

How the EU must oppose the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP)

COP27 was hailed by some as a success thanks to its historic decision on the long-awaited loss and damage fund. Yet, COP27 was clearly a failure on all other fronts, as Vice-President Timmermans rightly said in his closing remarks: 'this deal is not enough on mitigation ... we have lost a lot of speed since Glasgow'. Mr Timmermans also stated that countries devastated by the effects of climate change 'deserve our support for the loss and damage they face, but they also deserve our higher ambition to avoid repeat episodes.'

Moving forward from the disappointment of COP27, Europe must now shift its international climate mitigation efforts to other multi-lateral and bi-lateral fronts.

In this position paper, EU Staff for Climate argues that stopping the East African Crude Oil Pipeline (EACOP) is the type of challenge that the European Union (EU) must urgently address. We first briefly describe the context (part 1), then we explain the reasons why EU should intervene (part 2) and, finally, we propose steps towards action (part 3).

1 What is EACOP?



EACOP is a huge fossil fuel extraction project, including **the longest electrically heat traced pipeline in the world** transporting **crude oil** through **1443 km** of highly biodiverse and sensitive landscape in Uganda and Tanzania.

This **USD 5 billion** project would, from 2025, and over its 25 years lifespan release **379 million tonnes of CO₂** into the atmosphere (Climate Accountability Institute – [CAI estimate](#) from October 2022). This corresponds roughly to the yearly CO₂ emissions of France. The main shareholder is **TotalEnergies (62%)** followed by E&P Uganda (15%), TPDC

Tanzania (15%), and CNOOC (8%), a large crude oil company from China.

Opposition to EACOP is fierce locally and internationally, but this has not yet significantly impacted the project's progress. The movement [#STOPEACOP](#) gathers several initiatives aimed at stopping the project, including an AVAAZ petition counting more than a million signatures. In November 2022, the insurance company [Britam backed out from the EACOP project](#), arguing that EACOP and associated oil projects did not meet the IFC's environmental and social standards. Several banks and credit export agencies also announced that they will not support the project.

In Europe, the European Parliament (EP) signed [a resolution on violations of human rights in Uganda and Tanzania linked to investments in fossil fuels projects](#). The resolution points to EACOP's violation of human rights and calls 'for **the EU and the international community to exert maximum pressure on Ugandan and Tanzanian authorities, as well as the project promoters and stakeholders**, to protect the environment and to put an end to the extractive activities in protected and sensitive ecosystems, including the shores of Lake Albert and commit to using the best available means to preserve

IN BRIEF

- EACOP – a huge crude oil pipeline project in Uganda and Tanzania – **is a global climate threat**
- EU Staff for Climate supports the European Parliament resolution on human rights violations linked to EACOP
- **Europe can stop EACOP**, and through a dialogue at the highest level, offer green growth alternatives

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the culture, health, and future of the communities affected and to explore alternatives in line with international climate and biodiversity commitments...’ [emphasis added].

2 Why Europe should oppose EACOP

The EU must uphold and defend its values globally and therefore pursue environmental protection for the current and future generations. As a world leader on climate mitigation, Europe must now take concrete and targeted measures, such as preventing another pipeline from damaging our climate further.

A European giant (TotalEnergies) cannot be allowed to mobilise investments (5 billion dollars) hindering European’s climate mitigation and adaptation efforts (for example, the [Africa-EU Green Energy Initiative](#) (AEGEI) with estimated funding of EUR 15 billion from the EU public institutions and private investors), knowing that it is far more difficult to repair than to prevent damage. Our **European credibility for environmental issues in Africa will be destroyed** if the European market and European economic actors annihilate our green partnership efforts there. Advocating for green development is in vain if we Europeans build pipelines in Africa to burn their oil.

Taking into account the important [Team Europe Initiatives in Africa](#), i.e. the AEGEI, the silence of the European Commission and the European Council on EACOP is inexplicable. Under the false pretext of African sovereignty, it is a tacit consent of neo-colonialist practices, bidding for Africa’s future through the extraction of its resources.

The EP resolution points rightly to the damages that EACOP would cause to the local communities and their environment. The EU has the power and moral obligation to assist Africa in avoiding the “Dutch disease” trap due to oil revenues and in reaping the benefits of green growth fully.

3 Steps to get out of EACOP – conclusion

Dialogue and partnership are at the heart of European cooperation with Africa. This dialogue must be frank and honest. The EU must express clearly its opposition to EACOP and condemn the project as a climate threat. In addition the EU must find the courage and means to help Tanzania and Uganda to stop the project and work on alternatives. This needs endorsement at the highest levels. Both Europeans and Africans must abandon fossil fuel investments and carbon-based growth.

Europe must also upscale its green growth support through ambitious programmes aiming to create jobs in Tanzania and Uganda. These jobs should create green growth in fields such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, water and sanitation, circular economy, sustainable cities and green transport. Education and gender equality should support their sustainable development.

Carbon taxes imposed at European external borders should be raised to prevent new projects such as EACOP from even being considered by European companies. Like in much environmental legislation, the first steps are to prevent further harm from being done and to regulate new projects.

Working on European demand for fossil fuels through price mechanisms (favouring renewable energy) is necessary. EACOP is not an answer to the current energy crisis as it is not scheduled to be completed until 2025.

Most importantly, the EU must apply a conditionality to its [Team Europe Initiatives](#) in Tanzania and Uganda, i.e. the AEGEI, on abandoning the EACOP completely and prioritise a green transition that benefits Africa environmentally, socially and economically.

[EU Staff for Climate](#) is a bottom-up initiative bringing together colleagues from the EU institutions who are deeply concerned about the climate, ecological and social crises facing our planet.

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