

Human Security in Africa during the COVID-19 Pandemic and Sustainability of the EU-Africa Relationship System

Marina GLASER (KUKARTSEVA)

mglaser@hse.ru

Anastasia LOMOVA

lomova.dip@gmail.com

Abstract: *The article, using the example of the human security crisis in Africa and the EU caused by COVID-19, explores the likelihood of transformation of the entire EU-Africa relationship system. The key threats and challenges to the humanitarian security environment of African countries are examined, the example of its social subsystem detailed as the most complex and multifactorial. The internal and external risks for the EU are analysed in the implementation of the African vector of its foreign policy in a pandemic situation. It is argued that, despite the difficulties encountered for both sides, the development of the EU-Africa relationship system itself will not change its path: the system remains balanced and based on a pragmatic approach.*

Key words: *human security, Africa, COVID-19, European Union, migration.*

Introduction

The term ‘human security’ first entered the political vocabulary in 1994 in the text of the Human Development Report of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It was interpreted as a dual concept: firstly, as “safety from the constant threats of hunger, disease, crime and repression”; and secondly, as “protection from sudden and hurtful disruptions in the pattern of our daily lives—whether in our homes, in our jobs, in our communities or in our environment.”¹ By the beginning of the 2000s, human security had become a global norm, understood as a

¹ The United Nations Development Program, *Human Development Report, 1994*, <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/255/hdr_1994_en_complete_nostats.pdf> (accessed 6 May 2020).

consensus among a large group of states and international organizations that individuals and communities have the right to protection from harm and that other entities (including states or organizations) can and should assist them in providing this protection.

The European Union considers human security an important part of its international political identity. This is reflected both in official documents of the European Union—for example, the EU Global Strategy on Foreign and Security Policy (2016)²—and in well-known reports: the Barcelona Report (2004), the Madrid Report (2007), and the Berlin report of the *Human Security Study Group* (2016).³

An important direction for the EU's promotion of human security is Africa. There is a wide range of reasons for this, at the core of which are Africa's colonial past and historical memory; the EU's role in the architecture of modern humanitarianism as one of the key providers of humanitarian assistance; and the security of the European Union itself, which is in the focus of huge migration flows from North Africa and sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, the EU, together with African countries, has developed a number of complementary programs and projects that emphasize the various features of the continent so that assistance can be concrete and effective.⁴ The ultimate goal declared in the treaties is to create and strengthen the EU-

² European External Action Service, *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe. A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy*, 2004, <http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf> (accessed 5 July 2020).

³ "A Human Security Doctrine for Europe," *The Barcelona Report of the Study Group on Europe's Security Capabilities*, 2004, <<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/40209/1/AhumansecuritydoctrineforEurope%28author%29.pdf>> (accessed 5 July 2020); *A European Way of Security: The Madrid Report of the Human Security Study Group*, 2007, <<http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/40207/1/AEuropeanWayofSecurity%28author%29.pdf>> (accessed 5 July 2020); "From Hybrid Peace to Human Security: Rethinking EU Strategy Towards Conflict," *The Berlin Report of the Human Security Study Group*, 2016 [Электронный ресурс], <<http://recom.link/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/The-Berlin-Report.pdf>> (accessed 5 July 2020).

⁴ Council of the European Union, *EU-Africa Relations*, <<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eu-africa/#:~:text=The%20Cotonou%20agreement%20is%20the,countries%20in%20Sub%2DSaharan%20Africa>> (accessed 5 July 2020).

Africa relationship system on the basis of mutually beneficial conditions. The scenario of cooperation within the framework of the created system has been implemented more or less effectively for years.

The COVID-19 pandemic has proved to be an unforeseen scenario malfunction, a black swan that triggered a global human security crisis. Freedom from fear, freedom from want, and freedom to live with dignity have been threatened by both the EU and Africa. The pandemic has revealed the need to explore the characteristics of relations between those who have relatively sufficient resources to ensure their own human security and those who have no guarantees of being protected on their own.

The key questions of the article: Will the interaction of the European Union with Africa help resolve the human security crisis of the continent during the pandemic or could it become a trigger to change the entire system of their relations? Will the EU's human security policy toward African countries (in a situation of slow growth of financial resources and difficulties in compensating for failures in the EU's management effectiveness caused by the pandemic) lead to increased tension in this system, its crisis, or the creation of another strategy?

Hypotheses: The COVID-19 pandemic in Africa, aggravated for the EU by the migration threat, is likely to complicate existing and create new problems in the EU-Africa relationship system, but the development of the system itself will remain in the tube of trajectories. Emissions of accumulated internal stresses in the system are inevitable, but not destructive: even such a powerful factor as the COVID-19 pandemic is not enough for a total reform of the system as far it is necessary to overlap several very significant factors (that are not visible in the medium term).

Theoretical and methodological frameworks of the study

For the study of possible changes within the EU itself and in its relations with Africa, we rely on the concept of European integration, presented in the framework of social constructivism in its conventional version.⁵

The article's human security research is based on the concept proposed by Akihiko Tanaka, with a few modifications.

The human security threats scheme presented by Tanaka indicates the locations of various threats within three differentiated systems.⁶ The first system is a physical one: threats come from the peculiarities of geographical location, landscape, and access to the oceans, and are associated with natural processes. The second system is biological: threats come from biosphere specifics and biodiversity. These include the spread of infectious diseases and pathogens of unknown origin. The third system is social: threats come directly from political and social institutions and from people themselves—wars, conflicts, terrorism, economic crises, trafficking, migration.

In his theory, Tanaka further splits each system into subcategories of threats to human security; in our opinion, this is excessive, leading to the artificial convergence of the systems. There is no need to describe each case of a particular human security threat, since then it would be necessary to create an exhaustive list of threats (which is impossible), and thereby significantly limit the possibilities for further interpretation. The division of human security threats into three systems focuses on its core, thereby forming certain boundaries and filling them with an essence. At the same time,

⁵ Jeffrey T. Chekel, "Constructivist Approaches to European Integration," *ARENA Working Papers*, <https://www.sv.uio.no/arena/english/research/publications/arena-working-papers/2001-2010/2006/wp06_06.pdf> (accessed 6 May 2020).

⁶ Akihiko Tanaka, "Toward a Theory of Human Security," in *Human Security in East Asia: Beyond Crises*, eds. Carolina G. Hernandez, Eun Mee Kim, Yoichi Mine and Xiao Re, 21–40 (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018).

possible aspects, details, and nuances, and a specific differentiated list of human security threats related to the periphery can turn from hypothetical threats into real ones depending on specific conditions. In this regard, we propose to divide the human security threats into two broad categories: conditional and unconditional. Conditional are those that can become a human security agenda in an unpredictable specific situation; unconditional ones relate to the physical aspects of human security, such as life and health, and always exist.

The key research question of the article is explored on the basis of unconditional threats to the social system of human security in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa.

The social system of human security of Africa in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic

According to the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, by the end of 2020, up to 3.3 million people on the African continent may die from coronavirus.⁷ The pandemic has caused a change in the structure of budget expenditures, falling prices for raw materials, and a revision of social obligations that most African states are no longer able to implement fully. In addition, the need to tighten belts has caused resentment not only among citizens, but also among elites. The social system of human security is the most vulnerable, and the key threats to it can be defined by a chain of subsets: increased terrorist activity, increased migration trends, politicisation of the pandemic, and ‘coronisation’ of the population.

⁷ United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, *COVID-19 in Africa: Protecting Lives and Economies*, April 2020, <https://www.uneca.org/sites/default/files/PublicationFiles/eca_covidreporten24aprweb1.pdf> (accessed 4 July 2020).

The intensification of terrorist activities increasing conflict potential (the case of Chad, Nigeria, Niger)

On April 15, 2020, Abubakar Shekau, leader of the Boko Haram terrorist group (connected with the Islamic State terrorist organization), posted online an audio recording about the coronavirus epidemic. He characterized international measures to combat the pandemic as “part of the war against Islam by the forces of evil.”⁸ He condemned social distancing practices and suspension of the pilgrimage to Mecca, arguing that “true Muslims”—by which he means exclusively the followers of his extreme Salafi movement—were “protected from the virus”.

Earlier (March 23, 2020), Boko Haram attacked the village of Boma near the border of Niger and Nigeria (Lake Chad region). It led to the mass deaths of civilians; in addition, 98 government soldiers were killed and 47 people were injured.⁹ Following this, the Chadian military started an operation called Colère de Boma (‘Revenge for Boma’) launched on March 31, aimed at cleansing the territory of the militants. In this regard, it is important that at the time of the terrorist attack in Chad, there were only nine confirmed cases of COVID-19, but the speech of the militant leader caused serious concerns among the population. Such attacks are a kind of test for the stability of a state and its institutions. The demonstration of power by the Chadian military reinforced the image of the Chadian army as a bulwark of the struggle against militant Islamist groups in the region. The operation also

⁸ John Campbell, “Boko Haram’s Shekau Labels Anti-COVID-19 Measures an Attack on Islam in Nigeria,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 2020, <<https://www.cfr.org/blog/boko-harams-shekau-labels-anti-covid-19-measures-attack-islam-nigeria>> (accessed 9 July 2020); “Audio Message on Coronavirus by Abubakar Shekau,” *Unmasking Boko Haram: Exploring Global Jihad in Nigeria*, <<https://unmaskingbokoharam.com/2020/04/19/boko-haram-abubakar-shekau-audio-message-on-coronavirus-april-15-2020/>> (accessed 4 July 2020).

⁹ “Boko Haram Militants Kill Nearly 100 Chadian Soldiers in Attack,” *Reuters*, March 25, 2020, <<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-chad-security/boko-haram-militants-kill-nearly-100-chadian-soldiers-in-attack-idUSKBN21C0VA>> (accessed 4 July 2020).

increased pressure on neighbouring countries to engage their armed forces more actively in the fight against terrorists.

The ability of Boko Haram to carry out such a massive attack itself, along with the previous steady increase in Islamic militants' activity, clearly indicates that Boko Haram and ISIS are gaining great strength, and speculation about the threat of COVID-19 offers them more chances to legitimize themselves. The possibilities of repeat terrorist attacks are being examined, which could lead to fierce and bloody battles in the region. This leads to the next threat to Africa's social security system: uncontrolled migration.

Strengthening migration trends

More than 25.2 million refugees and internally displaced people live in Africa.¹⁰ Most organizations dealing with issues of refugees and displaced people are chronically underfunded, and most migration hubs are located in poor countries with weak health care systems. The vast majority of health care systems in African countries are not able to handle a sharp surge in the number of people infected with COVID-19.

This is illustrated by the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where Ebola and measles have not subsided over the past two years. In the DRC, there are only 50 places in intensive care units (in Burkina Faso and the Republic of Congo, for example, there are 15 and 20, respectively). In Niger, there are only five ventilation systems; in Cameroon and Senegal, there are 20 and 80, respectively. The COVID-19 pandemic could lead to disaster.

¹⁰ Allehone Abebe and Tsion Tadesse Abebe, "How Africa can Reduce COVID-19's Impact on Displaced Persons," *The Institute for Security Studies*, May 12, 2020, <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/how-africa-can-reduce-covid-19s-impact-on-displaced-persons?utm_source=BenchmarkEmail&utm_campaign=ISS_Today&utm_medium=email> (accessed 4 July 2020).

In addition, eight of the ten largest refugee camps in the world are located in Africa (Kenya, Tanzania, South Sudan, and Ethiopia).¹¹ According to information presented by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, 225,000 refugees and asylum seekers, including those evacuated from Libya, live in Niger. With continued militant offensives in the Lake Chad basin, the region is expected to see an increase in the number of asylum seekers. Burkina Faso is also facing a big crisis in the field of migration: there are 840,000 internally displaced persons.¹² It is important that refugee and internally displaced persons' camps are ideal places for the transmission of coronavirus. They are overcrowded and do not have sufficient access to water supply, sanitation, hygiene products, and medicine in general.

There is every reason to believe that many thousands of refugees will move on the continent and go beyond its borders, to Europe particularly. The reverse process is also possible: frightened by COVID-19 and the lack of expected living conditions in the EU, many illegal migrants will want to return to their homeland. Traffickers have already established such routes.¹³

¹¹ The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), *Inside the World's 10 Largest Refugee Camps*, <<https://www.arcgis.com/apps/MapJournal/index.html?appid=8ff1d1534e8c41adb5c04ab435b7974b>> (accessed 4 July 2020).

¹² The United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), *UNHCR Warns Chronic Lack of Resources Contributing to New Crisis in Burkina Faso*, April 7, 2020, <<https://www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2020/4/5e8c3b614/unhcr-warns-chronic-lack-resources-contributing-new-crisis-burkina-faso.html>> (accessed 4 July 2020).

¹³ "Migranti Obrátili, z Evropy Prchají Před Koronavirem. A Platí Za to Víc," *iDNES.cz* (Czech News Agency), April 24, 2020, <https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/zahranicni/spanelsko-migranti-pandemie-koronavirus.A200424_142550_zahranicni_jhr> (accessed 6 July 2020); in English, <<https://rmx.news/article/article/migrants-paying-smugglers-5-400-to-go-back-to-africa-during-coronavirus-outbreak>> (accessed 6 July 2020).

The politicisation of the pandemic: the risk of using the COVID-19 epidemic to achieve political goals

The scale of the epidemic, unprecedented for the twenty-first century, proves that public health care system problems can be used to justify repression of opposition politicians and the public, and to manipulate the vital humanitarian component. In African states, where authoritarian trends existed before COVID-19, the mechanism of restricting the freedoms of the population has risks of increasing both autocratic and populist trends.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni warned about the risk of political opportunism during the pandemic, referring to “the opportunistic and irresponsible politicians who try to distribute food for cheap popularity.”¹⁴ He announced that “anybody involved in that effort will be charged with attempted murder.”¹⁵ At the same time, the presidential elections in Uganda, scheduled for August 2021, were postponed indefinitely due to the pandemic. The opposition accuses J. Museveni of persecuting anyone who dares to challenge his presidency.

The spread of the COVID-19 epidemic has led to the legitimization of a certain set of means and methods of population control, the restriction of civil liberties, and the introduction of tracking technologies. The impact of digital technology on civil liberties is likely to go beyond the current crisis, and African countries also want to keep up with the times. However, only some African countries currently have laws on the protection of personal data and confidentiality, and an even smaller proportion of them are actually implemented.

¹⁴ “President Museveni Addresses the Nation on COVID-19 Situation in Uganda,” *NTV Uganda*, April 28, 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y6AN7ZXKkHk>> (accessed 4 July 2020).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

'Coronisation' of the population and the perception of 'strangers'

The term 'coronisation' means the importation of the virus by foreign citizens coming from countries harbouring high-risk epidemiological areas.¹⁶ The term was quickly politicized and began to spread on social networks, increasing the African population's fear of 'strangers'. This fear has different forms and different directions.

The first direction is anti-Chinese. More and more Africans have expressed dissatisfaction with China's help to Africa in the fight against COVID-19, believing that medical equipment supplied as humanitarian aid is "a means to legally transport the virus from China to Africa."¹⁷ In the wake of a general panic in Nigeria, civil society groups put pressure on the government to "close the state's borders with countries with a high incidence of COVID-19"¹⁸(meaning primarily China), and the Nigerian Medical Association expressed its disagreement with the arrival of the Chinese medical group in the country.

The second direction is anti-European. The Africans expressed their indignation that many Europeans in the midst of the epidemic in their countries were still prepared to come to Africa—for example, in the comments on social networks about the confirmation of the second case of COVID-19 in Senegal on March 3, 2020 (the patient was a French national who arrived in Dakar): "Dear French people, please stay in France until the virus is over ... they have always been a part the greatest misfortunes Africa

¹⁶ Matteo Maillard, "Covid-19: Médias et Réseaux Sociaux Africains Mettent en Cause un Virus venu d'Ailleurs," *Le Monde*, March 6, 2020, <https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2020/03/06/covid-19-medias-et-reseaux-sociaux-africains-mettent-en-cause-un-virus-venu-d-ailleurs603211_63212.html> (accessed 4 July 2020).

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

has ever known ... stay home;”¹⁹ “They colonise us, they coronise us;”²⁰ “The French, as always.”²¹

The death of George Floyd in the USA and the vigorous actions of the Black Lives Matter movement also got a response from among the African population. It affected different countries, and was particularly sensitive for South Africa, with its history of apartheid. Zimbabwean officials decided to rename the street where the US Embassy is located G. Floyd Street.

These events not only revealed issues related to police arbitrariness, but also the connection between racial discrimination and colonialism, neocolonialism, and debt obligations in Africa, as well as gender-based violence related to the murder of a pregnant woman, Tshegofatso Pule, in South Africa.²²

The European Union’s African policy during the COVID-19 pandemic

The EU’s position—unlike a number of other significant international actors, perhaps—is clear: “We have to help Africa in our own interest because if the pandemic spreads there, it will [come] back to Europe.”²³ Therefore the European Union is steadily increasing its cooperation with African countries in the fight against the epidemic, increasing humanitarian assistance to the continent. This fully meets its own European interests in terms both of (political, human, economic) security, and restoring the image of Europeans, tarnished by the COVID-19 pandemic, across the African continent.

¹⁹ “Coronavirus: Un Deuxième Cas est Confirmé au Sénégal,” *TV5MONDE Info*, March 3, 2020, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rX6yPUclQyM>> (accessed 4 July 2020), Comments by Pierre Seck2, SNB 47, Diop Ababacar.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² #JusticeForTshego.

²³ “The Press Conference with the HR/VP Josep Borrell on the Foreign Affairs Minister’s Video Conference,” April 3, 2020, <<https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanExternalActionService/videos/-follow-live-the-press-conference-with-the-hrvp-josep-borrell-on-the-foreign-aff/225685978490712/>> (accessed 6 July 2020).

The European Union has the opportunity to provide financial and other assistance to African countries—for example, to strengthen the humanitarian response by opening safe trade corridors, especially for medical supplies, food, and revamping the health care system infrastructure. The EU's financial support measures for African countries can be divided into passive (debt relief) and active (assistance). On April 8, 2020, the EU launched the Team Europe project. The financial package includes 18.8 billion euros to assist the most vulnerable countries, in particular in Africa (3.8 billion). Most of this funding comes from reorienting existing EU funds and programs. Because of the pandemic, the EU is providing an additional 105.5 million euros to the countries on the Horn of Africa. This package is aimed at financing such projects as supporting medical institutions, food provision, and assistance to refugees and internally displaced people (providing physical protection, housing, water access, food, health care, and education). The proposed measures are fully consistent with the new EU-Africa strategy 'Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa', unveiled in March 2020.²⁴

The European Union's internal risks

The internal risks to the EU cannot be ignored. Ongoing economic and political destabilization in Africa is very painful for the European Union itself, and the EU's economy is damaged by COVID-19. The European Commission's summer forecast emphasized that the recession in EU countries will reach 7.4 percent. The situation is aggravated by uncertainty about the possibility of a second wave of coronavirus and the debates about the need for a common European reaction to the problem. Now the European Union is discussing, firstly, the new multi-year financial program

²⁴ European Commission, *Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council: 'Towards a Comprehensive Strategy with Africa'*, Brussels, March 3, 2020, <https://ec.europa.eu/international-partnerships/system/files/communication-eu-africa-strategy-join-2020-4-final_en.pdf> (accessed 6 July 2020).

2021–2027, and secondly, the creation of an €750 billion economic recovery fund.

Therefore, despite the fact that the idea of activating the internal resources of African countries with the financial dominance of the EU is not new in the European political discourse, it takes on a slightly different meaning in the context of the spread of the epidemic and turns into a management discourse, exchanging urgent humanitarian assistance to Africa in the present for financial control in the future. Not all African countries support that policy. Therefore the European Commission uses financial measures—for example, intends to include such African countries as Mauritius, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Ghana in the list of countries involved in money laundering.²⁵

Another internal risk is serious destabilization on European borders, especially from the south. Migration from Africa to Europe has long been securitized on the European agenda. It has turned into a situation of insecurity: migrants are a threat to the EU's own security, and at the same time they are a vulnerable group and suffer from insecurity.

Today the European Union's development policy is an instrument of border control. Of course, it is impossible to predict accurately the impact of COVID-19 on migration from Africa to Europe, but a number of possible consequences are already being observed more or less clearly, among them toughening measures to cross European borders and reducing migration flows. Hungary used the virus as an excuse to suspend access to the asylum system, and deportations of migrants and refugees have become more frequent—for example, in Malta and Greece. Attacks on refugee boats in the Mediterranean have not been isolated cases for a long time, and are

²⁵ David Ochieng Mbewa, "Four African Countries Added to EU Blacklist for Money Laundering," *CGTN Africa*, May 8, 2020, <<https://africa.cgtn.com/2020/05/08/four-african-countries-added-to-eu-blacklist-for-money-laundering/>> (accessed 4 July 2020). Already on the list are Afghanistan, Iraq, Vanuatu, Pakistan, Syria, Yemen, Uganda, Trinidad and Tobago, Iran, and North Korea.

gradually becoming a brutal strategy of intimidation of migrants that violates both national and international law. Perhaps this practice will continue after the cessation of the spread of the disease.

The EU-Africa partnership clearly demonstrates who benefits: “A mix of positive and negative incentives will be integrated into the EU’s development and trade policies to reward those countries willing to cooperate effectively with the EU on migration management and ensure there are consequences for those who refuse”.²⁶ It seems that if the tendency to increase border closures continues, then in the context of migration, this will lead to an increase in illegal migration channels, an increase in problems in those sectors of the economy of EU countries that depend on labour migrants, and the activation of other international actors in Africa that will undoubtedly use the EU’s damaged image (the African Union claims this too²⁷).

At the same time, during the pandemic, there were some encouraging events in EU countries, such as the release of detained migrants from custody, the suspension of deportation, the provision of social benefits and medical supplies to undocumented migrants, and specific attempts at government level to grant refugee status to persons without documents (for example, in France).

The European Union’s external risks

The fate of the current EU’s missions and operations in Africa is not clear, and European politicians refrain from commenting. Missions and operations

²⁶ European Commission, *Commission Announces New Migration Partnership Framework: Reinforced Cooperation with Third Countries to Better Manage Migration*, Press release, Strasbourg, June 7, 2016, <<https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP162072>> (accessed 4 July 2020).

²⁷ Cedric de Coning, “How COVID-19 is Impacting the African Union’s Operations,” *The Africa Portal*, April 6, 2020, <<https://www.africaportal.org/features/covid-19-and-african-union/>> (accessed 4 July 2020).

of the European Union in African countries, such as the European Union's Capacity Building Mission in Niger (EUCAP Sahel Niger) or the Atalanta operation in Somalia, are still active, but it is not clear whether the scope of their work will remain as it was before the pandemic. In addition, it seems important for the European Union not to fall into the trap of its own obligations: instead of ensuring the security of African countries, there is a risk of reorienting existing programs exclusively to ensure the EU's security and protection against illegal migration.

Conclusion

The EU-Africa relationship system has been built over decades. The European Union has to determine its African policy in the form of a consistent set of tools and directions that can successfully combine its own geopolitical interests with a deep understanding of the complex needs of local communities. This involves implementing a scenario of rapprochement between the two on economic and political axes. The accumulation of organizational skills, coupled with the capabilities of modern communications, does not in itself lead to an immediate breakthrough, but plays a huge role in the progressive nature of the implemented changes. The focus for the EU is the policy of Africa's development, ensuring human security in the continent's countries, protecting the population and protecting the states with the focus on the social system of human security.

The EU-Africa relationship system is designed to be strong enough and not provoke crises. However, some crises are difficult to predict, and their cumulative impact can lead to system-wide failures. The COVID-19 pandemic led to the creation of a generally negative environment, but it did not act as a trigger that turned the system in the direction of devastating consequences and dead ends. The EU-Africa relationship system continues to operate in automatic mode, does not require manual control in terms of the intervention of top officials. This means that EU-Africa relations are not threatened with dismantling: they still have high potential, determined by

the significant interweaving of the European and African continents' security environments.

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