

## **ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL COUNCIL (ECOSOCC)**

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### **AU-ECOSOCC steps up relations with European civil society; signs MoU with EESC**

**Today, the African Union Economic Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC), through its Presiding Officer, Khalid Boudali and the President of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), Oliver Röpke signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The memorandum aims to formalise the partnership between the two institutions and enhance economic and social stakeholder involvement in the Africa-EU partnership.**

The signing of the MoU took place at the margins of ECOSOCC's 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemoration which includes the 2024 ECOSOCC Citizens Forum in Ghana.

The MoU outlines the areas of cooperation relevant for both parties to work together with a view to achieving the objectives of the Africa-EU Partnership, building sustainable and inclusive development, and contributing meaningfully towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mr. Khalid Boudali ECOSOCC Presiding Officer said, "This MoU is more than just a document. It's a testament to the collaborative spirit nurtured between ECOSOCC and EESC since our meeting in Brussels in June 2023 and through subsequent continuous coordination and planning meetings.

"Each step has reinforced our shared vision for a stronger, more inclusive partnership between Africa and Europe. The journey to this day has been marked by significant milestones, shaping our collective approach for a dynamic and impactful partnership."

EESC President **Oliver Röpke** said, "Through this MoU, we underline our commitment to enhance civil society participation in the Africa-EU partnership, fostering the setting-up of a permanent, inclusive and representative mechanism for

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such engagement. It is a demonstration of our shared commitment to promoting the values of democracy, inclusive dialogue, and sustainable development.”

### **Background**

Relations between the ECOSOCC and EESC have strengthened since 2015 and as a result, an EESC delegation regularly participates in ECOSOCC's General Assembly.

Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, the cooperation continued with a number of events and meetings including the EU-Africa Economic and Social Stakeholders' Network consultations periodically organised to gather input from stakeholders on the EU-Africa partnership.

Very recently, the EESC has started working, in consultation with the AU ECOSOCC, on an own-initiative opinion *"Democracy in Africa-current situation and future perspectives. What role for the EESC?"* to be discussed and adopted in the EESC plenary session towards the end of the year.

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### **About ECOSOCC**

The Economic, Social and Cultural Council (ECOSOCC) was established in July 2004 as an Advisory Organ composed of different social and professional groups of AU Member States. The mandate of ECOSOCC is to contribute, through advice, to the effective translation of the objectives, principles and policies of the African Union into concrete programmes, as well as the evaluation of these programmes.

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