

CSO AND LA PARTICIPATION IN THE AFRICA-EUROPE WEEK OF PARTNERSHIPS 14-18 FEBRUARY 2022, COINCIDING WITH THE EU-AU SUMMIT (17-18 FEBRUARY)

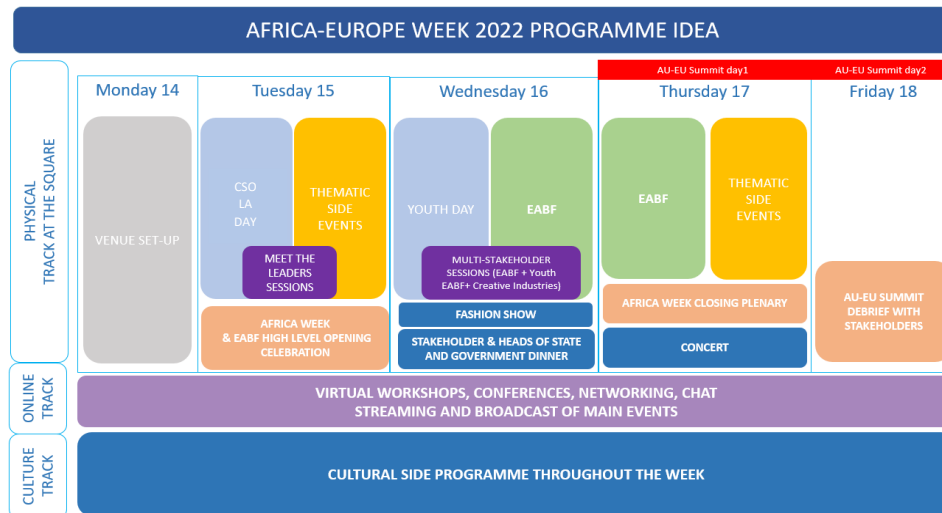
1. The Africa-Europe Week of partnership

1.1. Context

From 14 until 18 February 2022, European Commission DG International Partnerships (INTPA) will be holding the Africa-Europe Week of Partnerships which will serve as a platform for a wide range of European and African non-state actors to actively contribute to the debates on a joint way forward for the Africa-EU Partnership, celebrate joint achievements, discuss strategic priorities for both continents and offer opportunities for meaningful exchanges among stakeholders, in the margins of the European Union-African Union Summit.

1.2. Structure

The draft programme structure and components of the Africa-Europe Week of partnership are as follows (idea stage, tbc):



A Civil society Forum and a Local authorities' Forum (in part joint and/or in parallel) will take place on Tuesday 15 February 2022. It will be jointly organised by a group of African and European civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs).

2. The Civil society and Local authorities' Forums

2.1. Objective

The objective of this innovative forum is to move away from traditional institutional set-ups and ensure appropriate democratic space for European and African civil society organisations (CSOs) and local authorities (LAs) to engage in fruitful discussions. Its structure, format and content will be jointly defined by the stakeholders.

2.2. Invited stakeholders

The envisioned stakeholder-led forum will focus on gathering European and African civil society organisations, local authorities, economic and social actors, all of which constitute an essential part of the Africa-EU Partnership and its “people-centered” approach.

2.3. The venue

The event will take place in a hybrid format, with participants joining online and a specific number of participants to join in person at the conference center [The Square located in Brussels](#). Details on the exact number of participants that could attend the Brussels' venue will be communicated as soon as possible and will depend on the sanitary situation and compliance with Belgian sanitary restrictions.

3. An African and European CSOs and LAs-led process

3.1. The steering group of African and European CSOs and LAs

A steering group of African and European CSOs/LAs will be in the driving seat, shaping the forum according to priorities and needs expressed by stakeholders. It will be formed by a single person of contact within each organisation.

The steering group will ensure that the forum will:

- be co-organised by both European and African CSOs/LAs representatives;
- contribute to a constructive dialogue;
- adopt a continent and gender balanced approach (valid for speakers and participants).

It will notably shape the agenda, decide on the themes to be discussed as well as the panels, debates to be held and participants that will be invited to the forum.

The steering group will regularly report back and collaborate with the CSO/LA programme team, to safeguard the Africa-Europe Week of Partnerships' global coherence.

The steering group members will have to consider the following:

- To embrace the spirit of a real partnership characterised by equality and the pursuit of common objectives.
- To empower people and the creation of conditions to enable them to play an active role.
- To encourage holistic approaches to development processes and the inclusive participation and mobilisation of a broad spectrum of civil society actors in the EU, Africa and beyond.
- To showcase the complementarity of various perspectives and opinions, while seeking to break up traditional silos.
- To dedicate sufficient time and resources for successful outcomes.

3.2. A stakeholder-led programme structure

The design of the programme's structure will be lead by the steering group of African and European CSOs and LAs.

Upon doing so, the following guidelines should be considered:

- The forum would start earliest at 09:00 and finish latest by 18:30.
- No more than 5 rooms could be used and livestreamed in parallel. Further logistical matters will be discussed at a later stage.
- The programme should include proper amounts of breaks between sessions and a lunch.

Please note that the logistical arrangements for rooms will depend on foreseen session needs.

3.3. Stakeholder-led themes and topics

Following the same logic, the steering group will have the responsibility of selecting the forum's themes and topics and allocating them to dedicated session organisers and timeslots.

Based on Commissioner Urpilainen's dialogue with civil society organisations and local authorities ahead of the meeting of AU-EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Kigali on 21st October 2021, possible themes could include: Human development (health, education), democracy and good governance, human rights, peace and security, migration, digitalisation, environmental sustainability, strengthened partnerships at continental, regional and local levels.

3.4. Stakeholder-led session formats

The steering group will also determine how they wish to approach the choice of session formats.

Upon doing so, the following elements should be considered:

- The forum will be planned in a hybrid format, meaning partly in physical presence at the venue, and partly online to allow the participation of wider audiences.
- Sessions are more than just online discussions. They should be designed to generate an interesting video production that will be livestreamed and accessible after the event via a free video on demand service.
- Captivating an online audiences' attention will require a mix of insightful content, interesting speakers, meaningful interactions, a dynamic pace, and lively visuals. Please note that you may make use of a variety of pre-recorded material.
- Sessions should be interactive, notably through chats or surveys. As an example, a session facilitator could launch a poll and have the audience respond to it live during discussions.

Please note that with the Covid situation evolving quickly, and further possible restrictions, the event must be designed in a way that can easily be shifted to an online only format. Swapcard platform will be used as the main streaming and engagement tool to assist in this matter.

3.5. Speakers and facilitators selected by CSOs and LAs

Knowledge is an important factor in selecting good facilitators and speakers. The profiles that will be chosen should also be able to inspire, to arouse passions, and to leave a memorable experience.

Considering the hybrid nature of the event, session organisers will be invited to reach out to speakers far away from the “usual suspects” in Brussels to make new voices heard thanks to online technology. The diversity of speakers within a given session will be highly valued.

3.6. Pre-Forum events

Several CSO and LA-led events are being planned for the period leading up to the AU EU Summit. It is proposed to use the process of preparing the CSO and LA Forums at the Africa Week to spread information about these events, and enable them to be part of the preparations for Africa-Europe Week. Modalities for this to be worked out.

3.7 Promoting the forum

In parallel of the European Commission's efforts, the steering group will be in charge of contributing to the active promotion of the stakeholder-led forum and its sessions to a wider audience, notably in:

- advertising the event on their website;
- promoting their involvement in the forum in their newsletters;
- announcing the live web-streaming;
- sharing related Africa-Europe Week of Partnership content on their social media platforms.

3.8. Support functions

The steering group will work hand in hand with the CSO/LA programme coordinator who will serve as a facilitator to assist the group in coming to their desired outputs.

Possible support functions could include touch upon the following:

- Setting-up steering group meetings prior to the event, providing guidance, secretarial assistance, logistical (including registration and invitation process, participant management) and technical assistance.
- Support with Communication functions, if required.
- Virtual event platform (*Swapcard*) and physical space at [The Square](#).
- Arrangements for catering for lunch/coffee during the forum.
- Travel and accommodation management (up to 150 participants (TBC) depending on the sanitary situation).
- Monitoring progress and reporting.

More precise details on the CSO/LA programme coordinator's functions may be discussed together with him at a later stage, depending on the steering group's plans.

3.9. Milestones and deadlines

Below you will find a timeline of activities planned for the steering group:

9 December 2021	Inception meeting with stakeholders
14 December 2021	Deadline for submitting expressions of interest to join the steering group
15 December 2021	Publication of the members of the steering group
16 December 2021	First meeting of the steering group with INTPA & CSO/LA programme team

Below you will find an indicative timeline of activities that the steering group will refine once in function:

17 December 2021- 10 January 2022	Drafting of a concept note, detailing the methodology, themes to be discussed, proposed sessions, speakers, possible outcomes, means for organisations to get involved...
10 January 2022- 9 February 2022	Organisation of sessions
9-11 February 2022	Finalisation of all sessions
15 February 2022	Civil society and Local authorities' Forum

3.10. Contact us

For general enquiries about the Africa-Europe Week of partnerships CSOs and LAs programme, please contact: florent.barel@wearemci.com

Please send your expression of interest to be part of the steering group **by Tuesday 14 December** to: florent.barel@wearemci.com