

Special Report

The African Peace and Security Architecture: need to refocus EU support

(pursuant to Article 287(4), second subparagraph, TFEU)



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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

APF	African Peace Facility
APSA	African Peace and Security Architecture
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
CEWS	Continental Early Warning System
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
JAES	Joint Africa-EU Strategy
JFA	Joint Financing Arrangement
PSC	Peace and Security Council
PSD	Peace and Security Department
RIP	Regional Indicative Programme
SRO	Sub-Regional Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- I. The member states of the African Union (AU) established the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in 2002 as a long-term structural response to the peace and security challenges on the African continent. Through the APSA, the African Union (AU) and mandated sub-regional organisations (SROs) have access to tools which help them to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.
- II. In our audit, we examined the EU's support for the APSA. We assessed whether EU support was well designed and targeted, whether it contributed to sustainable results, and whether it was implemented well. We audited contracts whose total value exceeded €100 million, which were concluded by the Commission in the period from 2014 to 2016.
- III. Overall we conclude that the EU's support for the APSA has had a poor effect and needed refocusing. Although a broad strategic framework is in place, we found that EU support for APSA had long been focused on contributing to its basic operational costs. Due to weak financial ownership of the APSA by the African Union, the APSA has been for many years heavily dependent on the support of donors. EU has financially contributed to the APSA's components, but the quality of the capacities of these components varies considerably and several challenges remain.
- IV. We found that the EU did not set clear priorities for EU support for the APSA and its strategy lacked a long-term vision for the evolution of its support. During the period audited, the EU did not focus sufficiently on the transition away from paying salaries and towards targeting capacity-building to ensure the long-term success of EU support. The EU supported the AU's plans for achieving financial independence in order to be able to take on a growing proportion of operational costs for the APSA, but implementation was still at an early stage.
- V. We also found that six of the fourteen contracts we audited, which mainly concerned staff costs, had delivered most of the expected results by the time of the audit. Two had only partially and one had not delivered. In five cases, implementation delays meant that we could not assess whether the contract had delivered or not. Furthermore, delays in contracting, retroactive financing, and a paucity of information on results achieved

hampered the delivery of the EU's support. During the period audited, financing instruments were not always used coherently.

VI. On the basis of the observations in this report, the Court recommends that:

- i. the Commission and the EEAS foster AU ownership of the APSA in order to achieve financial independence and refocus EU support away from supporting operational costs towards capacity-building measures, and
- ii. the Commission makes interventions consistently results-based, reduces delays in contracting and retroactive financing, improves monitoring and makes coherent use of financing instruments.

INTRODUCTION

The APSA

1. The African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) is a set of institutions, legislation and procedures designed to address conflict prevention and promote peace and security on the African continent. The Constitutive Act of the African Union¹ lays down the legal basis for the APSA. The Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, adopted by the AU member states in 2002, defines its structure, objectives and principles. Ten African sub-regional organisations (SROs), to which their respective member states conferred a mandate to act in the area of peace and security, also play a role in the APSA. Eight are Regional Economic Communities (RECs), and two are Regional Mechanisms for conflict prevention, management and resolution (RMs)². Cooperation between these organisations and the AU under the APSA are subject to the principles of subsidiarity and complementarity³.

2. At the centre of the APSA is the Peace and Security Council, established by the AU member states as a “standing decision-making organ for the prevention, management and resolution of conflicts”. It is supported by the African Union Commission, a Panel of the

¹ The AU was created in 2000 as the successor to the Organisation for African Union. In 2017, all 55 African countries were members of the African Union.

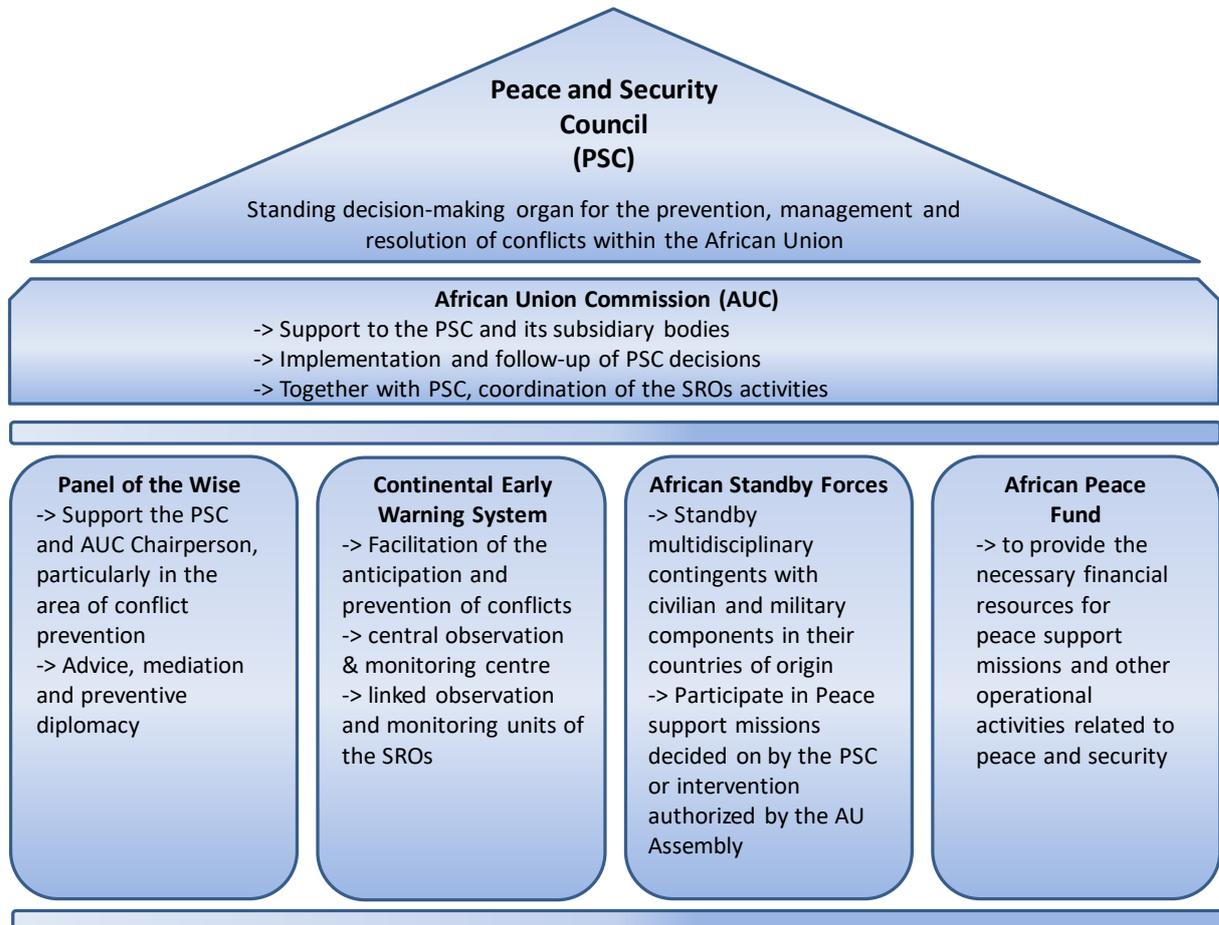
² RECs: The Arab Maghreb Union (AMU), the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CENSAD), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the East African Community (EAC), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

RMs: The Eastern Africa Standby Force Coordination Mechanism (EASFCOM) and the North African Regional Capability (NARC).

³ Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation in the area of peace and security between the African Union, the Regional Economic Communities and the Coordinating Mechanisms of the Regional Standby Brigades of Eastern Africa and Northern Africa, Article IV.

Wise, a Continental Early Warning System, an African Standby Force and a Peace Fund⁴,
(**Figure 1**).

Figure 1 - Components of the African Peace and Security Architecture at the level of the African Union



Source: European Court of Auditors based on the AU Protocol of 2002.

3. The APSA aims to provide the framework and tools for the AU and SROs to play an active role in preventing and resolving conflicts in Africa, which have different causes (**Box 1**).

⁴ According to the Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union.

Box 1 - The causes of conflicts

According to the Institute of Security Studies, state weakness is the principal source of insecurity in Africa⁵. State weakness also leads to weaknesses in regional security mechanisms. Against that backdrop, individual conflicts are caused by a complex mix of factors, but three main triggers have been identified: government transitions, inter-state contestation, and violent extremist movements.

Contested government transitions are a major source of conflict. There are huge financial benefits to holding elected office, and governance systems are often weak. This presents a great incentive to use violence to secure election. Violence associated with elections has increased in recent years.

Inter-state contestation. In Africa, antagonism between states (inter-state contestation) is common. Such antagonism often manifests itself in states supporting violence in adjacent countries in order to further their own political goals. This may take the form of clandestine cross-border military operations, or the covert or open provision of support to insurgents on the other side of the border. Many conflicts conventionally regarded as “internal” are actually triggered or sustained by foreign influence of this kind.

Violent extremist movements cause a great deal of violent conflict in Africa. Once they gain a foothold, they tend to spread across borders: for example, violence by militants in Libya, Mali, north-eastern Nigeria, and Somalia has spread into neighbouring countries, with further attacks taking place in countries including Algeria, Burkina Faso, Kenya and Uganda⁶.

4. The AU and the SROs intervened under the APSA framework in 28 out of the 67 violent conflicts (42 %) occurring in Africa during 2016. The interventions took the form of diplomacy, mediation and peace-support operations, or a combination of the three. Evaluations of these 28 interventions indicated that 21 of them were at least partly successful in either preventing or de-escalating conflict⁷ (**Box 2**).

⁵ Institute for Security Studies, “How EU Support of the African Peace and Security Architecture Impacts Democracy Building and Human Security Enhancement in Africa”, 2009.

⁶ World Peace Foundation, "African Politics, African Peace", 2016.

⁷ APSA Impact Report 2016, Institute for Peace and Security Studies, Addis Ababa University, October 2017.

Box 2: An example of intervention under the APSA

The Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) intervened to restore order during the constitutional crisis which followed Gambia's 2016 presidential election. ECOWAS first pursued diplomatic initiatives and high-level mediation involving the presidents of Ghana, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania and Nigeria. These efforts were not successful, so ECOWAS issued an order for military intervention. Around 7 000 troops from the ECOWAS Standby Force prepared to enter Gambia. The combination of diplomacy and threatened military force led to the quick and effective resolution of the conflict in Gambia, with no reported casualties.

5. The AU member states created the African Peace Fund to raise finance for the AU peace support missions and peace and security operational activities⁸. Funding was to come mainly from the AU budget, with the possibility of further funding in the form of voluntary contributions from other sources. However, fewer than half African states paid their contributions to the AU budget on time and in full⁹, resulting in a shortfall of 33 % over the 2011 to 2015 period¹⁰. As a result, donors fund much of the AU budget¹¹ (54 % in 2017¹²).

6. In addition, only a small proportion of the AU budget is paid into the African Peace Fund. The AU member states agreed to increase funding of the African Peace fund to 12 % of the AU's regular budget by 2014. However, in 2016 the amount paid over corresponded to 7 % of the regular budget (i.e. less than €6 million)¹³.

⁸ Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Article 21.

⁹ By December 2016, only 25 of the AU's 54 member states had paid their 2016 contributions in full. *Source*: H.E. Paul Kagame "Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union", 29 January 2017, p. 13.

¹⁰ African Union, "Background Paper on Implementing the Kigali Decision on Financing the Union", September 2016.

¹¹ The AU's USD 446 million (around €395 million) annual budget (2017) corresponds to around 0.018 % of the AU's total GDP (€2.257 trillion in 2016).

¹² This excludes peace support operations in Somalia. See AU Executive Council Decision on the Budget of the African Union for the 2017 Financial Year, Doc. EX.CL/956(XXIX).

¹³ AU Peace Fund, Securing Predictable and Sustainable Financing for Peace in Africa, August 2016.

7. The AU and the SROs, have guided the APSA's development with roadmaps. They adopted the current APSA roadmap covering the period from 2016 to 2020, in December 2015. It has five strategic priorities: conflict prevention; crisis and conflict management; post-conflict reconstruction and peace-building; strategic security issues¹⁴; and coordination and partnerships within the APSA framework.

EU support to the APSA

8. The EU identified peace and security on the African continent as one of its priorities and defined the core principles of its approach in 1996¹⁵. It has reiterated these principles and its own interest in focusing on peace and security on the African continent in several high-level conflict prevention and security strategies¹⁶, most recently in the 2016 EU Global Strategy¹⁷. In 2007, the AU and the EU launched the Joint Africa EU Strategy (JAES) as a framework for cooperation and policy dialogue, and highlighted the importance of peace and security to both unions. Since then, the JAES action plans have prioritised making APSA operational.

9. The EU provides its financial support for the development of the APSA through the European Development Fund (EDF)¹⁸. The main channel of EDF support comes through the

¹⁴ Strategic security issues include the illegal flow of small arms and light weapons; counter-improvised explosive device/explosives management; weapons of mass destruction disarmament and non-proliferation; counter-terrorism measures; illicit financial flows; the integration of Africa's Integrated Maritime Strategy into APSA; and the combat of transnational organised crime and cyber-crime.

¹⁵ EU and the Issue of Conflicts in Africa: Peace Building Conflict Prevention and Beyond (SEC/96/32) sets out the basic approach towards the conflicts in Africa (importance of political analysis of structural root causes, focus on structural stability), the list of measures EU could undertake in various conflict situations, and the approach for the future (conflict prevention, early warning system, cooperation with AU and regional organisations as well as the UN, enhancement of African peace-keeping capabilities).

¹⁶ For example Communication on Conflict prevention (COM(2001) 211); 2003 European Security Strategy; The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises (JOIN(2013)30).

¹⁷ 2016 Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe.

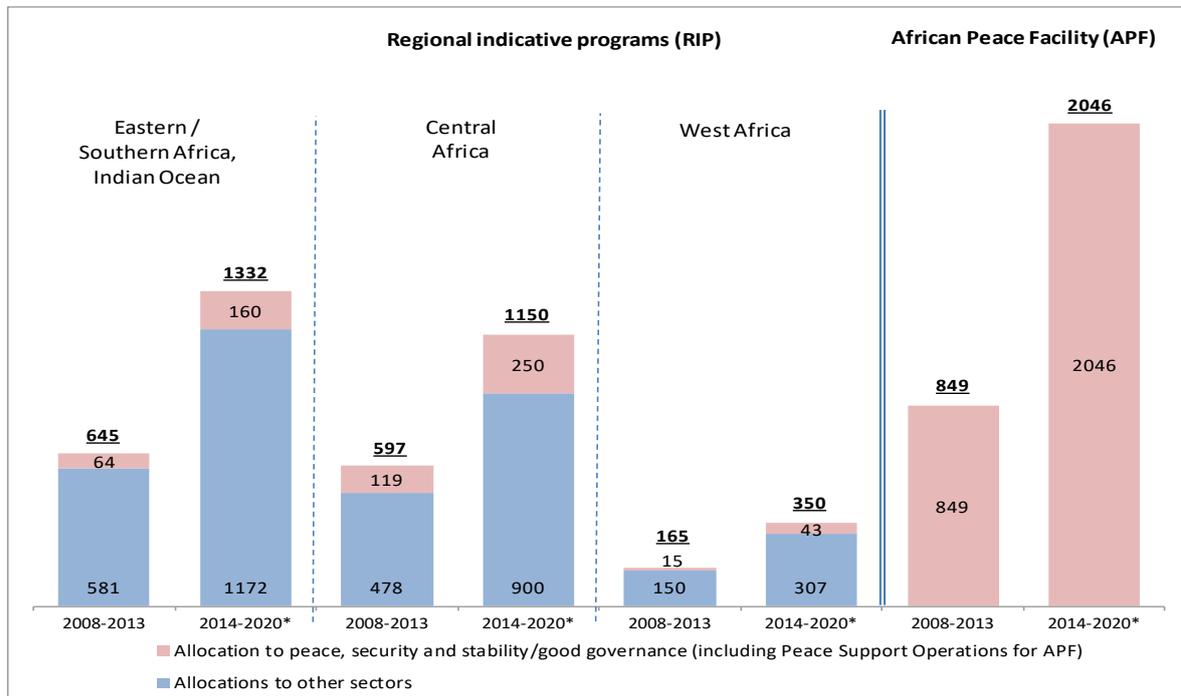
¹⁸ The EDF is the EU's main instrument for providing development aid to African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and to overseas countries and territories. Established by means of an internal agreement in 1959, it is financed by direct contributions from EU Member States, and remains

African Peace Facility (APF), established by the EU in 2003¹⁹, as well as through the Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs)²⁰. In the 2014 to 2020 EDF period, there are three RIPs in Africa, covering the West Africa, Central Africa and Eastern/Southern Africa/Indian Ocean regions. The amount allocated to peace and security under both the APF and under the RIPs has more or less doubled from the previous to the current period (**Figure 2**). Most of the funds (around 80 %) were used to finance peace support operations, such as the African Union Mission to Somalia.

outside the EU budget. The total financial resources of the EDF in the period from 2014 to 2020 amount to €30.5 billion.

- ¹⁹ Council Decision No 3/2003 of the ACP-EC Council of Ministers of 11 December 2003 on the use of resources from the long-term development envelope on the ninth EDF for the creation of a Peace Facility for Africa ([https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22003D0003\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:22003D0003(01)&from=EN)).
- ²⁰ The EU also supports peace and security in Africa out of the general budget using instruments such as the Pan-African Programme (PanAf); the Instrument contributing to Peace and Stability (IcPS); Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions; and the “EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa”.

Figure 2 - Amounts allocated to peace and security under Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs) and the African Peace Facility (APF), 2008-2020* (million euros)



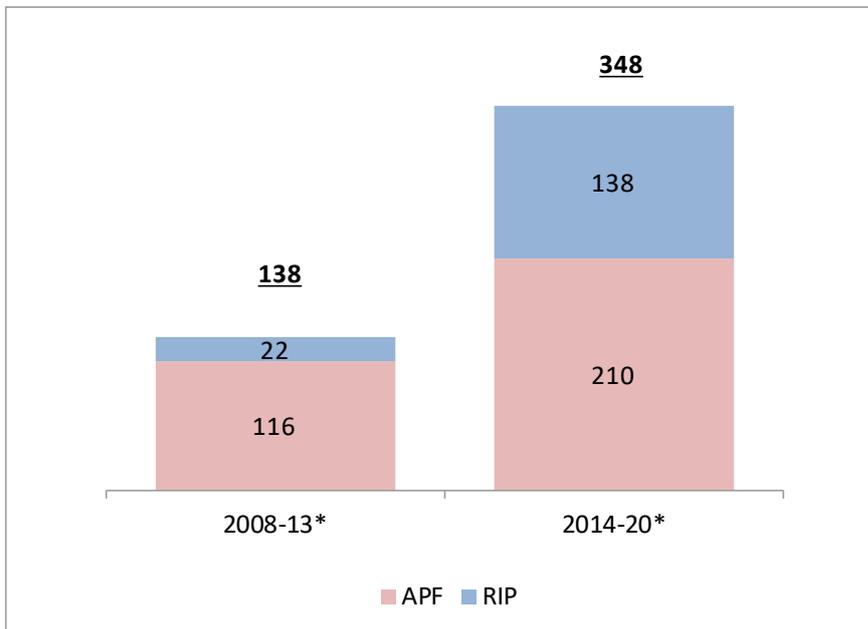
*APF figures for 2019-2020 are provisional.

Source: European Court of Auditors, based on information provided by the European Commission.

10. Around 14 % of overall funding for peace and security under the APF and the RIPs for 2014 to 2020, on average €50 million annually, has been allocated to the implementation of the APSA. This is an increase of 150 % compared to the previous programming period. The EU estimates that supporting the APSA, notably by strengthening the AU's and the SROs' capacity to prevent and resolve conflicts on the continent, may reduce the need to finance expensive peace-support operations, costing up to €720 million²¹ per year. At the same time, the amount allocated to APSA under the RIPs increased six fold, reflecting the increased EU focus on conflict prevention and mediation at a sub-regional level (**Figure 3**).

²¹ USD 900 million reported in APSA Assessment Study 2014, p. 78.

Figure 3 - EU funds allocated to implementing the APSA under the APF and RIPs, 2008-2020 (million euros)



*For future periods currently allocated amounts are still subject to discussion and changes. For past periods, and as far as available, contracted amounts are used instead of allocated amounts.

Source: European Court of Auditors, based on information provided by the European Commission.

AUDIT SCOPE AND APPROACH

11. In our audit, we examined whether the EU had provided effective support for the APSA. To do so, we set out to answer three sub-questions.

- (a) Has EU support for the APSA been designed and targeted well?
- (b) Has EU support for the APSA contributed to achieving sustainable results?
- (c) Has EU support for the APSA been implemented well?

12. The audit covered EDF expenditure made through the African Peace Facility (APF) and the Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs). We examined EU support from 2014 onwards and refer to evaluations and assessments of previous activities where available and relevant. We audited all of the 14 contracts concluded by the Commission in the period from 2014 to 2016, with a total value of €102.5 million. Nine of them were financed out of the African

Peace Facility, four under the RIP for West Africa and one under the RIP for Central Africa²². The largest contracts were signed with the AU, for example, joint financing arrangements to fund salaries in the Peace and Security Department of the AU Commission and the AU Liaison Offices. Other contracts were signed with regional organisations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). ***Annex I*** provides a breakdown of the funding provided to each organisation supported.

13. We excluded peace-support operations from our audit because this expenditure mainly relates to reimbursements of allowances paid to troops and not to support for the APSA. We did not audit the other EU instruments financing peace and security in Africa because during the period audited none of the activities related directly to the APSA.

14. We carried out our audit work between January and November 2017. We gathered evidence by reviewing documentation and by conducting interviews with the European External Action Service, the Commission, and relevant stakeholders, such as other donors and the beneficiaries of EU support (the AU and the SROs). We visited the African Union Commission, the ECOWAS and the ECCAS.

OBSERVATIONS

EU support remained focused on operational costs

15. In this section, we examine whether there was a clear strategy covering the present and future provision of EU support to the APSA. We assess whether EU support addressed the APSA's needs, and how it evolved to target ongoing and future issues facing the APSA.

The EU's support for APSA was conceived on the basis of a strategic framework

16. The EU assessed the peace and security situation on the African continent and developed an approach which formed the basis for EU support. Recognising the important role in the area of peace and security of both the African Union (AU) and the African Sub-regional

²² No contracts in support of the APSA were concluded during the audited period under the other RIPs.

Organisations (SROs), the EU engaged with both levels. As new threats to peace and security emerged, the EU revised and updated its strategies (**paragraph 8**).

17. In line with this strategic framework, the EU provided political and financial support to the AU, and to the SROs, including for the development of the APSA. The EU supported the preparation of successive roadmaps by the AU and the SROs, which contained plans for the APSA's implementation²³. The European Union also supported regular assessments of the APSA. This meant that the APSA benefited from regular feedback (in the form of the APSA assessments) and guidance for further development (in form of the APSA roadmaps). The roadmaps also provided a framework for donor coordination. However, a 2017 assessment of the APF pointed to weaknesses with the latest APSA roadmap. The roadmap is considered to be too complex to work with, lacks an overarching perspective and the AU Commission has not yet taken real ownership of it²⁴.

18. The EU set up mechanisms for political dialogue at both AU and regional levels. Political and policy dialogue on peace and security issues, including on the implementation of the APSA, took place during regular meetings with the AU within the framework of the JAES, established in 2007. There was, however, lack of clarity between the AU and the different SROs regarding the strategy for dividing up responsibilities between them, notably on the question of subsidiarity (**paragraph 34**).

19. The mechanisms which the EU set up for dialogue with the regional organisations ran less smoothly. In the case of the ECOWAS, for example, ministerial-level meetings were irregular (they took place in 2017 but, despite efforts, not in 2016). In other cases, policy dialogue was complicated (for example due to lack of institutional reforms, due to very slow advancing of the regional integration, or due to slow responsiveness of the counterparts on

²³ One for the period from 2011 to 2013 and another for the period from 2016 to 2020. The work plan for the 2011-2013 roadmap also covered some activities to be implemented in 2014 and 2015. During 2015 (before the second roadmap was drawn up), the EU did not sign with the AU any new major contracts for the development of the APSA, with the exception of the "Interim APSA Support Programme", whose main objectives included drawing up the second APSA roadmap.

²⁴ ECDPM, "Evaluation of the implementation of the African Peace Facility as an instrument supporting African efforts to manage conflicts on the continent", December 2017, p. 24 and 30.

proposals and queries). The dialogue needed to be improved, intensified and consolidated, for example in respect of the sub-regional EU Sahel and Gulf of Guinea strategies. Sometimes dialogue was difficult because organisations lacked administrative capacity, for example ECCAS.

APSA's funding depends on donors' contributions

20. The shortfall in contributions by the AU member states to the AU budget (**paragraph 5**) and the Peace Fund (**paragraph 6**) left the APSA underfunded. This issue was highlighted in the last APSA Roadmap: "Despite several decisions by the AU Assembly of heads of State and Government and/or provisions made in the establishment of the PSC, APSA still suffers from the absence of financial ownership by the AUC and RECs/RMs, and from a high dependency on donors²⁵. Also experts have emphasized that African ownership of the continent's peace and security agenda could not be expected until that agenda became financially autonomous²⁶.

21. Acknowledging the problems associated with relying on donors, the AU member states decided in July 2016 on a new mechanism for financing the AU's operational budget and the Peace Fund²⁷. The EU has supported this initiative, which consists of imposing a 0.2 % levy on all eligible goods imported into Africa, starting in 2017. By January 2018, 14 member states had started collecting the levy²⁸, the Peace Fund was beginning to operate, and it had a governance structure. In June 2017, the AU invited the EU to join the Peace Fund's board.

22. At the time of the audit, it was too early to assess the effectiveness of the new arrangements. Moreover, the financing difficulties affecting SROs, funded under separate mechanisms, are not addressed by the levy, for example the substantial shortfall in financing

²⁵ APSA Roadmap 2016-2020, p. 58.

²⁶ World Peace Foundation, "African Politics, African Peace", 2016, p. 53.

²⁷ Assembly/AU/Dec.605 (XXVII), https://au.int/web/sites/default/files/pages/31955-file-assembly_au_dec_605_financing_the_au.pdf.

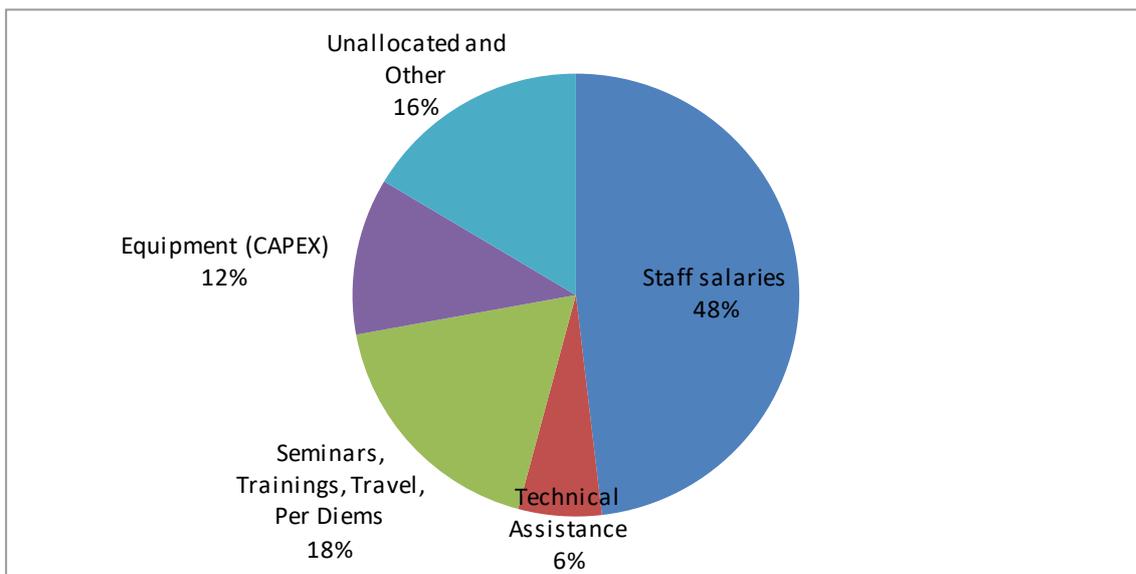
²⁸ <https://www.tralac.org/news/article/12591-mahamat-calls-for-urgency-in-self-financing>.

faced by the ECCAS²⁹. In addition to this, some African states may find they have to take decisions regarding whether to use scarce funds to finance the AU or the SROs³⁰.

EU financed operational costs with no plan for refocusing support

23. During the audited period, most of the EU's funding of the APSA was used to meet operational costs such as staff-related expenses (**Figure 4**). In the early years of its support (since 2010), the EU justified the funding of the operational costs by pointing out the importance of making the new structure operational. However, after nearly seven years, the focus of EU support remained to provide support for basic operational costs. This may lead to a risk of the APSA becoming dependant on donor support, since the longer the period over which aid is provided, and the greater the proportion of financing provided by donors, the greater a project's dependency on such aid becomes³¹.

Figure 4 - EU funding for the APSA (2014-2016)



²⁹ At the end of 2016, 10 out of 11 ECCAS Member states were in arrears, amounting to a total shortfall of approximately €52.3 million: more than three years of budget contributions. *Source:* ECCAS, via the European Commission.

³⁰ Institute for Security Studies, PSC Report 89, "The new funding model tests the commitment of AU member states", March 2017.

³¹ Victoria Stanford, "Aid Dependency: The Damage of Donation", University of Edinburgh, 2015.

Source: European Court of Auditors, based on information provided by the European Commission.

24. We expected the EU to have prepared a long-term plan to show how its provision of support would evolve over time and eventually be phased out. We found no evidence that it had done this. The EU had also not agreed with the AU and the SROs how it would gradually adapt the amount of support it was providing and reallocate funds towards more capacity building (for example for conflict prevention, effective response and post-conflict reconstruction) and strategic support measures (such as organisational and operational reforms, improvements of systems, provision of specific know-how and training, etc.), in order to develop long-term capacities.

25. The EU had not made provision of its support contingent upon conditions being met, such as the requirement for the AU or the SROs to continue financing initiatives previously supported by the EU. In one contract where such a provision was included in the financing agreement the SRO concerned did not respect the agreement and did not go on to fund the posts previously funded under the EDF (**Box 3**).

Box 3 - The ups and downs of a regional early warning system

An early warning system is a system of tools and procedures used for collecting and analysing data in order to anticipate and prevent conflicts. Central and regional early warning systems are key to the functioning of the APSA. In the central region of Africa, such a system, called “Mécanisme d'Alerte Rapide d'Afrique Centrale” (MARAC), was set up in 2007. The EU provided funds from the EDF for expanding the system, installing IT and communications systems and hiring and training staff members. A network of 30 correspondents was set up across several central African states. Several of the stakeholders we interviewed referred to MARAC’s effective and positive contribution to conflict anticipation and prevention.

However, after EU support ended in 2016, the SRO did not comply with the agreed requirement to continue to finance staff for the early warning system and the capacity that had been built up was lost. Only minimal financial support was provided under the African Peace Facility during 2017 and by the time of our audit, MARAC’s staff numbers had dropped to the pre-EU support level. Only a skeleton staff of three people remained (compared to the 15 needed for it to operate at full capacity) and its network of correspondents was no longer active.

The EU intervened again and during 2017 signed a new financing agreement which would fund an increase in MARAC's staff to four analysts, additional support staff and a network of 20 correspondents.

26. We also expected to see provisions in contracts for both reducing overall financing and moving away from support for operational staff and towards funding specialised staff. With the AU and the SROs taking over day-to-day running costs³², the EU could then focus on adding value by financing staff trained in specialist skills, such as conflict prevention and resolution. In most of the contracts we audited this was not the case. However, **Box 4** shows an example where this approach succeeded.

Box 4 - Increasing the added value of EU support

In 2015 donors paid for all short-term staff of the AU Commission's Peace and Security Department under a Joint Financing Arrangement (JFA) Salaries contract. Following discussion with the EU and the other donors, in 2017 the AU Commission reduced the number of staff members funded under the donor-funded JFA from 200 to 172 and increased the proportion of staff costs to be met by AU member states³³. At the same time, the ratio of support staff to professional staff funded under this contract was reduced from 1:1 to nearly 1:2. The target from 2017 onwards is 1:3³⁴.

The allocation of EU support was not sufficiently prioritised

27. Aware of the risk to EU citizens of conflicts in Africa (violent terrorism, the availability of weapons of mass destruction, and organised crime), the EU has started to channel its support towards preventing such conflicts from happening, and resolving them when they

³² The 2013 APF evaluation recommended that "The EU should explore options to jointly develop with the AU a plan for the latter to progressively assume responsibility for staff positions and the operating costs of key APSA components currently financed through the APF".

³³ See the 11th JFA steering committee meeting minutes (27 April 2017): "more than 50 % of PSD short-term staff at the AU Headquarters are paid using the [AU] Member States' funds".

³⁴ JFA Steering Committee meeting minutes.

do³⁵. In line with the Paris declaration on aid effectiveness³⁶ and the principles set out in the JAES, the EU has in general provided support for the APSA in accordance with the needs expressed by the AU and the SROs in the APSA roadmap. However, the needs defined were very broad and the priorities not specific or clear.

28. The EEAS and the Commission did not draw up specific EU funding priorities or develop guidelines for allocating resources to the various APSA components. However, the Commission and the EEAS scrutinised funding proposals received from the AU and SROs, and the Political and Security Committee of the Council of the EU assessed the “political appropriateness” of providing the funding. ***Annex II*** shows the example of the decision-making procedure of the African Peace Facility.

29. We analysed the fourteen contracts audited to see how they reflected the priorities set for the APSA. We found that in eight cases the way in which funds were presented in the contracts’ budgets made it impossible to see how much money had been allocated to each of the APSA pillars or priorities. We also found that the individual contracts had a wide scope in terms of targeting priorities: eleven of the fourteen contracts targeted at least four of the five APSA strategic priorities (***Annex III***).

Risks associated with allocating more funds to regional organisations

30. In the latest programming period, the EU decided to channel a greater proportion of total funding for the APSA through the RIPs (***paragraph 10***). The aim was to give SROs a greater role in decision-making, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. It also allows SROs to work directly with the EU, thus avoiding delays associated with the AU’s coordination of

³⁵ In this respect, see especially EU and the Issue of Conflicts in Africa: Peace Building Conflict Prevention and Beyond (SEC/96/332); the 2003 European Security Strategy; and the EU’s comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises (JOIN(2013)30).

³⁶ The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, OECD, 2005 includes the commitments of donors to “respect partner country leadership and help strengthen their capacity to exercise it” and to “base their overall support on partner countries’ national development strategies, institutions and procedures”, in order to increase the effectiveness and impact of the aid.

the funding for the APSA support programme. We found there to be risks associated with this change.

- (a) The SROs did not, at the time of our audit, have sufficient staff members with the necessary skills to manage the additional funding effectively.
- (b) The regional institutional framework is very complex. There are ten SROs with a mandate in peace and security, with overlapping memberships. On average, AU states are members of at least two SROs and some states belong to as many as four. The lack of clarity leaves some African states unwilling to commit to their SROs, leading to weaknesses in capacity. The EU Commission's strategy to deal with this complex regional framework was to support one joint RIP in each region; the EU currently funds the SROs under three RIPs.
- (c) Four of the ten SROs with a mandate in peace and security are not covered by a RIP and two of these four will continue to receive funding under the APF. In addition, EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa funds capacity-building measures for one SRO (the Intergovernmental Authority on Development) and for organisations outside the APSA framework (for example, the Sahel G5³⁷). This could undermine the coherence of the EU's funding approach.
- (d) there is a risk that a reduced role for the AU may weaken overall coherence and coordination of EU support to the APSA.
- (e) despite the significant increase in the amounts allocated to peace and security measures under the RIPs the number of staff working in the relevant regional EU delegations had not increased accordingly. For example, there were no military experts on the staff of the delegations to ECOWAS and ECCAS, meaning that these delegations were relying on military expertise made available by EU Member States' embassies.

³⁷ G5 Sahel is an institutional framework for coordinating regional cooperation in development policies and security matters. It was set up by Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, and Niger in 2014.

Despite EU support, the APSA faces several challenges and its operation depends on continued external support

31. In this section, we examine whether EU support contributed to results being achieved. We look at the extent to which EU-funded contracts delivered support according to the objectives set for those contracts. We also examine the challenges faced by the different components of the APSA. Finally, we assess whether the EEAS and the Commission had identified and addressed risks to the sustainability of the results of EU support.

Half of the contracts had delivered at the time of the audit

32. We audited fourteen EU support contracts. Six of them, which mainly concerned staff costs, had mainly delivered their overall expected results by the time of the audit. However, we did not have sufficient information to judge whether each individual output had been achieved (***paragraphs 59 and 60***). Two more contracts had partially delivered outputs and one contract had clearly not delivered the expected outputs. In five cases, implementation delays meant that we could not assess whether the contract had achieved the expected outputs or not (***paragraph 53*** and ***Annex IV***).

The APSA faces several challenges

33. Stakeholders and donors have high expectations of the APSA. Assessments³⁸ have concluded that the AU and the SROs play an important role in addressing conflicts in Africa. The APSA has a potential to become an effective framework for peace and security in Africa, although it faces many difficult challenges and needs further development of its capacities, its instruments and its overall operation.

³⁸ For example, Tana Copenhagen ApS – "The Inter-relationship between the African Peace and Security Architecture, the Global Peace and Security Architecture and Regional Initiatives", 2013; Swedish Defence Research Agency – "The APSA – Discussing the remaining challenges", 2016; European Centre for Development Policy Management, "Conflict management under the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA)", Discussion paper No 211, April 2017.

34. Challenges for the APSA include the following:

- (a) the financial and institutional capacity of the key bodies involved (the AU and the SROs) need to be strengthened;
- (b) specific steps are needed to overcome the lack of political will to address certain issues and crises³⁹;
- (c) there is no mechanism to enforce decisions;
- (d) there is a need for better cooperation between different bodies and institutions;
- (e) the relationship between the AU and the SROs should be clarified, particularly regarding subsidiarity⁴⁰;
- (f) there should be better coordination with complementary initiatives such as the African Governance Architecture⁴¹.

35. The African Peace Fund did not cover the cost of operating the APSA as had been planned (**paragraphs 5 and 6**). Most EU support therefore financed the operational costs of the APSA. **Paragraphs 36 to 47** present challenges to the operation of the components of the APSA and the contribution of EU support.

³⁹ Institute for Security Studies, PSC Report 90, "Denialism plagues Africa's early warning system", April 2017.

⁴⁰ The application of the principle of subsidiarity and the question of leadership between AU and the SROs remains a highly sensitive issue. A precise definition of roles and responsibilities of institutions on the national, regional, continental and multilateral levels is therefore crucial for the effective implementation of the APSA. 2010 and 2013 APF evaluations recommended clarifying the application of the principle of subsidiarity. However, there was little progress in this regard: the APSA roadmap for 2016-2020 still highlighted the lack of common understanding of the principles of subsidiarity as one of APSA's weaknesses.

⁴¹ The African Governance Architecture is a platform for dialogue between the various stakeholders who are mandated to promote good governance and strengthen democracy in Africa. See <http://aga-platform.org/about>.

Peace and Security Council

36. The Peace and Security Council (PSC) is established in its role as the main decision-making organ of the APSA and has taken positions on key issues by condemning coups and imposing sanctions. It has also contributed to resolving conflicts, for example in Burundi, Mali, and Somalia⁴².

37. However, the PSC faces challenges and several problems continue to affect its work. For example, the Assembly of the African Union Heads of State has frequently failed to adhere to principles set out in the PSC Protocol to assess prospective PSC candidates' compliance with set criteria. Countries that gained notoriety for openly flouting the decisions of the AU or for exhibiting unconstitutional behaviour, have been included into the Council. This has limited the quality and effectiveness of the PSC's decisions. The PSC has also experienced problems because of the importance assigned to reaching unanimity in decision-making. This is exacerbated by the lack of political will of some states to take a position on issues which they do not recognise as being in their interest, or if they do not wish to openly confront a fellow member state⁴³.

African Union Commission

38. The AU Commission implements PSC decisions and its Peace and Security Department (PSD) supports the other pillars of the APSA as well as other peace and security programmes, such as the demarcation of borders, and the strategy on small arms and light weapons. The PSD also coordinates relations between the AU and the SROs on peace and security matters.

39. The PSD has an important role in the APSA's operation, but inadequate funding by the AU left two-thirds of its posts vacant. In 2010, the EU, the AU and other international partners addressed this by setting up a common funding mechanism called a "Joint

⁴² APSA Assessment Study 2014.

⁴³ Institute for Peace and Security Studies, "The African Union Peace and Security Council (PSC): Challenges and Policy Options", March/April 2017.

Financing Arrangement” (JFA)⁴⁴. This covered the salary costs of additional 172 “short-term” staff members of the PSD (**Figure 5**). Although not all of the posts were filled, the additional staff members allowed the PSD to continue to function⁴⁵.

Figure 5 - AU Commission Peace and Security Department posts and vacancies

Type of contract	Filled posts	Vacant	Total	Remarks
AU regular budget	25	42	67	Recruitment process for key posts started Q4/2016
Short-term (JFA)	137	35	172	12 posts under recruitment
Secondment	12		12	Estimate March 2017
Total	174	77	251	

Source: Minutes of the 11th Steering Committee meeting on the Joint Financing Arrangement for support to the employment of AUC personnel working in the Peace and Security Programme, April 2017, and PSD staff overview, July 2016.

40. The PSD has a limited number of “professional” staff dealing with core peace and security issues of the African continent. **Figure 6** shows the type of staff and how they were funded in 2016. The main task of the staff is to fulfil the APSA’s broad 2016-2020 roadmap, a document which specifies 5 strategic priorities, 32 specific objectives and 116 outputs. The inadequate amount of resources allocated and the policy of “short-term” staff recruitment (**paragraph 57**) make this a difficult task.

⁴⁴ JFAs are a form of an enhanced donor support mechanism, through which interested partners can contribute to the agreed costs in a common, predictable and transparent manner. The donors contributing to the JFA for AUC PSD staff salaries during 2015-2016 were the EU, UK, Sweden, Norway, Germany and Netherlands.

⁴⁵ To ensure that these funds were used efficiently, the AU Commission and its partners regularly discussed the posts to be financed under this arrangement during bi-annual Steering Committee meetings.

Figure 6 - Source of funding for AU Commission Peace and Security Department posts

Distribution of staff posts by office / unit	JFA		AU Regular Budget		Total
	General Service	Professional	General Service	Professional	
Office of the Commissioner	2	2	1	2	7
Office of the Director including AU LOs to RECs/RMs	9	10	3	1	23
Conflict Prevention and Early Warning Division	6	15	7	6	34
Crisis Management and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Division	4	8	1	18	31
Peace Support Operations Division	3	32	6	12	53
Defence and Security Division	2	6	1	3	12
PSC Secretariat	2	6	1	2	11
Project Management Team	2	9	1	2	14
Peace and Security Finance Division	10	14	-	-	24
Other (Registry, HR, Internal Audit, etc.)	20	10	N/A - cross-departmental		
Total	60	112	21	46	239

Source: Minutes of the 11th Steering Committee meeting on the Joint Financing Arrangement for support to the employment of AUC personnel working in the Peace and Security Programme, April 2017, and PSD staff overview, July 2016.

41. The EU and other donors also channel money jointly through the AU Commission to support a network of AU Liaison Offices operating in 14 conflict and post-conflict countries in Africa. The yearly EU contribution to funding the AU Liaison Offices amounts to approximately €3.5 million (around 25 % of the annual budget). The network has around 200 members of staff, of which the ratio of support to operational staff is high (about 70:30). The PSC sets the mandates of the Liaison Offices, which range from monitoring emerging crises, preventative diplomacy and crisis management to post-conflict reconstruction. The offices represent the AU on the ground and have a primarily political role⁴⁶.

42. A recent EU-financed evaluation⁴⁷, pointed to the AU Liaison Offices' constructive and significant role in crisis situations in Mali, the Central African Republic, Sudan, South Sudan, the Comoros, Guinea Bissau and Madagascar. However, it also noted that insufficient funds and staffing problems led to operational inefficiencies. The evaluation found that the Liaison Offices' impact had been "mixed", but that their work had made "a reasonable contribution

⁴⁶ The role and activities are described in project documents for the JFA AU Liaison Offices and AU Commission Joint Narrative Reports.

⁴⁷ Mid-term evaluation, "Sustaining and strengthening African Union's Liaison Offices in post-conflict countries", African Union, January 2017.

to peace and security". Similarly, a recent report by the World Peace Foundation concluded that the Liaison Offices were "important, and should continue to be supported"⁴⁸.

Panel of the Wise

43. The PSC Protocol set up the Panel of the Wise as an advisory organ made up of five respected African personalities. Its role is to work towards conflict prevention, which it carried out, for example by convening workshops and high-level retreats. The Panel's role has expanded to include pre-election missions and mediation work⁴⁹. Despite an increasing workload, the Panel's resources have not increased. For example, the Panel's secretariat has only one political analyst, whose salary is supported by the EU under the JFA. The Panel has also encountered coordination issues with the PSC and other bodies tasked with conflict prevention and resolution.

Continental Early Warning System (CEWS)

44. The Continental Early Warning System (CEWS) is a system for collecting and analysing data in order to anticipate and prevent conflicts. The EU contributed technical and financial support towards setting it up and continues to finance operating costs under the JFA Salaries and APSA Support Programme contracts we audited (***Annex IV***).

45. The APSA impact report for 2015 concluded that the CEWS was "technically functional" and noted that there had been significant progress on cooperation between SROs and the AU on early warnings⁵⁰. Certain factors, however, limit the system's effectiveness.

⁴⁸ World Peace Foundation, "African Politics, African Peace", 2016.

⁴⁹ For example according to the final report for the JFA Salaries II contract (covering 1.4.2013 – 1.7.2015), the Panel of the Wise then carried out nine missions to countries preparing for elections as well as six mediation, preventive mediation and "good offices" engagements. One of the members of the panel undertook good offices missions to the DRC during 2015 and 2016.

⁵⁰ APSA impact report, 2016, parts 2.1.1 and 2.1.4(b).

- (a) The APSA roadmap points to the need to address the varying levels of functionality of the regional early warning systems, as well as to improve the connections between central, regional and national systems⁵¹.
- (b) The Peace and Security Council has highlighted “a persistent gap between early warning and early response”⁵², and concluded that AU member states often pay no attention to early warning signals of future crises, thereby undermining the Council’s conflict-prevention capacity, often leading to conflicts⁵³.

African Standby Force

46. The African Standby Force (ASF) is a multidisciplinary reserve force designed for rapid deployment to conflict areas by the AU Assembly and the PSC. It includes military, police and civilian units⁵⁴. EU support funded improvements to the capacity of the African Standby Force and its regional components under the African Peace Facility and the RIPs. Support covered staff costs and operational activities (improving planning, logistics, and policy development and strengthening the police and civilian components) as well as the procurement of IT infrastructure (C3IS) (*Annex IV* for the list of contracts). The EU also funded training to the stand-by forces, including support for field exercises (AMANI AFRICA II Support Programme).

47. The AU had not yet deployed the ASF at the date of our audit. Stakeholders we interviewed questioned the extent to which it is operational, pointing out that:

- (a) the ASF’s Command, Control, Communication and Information System is not yet operational (*Box 6*);

⁵¹ APSA Roadmap 2016–2020, p. 16.

⁵² 601st PSC meeting (30 May 2016) Press Statement, www.peaceau.org/uploads/auc-601st-psc-meeting-on-early-warning-30-may-2016.pdf

⁵³ 669th PSC meeting (21 March 2017) Communiqué, <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/669th-psc-com-ew-eng.pdf>

⁵⁴ Protocol Relating to the Establishment of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union, Article 13.

- (b) the ASF lacks the capacity to deploy units rapidly because of logistical constraints such as insufficient strategic airlift capability;
- (c) linguistic and cultural problems have the potential to reduce the effectiveness of deployment across regions.

Threats to the sustainability of results

48. The main risks to the sustainability of the results achieved in building the APSA's capacity are rooted in the weak financial, institutional and operational capacity of the AU and SROs, and in the lack of political commitment by a number of AU member states (**paragraph 34**).

49. Reforms planned with the aim of addressing weaknesses in the institutional frameworks of the AU Commission⁵⁵, ECOWAS⁵⁶ and ECCAS⁵⁷ have yielded few results to date. The EU Commission has encouraged and provided financial support for such initiatives: for example, the institutional reform of ECOWAS is currently being supported through the EU Support to Public Finance Management Reforms project, and institutional reforms to ECCAS are being targeted as part of a peace and support project under the EDF.

50. To counter the institutional and operational weaknesses of the AU Commission and the SROs, technical assistance financed by the EU has often focused on general management, a form of assistance which has a limited long-term impact on the development of the APSA. Technical assistance experts have often acted as project managers, providing a "short-term

⁵⁵ Decision on the Institutional Reform of the African Union, July 2016, Ref. Assembly/AU/Dec.606 (XXVII), followed by the Report on the Proposed Recommendations for the Institutional Reform of the African Union, by H.E. Paul Kagame (29 January 2017).

⁵⁶ In ECOWAS, the institutional reform started in 2013, and an internal institutional audit was contracted by ECOWAS to an international firm. The audit lasted 2 years and produced three institutional reform options that were presented internally but neither the audit findings nor the recommendations were shared with the EU or the other donors. At the time of the audit, ECOWAS had not yet formally agreed on one institutional reform option. The institutional audit led to a freeze in recruitment which resulted in over-centralisation and bottlenecks, complicating many ongoing initiatives and funding.

⁵⁷ For ECCAS, under the EDF RIP-funded programme, provision was made for a reform of the fundamental texts of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, but no result was achieved because of a lack of political will among ECCAS member states. The activity is scheduled again for the current EDF programme.

fix” to the internal weaknesses of the implementing organisations. The cost of doing so has often been very significant: for example, the amount of the ECOWAS Peace, Security and Stability grant provided by the EU was €6.7 million, while the cost of technical assistance for implementing the grant was a further €4.9 million: 73 % of the initial grant.

The implementation of EU support was affected by delays, incoherent use of financing instruments and insufficient information on results achieved

51. In this section, we examine whether the Commission provided EU support to the APSA in a timely, predictable and coherent manner and whether the contracts we audited were implemented as planned. We assess the monitoring and reporting mechanisms put in place by the Commission, and ask whether they provided adequate information on results achieved.

Delays in contracting and retroactive financing impaired the implementation of planned activities

52. The beneficiaries of the contracts we audited were the AU and SROs. The aim of the support was to finance and train staff to carry out complex peace and security tasks, and ensure that activities were implemented in a coherent way across the continent. The contracts, listed at ***Annex IV***, sought to:

- (a) strengthen the HR capacity of the AU Commission and the sub-regional organisations (the RECs and the RMs) to prevent and/or respond to crises in Africa;
- (b) help the AU Liaison Offices to monitor the implementation of peace agreements, support the preparation and monitoring of elections, and to represent the AU in meetings with national bodies and international organisations;
- (c) put in place a continental structure enabling the AU to rapidly deploy strategic and operational communication, command and control capabilities between the AU in Addis Ababa, the regional level and the missions in the field;
- (d) provide the AU Commission and SROs with expertise for their peace and security initiatives;

- (e) support the SROs in building their capacities and executing their conflict prevention and resolution mandates.

53. Timeliness and predictability are essential if institutional support is to have expected results. The failure to conclude contracts on time led to implementation delays and meant that financing of activities was not predictable. Ten out of the fourteen contracts we audited were signed late for one or a combination of the following reasons:

- (a) the AU Commission and the SROs submitted late or low-quality financing proposals;
- (b) complicated negotiations concerning contract budgets, activities and financial management;
- (c) technical problems with the EU Commission's information system.

54. In addition, eight of these ten contracts had financed activities retroactively⁵⁸. Three of them were signed only days before the activities financed were due to be completed. We found that delays in signing contracts, combined with existing internal weaknesses in the AU and the SROs, had a negative impact on the implementation of activities for six out of the fourteen contracts (***Annex IV***). ***Box 5*** presents the negative impact of contracting delays and of retroactive financing on two APSA Support Programmes.

Box 5 -Retroactive financing of the APSA Support Programmes

Through the APSA Support Programmes, the EU provides financial support to the AU Commission and to SROs to operate the APSA. We audited the second and third of these contracts, amounting to €5 227 335 and €28 770 000, respectively.

The second APSA Support Programme contract supported activities such as finalising the 2016 to 2020 APSA Roadmap. The contract was signed late, meaning many planned activities were not implemented, or had to be financed from other sources. Despite the delayed receipt of funds, the SROs maintained most of the staff financed under this contract. However, some staff members were

⁵⁸ The Commission can use funds from the EDF to finance activities which have already taken place to help “ensure early project start-up, avoid gaps between sequential projects and prevent delays” - Article 19 of Annex IV of the Cotonou Agreement.

laid off, resulting in the loss of capacity which had been built up. As consequence, only 56 % of the contract's budget was consumed.

The third APSA Support Programme contract was only signed in December 2016, although the implementation period covered 36 months from January 2016. The AU Commission did not pass on funds from the contract to the SROs until May 2017, due to their own contracting delays. The shortfall in funding was in some cases met by other donors, or resulted in the postponement of planned activities.

55. **Box 6** shows an example of delays in the purchase of an information system for the African Standby Force. In this case, the AU's internal weaknesses compounded the delay caused by the late signature of the contract.

Box 6 - Delays in establishing a Command, Control, Communication and Information System (C3IS) for the African Standby Force

The EU supported the development of the African Standby Force (ASF) and the management of African-led peace support operations with the C3IS contract. The C3IS was a key priority in the 2011 to 2013 APSA Roadmap. It was designed to enable the AU to rapidly deploy strategic and operational communications. For example, it would allow the AU in Addis Ababa to convey orders and to generate reports and maps for managing operations on the ground.

The AU completed its financing proposal in February 2013 and signed an agreement for €12.5 million of EU support in February 2014. The EU funded retroactively the AU Commission's preparatory activities undertaken since March 2013 and delegated management of the complex procurement procedure to the AU Commission to promote AU ownership of the system. However, this resulted in long delays in the procurement procedure, which was still ongoing at the time of our audit. The EU extended the implementation period for the contract to 67 months from the 24 months originally planned.

This delay had a negative impact on other activities planned. For example, one of the principal components of an essential African Standby Force training exercise (AMANI Africa II, also supported by the EU) was abandoned.

Financing instruments were not always used coherently

56. Neither the European Commission nor the EEAS had analysed the comparative advantages of all the instruments at their disposal in the area of peace and security (paragraph 9). We found that the instruments were not always used coherently. The APF is well suited for financing short-term needs, since its funding cycles last two to three years. Conversely, the RIPs lend themselves more readily to financing long-term needs, with a funding cycle of seven years.

57. We found cases of short-term APF contracts being used to finance long-term staff posts, for example, under the JFA Salaries contracts (paragraph 39). In this case, the use of revolving 1-2 year contracts weakened human resources management and meant that the numbers and types of staff posts were renegotiated almost yearly. This contributed to delays in contracting (paragraph 53) and to job insecurity, leading to loss of experienced staff. In other cases, the RIPs had been used to address short-term needs, to which they are less well suited.

58. The European Commission and EEAS have not set up a coordination framework covering all their instruments in the area of peace and security. However, since 2015, they have taken steps to make the APF and the RIPs complement each other more effectively, notably by:

- (a) clarifying the way in which staff positions in the SROs are funded. To this end, they decided that the cost of non-military staff of the regional organisations supported by the EU should be transferred from the APF to the RIPs. However, this decision was taken after the RIPs had been adopted, making it more difficult to implement. In the end, the transfer was postponed to January 2018;
- (b) involving the regional EU delegations in reviewing the regional APSA Support Programme work plans financed under the APF to ensure that these complement the RIP-funded programmes;
- (c) since 2017, including the regional EU delegations in the APSA Support Programme's steering committee.

Monitoring and reporting mechanisms were set up, but did not provide sufficient information on results

59. The Commission had set up monitoring and reporting mechanisms for all the contracts we audited. These included the periodic submission of narrative and financial reports (mostly half-yearly), regular steering committee meetings, and independent external audits of expenditure. In practice the Commission's monitoring mechanisms were affected by weaknesses and did not provide sufficient information on results. We found the following examples in the contracts we audited:

- (a) the planned outputs were not specific or not measurable in six out of the fourteen contracts. For example, the departments or instruments supported were expected to have their "capacity enhanced", "role strengthened", or to become "fully operational". In some of these cases, the underlying activities did not relate directly to the outputs;
- (b) some of the indicators drawn up for twelve of the contracts listed inputs and activities, rather than setting outputs to achieve, and were therefore of limited use for monitoring purposes. In other cases, baselines and targets needed to measure progress were missing;
- (c) in three cases, the fact that the contracts were signed on the very last days of their implementing periods meant that retroactive financing made monitoring provisions irrelevant in practice;
- (d) the reports prepared by the AU and the SROs often arrived late. For six contracts, these reports did not contain sufficient details on contractual outputs and indicators.

60. In general, the EU staff we interviewed had a good overview of the implementation of the contracts, although this knowledge was not always included in reports. For the contracts audited, the EU Commission had not yet performed any "Results-Oriented Monitoring (ROM)" missions⁵⁹. An external evaluation had been carried out in respect of only one

⁵⁹ The ROM is the external monitoring system of the European Commission, with a strong focus on results. Selected EU-funded projects are assessed by external experts according to four DAC

contract. This meant that the limited availability of information on results from the AU and the SROs was not compensated for from other sources.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

61. The AU member states set up the APSA to be a structural, long-term response to the challenges to peace and security on the African continent. Through the APSA, the AU and mandated SROs have access to tools which help them to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts. The EU provided support for the APSA out of the European Development Fund. We audited the EU's support over the three years 2014 to 2016 and found that it has had a poor effect and needed refocusing.

62. The EU did not set clear priorities for its support and its strategy lacked a long-term vision for the evolution of its support. For example, during the period audited, it did not focus sufficiently on the transition from paying salaries to targeting capacity-building to ensure the long-term success of EU support. The shortfall in contributions by the AU member states to the AU budget and the Peace Fund left the APSA heavily dependent on the support of donors, including the EU. The EU supported the AU's plans for achieving financial independence for the APSA, formalised in the AU's 2016 decision, but implementation was still at an early stage (***paragraphs 16 to 30***).

63. We found that around half of the EU-funded contracts had either mostly or partially delivered the expected results at the time of the audit. The EU has supported reforms to improve the financial, operational and institutional capacity of the AU and SROs, but these reforms have yielded few results to date. The capacity of the APSA's components varied considerably and was challenged by a lack of political commitment and by limited funding (***paragraphs 32 to 50***).

Recommendation 1**Foster AU ownership of the APSA and refocus EU support**

The EEAS and Commission should jointly develop a clear, long-term vision of EU support for the APSA, in order to:

- progressively decrease and eventually phase out EU support to APSA's basic operational costs in favour of well-targeted capacity-building programmes, and
- link capacity-building support for the APSA to improvements in the way in which the AU and the SROs operate,

and closely monitor the implementation of the AUs commitment to achieve financial independence.

Timeframe: end 2020.

64. We audited all fourteen contracts concluded between 2014 and 2016 under which the EU supported the APSA. We found that contracts were not always managed efficiently. Ten of the contracts were signed late, which meant that the availability of funds was not timely and predictable. This led to the loss of some experienced staff and resulted in delays in the implementation of the APSA's activities (**paragraphs 52 to 55**). We also found that while monitoring mechanisms were in place, they did not operate well, for example when contracts were financed retroactively. Reporting was incomplete and did not provide sufficient information about results. During the period audited, financing instruments were not always used coherently. We noted some improvements in these respects from 2015 (**paragraphs 56 to 60**).

Recommendation 2**Interventions should be consistently results-based**

The Commission should:

- further reduce delays in contracting, and avoid the use of retroactive financing;
- base the contractual monitoring and reporting on specific and measurable results, with indicators allowing to measure progress achieved;
- increase the “results-oriented monitoring” of the APSA’s capacity-building programmes, and evaluate them more often, and
- perform a comparative analysis of the available financing instruments in the area of peace and security and use them coherently.

Timeframe: end 2019.

This Report was adopted by Chamber III, headed by Mrs Bettina JAKOBSEN, Member of the Court of Auditors, in Luxembourg at its meeting of 26 June 2018.

For the Court of Auditors

Klaus-Heiner LEHNE
President

ANNEX I**BREAKDOWN OF THE EU FUNDING PROVIDED TO EACH ORGANISATION SUPPORTED***(euro)*

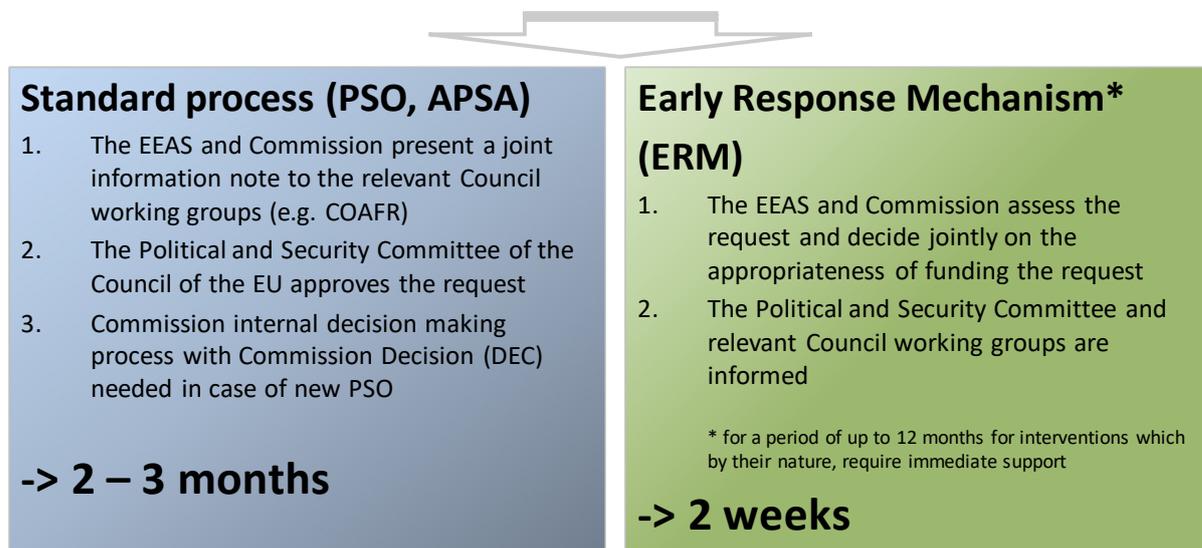
Organisation supported / Contract		C3IS	APF Service Contract	JFA Salaries II	JFA AU Liaison Offices II	JFA AU Liaison Offices III	JFA AU Liaison Offices IV	JFA Salaries III	APSA SP II	APSA SP III	ECOWAS-EU Small Arms Project	TA ECOWAS (implementation support)	ECOWAS Grant I	ECOWAS Grant II	ECCAS Devis Programme n°4	Total
AU	Liaison Offices				6 000 000	3 000 000	7 000 000									16 000 000
	Peace and Security Department	12 500 000		10 000 000				5 000 000	1 384 238	4 455 516						33 339 754
CEN-SAD									-	-						0
COMESA									595 562	3 019 999						3 615 561
EAC									337 564	2 833 320						3 170 884
EASFSEC									525 379	3 383 092						3 908 471
ECCAS									465 795	3 428 102					1 865 674	5 759 571
ECOWAS									617 014	3 550 000	5 560 000	4 896 500	6 724 594	2 757 182		24 105 291
IGAD									279 152	1 700 000						1 979 152
NARC									511 218	1 899 971						2 411 189
SADC									509 413	4 500 000						5 009 413
Transversal / not allocated			3 235 400						2 000	0						3 237 400
Total		12 500 000	3 235 400	10 000 000	6 000 000	3 000 000	7 000 000	5 000 000	5 227 335	28 770 000	5 560 000	4 896 500	6 724 594	2 757 182	1 865 674	102 536 686

Source: European Court of Auditors based on contracts audited.

DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES OF THE AFRICAN PEACE FACILITY

Decision making procedures of the African Peace Facility

Request submitted by the AU or a sub-regional organisation (REC/RM) and endorsed by the AU



Source: European Court of Auditors based on the APF action programme 2014-2016, Appendix 1.

LIST OF CONTRACTS AUDITED AND APSA STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Contracts							APSA Strategic Priorities				
Program	Contract number	Contract title	Organisation supported	Contract Budget (euro)	Paid* (euro)	Paid* (%)	Conflict Prevention (including Early Warning and Preventive Diplomacy)	Crisis/Conflict Management - African Standby-Force	Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Peace Building	Strategic Security Issues	Coordination and Partnerships
APF AP 2011-13	325231	C3IS for African-led peace operations	AU	12 500 000	10 534 027	84%		X			
	336871	APF Service Contract	AU and RECs/RMs	3 235 400	1 976 133	61%	X	X	X	X	X
	327360	JFA Salaries II	AU	10 000 000	9 000 000	90%	X	X	X	X	X
	327370	JFA African Union Liaison Offices II	AU	6 000 000	5 500 000	92%	X	X	X	X	X
APF AP 2014-16	371416	JFA AU Liaison Offices III	AU	3 000 000	2 400 000	80%	X	X	X		X
	375189	JFA AU Liaison Offices IV	AU	7 000 000	3 171 431	45%	X	X	X		X
	373209	JFA Salaries III	AU	5 000 000	4 000 000	80%	X	X	X	X	X
	366481	Interim African Peace and Security Architecture Support Programme (APSA SP II)	AU and RECs/RMs	5 227 335	4 181 868	80%	X	X		X	X
	380897	African Peace and Security Architecture Support Programme III (APSA SP III)	AU and RECs/RMs	28 770 000	7 674 227	27%	X	X	X	X	X
RIP West Africa	345376	ECOWAS-EU Small Arms Project	ECOWAS	5 560 000	4 185 614	75%	X			X	
	355873	Technical Assistance for Implementation of EU support to ECOWAS Regional Peace, Security and Stability Mandate	ECOWAS	4 896 500	1 780 903	36%	X	X	X	X	X
	368246	ECOWAS Grant - Strengthening Peace, Security and Stability in West Africa	ECOWAS	6 724 594	2 662 174	40%	X	X	X	X	X
	380850	ECOWAS Grant - Strengthening Peace, Security and Stability in West Africa II	ECOWAS	2 757 182	1 313 599	48%				X	
RIP Central Africa	359795	ECCAS - Devis Programme n°4 de croisière et de clôture	ECCAS	1 865 674	789 007	42%	X	X		X	X
Total				102 536 686	59 168 983	58%	12	12	9	10	11

* Paid amount as on 30.6.2017.

ECA OVERVIEW OF CONTRACTS' ASSESSMENTS

Program	Contract number	Contract title	Contract Objective	Adequacy of design		Implementation and monitoring			Results and their sustainability	
				Relevance for the APSA	Other design aspects (e.g. lessons learnt, coordination and monitoring framework)	Timeliness of contract signature	Implementation of activities	Reporting and Monitoring	Results achieved	Sustainability concerns
APF AP 2011-13	325231	C3IS for African-led peace operations	To put in place a continental structure enabling the AU to rapidly deploy strategic and operational communication, command and control capabilities between the AU in Addis Ababa, the regional level and the mission in the field. The C3IS is a key enabler to conduct the AMANI AFRICA II exercise, to operationalize the ASF and to manage African-led peace support operations.							
	336871	APF Service Contract	To provide the AUC and RECs/RMs with high quality and timely external expertise for facilitating the implementation of programmes related to the Action Plan of the Peace and Security Partnership. A particular focus will be the development of the APSA, via individual long-term assignments, as well as via short-term technical assistance in a wide range of crisis prevention/resolution and post crisis activities, including policy formulation. When needed, this technical assistance could also support strengthening the coherence between the APF and RIPS in the peace and security area.							
	327360	JFA Salaries II	To see the AUC Peace and Security Department continue to be the driving force of the AU Peace and Security Agenda on the continent, through an enhanced capacity and organisation in line with its ambitions							
	327370	JFA African Union Liaison Offices II	African Union Liaison offices (AU LO) are non-permanent structures of the African Union present in the most security and peace relevant regions in Africa. Their role is to support the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the AU Commission, to participate in follow up mechanisms provided by peace agreements and to support their implementation. The programme is a multi donor activity, taking into charge staff and operational costs of the AU LO.							
APF AP 2014-16	371416	JFA AU Liaison Offices III	African Union Liaison offices (AU LO) are non-permanent structures of the African Union present in the most security and peace relevant regions in Africa. Their role is to support the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the AU Commission, to participate in follow up mechanisms provided by peace agreements and to support their implementation. The programme is a multi donor activity, taking into charge staff and operational costs of the AU LO.							
	375189	JFA AU Liaison Offices IV	African Union Liaison offices (AU LO) are non-permanent structures of the African Union present in the most security and peace relevant regions in Africa. Their role is to support the Peace and Security Council (PSC) and the AU Commission, to participate in follow up mechanisms provided by peace agreements and to support their implementation. The programme is a multi donor activity, taking into charge staff and operational costs of the AU LO.							
	373209	JFA Salaries III	To ensure that the AUC Peace and Security Department continue to be the driving force of the AU Peace and Security Agenda on the continent, through an enhanced capacity and organization in line with its ambitions.							
	366481	Interim African Peace and Security Architecture Support Programme (APSA SP II)	The objective of the intervention is to strengthen the capacity and efficiency of the AUC, RECs and RMs to prevent and/or respond to crises in Africa. The action focused on activities required to enable the AUC and the RECs/RMs to sustain their activities and to finalise and politically endorse the key African peace and security strategies, such as the APSA Roadmap.							
	380897	African Peace and Security Architecture Support Programme III (APSA SP III)	To contribute to peace and security in Africa, thus providing the necessary conditions and pre-requisite for development, in line with the AU's objective to 'Silence the Guns by 2020'.							
RIP West Africa	345376	ECOWAS-EU Small Arms Project	To reduce effects of conflicts and violence through institutionalised, coordinated prevention and management and establishment of peace architecture for resilient communities.							
	355873	Technical Assistance for Implementation of EU support to ECOWAS Regional Peace, Security and Stability Mandate	To provide a technical assistance team (long term and short term expertise) to play an advisory role, to manage and supervise project EU ECOWAS PSS							
	368246	ECOWAS Grant - Strengthening Peace, Security and Stability in West Africa	To support ECOWAS to execute its conflict prevention and resolution mandate in a sustainable way notably by executing a shift from a reactive to a preventive mode in acquiring increased strategic, operational, and management capacities							
	380850	ECOWAS Grant - Strengthening Peace, Security and Stability in West Africa II	Grant funds three projects: 1. Management of Small Arms and light weapons in Nigeria (complementing the ECOWAS EU Small Arms project, most of budget), 2. Study tour to Lyon for West African Police Information Systems initiative (WAPIS), 3. Strengthening ECOWAS operational capacity to integrate gender in the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture							
RIP Central Africa	359795	ECCAS - Devis Programme n°4 de croisière et de clôture	The action "Devis programme 4" is the last programme estimate of the program "Programme d'appui à la CEEAC en matière de Paix et de Sécurité" (PAPS II) and is aiming at continuing the support to the ECCAS in order to sustain capacities in the area of peace and security							

Colour legend:

	In all significant respects, standards have been met
	Some standards are not met
	Significant deviation from the standards
	Too early to assess or sufficient information not available

REPLIES OF THE COMMISSION AND THE EEAS TO THE SPECIAL REPORT OF THE EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS

"THE AFRICAN PEACE AND SECURITY ARCHITECTURE: NEED TO REFOCUS EU SUPPORT"

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

III. EU support to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) both in terms of capacities as well as of financial ownership, has been instrumental in contributing to the development of this architecture – although expected results have not systematically been reached.

Contributing to salaries or other operational costs is not an issue in itself as long as it is linked to achieving results and is part of a wider support strategy with a clear exit strategy.

IV. The EU did set specific priorities for its support to APSA. It is in the EU's specific interest to support African solutions to African peace and security problems in order to stabilise Africa. This is the core objective of the EU's support to the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA). It is a long term endeavour, for which results cannot be measured immediately.

Operationally, the EU objective is to be reached through a clearly formulated strategy: the 2016-2020 APSA Roadmap¹. The implementation of this Roadmap is directly supported through a set of programmes, especially the ongoing third phase of the APSA Support Programme ('APSA III')². The activities under APSA III are further detailed through annual work plans, which allow for a prioritisation of EU's support and for benchmarking of concrete results against concrete objectives.

In order to deliver on those results, the Commission covers a set of activities, the implementation of which requires supporting operational costs such as trainings, travels, and salaries of the African Union Commission (AUC) Peace and Security Department staff. Financing these costs has been essential to achieve the main objective of the EU support.

V. The lack of information on results does not mean that there is a lack of results. Consequently, it cannot in itself be considered to be hampering the delivery of the EU's support.

The late signature of contracts and retroactive financing is very often due to belated requests and insufficient adequate information from the Organisations implementing EU's aid.

On coherence, the Commission stresses that significant progress has been made with regards to making a more coherent use of financing instruments.

In particular, the Commission has put in place an informal network of APSA focal points. The network facilitates consultations within the Commission during the identification and formulation of both APF (African Peace Facility) APSA support programmes and Regional Indicative Programmes (RIPs). In addition all relevant Commission Services /EEAS participate in internal Quality Support Groups during which peace and security programmes are discussed and complementarity between instruments is reviewed.

¹ <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/2015-en-apsa-roadmap-final.pdf>

² https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/annex-9-ausp-3_en_0.pdf

VI.

(i) The Commission and the EEAS accept the recommendation. However, ad hoc support to operational costs may still be appropriate under certain conditions.

(ii) The Commission accepts the recommendation.

INTRODUCTION

Box 2: An example of intervention under the APSA

This case is a good practice example of coherent use of the EU's tools to support the APSA's positive intervention in the Gambia through ECOWAS (Economic Community of the West African States): long-term capacity building of ECOWAS in the area of peace and security through the African Peace Facility and the Regional Indicative Programme combined with an African Peace Facility support to the ECOWAS Mission in the Gambia (ECOMIG) itself (first through the Early Response Mechanism, then through the Peace Support Operation envelope³).

6. The current status of AU member states financial contributions to the Peace Fund is USD 42.4 million. USD 39.9 million was collected for the year 2017 alone – the most important amount contributed by African Union member states since its establishment in 1993.

7. The development of APSA roadmaps has indeed been an African owned process, but one which has been supported by the EU through the provision of technical assistance and the facilitation of meetings and seminars as part of the APSA Support Programme II.

OBSERVATIONS

23. On this issue of financial ownership and sustainability, the Commission and the EEAS acknowledge the importance for the African Union and the African SROs to gradually increase their share of the funds needed. This is why the EU is supporting the AU's initiatives on the matter through off-budget financing means (art. 41.2 TEU), in particular the Kaberuka process and the implementation of the 0.2% levy on imported goods. As a consequence, the financial ownership of the APSA by the AU is already increasing. For example, in 2018, 57% of the salaries of AUC short-term personnel working on peace and security programmes will be covered by AU Member States contributions, and only 15% by the EU (against 34% in the previous 16 months). Overall, these efforts have already resulted in the AU assuming a larger part of its 2018 budget: 41,3 % in 2018 (USD 318 million out of 770 million) instead of 26,2 % in 2017 (USD 205 million out of 783 million). Other donors that are active in supporting APSA are Norway, the UK, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands.

The part of the APSA operational costs being funded by the AU Member States is therefore progressively increasing. Rather than more dependency, the figures show a path towards less dependency on donor support.

Donor support to EU African partners in the area of the APSA cannot reasonably be expected to fully come to an end in the near future. Moreover, the issue of financial ownership and sustainability is one of opportunity and political choice. Since, as explained above, it is in the EU's own interest to support the APSA, there is no direct justification to stop financing its basic operational costs as long as the Commission, the EEAS and the EU Member States continue to view this support as a relevant strategic tool to stabilise Africa.

³ Commission Decision C(2017) 8294 final OF 12.12.2017

24. The Commission and the EEAS refer to the principle of partner ownership as set out in several international agreements, such as the agreement of Monterrey 2003⁴. These principles mean that overall ownership of support should be in the hands of the partners (see also our reply under 28).

The African Union has adopted a clear plan to achieve financial sustainability by 2020. The EU, which financed technical experts hired by the AUC to assist developing the plan, has welcomed the measures included in it. EU's future support will be aligned with the plan. Measures to ensure sustainability included in the plan entail ensuring AU Member States contributions so that 100% of AUC operational costs and 25% of peace support operations costs are covered by them by 2020. A specific 0.2% levy over eligible imports is being put in place by AU MS to this end (Kaberuka plan).

In addition, the EU is supporting African Union Commission's reform of its financial and administrative management systems to become compliant with international standards. The Commission has supported such reforms by technical assistance to strengthen accountancy, internal audit, procurement and asset management and progress is acknowledged in a review of AUC's systems of April 2018⁵. The Commission intends to further assess the AUC systems in depth by the end of 2018.

Box 3 - The ups and downs of a regional early warning system

Second alinea: Through EU support (mainly PAPS II– Political Affairs, Peace and Security - under the 10th EDF RIP), the capabilities of MARAC (Mécanisme d'Alerte Rapide d'Afrique Centrale) have been developed. For example, it enabled the acquisition and provision of equipment for its Strategic warning room. However, following the end of PAPS II, ECCAS failed to build upon this progress, notably because a significant part of the technical staff was laid off.

Acknowledging this issue, the EU and ECCAS agreed that a minimum standard of business continuity ought to be supported through the APF-funded APSA Support Programme III. This is the reason why this programme contains specific provisions to support some MARAC capacity building activities in the 2017 and 2018 ECCAS work plans.

This is understood as a gap-filling measure while the preparations for the contractualisation of the Central Africa 11th EDF RIP peace and security programme are being finalised. One of the expected results of this upcoming programme is to keep on strengthening MARAC's capacities, while using the lessons learnt from PAPS II in terms of sustainability.

26. The Commission and the EEAS consider that steps are already being taken in this direction. Taking the example of the JFA (Joint Financing Arrangement) Salaries programme, the following progress has been made for 2018:

* As compared to the previous phase of this EU support (JFA Salaries IV), the EU's share of the total budget is reduced from 34 % to 15%. Moreover, AU Member States' pledges share for 2018 represents the majority of the total budget as a result of the efforts of the AUC to reduce the number of positions to be financed by partners.

⁴ <http://www.un.org/esa/ffd/monterrey/MonterreyConsensus.pdf>

⁵ The assessment was carried out by Ernst & Young and the report was issued on 16/04/2018 (Ares(2018)2249815)

* Positions financed by partners are limited to P3 and P4 (i.e. specialized staff) while all general staff positions have been taken over by the AUC. At present, they represent 12.6% of the positions financed under the present JFA, which is a major improvement as compared to the previous years.

* Partners and the AUC have agreed that the AUC will continue to progressively cover the staff costs of its personnel implementing peace and security programmes to enable partners to shift their support from operational to programmatic costs. This agreement is part of the JFA exit strategy.

28. The Commission and the EEAS refer to the principle of partners' ownership, and consider that they did set specific priorities for their support to APSA. These were discussed and agreed with the African Union Commission and African Regional Economic Communities during the formulation of the APSA Roadmap 2016-2020⁶. The Roadmap has a clear objective to support African solutions to African peace and security problems. The implementation of this Roadmap is supported through a set of programmes, in particular the ongoing third phase of the APSA Support Programme ('APSA III'). The activities under APSA III are further detailed through annual work plans⁷, which allow for a prioritisation of EU's support and for benchmarking of concrete results against concrete objectives.

In order to deliver on those results, the Commission therefore covers a set of activities, the implementation of which requires supporting operational costs such as trainings, travels, and salaries. Financing these costs has been essential to achieve the objective of the EU support.

30.

(c) The EU decided to transfer the entire IGAD RIP allocation to the Trust Fund for purposes of coherence, among other things. Most of the allocation is being directed to activities related to peace and security, resilience and migration. Using the Trust Fund provided greater coherence – for example, where the actions envisaged under the RIP were more appropriate for or contributed substantially to the emergency migration-related objectives of the Trust Fund.

(d) The concern with this risk is one of the reasons why the EU remains committed to continue working with the AU.

(e) Military expertise is available in the EU delegation to the AU where the programme is managed. This military expertise can rely, when necessary, on expertise available at EU regional delegations. Additional expertise has been recruited at EEAS headquarters in 2018.

For activities under the RIP, staff with military profiles are not required as these programmes are development programmes.

Additionally, a number of new Commission posts were allocated to Delegations in order to manage work related to the Trust Fund for Africa, part of which relates to peace and stability objectives.

37. Regarding unanimity, article 13 of the AU PSC (Peace and Security Council) protocol states that single majority (on procedural points) and two-third majority (any other point) suffice.

49. An external review performed in April 2018⁸ indicates that AUC systems have been strengthened.

⁶ <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/2015-en-apsa-roadmap-final.pdf>

⁷ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/annex-9-ausp-3_en_0.pdf

⁸ The assessment was carried out by Ernst & Young and the report was issued on 16/04/2018 (Ares(2018)2249815)

ECCAS Heads of State discussed in March 2018 a reorientation towards a mandate clearly focused on peace and security and ECCAS is now working on a new "Central African Commission" to take up ECCAS' activity.

Regarding ECOWAS, reforms were stalled due to lack of consensus by its Member States and consequently changes in its business processes have been postponed to June 2018. An EU pillar assessment of the ECOWAS Commission is envisaged in the first quarter of 2019.

50. The Commission's approach to the provision of technical assistance to the AU Commission has been revised. Technical assistance is now being provided on a targeted basis and based on requests made by the AU Commission. Over the year 2017, 9 experts were deployed. Their assignment was not specific to programmes but rather focused on transversal and organisational issues critical to the functioning of the AU Commission for APSA development.

53. Most of the contracting delays are due to the AUC and SROs difficulties to present financing proposals of acceptable quality in due time.

Following discussions at the European Commission/African Union Commission Steering Committee of 24th May 2017, the AUC has reinforced in 2018 the Programme management team in charge of EU funded programmes by contracting 4 additional staff. The Commission expects that this will result in an improvement in the quality of proposals and reporting to the EU.

(c) The technical problems with the Commission's information system have had a very marginal impact on contracting, financing and implementation delays – especially when compared to problems highlighted in points 53 (a) and (b). In substance, such technical problems only affected two of the audited contracts and delayed their signature by a few weeks each.

54. Most of the contracting delays and retroactive financing is often due to belated requests and insufficient information from the Organizations implementing EU's aid.

Specific measures have already been put in place by the Commission, including an increase of available human resources to manage APF programmes. The AUC has also taken measures in this regard by reinforcing in 2018 its Peace and Security Department's Programme Management Team, which is in charge of managing EU-funded capacity building programmes.

Box 5 -Retroactive financing of the APSA Support Programmes

Second alinea: With regard to the second APSA Support Programme contract, it should be noted that, in spite of contracting delays, the main output was actually delivered, since business continuity allowed the finalisation of the APSA Roadmap.

56. The Commission and the EEAS agree that there is a wide range of potential instruments and confirm that steps have been taken to optimise the comparative advantages of these instruments. There is for instance coordination between the APF and the RIPs – including the recent staff cost assessment and transfer exercise. Since 2016, there is a clear division of labour based on comparative advantages between RIPs and APF, so that the role of both instruments is clearly defined. The Commission has put in place an informal network of APSA focal points which includes regional delegations, geographical units and the unit in charge of managing the APF. The network facilitates consultations within the Commission during the identification and formulation of both APF APSA support programmes and RIP programmes. In addition all relevant Commission Services /EEAS participate in internal Quality Support Groups during which peace and security programmes are discussed and complementarity between instruments is reviewed. Within the framework provided by the APSA Roadmap, the needs for the operationalisation of APSA at regional level are prioritized by regional programmes under the 11th EDF RIPs.

Moreover, the APF is not only well suited for financing short-term needs. The roles of the different instruments are well defined in their respective basic acts as well as in the guidance notes. The APF scope is wider than financing short-term African-led military PSOs, since its ultimate objective is the building of African capacities in the peace and security domains, notably around the APSA. This is – by definition – a long term endeavour, which the APF is mainly financing through pluriannual APSA Support Programmes. See also reply to paragraph 58.

57. The JFA Salaries contracts funding for long-term staff posts is a transitory measure agreed by international partners to cover long term positions while the AUC designs and implements its ongoing Human Resources reform.

58. In addition to the informal network mentioned in paragraph 56, there are multiple instances of ad hoc coordination for a complementary and coherent use of all relevant instruments.

This is for example the case in the following instances:

* for Somalia, EEAS and Commission meet regularly to formulate and implement a comprehensive approach to support the transition from conflict to recovery. This entails a continuous analysis on the coordinated use of the most appropriate instruments: the APF to support AMISOM, the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) for recovery, the NIP (National Indicative programme) for state building, and CFSP for training the Somali National Army and the IcSP (Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace) for early stabilization actions.

*the same regular coordination has been put in place on the Sahel region, where the APF support to the G5 Joint Force makes part of a wider strategy to foster stabilization using the EU TF, the IcSP and the NIPs to ensure the presence of the different services of the State in conflict areas

More generally, such ad hoc coordination takes place whenever a specific crisis arises (Gambia, Guinea Bissau).

59. The Commission agrees that monitoring can be further strengthened in particular in what refers to the formulation of indicators but stresses that the systems in place provided valuable qualitative information.

(a) The Commission agrees that indicators can be strengthened to make them more specific in future programmes. However they provided valuable qualitative information which allowed to improve capacity building programme design, as recognized by the 2017 APF external evaluation.

(b) Even if indicators were in some cases too much activity oriented and therefore of limited value to measure results, they did serve the purpose of facilitating the monitoring of the delivery of the agreed outputs and ultimately the coherence between programme implementation and the approved programme design.

(c) Contracts were signed late because of the implementing organisation's difficulties to present financing proposals of acceptable quality in due time.

60. An overall external evaluation of the APF for the period 2014-2016 was carried out in 2017 (report published in March 2018⁹). It contains specific conclusions and recommendations on APSA-related capacity building programmes. The Commission and the EEAS will take them into account for the drafting of the APF action programme 2019-2020.

⁹ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/sites/devco/files/apf-evaluation-2017-vol._1_en.pdf

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

61. EU support to the APSA since its creation back in 2004, both in terms of capacities as well as of financial ownership, has been instrumental to contribute to the development of this architecture – although expected results have not systematically been reached.

62. The EU did set specific priorities for its support to APSA. It is agreed by the Commission, the EEAS and the EU Member States that it is in the EU's specific interest to support African solutions to African peace and security problems in order to stabilise Africa. This is the core business of the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA), which the EU is supporting. It is a long term endeavour, for which results cannot be measured immediately.

Operationally, the EU objective is to be reached through a clearly formulated strategy: the 2016-2020 APSA Roadmap. The implementation of this Roadmap is directly supported through a set of programmes, especially the ongoing third phase of the APSA Support Programme ('APSA III'). The activities under APSA III are further detailed through annual work plans, which allow for a prioritisation of EU's support and for benchmarking of concrete results against concrete objectives.

In order to deliver on those results, the COM covers a set of activities, the implementation of which requires supporting operational costs such as trainings, travels, and salaries. Financing these costs has been essential to achieve the main objective of the EU support. Contributing to salaries or other operational costs is not an issue in itself as long as it is linked to achieving results, as it is part of a wider support strategy and as a clear exit strategy is outlined.

63. The Commission and the EEAS are of the view that administrative reforms at the African Union have started to yield results.

The Commission has provided support to the AU Commission reforms through the contracting of dedicated technical assistance to strengthen accountancy, internal audit, procurement and asset management among other areas through two specific contracts. For further details see reply to paragraph 23.

Recommendation 1:

Foster AU ownership of the APSA and refocus EU support

The Commission and the EEAS accept the recommendation. However, ad hoc support to operational costs may still be appropriate under certain conditions. Contributing to salaries or other operational costs is not an issue in itself as long as it is linked to achieving results, as it is part of a wider support strategy and as a clear exit strategy is outlined.

64. Contracts were signed late mainly because of belated requests and insufficient adequate information from the Organisations implementing EU's aid.

Delays in contracting did not prevent the achievement of the main outputs in most of the cases. For example, the late signature of the second APSA Support Programme did not prevent the finalisation of the APSA Roadmap.

On the issue of monitoring, an overall external evaluation of the APF for the period 2014-2016 was carried out in 2017 (report published in March 2018). It contains specific conclusions and recommendations on APSA-related capacity building programmes. The Commission and the EEAS will take them into account for the drafting of the APF action programme 2019-2020.

When looking at the coherent use of financing instruments significant progress has already been made – especially when considering the complementarity between the APF and the RIPs (informal monitoring systems referred to in paragraphs 56 and 58, mutual consultation during quality support groups but also between the APF and the IcSP and ad hoc coordination referred to in paragraph 58).

Recommendation 2:
Interventions should be consistently results-based

The Commission accepts this recommendation.

Event	Date
Adoption of Audit Planning Memorandum (APM) / Start of audit	24.1.2017
Official sending of draft report to Commission (or other auditee)	27.4.2018
Adoption of the final report after the adversarial procedure	26.6.2018
Commission's (or other auditee's) official replies received in all languages	18.7.2018

PDF ISBN 978-92-847-0338-8 doi:10.2865/466192 QJ-AB-18-016-EN-N

HTML ISBN 978-92-847-0378-4 doi:10.2865/31039 QJ-AB-18-016-EN-Q

The member states of the African Union established the African Peace and Security Architecture (APSA) in 2002 as a long-term structural response to the peace and security challenges on the African continent. Through the APSA, the African Union and mandated sub-regional organisations have access to tools which help them to prevent, manage and resolve conflicts.

We examined the EU's support for the development of the APSA, concluding that the support has had a poor effect and needed refocusing. The APSA has been for many years heavily dependent on donor funding and the EU support had been focused on contributing to APSA's basic operational costs. We make a number of recommendations for improving the EU's approach, aimed at fostering African Union's ownership of the APSA, refocusing EU support and making the Commission's interventions consistently results-based.



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