



## The role of the EU in support of pastoralism and smallholder dairy farming in (Eastern) Africa

*Statement in the European Parliament during the conference on pastoralism and dairy farming  
7<sup>th</sup> Nov 2017, Brussels*

Pastoralism is a way of life and livelihood system that is practised in almost all Eastern African countries (Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Tanzania, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda). Pastoralism contributes in many ways to food security and nutrition in the drylands of Eastern Africa. It directly **supports an estimated 20 million people** in this region<sup>1</sup>, provides **90% of the meat** consumed in East Africa (Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda) and produces **80% of the total annual milk** supply in Ethiopia. Pastoralists also contribute to the dairy value chain, such as in Kenya with camel milk production. Other types of smallholder (sedentary) dairy farming in Eastern Africa also help improve food security and nutrition of the local population and add to local and national economies. Pastoralists and smallholder dairy farmers in Eastern Africa face, however, many constraints that inhibit the possibility to reach their full potential. The foremost challenge is their **insecure access to natural resources** such as land and water; this reduces their mobility, which is central to the pastoral production system. Secondly, pastoralists have **difficulties to access services** such as human and animal health services and education. These services need to be adapted to the mobile way of life of pastoralists. Thirdly, pastoralists make a living by selling their meat and dairy products but they **need improved access to markets**. Whether it be dairy or meat markets, pastoralists need to be able to sell their products at good prices to make their way of life economically viable. Lastly, and basically at the core of all challenges, is **the political marginalisation of pastoralists**. In many regions of the world, marginalisation of pastoralists is decreasing but explicit recognition of and support to pastoralism are still low in Eastern Africa. For instance, the African Union (AU) developed a continental policy framework on pastoralism, which was endorsed by African Head of States in October 2008, but this policy framework has not been a working policy document in many countries, and only a few countries such as Tanzania have endorsed it through their Parliament.

In light of the above, we ask the European Parliament and the European Commission to focus on:

1. **Investment in services and infrastructure adapted to pastoralism.** As stated above, there is often a lack of adapted services but this is also related to insufficient access to relevant infrastructure. Regarding dairying, for instance, this may mean decentralised milk-processing facilities and cooling equipment, but also roads to transport milk from pastoralist areas to urban areas where demand for dairy products is high. Likewise, special attention should also be devoted to the promotion and use of information and communication technology (ICT). Using phones or tablets to obtain information about markets, transport opportunities and security warnings can be vital for pastoralists. Promoting use of ICT by pastoralists can also contribute to knowledge sharing to improve decision-making for accessing markets more strategically. It may also help battle illiteracy, in particular for women and girls who are still often marginalised in pastoralist communities.
2. **Policy coherence for sustainable development.** The EU is a massive milk producer and some of this milk is exported to African countries. Though the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) affect African countries in different ways, it is important to respect the principles of policy coherence for sustainable development. With reference to dairy farming, this means that the impact of EU dairy exports on African markets should be closely monitored. **The biennial EU Reports on Policy Coherence for Development** should explicitly analyse this and pay attention to how EU exports of dairy and meat products are impacting African food producers such as pastoralists. Furthermore, EU companies and cooperatives investing in the dairy or meat sector in Africa should be encouraged to honour the engagements of the Agenda for Change and the EU Consensus on Development and therefore promote smallholder agriculture/ livestock development. Likewise, Corporate Social Responsibility needs to be

---

<sup>1</sup> CAPE AU/IBAR brochure "Introducing the community-based animal health and participatory epidemiology", Nairobi, CAPE Unit, n.d., p. 1. ; cf CELEP 2014.

promoted among European companies doing business in Africa and the Principles for Responsible Investment in Agriculture (RAI) and Food Systems should be supported. In particular, **RAI Principle 5** asserts that “Responsible investment in agriculture and food systems respects legitimate tenure rights to land, fisheries, and forests, as well as existing and potential water uses” and **RAI Principle 7** affirms that “responsible investment in agriculture and food systems respects cultural heritage and traditional knowledge, and supports diversity, including genetic diversity, and innovation.”

3. **Support researchers to analyse context-specific milk requirements and encourage policy makers to implement their findings.** This is necessary to support the real needs of smallholders, pastoralists and other small-scale dairy value chain actors. This is more sustainable than introducing unattainable conditions that push them out of the market. For example, in contexts without steady electricity supply, the point in the value chain at which pasteurisation occurs may need to be re-considered, as raw milk keeps better in the absence of an uninterrupted cold chain.
4. **Promoting dairy development in pastoralist areas should always start by recognising the role of pastoralist women regarding milk.** This would include putting forward their locally appropriate dairy products and their own initiatives in milk processing and marketing. Having access to milk from the herd is part of the identity of pastoralist women. Through marriage, a woman gains rights to this milk. Milk processing and allocation to the family and the market are completely under the women’s control, as are the incomes from dairy product sales. Most dairy “development” projects to collect, process, package and distribute milk (usually far from the point of production) disempower women in this regard, as they do not take into account the cultural constraints of women. For example, women can sometimes have limited access to means of transportation. Therefore, men will bring milk by motorcycle to the collecting points and take control over the selling and pricing of the product, as well as the proceeds from sales.
5. **Overall recognition of the role and the importance of pastoralism.** Though the EU is clearly in favour of pastoralism and this is reflected in certain policies (EU Consensus for Development) and projects (e.g. Global Alliance for Resilience Initiative (AGIR)); the EC should explicitly recognise the role and value of pastoralism (and pastoralists). It could do so by developing a reference document (technical note) that would confirm this positive attitude. Not only would this clarify the course of action of the EC towards pastoralism, it would also be a clear signal towards partner countries, in particular in (Eastern) Africa. In addition, the EU should:
  - a. **Focus increasingly on the important role of pastoralist civil society organisations (CSOs).** CSOs are instrumental to push forward a pro-pastoralist agenda. Together with their international partners, they come up with innovative solutions related to some of the challenges mentioned above, such as Participatory Rangeland Management and Community/Village Land Use Planning. These innovations should be supported through EU development policies and projects. The EU should also support the organisation of local awareness-raising events on the importance of pastoralism, such as Pastoralists’ Days or Weeks.
  - b. **Focus on supporting the African Governance Architecture (AGA).** Local CSOs and interest groups defending pastoralist rights have been making strides to successfully defend their rights. For instance, Kenya’s Ogiek people, an indigenous minority of pastoralists, hunters and gatherers, won a historic case against the Kenyan Government earlier this year, close to a decade after they began their legal battle. **The African Court on Human and People’s Rights (ACHPR)** ruled in favour of the Ogiek and recognised their right to Kenya’s Mau Forest as their ancestral home, and their role in protecting it. The EU can reinforce the AGA so that these cases can be brought to the ACHPR more often. Strengthening the AGA will also help to implement the African Union Policy Framework on Pastoralism, as mentioned in the introduction.

The Coalition of European Lobbies for Eastern African Pastoralism is an informal advocacy coalition of European organisations, groups and experts working in partnership with pastoralist organisations, groups, and experts in Eastern Africa. They collaborate to encourage their governments in Europe and Africa and the EU to explicitly recognise and support pastoralism and pastoralists in the drylands of Eastern Africa. For more information, contact the CELEP focal point Koen Van Troos at [k.vantroos@vsf-belgium.org](mailto:k.vantroos@vsf-belgium.org) or the Eastern African focal point Ken Otieno at [kenotieno@reconcile-ea.org](mailto:kenotieno@reconcile-ea.org).