



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Ouagadougou, 24 October 2008  
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**14th ECOWAS-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting  
Ouagadougou, 23 October 2008**

**FINAL COMMUNIQUE**

- (1) The fourteenth ministerial Troika meeting between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union (EU) was held in Burkina Faso on 23 October 2008 under the Co-Chairs of Mme Minata Samate, Deputy Minister for Regional Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Cooperation of Burkina Faso and H.E. Mr. Alain Joyandet, Secretary of State in charge of Cooperation and Francophone Affairs of France.
- (2) The ECOWAS Troika further included Dr Mohamed Ibn Chambas, President of the ECOWAS Commission, Mrs Nana Bema Kumi, Ambassador of Ghana to the EU, Mr. Aougui Niandou, Director of African Union, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, the Republic of Niger and Mr. Felix Pwol, Director, ECOWAS Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Nigeria. The EU Troika included Mr Jean de Glinasty Director of the Africa and Indian Ocean Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France, Stefano Manservigi, General Director, the European Commission, Director Bronislava Tomasova, MFA Africa Department, Czech Republic and General Pierre-Michel Joana, Counsellor to the Secretary-General, High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security

**P R E S S**

Policy of the Council of the European Union, Said Djinnit, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in West Africa, (UNOWA) and Mr Soumaila Cissé, President of the UEOMA Commission, also attended the meeting as observers.

- (3) Both parties commended the adoption of the EU/Africa joint strategy in Lisbon and undertook to continue to strengthen their relationship in this partnership.

**A. PEACE AND SECURITY**

- (4) The EU/Africa joint strategy is a historical opportunity to enhance the capacity of Africa and EU to respond appropriately to security threats and join efforts in addressing global challenges. Many actions taken in the region could be strengthened under the framework of this strategy, e.g plans for combating drugs, arms and human trafficking as well as co-operation to ensure security, peace and development in the Sahel region. Peace and security are directly connected to sustainable development.
- (5) Both parties agreed on the necessity to reinforce links between AU and ECOWAS aiming at continental integration. Its shaping and implementation will take into full account the ongoing harmonisation processes of the approaches of the African Union (AU) and the ECOWAS commissions to the full achievement of the African architecture of peace and security. In this view, one of the challenges is the EU support to the ECOWAS Training Centres. ECOWAS is seeking to establish an adequate ownership, which would be helpful for EU to provide appropriate support. ECOWAS and EU continue working in close co-operation.
- (6) Both parties exchanged views on the peace and security situation of the region. To further consolidate the efforts of ECOWAS in terms of peace keeping, the discussion focussed on the reinforcement of its regional capacities and the operationalisation of the ECOWAS standby force and on the priorities as reflected in its conflict prevention framework. The EU commended ECOWAS for its progress in this area. It will enable ECOWAS inter alia to reinforce its capacities of anticipation and response to regional crisis, to contribute to the consolidation of democracies in the region and provide support for post conflict reconstruction.
- (7) Turning to country specific situations in West Africa, the parties discussed the consolidation of peace and democracy in Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Guinea Bissau and the Sahel region. In a number of these countries scourges such as terrorism, organised crime, trafficking of drugs and small arms as well as human trafficking are causing growing concern and have become prominent factors for political and socio-economic instability. In this context, the parties noted the importance of the ratification of the ECOWAS convention on small arms and light weapons and expressed their hope that it will enter into force by the end of this year.

## **Côte d'Ivoire**

- (8) ECOWAS and the EU commended the progress achieved in Côte d'Ivoire in respect of the implementation of the Ouagadougou Comprehensive Peace agreement of 2007. ECOWAS and the EU exchanged views on the political situation in Côte d'Ivoire. The parties reiterated their satisfaction with President Blaise Compaoré's continued engagement in the process towards peace and development.
- (9) ECOWAS and the EU noted the efforts of the authorities to be able to hold free and fair elections as soon as possible. They welcomed the launching of the registration process on 15 September 2008, and encouraged the Ivorian authorities to take all the necessary steps to complete this fundamental process in the organization of free and fair elections.
- (10) Notwithstanding the stable political and security situation, Côte d'Ivoire still faces serious difficulties with regard to effective disarmament and demobilisation of the militias. These are essential elements of the peace process. Both Parties encouraged the international community to consider reinforcing the support in assisting the actors in achieving tangible results.

## **Guinea**

- (11) ECOWAS and the EU expressed concern with the political, social and economic situation in Guinea. The country remains fragile. The parties took note of the appointment of a new Head of Government. ECOWAS and the EU discussed the findings of the recent EU mission to Guinea according to the article 96 consultation process of the Cotonou Agreement.
- (12) ECOWAS and the EU encouraged all parties in Guinea to pursue efforts for the stabilisation of the country. The parties agreed on the fact that elections are to be seen as one of the key elements in the way forward to secure a stable political and socio-economic society. In this respect, they took note of the preparations for legislative elections that are underway. However, the parties strongly emphasised the urgency of the authorities setting a firm date for the elections. They also reiterated their availability to take part in the observation of these elections but the EU underlined the need to receive an official invitation from the Guinean government and the confirmation of the date in order to initiate the preparatory work for the electoral observation missions.
- (13) ECOWAS and the EU expressed furthermore concern with the fact that the drug trafficking and human trafficking are becoming increasing problems for the Guinean society. The parties, however, took note of the will of the Guinean authorities to combat drug trafficking and urged them to continue to strengthen their efforts in both areas.

- (14) The parties urged the Guinean authorities to honour its previous commitment to enable the National Enquiry Commission to start its important work and extend its mandate. In the area of human rights and governance, the parties commended the Guinean authorities for the creation of the National Observatory of Human Rights in June 2008 and expressed their hope of seeing this body sufficiently equipped and funded to work independently.

#### **Guinea Bissau**

- (15) ECOWAS and the EU took note of the political developments in the country since the last troika in April 2008. They expressed hope that the legislative elections scheduled for 16 November 2008 would strengthen democratic institutions. They agreed also that the elections could be an important step to restore confidence in the political development of Guinea-Bissau.
- (16) The parties commended the authorities of Guinea-Bissau on the preparations for the elections. ECOWAS expressed satisfaction with the provision of funds by the EU to cover the outstanding elections budget deficit enabling the elections to take place as scheduled.
- (17) The security sector remains an essential part of the reform process. ECOWAS and the EU discussed the on-going efforts of the international community, the ESDP mission in particular, in this respect. They underlined the necessity for all stakeholders to support the reform and urged them to remain actively committed in its implementation.
- (18) The parties observed that the problem of drug trafficking continues to pose a serious threat to Guinea-Bissau, even though it is no longer an exclusive problem of Guinea-Bissau but has spread to all the sub-region. It therefore demands a broader approach from the international community in general and a deeper involvement from the African Organizations in all the actions taken to help fighting it.
- (19) The parties expressed concern with the current socio-economic situation, which they found fragile. Arrears in State payments and the rise in food prices, coupled with the parallel economy of drug trafficking, and the recent outbreak of cholera make the continued attention from the international community very much needed. The parties underlined that they would cooperate both on the ground and within relevant international fora to that end.

#### **Sahel (Security Situation in Northern Niger/Northern Mali)**

- (20) EU and ECOWAS shared the same analysis regarding the recent positive developments in Northern Mali. They encouraged the parties to continue their efforts in order to fully respect the current agreements. This will have a beneficial effect on the security situation in the region. They also expressed their wish to see reinforcement in the fight against the illegal trafficking in drugs and arms, as well as human trafficking.

- (21) ECOWAS and the EU reaffirmed their support for the Governments of Niger and Mali in their actions to preserve the peace and territorial integrity of their respective countries. Both sides again underlined the importance of regional cooperation to ensure security, peace and development in the Sahel. In this context, ECOWAS and the EU have firmly supported the organisation of a regional conference addressing both security and development aspects, initiated by the President of Mali.

## **B. COOPERATION BETWEEN ECOWAS AND THE EU ON DEMOCRATIC CONSOLIDATION AND ELECTIONS**

### **Priorities for election observation**

- (22) ECOWAS welcomed the decision of the EU to deploy the first ever EU election observation mission to Ghana to observe the presidential and parliamentary elections scheduled for 7 December 2008. This step illustrates the EU engagement to foster good governance and reinforce the democratic process in Ghana as well as in West African region. The EU further confirmed its intention to send an observation mission to Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea Bissau and Guinea according to the evaluation of the electoral process.

### **UN Peace Building Commission**

- (23) The EU reaffirmed that the UN PBC has proven to be an important organ in consolidating peace and democracy in the countries on its agenda.
- (24) The parties noted the first semi-annual review of the PBC strategic framework for Sierra Leone which took place in June 2008 and welcomed the achievements of Sierra Leone in implementing the framework. Progress were noted in the area of good governance including the fight against corruption. However, the challenges the Sierra Leonean Government is facing persist. The EU and ECOWAS therefore called on the PBC and its members as well as the international community to swiftly implement their commitments stemming from the framework and hence, assist Sierra Leone in the peace building process.
- (25) As regards Guinea Bissau, the parties welcomed the recently adopted Strategic Framework of the PBC and expressed hope that the actions foreseen will be rapidly launched.

## **C. IMPACT OF INCREASE IN FOOD AND OIL PRICES**

- (26) The parties exchanged views on how best to deal with rising commodity and oil prices, which pose a serious challenge to the stability of the West Africa region. They commended the actions that were taken in the short term to address and mitigate the effects of the food price shocks by measures targeting the most vulnerable groups of the population. To this end, the EU noted the different ongoing and proposed initiatives to mitigate on the one hand, the impact of this rise

and on the other hand, in a medium term, foster the recovery of agricultural production ECOWAS welcomed this initiative and supported the efforts of the EU for the putting in place a food facility. They agreed that the international community needed a fully coordinated response and a comprehensive strategy to tackle this issue in an integrated fashion from short to medium and long-term. They declared that a high level of priority should be given to rural development policies. They called for a global partnership for food and agriculture under UN lead. As regard the situation of world food crops markets, they focussed especially on the necessary enhancement of agriculture productive capacities, particularly in LDC's countries.

- (27) The parties took note of the decrease in oil prices and expressed concern with regard to the difficulties in the energy sector for the countries of the region. They agreed to combine efforts in finding solutions.

#### **D. MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

- (28) The EU informed ECOWAS on the preparation of the next Euro – African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development, which will take place in Paris on 25 November 2008. The EU and ECOWAS agreed to collaborate with the other countries in order to make the conference successful. The EU and ECOWAS, together with other countries and international organisations, aim to adopt a multi-annual programme of cooperation based on the three points of the global approach to migration: legal migration, combating illegal migration, and synergies between migration and development policy. The cooperation programme will draw inspiration from the conclusions of three meetings of experts that were held in Rabat in March 2008 (legal migration), in Ouagadougou in May 2008 (combating illegal migration), and in Dakar in July 2008 (migration and development). The EU and ECOWAS committed themselves to strengthen cooperation between Europe and Africa in all matters relating to the migration route from West Africa in the framework of the partnership on migration, mobility and employment signed in Lisbon. The two parties agreed that the next meeting of the ECOWAS-EU Joint Group on Migration should take place before the end of the year in order to present the main achievement in the area of migration.

#### **E. MEASURES TO COMBAT DRUG TRAFFICKING**

- (29) ECOWAS informed the EU of the forthcoming ECOWAS Ministerial Conference on Drug Trafficking as a security threat to West Africa, which is to be held in Praia, Cape Verde, 26-29 October 2008. ECOWAS warmly welcomed the participation of the EU. Both parties shared their strong concern about the increasing impact of drugs on the region's stability. The EU reaffirmed its willingness to support ECOWAS in the implementation of the regional response action plan on fighting the drug trafficking and related organised crime in West Africa, as well as the role of ECOWAS Commission in building a strong Drug Control Coordination Mechanism.

**F. REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AND EPA DEVELOPMENT  
DIMENSION**

- (30) In view of the recent positive developments in the negotiations, which are now genuinely progressing, the EU and ECOWAS, renewed their commitment for the finalisation, as soon as possible, of a comprehensive regional EPA. To this end they encouraged their negotiators to progress on discussions on market access offers.
- (31) They reaffirmed that the enhancement of regional integration is one of the main goals of the EPA's and, on this subject, welcomed the EU of its communication on regional integration for the development of ACP countries. They considered that a quick finalisation of regional EPA's as a concrete sign of this commitment.
- (32) The EU and ECOWAS reaffirmed the importance of the development dimension of EPA's and renewed their commitment to define a package of accompanying measures linking trade and development cooperation. They reaffirmed that this package was to be prepared and implemented, in accordance with Paris Declaration principles on aid effectiveness, at both national and regional levels.

**G. WORLD FINANCIAL CRISIS**

- (33) Both parties expressed their concern about the impact of the world financial crisis on the economic situation of developing countries and on growth prospects as well as on foreign direct investments. In this context ECOWAS expressed concern regarding the risks of seeing diminishing official development aid and migrants remittances. The EU confirmed its commitment and priority as regard development aid.

The next ministerial troika meeting will take place in Europe at a date to be determined by the parties.