
EU-Africa Summit: Von der Leyen, “time to turn our shared vision into reality”. Ukraine crisis, West to hold virtual conference tonight

“Now is the time to turn our shared vision into reality. It is the time to become operational”, said European Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen, in her closing speech at the EU-AU Summit that ended in Brussels today. Being operational means developing “strategic projects with transformative impact” in infrastructure, with a focus on energy, digital and transport interconnection. On the European side, projects will be supported by a Global Gateway investment package worth €150 billion, which will facilitate the Africa Continental Free Trade Agreement. Young people will also be supported in their education and training so that they learn general and business skills. Finally, a focus on health: facilitating the delivery of vaccines and their local production, and strengthening health systems. Also, a monitoring mechanism will be set up to follow up on the implementation of the commitments taken, von der Leyen went on to explain. A point to be clarified is the waiving of intellectual property rights for vaccines: we will work with the WTO over the next few months, with a view to finding a solution at a meeting between the EU and the AU Commissions next spring, she told the press. Once again, however, the events at the Ukrainian-Russian border stole the limelight. A virtual conference is to be held at 8.00 p.m. tonight to take stock of the ongoing crisis, which will be attended by European leaders, US President Joe Biden, NATO Secretary-General, and EU high representatives.

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