
Italy-Africa Summit: von der Leyen (EU Commission), “our destinies are aligned”. Mr Assoumani (AU), “work together”

“I am very grateful to Italy for putting cooperation with Africa at the heart of its foreign policy and of the G7 Presidency”, said the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, speaking at the Italy-Africa Summit at the Senate in Rome. In her view, “the new Mattei Plan comes as an important contribution to this new phase of our collaboration” with Africa, “and it comes complementary to our European Global Gateway”. The interests and destinies of Africa and Europe “are aligned”, Von der Leyen said, especially in some key sectors such as clean energy, combating climate change, labour, and migration. She then spoke at length on migration, saying: “We must crack down on smugglers who trade on human lives”, and in parallel, “to build legal alternatives to the deadly smuggling routes”. She then mentioned the ongoing cooperation with Ivory Coast, Gambia, Mauritania and Senegal. “Our common approach is clear: we offer more opportunities to come to Europe legally so that people can move, learn and bring their new expertise back home. Mobility must be managed by law, and not by the smugglers”. The President of the African Union, Azali Assoumani, said in his speech: “It is essential to work together to harness Africa’s potential, to develop the continent further, to strengthen our partnership, and above all to put an end to migration flows that are often deadly for Africans. I hope that the Summit will be an opportunity to encourage Italy and other partners to contribute more to enhancing food security and ensuring the transformation of agricultural production systems in Africa”. The UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, for her part, stressed: “The 2030 Agenda is lagging behind. Only 15 per cent of the targets will be met by the deadline”. “For now, it is a failure”. “The commitments made in recent decades have been compounded by the inability to recover from numerous crises”, such as the pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and the conflict between Israel and Hamas.

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