

Africa can learn from EU: Ramaphosa

Africa can draw lessons from the European Union's path to integration, economic and political union, and achieving social progress, says President Cyril Ramaphosa.



President Cyril Ramaphosa

In his address on Wednesday, the president said the European Union (EU) was born out of the need to end the historic divisions on that continent, to create a firm base for the construction of a new Europe rooted in solidarity and cooperation and contribute to global peace, security and development.

“The African Union’s Agenda 2063 provides a programme for integration and prosperity on a continent that has been racked by division, exploitation and strife,” he said.

The president is currently in Strasbourg, France, on a working visit to the EU, which is set to strengthen bilateral relations.

Ramaphosa noted the tireless work of the European Parliament to ensure that the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty on the eradication of poverty continue to underpin the EU’s approach to external development cooperation.

Since 2007, South Africa and the EU have enjoyed the mutual benefits of a strategic partnership that continues to play a meaningful role in our country’s economic growth.

It covers over 20 sectoral policy dialogues on diverse issues from development cooperation, science and technology, health and trade, among others.

Inter-Parliamentary meetings between the South African Parliament and the European Parliament form part of the partnership.

“The meetings have played a crucial role in strengthening SA-EU relations, contributing to a strategic partnership based on equality, shared values and issues of mutual interest,” said Ramaphosa.

He thanked the EU and its Parliament for the role they played in South Africa’s development.

For the African continent, a lack of investment and opportunity are a threat to development.

“We therefore welcome the support of the European Union for Africa’s developmental needs through initiatives such as the European External Investment Plan, the Economic Partnership Agreement and the new Africa-European Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs,” the president said.

He underscored the importance of European and African countries to work together to develop sustainable and humane responses to the challenge of irregular migration.

“This is a challenge that Europe has had to deal with in recent years. So too has South Africa and several other African countries. We need to work together to address the root causes of irregular migration, which include poverty, inequality, unemployment, economic exclusion and competition for scarce resources.”

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