



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Abuja, 11 November 2009  
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**16th EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika Meeting  
Abuja, 11 November 2009  
COMMUNIQUÉ**

1. The Sixteenth Ministerial Troika meeting between the European Union (EU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held in Abuja on 11 November 2009 under the Co-Chairmanship of Mr. Frank Belfrage, State Secretary for Foreign Affairs at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and Ambassador Bagudu M. Hirse, Minister of State at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nigeria.

**P R E S S**

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2. The EU Troika further included Mr. Stefano Manservigi, Director-General for relations with African, Caribbean and Pacific countries and Development, European Commission, Mr. José Costa Pereira, Head of Unit, Africa Task Force, General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union and Ms Carmen de la Peña, Director-General for Africa, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Spain. The ECOWAS Troika further included Madame Minata Samate-Cessouma, Deputy Minister of Regional Cooperation in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Burkina Faso, and Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, President of the ECOWAS Commission. Mr. Nicolas Guinard representing the Special Representative of the UNSG, United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and Ambassador Amadou Diop, Diplomatic Adviser to the President of the UEMOA Commission, also attended the meeting as observers.
3. In their opening statements, the Co-Chairmen underscored the constructive political dialogue and the close and fruitful cooperation between the EU and ECOWAS (hereinafter the Parties). They underlined the decisive positive role played by the jointly agreed EU-Africa Strategy in achieving closer EU-Africa relations, and in particular the crucial importance of its strategic partnerships on Peace and Security, Governance, Environment and Climate Change, Energy, and other political, trade and development-related issues of mutual interest. Continued and intensified EU-Africa partnership in this framework will be instrumental for the success of the upcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> EU-Africa Summit.

## **PEACE AND SECURITY**

### **Situations of peace and security in ECOWAS Member-States**

4. The Parties expressed mutual concern about the attempts at constitutional manipulation and the reversals of democracy in some ECOWAS Member States. In this regard, the EU expressed its appreciation of the measures being taken by ECOWAS to defend the gains of the democratization process and uphold the rule of law in West Africa.

## **Niger**

5. The Parties expressed deep concern regarding the political developments in Niger. The EU welcomed the position of the 17 October 2009 Extraordinary Summit of ECOWAS that the series of unconstitutional steps taken by the authorities in Niger to extend the non-renewable mandate of President Tandja, including the abolition of the Constitutional Court and the Referendum of 4 August 2009, were against the letter and spirit of the 1999 Niger Constitution and the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance. Both Parties agreed that the actions of the authorities are in grave violation of democratic principles and the rule of law. The Parties further described the circumstances under which the legislative elections of 20 October 2009 took place as not conducive for the elections to be deemed credible, free, fair and inclusive. The EU therefore expressed its support for the decision of ECOWAS of 20 October, and encouraged ECOWAS to further exercise its leverage over the country.
6. The Parties emphasized the importance of re-establishing a constructive and inclusive dialogue among all the relevant Nigerien stakeholders to resolve the current political crisis and return the country to the rule of law in a consensual manner. Towards this end, both Parties expressed strong support for the Inter-Nigerien Dialogue that began in Abuja on 9 October 2009 under the facilitation of the ECOWAS Mediator, General (Rtd) Abdulsalami Abubakar, and urged all the parties to the crisis to demonstrate strong political will and determination in order to reach a consensual arrangement on the way out of the constitutional impasse.
7. The EU informed ECOWAS of its proceedings in accordance with Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, by which the Nigerien authorities have been invited to hold consultations in Brussels with the EU on the way out of the political stalemate in the Country. The Parties agreed to continue to closely coordinate their efforts in support of the dialogue and called on all the other concerned members of the international community to join efforts to restore consensus and the rule of law in Niger.

## **Guinea**

8. The EU and ECOWAS expressed grave concern about the worsening climate of violence and the sharp deterioration of the political, security and human rights situation in Guinea under the CNDD. In this context, the two Parties strongly condemned the violent repression of the peaceful political demonstration on 28 September 2009 in Conakry by the security forces under the command of the CNDD which resulted in the massacre of more than 150 unarmed civilians and perpetration of sexual violence against women.

9. The EU took satisfactory note of the commencement of consultations on 3 November 2009 in Ouagadougou between the ECOWAS Facilitator, President Blaise Compaore, and the Forces Vives. The Parties called upon the Chairman of the CNDD to confirm publicly and in writing, his previous commitment that neither he and the other members of the CNDD nor the Prime Minister will stand in the forthcoming Presidential elections. Both Parties urged Guinean stakeholders to put in place, without further delay, a new transition authority on a consensual basis and to continue without delays in the preparations for the electoral process.
10. The EU and ECOWAS welcomed the decision by the Secretary General of the UN to establish an International Commission of Inquiry into the events of 28 September 2009 in Conakry and underlined the personal responsibility of the perpetrators for the killings, sexual violence and human rights violations. Both Parties recalled the ECOWAS and EU decisions of 17 and 27 October respectively to impose an arms embargo on Guinea and to adopt measures targeting the members of CNDD and individuals associated with them, responsible for the gross violation of human rights and/or the political stalemate in the country. The EU further recalled that consultations under article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement have been closed since July 2009 and that only initiatives relating to the humanitarian aid and support for democratization remain open. The gradual resumption of EU-cooperation with Guinea will depend on concrete progress in peaceful democratic transition and the reestablishment of the rule of law in the country.
11. The Parties commended the role of the International Contact Group on Guinea (ICG-G) and urged the Group to continue its good work aimed at facilitating the restoration of constitutional order and the rule of law. They called upon the Guinean authorities to fully cooperate with the ICG-G.

## **Guinea-Bissau**

12. The EU and ECOWAS lauded the peaceful and orderly conduct of the June and July presidential elections in Guinea Bissau. The Parties reaffirmed their commitment to assist Guinea-Bissau to foster peace and stability by restoring essential services to the population, strengthening governance institutions, and embarking on the alleviation of poverty and the fight against organised crime and impunity. The EU announced its intention to rally the international community for an international donor conference to be held in Europe in the first semester 2010 aimed at mobilising the necessary financial resources for the economic development and stabilisation of the country, simultaneously linked to improvements in the social, economic and political areas as well as to the security sector reform.

13. Both Parties stressed the utmost urgency of a swift and comprehensive reform of the country's security sector. In this context, ECOWAS informed the meeting of the visit of a joint AU/ECOWAS information Mission to the country to assess the modalities for assisting the new government in the implementation of the reform of the Defence and Security Sector, post conflict reconstruction and development and the fight against drug trafficking. ECOWAS further announced that a preparatory conference on security sector reform in Guinea Bissau will be held in Abuja before the end of the year. ECOWAS commended the ESDP mission in Guinea Bissau (EUSSR) for the work accomplished in the security sector in Guinea Bissau and expressed its support for the extension of the mission beyond November 2009.
14. The Parties expressed deep concern about the effects of drug trafficking on the security situation and political stability in the country. They agreed on the need to explore and safeguard synergies between all national and international partners to support the immediate implementation of the ECOWAS Regional Action Plan. The EU reaffirmed its political and financial support to the Regional Action Plan.

### **Côte d'Ivoire**

15. ECOWAS and the EU deplored the slow pace of the electoral process in Cote d'Ivoire. They expressed their preoccupation with the latest twist in the citizen identification and voter registration exercises, whereby the voting rights of a significant number of potential voters are being questioned, adding to the repeated postponement of the publication of the provisional voter's register and thus rendering the holding of the elections on 29 November 2009 practically impossible. They stressed the need to prioritize the holding of credible elections immediately as a necessary precondition for a successful transition and political stability in the country, and called on the authorities to confirm an early date for the elections.
16. Both sides welcomed the progress towards the reunification of the country and the nationwide restoration of civil administration, tasks yet to be completed and consolidated. They expressed concern about the limited progress in the integration of the Forces Nouvelles combatants into the national security forces, the dismantling of the numerous militias and the establishment of the Integrated Command Centre, solely responsible for ensuring security during the upcoming elections.

17. Both Parties commended the efforts of President Blaise Compaoré as Facilitator in the Inter-Ivorian Dialogue and encouraged him to continue his good offices by encouraging the stakeholders in the peace process to fully and swiftly implement all outstanding elements of the Ouagadougou Peace Agreement, including the holding of the elections.

### **Security and development in the Sahel region**

18. The Parties expressed concern over the prevailing security situation in the Sahel region, fuelled notably by organised crime, trafficking and the activities of terrorist cells. They also noted the decisive exacerbating impacts of weak governance, poverty and exposure to climate change on instability and weak development in the region. They called on all States in the region to step up their engagement and cooperation, including the holding of the anticipated High-Level Conference on Security and Development to strengthen intra-regional dialogue and adopt a strategy to meet these challenges.
19. The EU informed ECOWAS of its missions to Mali and Mauritania and its on-going efforts, in close coordination with the governments of the region, to address the underlying causes of instability. The EU welcomed the support that ECOWAS reiterated in this regard and emphasized the importance of the Organisation remaining engaged.

### **The regional peace and security architecture**

#### **ECOWAS Standby Force**

20. Both Parties noted the steady progress being made by ECOWAS in the operationalisation of the ECOWAS Stand-by Force, whose full validation had originally been envisaged for 2010 in the roadmap of the Africa Standby Force. This will include the scaling up of efforts to bring the development of the all-important police and civilian components up to speed with the military component thus ensuring an integrated approach and allowing an effective and flexible rights-based response to possible crisis. The EU welcomed the active participation of ECOWAS in the continental exercise Amani Africa. The EU also encouraged ECOWAS to finalise the development of the Rapid Deployment Capability.
21. The Parties welcomed the logistics exercise that was carried out in June 09 and which constituted a further step towards full operational capability of the ECOWAS Stand-by Force. They noted that detailed planning, elaboration of clear objectives and associated priorities in line with agreed policies is of utmost importance to make further progress and allow for focused, harmonised support by partners.

22. The study aiming to support training centres on the African Continent entered a crucial phase. A field study was conducted in close cooperation with ECOWAS staff. Both Parties welcomed this joint effort and agreed that additional refinement whereby ECOWAS sets priorities is needed in order to allow support to match the training needs of ECOWAS Stand-by Forces.

### **Conflict Prevention**

23. The EU welcomed the efforts currently underway by ECOWAS to develop the Plans of Action to facilitate the operationalisation of the ECOWAS Conflict Prevention Framework and reiterated that operational and structural conflict prevention in the region is an EU top priority.

### **Electoral processes**

24. The Parties, while expressing satisfaction with the noticeable improvements in the capacity to organize and monitor elections in the region, also recognised that the region had experienced serious challenges and set-backs brought about by the manipulation of Constitutions and non-consensual modifications to the electoral legal frameworks. They stressed the utmost importance of enforcing the respect and implementation of minimum standards such as established by ECOWAS and the AU. In this regard, both Parties stressed that the ECOWAS Supplementary Protocol on Democracy and Good Governance continues to provide a legally binding and essential reference for Member States. In the cases of the post-conflict countries, particularly Cote d'Ivoire and Togo, the Parties stressed the necessity to continue building the required capacities for organizing polls and conducting electoral campaigns in accordance with established international standards.
25. The Parties underscored the urgent need to pay greater attention to the implementation and recommendations of the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), and also recommendations from the ECOWAS and EU Election Observation Missions. The Parties undertook to improve the follow-up to these processes, including by establishing the necessary incentives and constraints to transform the expectations of key stakeholders in the countries concerned.
26. The Parties recalled that the political challenge of managing a post-electoral process remains crucial. They stressed the need to continue to emphasize the importance of preventing and addressing election related disputes and conflicts. The EU underlined the importance of ECOWAS-led mediation efforts in this context, and pledged continued full EU support for such efforts.

## **Women as agents in transition towards peace and development**

27. ECOWAS and the EU underlined the critical importance of women's and girls' human rights and a full involvement of women in the promotion of peace, security and development in accordance with the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action as well as the UN Security Council Resolutions 1325, 1820, 1888 and 1889 on Women, Peace and Security. The Parties underscored their resolve to step up efforts to empower women and to protect women and girls from gender-based and sexual violence during and after armed conflict, and to combat impunity for these crimes, considering them to constitute crimes against humanity if committed systematically.
28. The Parties affirmed the need to enable women to get more actively involved in mediation and peace negotiation efforts on an equal basis, and to assure a greater role for women in decision-making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution as well as sustainable reconstruction. As part of these efforts, the Parties emphasised the urgency to address attitudinal issues concerning women and girls as agents for peace and as political actors. Both sides also agreed on the necessity to facilitate women's participation in economic life, notably by guaranteeing equitable access to education, justice and resources, including through specific instruments such as micro-credit.

## **JOINT CHALLENGES**

### **Climate change, environment and energy security**

29. The Parties reiterated that climate change is one of the most demanding challenges of our time requiring an urgent and extraordinary global response and that the increase in global temperature should not exceed 2°C. To this end the Parties expressed their determination to step up the pace of negotiations in order to reach a positive and ambitious outcome, including a shared vision, mitigation, adaptation, technology development and transfer, and financial resources at the 15th conference of the parties to UNFCCC in Copenhagen in December this year.

30. The Parties stressed that developed countries should continue to take the lead by committing to deep emission reduction cuts in the medium and longer term and to the provision of capacity building, financing and technology to put developing countries on a low-carbon development path and to help them adapt to unavoidable harmful consequences of climate change. They recognized the important implications that climate change will have for global security and welcomed the initiative by the EU of a dialogue with major parties in order to look at possible areas of cooperation.
31. ECOWAS and the EU called on developing countries to prepare as soon as possible low-carbon development growth plans in order to indicate the actions to be taken and the level of support they require. The EU welcomed the advanced stage of preparations by ECOWAS to adopt a Regional Action Programme to reduce Vulnerability to Climate Change in West Africa, including setting up a Climate Change Secretariat at the ECOWAS Commission to facilitate the mainstreaming of climate change into priority national, regional and multi-country investments, programs and projects.
32. The Parties reconfirmed their commitment to intensify their cooperation within the framework of the priorities agreed for the Africa-EU Energy Partnership. They reconfirmed that, with the right policies in place, there should be no contradiction between responding to the climate change challenge and enhancing energy security and identified the future development of the energy sector in the ECOWAS region as a key area for the deepening of bilateral cooperation.
33. The EU welcomed the efforts of ECOWAS to establish a common energy and electricity market. Both Parties noted that the recently launched International Partnership on Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC) and International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) could play an important role in further enhancing cooperation on energy efficiency and renewable energy.
34. Finally, the Parties recognised that West Africa and Europe have shared interests to increase the use of renewable energy resources. Regarding the oil and gas sectors, they stressed the critical importance of developing and strengthening joint strategies to enhance corporate social responsibility and responsible natural resource governance as a tool to mitigate resource-based conflicts in the region and making the development of the oil and gas sectors beneficial to the whole society. In addition, they emphasized the need to support a more diversified growth as well as a wider access of the population to energy services.

## **Regional integration, EPA and the development dimension (EPADP)**

35. The Parties emphasised the importance of regional economic integration for consolidation of peace and security, the eradication of poverty, and the development of all economic sectors in West Africa. In this context, the Parties welcomed the progress being made in the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) negotiations and reiterated the commitment of both sides to demonstrate the necessary flexibility, including the consideration of special and differential treatment issues, in order to resolve the outstanding areas of divergence and swiftly conclude the negotiations for the establishment of a comprehensive regional EPA covering trade in goods, EPA-related cooperation and other trade-related issues. Both Parties underscored the importance of revitalising trade flows between West Africa and Europe, especially against the backdrop of the global economic and financial crisis, and stressed the positive role an EPA could play in this process.
36. The Parties welcomed the progress made by West Africa in the definition of the EPA Development Program (EPADP). The EU and ECOWAS underlined the instrumental role of the EPADP in enabling the West African region to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by the EPA whilst minimising the adjustment costs resulting from the implementation of the Agreement. In that context, they also welcomed the references to the EPADP in the joint EC/ECOWAS/UEMOA statement issued in Abuja on 16 October 2009, underlining in particular the EPADP as a coherent framework for the implementation of priority actions of EU assistance (European Commission and Member States) to support the EPA Development dimension.

## **Regional efforts to combat organised crime**

37. The EU and ECOWAS shared their enduring preoccupation with human trafficking, drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime as transnational phenomena that gravely impact on countries of origin, transit and destination and which call for concerted international efforts to combat the pull and push factors underpinning the trade. ECOWAS and the EU agreed to continue their cooperation in this field, based on the principle of shared responsibility and a balanced approach. Furthermore, the Parties encouraged the continuation of the dialogue between the EU and ECOWAS at experts level on issues of common concern including in the fight against proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

38. ECOWAS informed about the serious damage drug trafficking and organized crime have inflicted on the region's political and socio-economic stability, and the efforts underway to counter the scourge. The EU side stressed its continued commitment to preventing and combating the threat, and underlined the importance of ECOWAS as a key partner for the EU in these efforts.
39. Both the EU and ECOWAS recognised the importance of robust regional leadership in tackling the issue. They welcomed the endorsement at the highest political level of the Operational Plan which outlines the practical measures and activities for the implementation of the Praia Plan of Action and urged ECOWAS Member States to intensify their engagement and move forward the Regional Plan. The EU reconfirmed its engagement in the region and noted that substantial resources for preventing and combating human trafficking, drug trafficking and other forms of organised crime are provided by the European Commission programmes and Member States' bilateral and multilateral assistance projects.

#### **AOB**

40. The EU and ECOWAS agreed that the next ministerial Troika meeting will take place in Europe at a date to be determined by the Parties.
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