

**Sustainable Regional Integration:
EUROPEAN UNION & WEST AFRICA**

West Africa Institute

WAI is the first research institute of its kind in West Africa offering academic analysis of processes and institutions, concrete policy advice as well as a capacity development and the dissemination of knowledge and information about regional integration and social transformation in West Africa. Based in Praia, Cabo Verde, the institute was founded with the significant encouragement of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), the West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), ECOBANK, UNESCO and the Government of Cabo Verde.

Center for European Integration Studies

The Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI) is an interdisciplinary research and further education institute at the University of Bonn, Germany. Founded in 1995 on the basis of the Bonn-Berlin law, ZEI's current research focuses on European governance and regulation, as well as comparative regional integration. Linking its research experience to a training component, ZEI offers postgraduate students an English-speaking Master of European Studies with a focus on governance and regulation.

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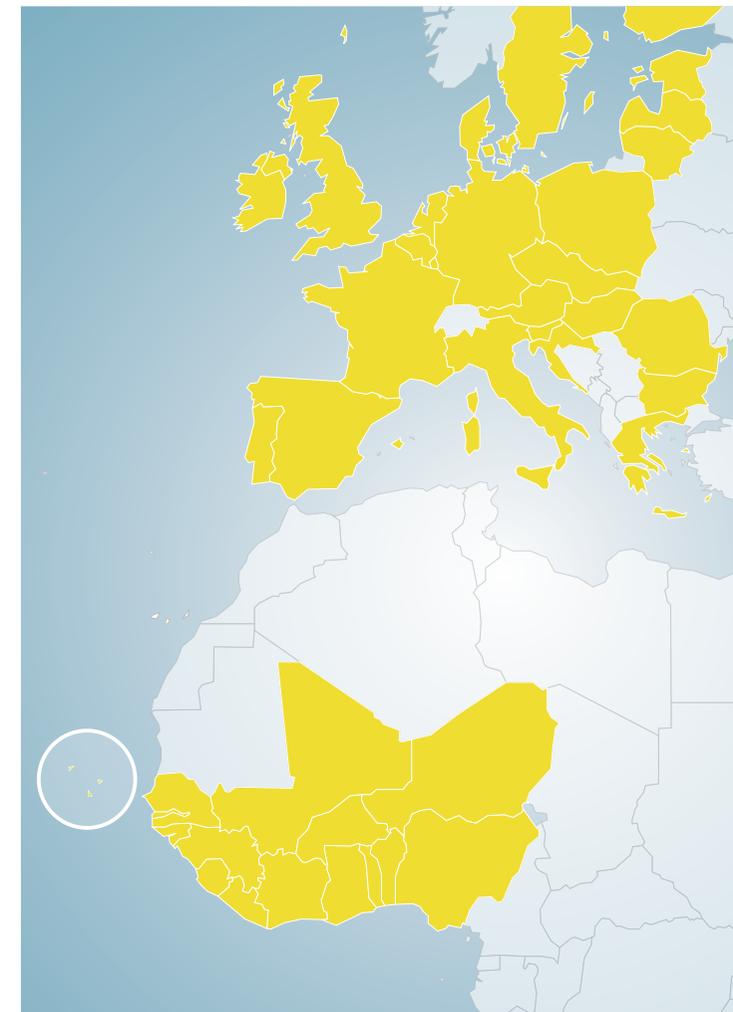
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About the Project

Following the disintegration of the bipolar world order, regional groupings have emerged on every continent as an important element of political, economic and cultural self-assertion and reorientation. The concept and experiences of European integration often serve as a source of inspiration.

Against this background, the bi-regional project “Sustainable Regional Integration: The European Union and West Africa” analyzes and explores determinants of regional integration in West Africa in the fields of politics, economics and institutional capacity development, taking into account a comparative perspective and linking the results to a training component.

The research and consulting project is jointly conducted by the West Africa Institute (WAI) in Praia, Cabo Verde, and the Center for European Integration Studies (ZEI) at the University of Bonn, Germany. Cooperation between the two institutes started in 2008. Since 2010, scholars from both regions meet regularly to discuss new ideas for advancing cooperation on sustainable regional integration.

Over the period 2012-2016, the project is funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) within the scope of the strategy of the German federal government on the internationalization of science and research. The project reflects the focus of the strategy on new and innovative forms of research cooperation between German institutions and partners in developing countries, especially in Africa.

Researchers from West Africa and Europe at the first WAI-ZEI study group meeting in Praia, Cabo Verde, in October 2012.



Academics and high-ranking ECOWAS and WAEMU stakeholders at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Praia, Cabo Verde, during the joint midterm conference of the WAI-ZEI project in October 2013.

Project Structure

The WAI-ZEI cooperation encompasses the following elements, with the goal of supporting the academic and administrative establishment of WAI as a research institute and to elaborate innovative research results on regional integration:

- Joint analysis of selected policy fields by equally representative groups of researchers from West Africa and Europe
- Joint policy advice for decision-makers on the basis of elaborated research results
- A joint publication program
- Conducting joint public meetings and conferences in West Africa and Europe
- Support for the establishment of WAI library in the National Library of Cabo Verde in Praia
- Establishment of extensive databases of experts and literature
- Development of monitoring instruments such as a survey among regional integration decision-makers in West Africa

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Focus Areas

The project aims at providing new insights into the challenges of bi-regional relations in the age of globalization and the need for a new paradigm that addresses these profound global challenges in a more holistic way. It focuses on three thematic areas:

- Regional integration and policy formulation processes
- Economic integration and regional trade
- Institutional capacity development for regional integration

Capacity Development

To strengthen the capacities of stakeholders and thus the sustainability of regional integration processes, the project includes the following training components:

- Establishment of an Africa-specific Master in Regional Integration in Praia, Cabo Verde, a cooperation between WAI, the University of Cabo Verde and the Government of Cabo Verde
- Each year, seven scholarships enabling West African postgraduates and professionals to study for a Master at ZEI in Bonn, Germany

Publications

- WAI-ZEI Papers
- WAI-ZEI Regional Integration Observer

The WAI library in the National Library of Cabo Verde in Praia.

