

## High-Level Forum Africa-Europe 2018

### Taking cooperation to the digital age

Austria is holding the rotating presidency of the Council of the European Union in the second half of 2018. In line with the conclusions of the European Council of June 28 2018, Europe needs to take the extent and the quality of its cooperation with Africa to a new level, moving beyond focusing on migration as a common challenge. Austria wants to contribute to this aim.

President Kagame of Rwanda is the Chairman of the African Union for 2018. As an advocate for the advancement of an African single digital market, he has emphasised that a pathway to prosperity for all Africans, especially young people, can only be achieved by infusing African economies with technology and by collaborating with Africa's private sector.

Therefore, **President Kagame and Chancellor Kurz have decided to call for a High-Level Forum** to provide a space for European and African leaders, together with CEOs of major global companies, innovation champions, start-ups and other stakeholders, to reflect and act on what needs to be done to secure prosperity and competitiveness on both continents as well as to deepen the relationship in all its aspects with a specific focus on taking our cooperation to the digital age. **The forum will take place in Vienna, Austria on December 18 2018.**

The High-Level Forum will promote **innovation and digitalisation** as important enablers of our future development, so that everyone can benefit from the ongoing digital transformation. It aims at assessing how current partnerships between Africa and Europe contribute to this goal, complementing the ongoing implementation of the joint declaration of the 2017 Abidjan Summit between the African Union and the European Union, which, among other things, highlighted the importance of unlocking the potential of the digital economy for Africa and Europe. It also aims at contributing to the Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs announced by President Juncker in his recent State of the Union speech.

The **High-Level Forum** will highlight the untapped potential for deepening the partnership in technology exchange and trade as well as their importance for economic growth, creating employment opportunities, building resilient societies and fulfilling the Sustainable Development Goals. In order to harness this potential, political will is crucial for creating the necessary conditions for investment and innovation. Together with President Kagame, Chancellor Kurz will open the Forum at the Austria Center Vienna. During the high-level dialogue segment, political leaders and CEOs will be invited to share their vision on the current and future cooperation between Africa and Europe regarding innovation and digitalisation. Participants will consist of European and African heads of state and government accompanied by relevant ministers, CEOs of highly agile and innovative European and African companies, representatives of start-ups and innovative companies, investors, bilateral and multilateral development partners and civil society representatives.

A **Round Table Programme** will focus on key themes linked to innovation for the digital age in Africa: Agriculture 4.0 (in cooperation with the Austrian Development Agency); FinTech (in cooperation with the Austrian Ministry of Finance); Jobs for the 21<sup>st</sup> century (in cooperation with the Austrian Ministry for Digital and Economic Affairs); Investing in Start-ups (in cooperation with ABAN/aaia/New Venture Scouting); Sustainable Energy Access (in cooperation with SEforALL); eGovernment (in cooperation with the European Commission); Accelerating eCommerce in Africa (in cooperation with the World Economic Forum).

The Forum will be accompanied by **Business to Business (B2B)** as well as Business to Government (B2G) meetings (organised by Advantage Austria/the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber), where entrepreneurs and innovators will exchange their concepts and solutions for the digital age. A lot of innovation is happening both in Africa and in Europe, with many creative start-ups providing solutions for different emerging challenges, and this will be an opportunity to showcase them.

**Side Events** will be organised by LivingLab/Kenya and ECOTEC/Austria (African-European collaboration), the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (cooperation initiative in higher education and research), Brainbows/R20AWS (mobilising finance for climate action), the European Investment Bank (connectivity in Africa) as well as the Austrian Development Agency and the Austrian Foundation for Development Research (ÖFSE) (connecting cities).

