

EU boosts aid to Africa by \$10bn

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BBC News, Brussels

The EU has pledged to increase its aid to Africa by \$10bn (£6bn) to \$30bn (£17bn) in the next five years.

The move comes after talks between the head of the EU's executive branch with his counterpart from the African Union in Brussels.

The EU's new aid strategy would make Africa its top priority.

However, it depends on EU leaders being able to agree their next long-term budget - something they have so far been unable to do.

Mass migration

Speaking after the Brussels talks, President of the European Commission Jose Manuel Barroso said it was not just a question of generosity, but of tackling the structural roots of under-development in Africa.

In recent weeks, thousands of African migrants have been trying to enter the EU via the Spanish enclaves of Melilla and Ceuta.

Eleven migrants died and hundreds have been expelled from the enclaves.

African Union head Alpha Oumar Konare said walls and prisons would not solve the problem - people were migrating because of impoverishment.

He called on the EU to keep its promises to open its markets, cut subsidies and drop tariffs.

But the promise of increased aid depends on whether the EU can agree on its next budget, to run from 2007 to 2013.

The budget talks collapsed earlier this year, raising the prospect that Africa will lose out because of Europe's internal wrangling.

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