

**Periodic Assessment of Relations between European Union and African Union
(2017-2022)**

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Certification

This is to certify that **Oluwakayode Courage AKINKAHUNSI** with matriculation number **LCU/PG/002170** carried out this research with title **“Periodic Assessment of Relations between European Union and African Union (2017-2022)”** in the Department of Politics and International Relations, Faculty of Management and Social Sciences, Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, for the award of Master of Science Degree (MSc) in International Relations, and that this has not been previously submitted.

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Date

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Date

Dedication

This research is dedicated to the God Almighty for His unwavering grace in carrying out this research work.

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Acknowledgment

All thanks due to God who saw me through from the beginning to completion of the study. I wish to acknowledge and express my sincere appreciation to Lead City University, Ibadan, for an amazing environment that nurtures discipline and innovation. This is also extended to Lead City University library and Central Bank of Nigeria library for the materials I obtained from them and used. I am especially thankful to my supervisor, Dr. Emma Jimo, for his feedback, consistent encouragement, and patient mentorship. My sincere appreciation also goes to Professor Afolakemi Oredein, the Provost of the Postgraduate College, whose commitment to excellence continue to increase the postgraduate experience at Lead City University. To my **Head of Department of Politics and International Relations**, Dr. Alade, and other lecturers who have imparted a great measure of knowledge, Prof. Akeem Amodu, Dr. Ronald Badru, Dr. Modupe Albert, and Dr. Remi Sarumi who put in some finesse and finishing. My profound gratitude goes to my wife and children for their support and understanding while the study lasted.

Finally, “Even though the above-mentioned institutions and persons have assisted in the process of this research work, I alone stand responsible for the errors, if any, found in the work.”

Abstract

This study assessed the nature, key policy issues, operational challenges, and future prospects of African Union (AU) and European Union (EU) relations between 2017 and 2022 with the objective of determining whether the relationship reflects mutual cooperation or structural asymmetry. It addressed the gap in existing literature by offering a critical and data-driven synthesis of AU–EU interactions using **Dependency Theory** and **Neo-Gramscian Analysis** to interpret how financial, diplomatic, and policy instruments reproduce historical patterns of inequality. The research adopted a **qualitative descriptive design**. The population comprised institutional documents, policy declarations, summits, funding records, and partnership frameworks produced by both AU and EU between 2017 and 2022. A **purposive sampling technique** was used to select relevant AU and EU strategic reports, continental development plans, and financial instruments including NDICI, Global Gateway, and the EUTF. Data was collected through critical documentary analysis and analyses using **thematic content analysis** supported by theoretical interpretation. Findings revealed that while over **€50 billion** was invested by the EU into Africa during the period under review, most initiatives prioritised European geostrategic concerns such as migration control and regional security. African actors were frequently positioned as policy recipients rather than co-designers, and internal fragmentation within the AU further weakened collective bargaining power. The study concluded that although AU-EU relations have matured in form, they remain imbalanced in substance. It therefore recommends a recalibration of the partnership to promote **African ownership, reduced conditionality, and inclusive implementation mechanisms**, anchored in continental priorities like AfCFTA and Agenda 2063. Further, the African Union should institutionalise periodic independent reviews of its engagements with the EU; to address the EU’s dominant themes and strategic interests, the AU must strengthen its internal consultation mechanisms to formulate unified continental positions in areas such as digital policy, migration, and security; to confront the recurring challenges in the partnership, the AU should invest in building autonomous continental structures. Finally, in deciding whether to continue or delink, the AU must pursue strategic diversification.

Keywords: AU-EU Relations, Dependency Theory, Global Gateway, Development Partnership

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