

PRESS RELEASE  
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## African Union–European Union Summit \ **New impulses for regional arms control?**

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**A long history of armed violence and conflict has left a legacy of high rates of weapons and ammunition proliferation in several African states. One of the priorities to be discussed at the African Union–European Union Summit on 29–30 November 2017 in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, will be peace and security. The peace and conflict research institute BICC works in partnership with African regional organizations mandated to work on arms control, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office. In respect to the summit, the experts of BICC hope for new impulses for these efforts.**

**“No single state is capable of effectively countering the threat posed by high levels of weapons and ammunition proliferation”, Wolf-Christian Paes, Head of Advisory Services at BICC, underlines. BICC, funded by the German Federal Foreign Office and the UNSCAR Trust Fund, has been supporting the ongoing “AU-Germany project on enhanced SALW control and improved PSSM in the Greater Sahel Region” since 2016. The project has three main aims: To promote joint action among different stakeholders, to generate closer collaboration between donors and recipient states and to identify and sustainably address capacity shortfalls.**

**“The close cooperation with the Defense and Security Division of the African Union (AU) and Regional Centre on Small Arms in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA) are of particular importance”, Wolf-Christian Paes stresses. Collaborative activities include supporting regional and national PSSM capacity-building trainings, longer-term political and technical advice at the strategic level, implementation support for community-level initiatives such as arms marking, registration and tracing efforts as well as fundraising advice and visibility at international arms control fora through the production of documentaries, e. g. the video “Keep The Safety On: A film on regional approaches to stockpile security” (2017, available on [YouTube](#)).**

**“The key to sustainability is building local capacities for arms control in Africa”,** says **Wolf-Christian Paes**. To reach that goal, BICC has been supporting a “Training-of-Trainers” programme together with RECSA and the German Armed Forces. Regional training activities have been taking place in Kenya’s capital Nairobi since 2012, and the African instructors have carried out training activities in more than ten African countries from Nigeria to Sudan. In addition, last week BICC and the German Armed Forces concluded the third Executive Course on Weapons and Ammunition Management, which brought together 24 representatives from different African states for two weeks in Germany. Expectations are high for the AU–EU Summit in Abidjan as the continent has grown in importance as a result of both the refugee crisis and the threat posed by violent extremism. **“The European Union has a moral obligation to assist Africa in dealing with conflict and crisis”,** says **Wolf-Christian Paes**. However, providing military assistance is not sufficient and might even be harmful. **“We need to help African states to address the root causes of conflict, such as poverty, bad governance and exclusion”**.