

The EU and Africa

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Module Summary:

This course proposes to explore the complex and evolving relationship between the European Union (EU) and Africa, examining historical ties, contemporary partnerships, and future prospects.

It will examine the intertwined histories of European integration and Africa, analyzing how the development of the European project has influenced and been influenced by Africa's own historical, political, and economic trajectories. From the colonial era through the post-World War II push for European unification, to the modern policies of the European Union (EU), the course will highlight the deep connections and circulations between these regions.

To understand the driving force behind current relations between Europe and Africa, we need to go back to the imperial origins of this relationship. From the "scramble for Africa" in the 19th century, to the conceptualization of a united political entity "Eurafrica" in the interwar years, the question of institutionalizing and perpetuating relations between Europe and Africa has peppered the history of the construction of these two entities into as integrated geopolitical areas. After the Second World War, the question of relations with Africa had a lasting influence on debates on the construction of Europe, to the point of raising the question of whether European construction itself was not conceived as a policy of imperial management. This unequal, overtly hierarchical relationship has gradually been transformed, with the advent of African nation states, into one of cooperation and interdependence, a kind of strategic partnership between the two continents.

The course will consider the impact of the origins of the relationship between the EU and Africa on this paradigm shift brought about by the decolonization of colonial empires, and the limits of this change. Indeed, the history of relations between the EU and Africa is also that of the complex process of transforming colonial relations into international relations. More broadly, this course will lead students to consider the legacy of empires on the current international system, and in particular the way in which French, Belgian and British empires have sought to adapt to an international order based on nation states, as well as African agency in influencing Europe's global agenda.

This course will take a historical and analytical perspective on relations between Western Europe (EEC/EU) and Africa. The aim is to understand how these relations have evolved from colonial times to the present day, through the study of a number of historical facts and economic, political and social issues (on trade, development, migration, etc.).

Assessment:

- A group work paper
- A presentation
- A final test (MCQs and SAQs) during the last class

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