

Historical Assessment of European Union-Nigeria Relations, 1960-2015

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Abstract

This study assessed the EU-Nigeria relations since Nigeria independence from 1960 to 2015. From the earliest beginning of human civilization on earth, history has it that, the world system has varied subjects, principally; states and non-state actors have been in contact and builds relationship. The EU as such falls into this category of maintaining relations with states and building strong European ties with her colonies especially Nigeria. From its birth, the European Union has exhibited political relationship, partnership in form of trade and aid, military role and economic assistance to African countries and Nigeria in particular. The research explores the early years following Nigeria's independence in 1960 and the subsequent establishment of diplomatic ties between the EU and Nigeria. It assesses the historical context of Nigeria-EU relations. The analysis encompasses the impact of Nigeria- EU relations to the development of Nigeria. Additionally, it identifies the EU core interest in Nigeria. With the use of primary and secondary data, this work assessed the relations between EU and Nigeria in fostering economic, social, political, etc. of the country. The study revealed that this relation is asymmetrical as EU has used this to advance its democratic value in Nigeria. Hence, the study made valuable recommendations such as to collaborate extensively on security issues, including counterterrorism efforts, border security, and cybersecurity

Keywords: *European Union, Nigeria, Relations,*

INRODUCTION

Nigeria's relations with the European Union (EU) have evolved over the years since Nigeria gained independence in 1960 (Eyben, 2006). Shortly after Nigeria's independence, the EU member states at the time recognized and established diplomatic relations with Nigeria. The focus was primarily on trade and economic cooperation, with European countries being major trading partners for Nigeria. In its relations from 1970s-1980s: Nigeria faced political instability and economic challenges during this period. The EU provided development assistance and support to Nigeria in areas such as agriculture, education, and infrastructure development. The coming of Nigeria to Military rule and human right abuses brought a strained relations between EU and Nigeria. However, in the 1990s, Nigeria transitioned from military to civilian rule in 1999 restored cordial relations. During this period, the EU supported Nigeria's democratization process and encouraged good governance, human rights, and the rule of law. They also provided development assistance to promote economic growth and poverty reduction.

And in the year 2000, the EU and Nigeria deepened their cooperation in various fields, including trade, investment, development cooperation, and political dialogue. The EU became Nigeria's largest trading partner, and discussions on economic partnership agreements took place. The EU also supported Nigeria's efforts to combat corruption and improve governance. The EU continued to work closely with Nigeria on various fronts, including security, regional stability, and counterterrorism efforts. (Bauer,2000).

By 2015, Nigeria was facing challenges such as the Boko Haram insurgency in the northeast and the need for economic diversification. The EU supported Nigeria's efforts to address these issues,

providing humanitarian assistance, security cooperation, and support for economic development. Throughout the period from 1960 to 2015, the EU and Nigeria maintained a diplomatic relationship based on mutual respect and shared interests. Cooperation expanded from trade and development assistance to encompass various areas such as democracy promotion, human rights, security, and regional stability. The EU has been an important partner for Nigeria, contributing to its socio-economic development and supporting its efforts to address key challenges.

Statement of the Problem

The relations between Nigeria and the EU during the period from 1960 to 2015 was marked by various challenges and opportunities. This study aims to analyze and understand the key issues that affected Nigeria-EU relations during this period. By identifying and evaluating these challenges and opportunities, the research seeks to shed light on the complexities and dynamics of the bilateral relationship, as well as provide valuable insights into the factors that shaped Nigeria's engagement with the EU.

Aim and Objectives

The aim of this study was to assess EU-Nigeria Relations for addressing the impact of this relations in Nigeria. Specifically, the study was guided by the following objectives:

1. assess the historical context of Nigeria-EU relations
2. identify the EU core interest in the Nigeria-EU relations.
3. assess the impact of Nigeria –EU relation

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted qualitative survey which employed a descriptive analysis. The study made use of primary and secondary data sources. The primary data gathered information that were analysed from experts on EU-Nigeria Relations, the use of in-depth Interviews, observations and Focused Group Discussion which was carefully analyzed. The secondary data were gathered from reliable journals, articles, books, etc.

THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF NIGERIA-EU RELATIONS

The birth of the European Union (EU) could be traced to European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) which is its forerunner. The first step in the creation of what would become the EU, however, was only taken with the famous Schuman declaration of 9 May 1950 (Zabadi, 2004). The essence of this according to the then French Foreign minister, Robert Schuman was to enhance and encourage cooperation and oneness between European Countries. By this, he hoped that there would be no reason to resort to the use of force rather an avenue for peaceful negotiation and settlement of internal/ external disputes which evidently would foster peace and cooperation for economic development. In pursuit of peace and avoidance of further conflicts, there was the need for the establishment of unions to enhance cooperation. What gave impetus to the call and move towards European unity was the disastrous effect of the two wars; the First World War and the Second World War, particularly the second world war of 1939 to 1945. The huge damage to Europe by the Second World War opened people's eyes to the danger of rival nation states fighting each other. European Unity was seen as a counter poise against USA and Russia domination (James, 2004). European unity was also seen as a means to secure economic recovery, to defend Western Europe against

communism (Russia) and to give Europe the opportunity to rise again as a “third force” able to stand and defend itself against the two super powers; USA and USSR. Some European argued that European unity would be based on economic, military and possibly political integration. (Adebayo,2015). Looking at the ruins of Europe resulting from the second WWII Winston Churchill and others in 1946 emphasized the need for closer European cooperation and reconciliation between France and Britain.

Immediately, after the second WWII a united European movement appeared in Britain, French council for Europe in France and European council in Germany. Though Britain enthusiasm for a united Europe was under the Labour Government, 1945-1951 and Wilson Churchill was unwilling to involve Britain when he returned to power in 1951, the European nations were forced into a growing measure of cooperation by economic and military circumstances (Hyden, 2006)). Accordingly, it was Ernest Bevin who invited the European nations to come together in the Organization European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) in order to take advantage of the Marshall Plan (1947) and fear of the military might of the Soviet Union led to the signing of the Brussels Treaty of Mutual defense (1948) by Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. From this treaty developed the largest military organisation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949 (Akonor, 2008).

In 1949, the Council of Europe was set up. The council of Europe was a Pan European Organization which has its root in the Brussels Treaty which provided for social and cultural co-operation as well as mutual defense. Its members included Britain, France, Belgium, the neither lands Luxembourg, Iceland, West Germany, Italy, Denmark, Ireland, Greece, Norway, Turkey and Sweden. Austria was admitted in 1946. The council aimed at promoting greater unity between members in economic, social, cultural, legal and scientific matters. At this stage, people continued to push for a stronger European unity to the extent that the movement towards European unity came to be led by two groups- the federalist and the functionalist. The federalist granted a complete union state, political and economic under a supra- national authority, i.e that authority that will control functionalist. Further step was taking in 1951 when three separate communities were emerged. The three communities were the European coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (ECC) and the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC) which came into existence through the treaty of Paris in 1951 and treaty of Rome in 1957. The three communities were merged together through the merger treaty of July 1967 to become the European Communities (EC) formed by six European countries: France, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg. It was formed to enable countries avoid forms of extreme nationalism that had devastated the continent and to address the challenging economic and political business of member countries, (Evrensel, 2010). The need for economic, political partnership and cooperation has always been recognized by European countries. It is therefore on this note that EU considers its partnership beyond Europe as it will not just create more opportunities for economic development of its members but also spread development and extend relationship to countries outside its shores including Africa and Nigeria. Nigeria at independence (1960) was ready to grow her economy and guide her foreign policy. Thus, this opened door to different Associations, Partnerships and agreement and other forms of relationship.

The relationship between EU and Nigeria within the period of 1960 till 2015 can be seen in the different Lome Conventions and the Cotonou partnership Agreement of 2000 (Berry, 2000). Nigeria-EU relations have evolved over time through various agreements and collaborations. One significant aspect of this relationship is the series of agreements known as the Lomé Conventions.

The Lomé Conventions were a set of agreements between the European Union and African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries, including Nigeria. The Lomé Conventions laid the groundwork for the current partnership framework between the EU and ACP countries known as the Cotonou Agreement, which was signed in 2000. The Cotonou Agreement builds upon the principles of the Lomé Conventions but reflects changing global dynamics and priorities.

Overall, the Lomé Conventions played a significant role in shaping Nigeria-EU relations, promoting trade, development cooperation, and political dialogue. These agreements contributed to Nigeria's socio-economic development and helped foster closer ties between the two entities.

Lomé Convention I (1975-1980): The first Lomé Convention marked the beginning of the cooperation framework between the EU and ACP countries. Its main focus was on promoting trade, development aid, and economic cooperation. Nigeria, as an ACP member, benefited from financial assistance and preferential access to the EU market.

Lomé Convention II (1981-1985): The second Lomé Convention built upon the foundations laid by the first one. It emphasized the importance of political dialogue, human rights, and good governance. Nigeria continued to receive financial aid and trade preferences, with a stronger emphasis on structural adjustment programs.

Lomé Convention III (1985-1990): The third Lomé Convention expanded the scope of cooperation, introducing new areas such as agriculture, fisheries, and energy. It emphasized the need for sustainable development and increased cooperation in regional integration efforts. During this period, Nigeria faced significant economic challenges, including falling oil prices, which affected its relationship with the EU.

Lomé Convention IV (1990-2000): The fourth Lomé Convention introduced important changes and reforms. It aimed to strengthen political dialogue, improve governance, and enhance economic cooperation. Key provisions included support for democratization processes, human rights, and the environment. The EU's financial assistance to Nigeria focused on sectors such as education, health, and agriculture. The Lomé IV Convention and the Cotonou Agreement are two separate agreements with distinct historical contexts.

The Lomé IV Convention was a trade and aid agreement between the European Union (EU) and 70 African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries (Adetula, 2008). It was the fourth edition of the Lomé Conventions, which were established to promote economic cooperation, development assistance, and preferential trade relations between the EU and the ACP countries. The Lomé Conventions were named after the city of Lomé in Togo, where the first agreement was signed in 1975. Under the Lomé IV Convention, the EU provided substantial financial aid to the ACP countries, focusing on development projects, technical assistance, and support for agricultural, industrial, and infrastructural development. The convention also aimed to facilitate trade between the EU and the ACP countries by granting preferential access to European markets for ACP products (BINDRA, 2018).

Cotonou Agreement (2000-present): The Cotonou Agreement is a comprehensive partnership agreement between the EU and the ACP countries, replacing the previous Lomé Conventions. The agreement was named after Cotonou, the capital city of Benin, where it was signed in June 2000. The Cotonou Agreement built upon the principles and objectives of the Lomé Conventions but introduced several significant changes (Amin, 2007). It aimed to modernize the partnership between the EU and

the ACP countries, reflecting changing global dynamics and addressing new challenges such as globalization, regional integration, and sustainable development. It emphasized political dialogue between the EU and the ACP countries, focusing on issues such as human rights, good governance, democracy, and the rule of law, provision of financial assistance for development projects in the ACP countries, aiming to reduce poverty, promote sustainable development, and achieve the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals, **encouraged** trade and economic cooperation between the EU and the ACP countries.(Carbone, 2011) It includes provisions for reciprocal market access, regional integration, and cooperation in areas such as agriculture, fisheries, and services and promoted Regional Integration.

IDENTIFYING AREAS OF INTEREST IN EU-NIGERIA RELATIONS

The EU interest varies and can be seen in her relations and aid donor in the different sector. This core interest can be found in: economy, trade, value and democracy (Goldman, 1999). The relations between Nigeria and EU within the period of 1960- 2015 was categorized in two factors: the Economy and Value. This is identified due to several clear statements by EU such as acting “in support of the democratic process in Nigeria” (European Union Commission 2010). The EU’s promotion of the democratic process in Nigeria is also expressed by more specific interests stated, such as the strengthening of the electoral process, aiming at free and fair elections, the promotion of democratic quality and accountability as well as the implementation of democratic principles.

This EU interest in democracy promotion as well as the spread of democratic values is of major importance. EU was promoting its European values, legitimized through its unique history, in order to create a more stable world (Adiele, 2005). Thus, explanations for the EU’s interest in democracy promotion. (Abbey, 1998:78).

Core Interest: Value

Another key interest of the EU is based on share Value. According to the EU, its relation with Nigeria “shall be based on ... shared values of respect for human rights, democratic principles, the rule of law and good governance” (Council of the European Union, 2001). This is a way for the promotion and spread of European values – like human rights, the rule of law and peace – in case that the promotion and sharing of these values is valuable as it is obvious that these values produce relative gains for the EU in its relations with Nigeria, it might become an interesting and pursued goal (Harrison.2000). One example of such an instance might be the promotion of peace through shared values. A peaceful situation in a country, regardless of the type of regime - democratic or military – creates a more stable political situation which also influences the economic stability. Also Cook & Moos (1954), argue that the sharing values or principles commonly agreed upon might be conducive or indeed necessary in order to pursue strategic goals more effectively.

Economy

EU interest in this issue area can be very well explained since the promotion of economic development and relations resemble strategic interests of the EU, which are of highest priority. Accordingly, well-functioning economic relations might be conducive in order to secure a significant position in the international system and to increase his relative gain (Albert, W. Brain, D. & Palitha P. 2005). From 2001 onwards the EU indeed expresses its interest in strengthening mutually beneficial relations with Nigeria “in all areas of common interest” (Article 1.1) (Council of the European Union, 2001). Since Article 1.2 of this Position states the EU’s willingness to support

Nigeria among others in its own process of economic development. This shows that not only the EU, but also Nigeria itself actively pursues economic development. Thus, arguing that the promotion of the Nigerian economy is a common interest, the EU is indeed interested in benefiting from these relations in some ways (Burnside & Dollar, 1997).

Economic relations include trade and investments but also include the development cooperation support that the EU gives to Nigerian to improve its competitiveness and business climate with respect to trade, the EU has remained over the years Nigeria most important trading partner in exports and imports, representing about 40% of Nigeria's total external trade. In terms of investments, EU foreign direct investment, stock in Nigeria stood at 38.4 billion EUWs in 2015 according to EUW cast, representing more than 50% of the overall FOI stock in Nigeria according to United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). Even during the period of recession in 2016, the stock of EU FDI in Nigeria stood at about 37 billion EUWs (Alesina & David, 2000).

The stock of EU FDI in Nigeria shows that European companies have invested in the country, contributing to local growth and job creation (Khakee, 2010). European companies do not come to Nigeria to make quick profit and leave. They do not content themselves with selling without investing in local production. The EU delegation and European Business Organization (EBO) Nigeria, a business group uniting leading European investors and corporate organizations in Nigeria that was launched last year at the 7th edition of the EU Business Forum in Lagos is currently preparing a study mapping the European businesses present in Nigeria.

Also, economic relations include also the support the EU provides to private sector development, business environment and trade facilitation in Nigeria and in the ECOWAS region. Under the 10th and 11th EDF, the EU is funding a number of regional programmes covering economic integration, private sector development, trade facilitation and competitiveness. Example is the Nigerian component of West Africa competitiveness programme, implemented by GIZ (the German Development Cooperation Agency) which an 11 million EUW project seeking to improve competitiveness and exports through values chain development. This project is implemented in seven states and focuses on four value chains namely; tomatoes, ginger, leather and garments.

EU-Nigeria Relations and its Impact on Political Development

The political dimension of the relations between Nigeria and the EU is articulated in Articles 8 to 13 - of the revised Cotonou Partnership Agreement. Article 8 in particular spells out the objectives and the key topics of the political dialogue.

Nigeria and the EU decided in 2008 to take their relationships to a new level through intensified dialogue and enhanced cooperation. Nigeria and the EU drew the main lines for a way forward to intensify their relations.

Following the return of Nigeria to civilian government in 1999, Nigeria has consistently repositioned itself in the EU to advance its national interests.

For example, in 2009, EU and Nigeria signed the Nigeria-EU Joint Way Forward which highlights guidelines for developmental cooperation; focusing on certain priority areas: peace and security, governance and human rights, trade and energy, although the logic of the EU partnership and rests in Nigeria since 1999 seems to be based on purely strategic objectives of the EU interests in Nigeria (Bakale, 2019).

The most far reaching and recent treaty on democracy and good government was the Cotonou Agreement signed in 2000 between the EU and the ACP. Article 9 (1) of the Cotonou Agreement affirms that respect for human rights, democracy and good governance are anchored on the rule of law; “transparent and accountable governance is an integral part of sustainable development”. Similarly, the EU- Africa Strategy 2005, which aims to provide a comprehensive integrated approach for EU-African relations, also emphasizes “good and effective governance” as a “central prerequisite for economic growth and sustainable development”. In contrast to this, however, previous analysis of the EU’s commitment to the promotion of democracy and good governance in ACP has suggested an inconsistent engagement with this principle by the EU. In fact, the EU tends to prioritize its strategic interests when democratization processes and good governance in Member States seem to clash and be asymmetrical with its own policy objectives. The EU’s continued relations, at various points, with several countries in Africa, including Ethiopia, Rwanda, Nigeria, Kenya and Chad, where dubious elections have taken place, demonstrates the EU’s inability, or disinterest, in upholding article 9, which specifies respect for the rule of law and good government. In respect to Nigeria, (Khakee, 2010) noted that promotion of democracy and good governance tended not to be the top priority of EU-Nigerian relations, but rather oil and trade relations.

EU Democracy Support to Nigeria 1999 till date

EU Support	Amount
Democracy	Over 150 million
Innovation and jobs for youth in Nigeria	55 million
Cooperation facility	21.4 million
Covid	500 million

eeas.europa.eu

Political problems including migration, Nigeria’s status as a regional power, the country’s weak internal political system and the EU’s own economic and political interests have also compromised the EU’s engagement in the promotion of Nigerian democracy.

EU-Nigeria Relations and its Impact on Development

In spite of the limitations of EU—ACP relations, some viable and visible projects can be cited that have been funded by Brussels in support of Nigeria’s development efforts. For analytical purposes, the history of EU assistance to Nigeria can be divided into two phases: the period before 1995, and the period since May 1999. In 1995, the EU closed all its projects and suspended its relationship with Nigeria because of the country’s human rights record under the regime of General Sani Abacha (1993—1998). From May 1999, Brussels resumed co-operation with Nigeria, following the restoration of democratic rule to the country (Ampaw, 2002).

In the period before ‘1995, the EU was actively engaged in funding nine projects in Nigeria. These projects were located in various parts of the country and were estimated to cost €415.44 million. They included the Mambilla Tea Integrated programme in Taraba state; the Oban Hill programme in Cross River state; the Katsina Arid Zone programme in Katsina state; and the University Libraries Project in support of state universities nation-wide (Browne, S2006). Other projects funded by Brussels within the same period included the Nigeria Telecommunications Maintenance Training Project in Kano and Lagos states; the Sokoto Environmental Protection programme in Sokoto and Zamfara states; the Middle Belt programme in Kwara, Kogi and Niger states; the North-east Arid Zone programme in Yobe state; and the Oil Palm Belt programme in Rivers and Cross River states.

The amount of finding allocated to each programme, and the amount outstanding for each project before they were all summarily round up in 1995 are illustrated in the below:

EU-Funded Projects in Nigeria prior to 1995

Project title	State of Location	Total (£'M)	Disbursed (£'M)	Outstanding (£'M)	Utilization (%)
Mambilla Tea Integrated Programme	Taraba State	31.80	27.960	3.840	87.93%
Obanhill Programme	Cross River State	27.50	13.750	13.750	50.00%
Katsina Arid Zone Programme	Katsina State	25.00	6.000	19.000	24.00%
University Libraries Project	State Universities	11.50	0.318	11.182	2.76%
NITEL Maintenance Traububg Project	Kano and Lagos	10.50	1.909	8.591	18.18%
Sokoto Environmental Protection Programme	Sokoto and zamfara States	30.60	25.634	4.966	83.76%
Middle Belt Programme	Kwara, Kogi and Niger States	33.00	23.600	9.400	83.76%
North East Arid Zone Programme	Yobe	35.00	33.665	1.335	72.52%
Oil Palm Belt	Rivers and Cross River State	210.54	69.000	141.540	96.19%
Rural Development Programme	Bayelsa				32.77%
		415.44	201.827	213.613	48.58%

Source: EU/Commodity Future trading Commission (CFTC), 1995

Some Economic Reform Projects from the year 2000

9th EDF focal sector 2: Institutional and Economic Reform (01/2009)

Projects	Amount m€	FA Signature	D+3 end Contracting	Project start	End Implem.	Commit. m€	Contracted	Paid	Paid/com. (%)
Technical cooperation facility (TCF)	10.7 ³³	27-may-04	5-may-07	27-may-04	31-dec-07	5.1	5.1	5.1	100%
Study potential contribution to census	0.1	NA	NA	NA	NA	0.1	0.1	0.1	100%
Support to the officer of the NAOI	7.7 ³³	19-nov-04	25-oct-07	19-nov-04	30-jun-10	5.7	5.7	4.5	79%
Support to the officer of the NAOII	4	19-mar-08	19-sep-10	19-mar-08	31-dec-13	2.6	2.6	0.9	34%

Census support initiative	116.5	17-dec-04	15-dec-07	16-dec-04	31-dec-09	116.5	116.2	115.4	99%
Support to reforming institution programme (SRIP-1)	27.6	23-dec-04	20-dec-07	30-dec-04	31-dec-11	24.1	18.5	13.6	56%
SRIP-II	40.0	24-jul-08	17-oct-10	01-jan-09	31-dec-10	29.4	17.3	5.9	20%
Support to law enforcement against economic and financial crimes EFCC	24.7	07-oct-05	31-aug-08	01-nov-05		24.7	24.7	23.9	97%
Support to Nigerian electoral cycle 2006-2011	40	05-sep-06	11-jul-09	05-sep-06	30-jun-11	40	40	31.2	78%
Support to NGOs inside	20	26-sep-07	Jun-10	Sep-08	Jun-11	20	6.7	1.8	9%
Total FS2	287.3					266.4	234.3	201.3	75%
Total 9 TH EDF	480.1					465	357	257	55%

Source: Elaborated by Evaluation Team Based on Individual Project Documents, Monitoring Reports And ECD Finance & Contract Follow Up File (7 Jan. 2009)

EU-Nigeria Relations and its impact on Economy and Trade

One of the main objectives of EU development policy is to facilitate the smooth integration of developing countries into the world economy. (Hettne & Söderbaum, 2005). The EU trade policy is a powerful tool in this respect. The EU believes that trade is a powerful engine for economic growth. While trade alone cannot solve development problems, openness to trade and support for supply capacity are important elements in a coherent development strategy. To facilitate the integration of ACP countries into the world economy, the EU has taken a number of initiatives (Hyde-Price, 2008). The EU has been a major proponent in making development the key issue at the WTO negotiations and it has since been active in seeking a successful outcome of the Doha Development Agenda. The Economic Partnership Agreements are conceived as long-term partnerships based on a comprehensive approach to development. In this context the EU maximizes the trade and investment opportunities for development. Moreover, the EU is developing an aid for trade agenda financed by the EDF and additional resources from EU Member States (Campell, 2009). The twelve EC policies that are part of Policy Coherence for Development are: trade, the environment, climate change, security, agriculture, fisheries, the social dimension of globalization, including employment and decent work, migration, research, the information society, transport and energy (Calderisi, 2006). The EC also offers the GSP + system to those countries that comply with international conventions. This tool implies a coherent approach between trade and governance.

The total volume of trade between Nigeria and the EU has increased over the years about 20 billion EUWs in 2016, 20 billion EUWs in 2017 and 34.4 billion in 2018. Importantly, Nigeria has positive

trade in balance with EU about 2 billion EUWs in 2010, 5 billion EUWs in 2017 and 10 billion EUWs in 2018.

According to the 2018 figures of the National Bureau of statistics, the top three EU countries from which Nigeria imports goods mainly oil refined products, chemicals and machinery are the Netherlands (N1.50 1,640). Trade (377, 569.9) and Germany 9357, 731.5) representatively 27.8%, 7% and 6.6% of the overall imports of Nigeria from the EU countries to which Nigeria export goods are: The Netherlands (N 2.051. 225.5), Spain (1.934, 078.4) and France (N 1,513, 883.7) representing respectively 24.4%, 23.1% and 18% of Nigeria overall exports to the EU.

CONCLUSION

Nigeria-EU relations have evolved significantly since Nigeria gained independence in 1960. The EU has played an important role in supporting Nigeria's economic and social development, and the two entities have engaged in various partnerships over the years. The relationship between Nigeria and the EU has been shaped by a range of factors, including economic, political, and security considerations.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Nigeria was primarily focused on building its economy and establishing itself as a regional power. The EU provided financial and technical assistance to support Nigeria's development efforts, including funding for infrastructure projects, education, and healthcare. In the 1980s and 1990s, Nigeria's relationship with the EU was strained by political instability and human rights concerns

However, in the early 2000s, Nigeria and the EU rekindled their relationship, focusing on trade and economic cooperation. The EU became Nigeria's largest trading partner and provided funding for a variety of initiatives aimed at promoting sustainable economic growth and development.

Overall, the relationship between Nigeria and the EU has been characterized by periods of cooperation and tension, but has remained an important partnership for both parties. As Nigeria continues to develop and face new challenges, its relationship with the EU is likely to remain an important aspect of its foreign policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study made the following recommendations:

- **Strengthen Economic Cooperation:** Encourage and facilitate increased trade and investment between Nigeria and the European Union. Promote business forums, trade missions, and bilateral investment treaties to foster economic ties. Identify and address barriers to trade and work towards a mutually beneficial economic partnership.
- **Promote Development Assistance:** The EU can continue to provide development assistance to Nigeria, particularly in areas such as infrastructure development, education, healthcare, and agriculture. Encourage the Nigerian government to implement policies that promote good governance, transparency, and accountability to effectively utilize the aid.
- **Enhance Security Cooperation:** Collaborate closely on security issues, including counterterrorism efforts, border security, and cybersecurity. Exchange intelligence, share best practices, and engage in joint training programs to combat transnational threats

effectively. Strengthen cooperation in maritime security to tackle piracy and illegal fishing in the Gulf of Guinea.

- **Support Democratic Institutions:** Encourage the Nigerian government to strengthen democratic institutions, rule of law, and human rights protections. Promote free and fair elections, support civil society organizations, and advocate for press freedom. The EU can provide technical assistance and capacity building to reinforce democratic processes.
- **Climate Change and Sustainable Development:** Collaborate on addressing climate change challenges and promoting sustainable development. Support Nigeria's efforts in renewable energy development, climate change adaptation, and mitigation strategies. Facilitate technology transfer, knowledge sharing, and financial support to accelerate Nigeria's transition to a low-carbon economy.
- **Cultural and Educational Exchanges:** Foster people-to-people connections through cultural and educational exchanges. Encourage student exchanges, academic collaborations, and cultural events to promote mutual understanding, cultural appreciation, and academic cooperation between Nigeria and EU member states.
- **Migration and Mobility:** Work together to address the root causes of irregular migration, enhance legal migration pathways, and combat human trafficking. Collaborate on migration management strategies, including border control, capacity building, and information sharing. Support the socio-economic development of local communities to reduce migration pressures.
- **Regional Cooperation:** Nigeria and the EU should collaborate to promote regional stability and economic integration in West Africa. Support regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and contribute to regional peacekeeping efforts. Jointly address regional challenges, such as cross-border terrorism, organized crime, and irregular migration.
- **Health Cooperation:** Strengthen cooperation on public health issues, including pandemic preparedness, healthcare infrastructure, and capacity building. Collaborate on research and development for vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics. Support Nigeria's efforts to improve healthcare access, strengthen healthcare systems, and address public health challenges.
- **Diplomatic Dialogue:** Maintain regular high-level diplomatic dialogue between Nigeria and the EU, including summit meetings and ministerial visits. Engage in strategic consultations to address common challenges, exchange views on global issues, and promote cooperation in multilateral fora.

These recommendations aim to promote mutual understanding, economic growth, security, and sustainable development between Nigeria and the European Union. Implementing these measures will contribute to a stronger and more prosperous partnership between the two entities.

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