Africa’s Strategic Partnerships, AU Doc. EX.CL/802(XXIV)iv, which was endorsed by the Executive Council, see *Decision on the Report of the PRC Sub-Committee on Multilateral Cooperation with respect to Africa’s Strategic Partnerships*, AU Doc. EX.CL/Dec. 786 (XXIV), 28 January 2014.

<sup>47</sup> See A. Huliaras and K. Magliveras, “African Diplomacy” in C. M. Constantinou, P. Kerr & P. Sharp (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Diplomacy*, Sage Publications, London, 2016, 398-413.

<sup>48</sup> See also Y.K Spies, ‘African diplomacy’ in G. Martel (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Diplomacy*, Willey Blackwell, 2018 (forthcoming).

<sup>49</sup> See Seoul Declaration of the Third Korea-Africa Forum 2012, 17 October 2012, at: <http://news.mofat.go.kr/enewspaper/articleview.php?master=&aid=4795&ssid=24&mvid=1411>

<sup>50</sup> See Third Africa-South America Summit, Malabo Declaration, 22 February 2013, at: [http://www.iri.edu.ar/images/Documentos/Boletines\\_IRI/132/asa\\_malabo.pdf](http://www.iri.edu.ar/images/Documentos/Boletines_IRI/132/asa_malabo.pdf)

African Development (TICAD) (Yokohama, Japan, June 2013);<sup>51</sup> the Third Africa-Arab Summit (Kuwait, November 2013); the Second Africa-Turkey Summit (Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, November 2014);<sup>52</sup> the Third Africa-India Forum Summit (New Delhi, India, 26-30 October 2015);<sup>53</sup> and the Second Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Summit (Johannesburg, South Africa, 4-5 December 2015).<sup>54</sup> African states continue to pursue summitry as a diplomatic means to promote bilateral relations with third states, which are considered to be middle-level powers. Thus, the first ever Africa-Israel Summit is to be held in Lomé, Togo, in October 2017 focusing on high technology, security and development.<sup>55</sup>

For these states and groups summitry plays a very important role in their dealings with Africa as it allows them to transact simultaneously with all (or most) of African states coming from its five regions. Given that these summits invariably concern the same issues, principally trade and economic relations, the question could be asked (arguably it has not been addressed in the literature) whether they are, directly or indirectly, in competition with each other. Given that the aim is to secure for the respective states and/or groups the best possible terms and usher the closest possible relationship with Africa, the question is whether Africa could offer to all of them simultaneously the most favourite economic, trade and political conditions.

However, these considerations do not apply to the EU, because, for a combination of reasons (e.g. colonization, geographical proximity, the single largest institutional funder, etc.), it already has a position of primacy in Africa's economic, political and social affairs. In other words, the EU does not have to rely on summitry to transact with Africa and to implement its agenda. Even though the holding of the 2<sup>nd</sup> EU-Africa Summit (Lisbon, December 2007), after a seven years' gap,<sup>56</sup> probably had partly to do with Europeans becoming alarmed at China's growing presence in Africa,<sup>57</sup> the fact that there are now regular high level meetings between Europe and Africa throughout the year, covering a large variety of different areas does make summitry rather redundant. Indeed, it could be argued that in the case of the EU the multiplicity of summits leads to lowered expectations: on account of the sheer number of EU-Africa

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<sup>51</sup> Note that TICAD I was held in 1993; for the adopted Declarations, see M. Juma (ed.), *Compendium of Key Documents Relating to Peace and Security in Africa*, Pretoria: Pretoria University Law Press, 2006, 491 et seq. See further, [http://archive.unu.edu/africa/ticad/files/UNU\\_TICADIII\\_policyBrief.pdf](http://archive.unu.edu/africa/ticad/files/UNU_TICADIII_policyBrief.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> See Declaration "New Model of Partnership for the Strengthening of Sustainable Development and Integration", 21 November 2014, at: <http://afrika.mfa.gov.tr/data/21-november-2014-summit-declaration.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> See India-Africa Framework for Strategic Cooperation, 29 October 2015, at: [http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/25981\\_framework.pdf](http://www.mea.gov.in/Uploads/PublicationDocs/25981_framework.pdf)

<sup>54</sup> See Declaration of the Johannesburg Summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation, 25 December 2015, at: [http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dwjbzjjhys\\_1/t1327960.htm](http://www.focac.org/eng/ltada/dwjbzjjhys_1/t1327960.htm)

<sup>55</sup> See 'Netanyahu to travel to Africa for second time in year', *The Times of Israel*, 26 May 2017, at: <http://www.timesofisrael.com/netanyahu-to-travel-to-africa-for-second-time-in-year/>

<sup>56</sup> The first Summit took place in Cairo, Egypt, on 3-4 April 2000 and culminated in the Declaration of Cairo and the (joint) EU-Africa Cairo Plan of Action. The second Summit, scheduled for April 2013, had to be postponed because the EU states were unhappy to have Zimbabwean President Mugabe attend it and, as retaliation, African states threatened to boycott it, see *The European World Year Book 2003*, 44<sup>th</sup> ed., Vol. I, Europe Publications, London, 2003, p. 132.

<sup>57</sup> See A. Huliaras and K. Magliveras, "In Search of a Policy: European Union and U.S. Reactions to the Growing Chinese Presence in Africa" [2008] 13 *European Foreign Affairs Review* 399-420.



meetings, conferences, and summits it is not possible that all will have tangible results and justify their taking place.

#### **IV. Conclusions**

Does this mean that summitry should be declared dead in the EU-Africa diplomacy? The answer should be in the negative. Summitry, in the form of institutionalized very high level meetings with a general agenda, continues to have many advantages. The EU needs it to assure African states of its unfettered devotion in solving their perennial problems and to make it clear to the other powers that it has no intention to diminish its primacy in the continent. On the other hand, Africa needs it to press Europeans to continue allocating ever larger sums of money not only to alleviate its predicaments and also to support the Africa Union.<sup>58</sup> But what appear to be redundant and serving no real goal are monothematic summits, such as the Valletta Summit. The perplexed issue of illegal/irregular migratory waves from Africa cannot be solved by means of summitry. Indeed, it could be argued that it is a matter which requires to be addressed not with Africa as a whole but at the level of individual regions and, more specifically, with the countries of origin or the countries of transit. Plurilateral negotiations appear to be preferable to multilateral dealings, which necessarily involve states that might not be interested to what is being discussed. The Rabat and Chartoum Processes are exactly political initiatives which subscribe to this rationale and, if implemented effectively, they could achieve far more than the celebrated (for public relations purposes?) summitry.-

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<sup>58</sup> It is instructive to note that more than half of the AU's total budget is covered by the so-called 'international partners' with the EU contributing the most, see K. Magliveras and G. Naldi, *The African Union: History, Institutions, and Activities*, Wolter Kluwer, Alphen aan den Rijn, 2017 (forthcoming).