



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on Colombia

*2830th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting
Brussels, 19 November 2007*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1 The Council recalls and reaffirms the EU Conclusions of 3 October 2005, expresses EU's total solidarity with Colombian people, its full support for the Colombian Government in its search for a negotiated solution to the internal armed conflict, and underlines the importance the EU attaches to the ongoing implementation of the Justice and Peace Law (JPL) and its related legal framework and the development of the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) process under the JPL.
- 2 The Council reconfirms the readiness of the EU and its Member States to assist the Colombian Government, state institutions, civil society and international organisations in providing support for activities that promote peace, truth, justice, reparation and reconciliation and in providing support for activities that advance DDR processes.
3. The Council welcomes the steps that have been taken by the Colombian government and Colombian authorities to implement the JPL in a transparent and effective manner, the work of the National Reconciliation and Reparation Commission and the role played by the Constitutional Court. It also welcomes the appointment and the work of the High Commissioner for the Social and Economic Integration of Armed Individuals and Groups.

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4. While recognising what has been achieved, the Council also takes note that the implementation of the JPL is far from complete. It urges the Colombian government to support and resource the quick and efficient implementation of all aspects of the JPL - including by providing adequate staffing to the Justice and Peace Law unit within the Office of the Attorney General - in a manner that gives priority to victims' rights to truth, justice and reparation.
5. The Council welcomes the ongoing efforts of the Colombian government to improve the human rights situation in Colombia, including the drafting of the National Action Plan on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law. It commends the work of the UNHCHR Office in Colombia and calls on the Colombian government to implement its recommendations fully and quickly. In this context the Council takes note with satisfaction of the improved cooperation between the Colombian government and the UNHCHR Office. The Council firmly believes that the continuous interaction with and the full support for the UNHCHR Office by the Colombian government remain of vital importance for the peace process, as well as the dialogue between the UNHCHR and the civil society. In this context the Council also welcomes the prolongation of the mandate of the UNHCHR Office for another three years.
6. The Council has noted the additional means that have been made available by the Colombian government to protect human rights defenders, witnesses, journalists, trade unionists and other persons at risk. Nevertheless, attacks against such individuals continue. Therefore, the Council urges the Colombian Government to continue adopting concrete measures to protect those people at risk and to put an end to impunity. Protection of human rights defenders should be given special attention. Special attention should also be given to witness protection programmes, since their effectiveness is central in the search for peace and justice in Colombia.
7. The Council welcomes the improved dialogue between the Colombian government and civil society and commends the role of the G24 in facilitating this dialogue. In this context the Council looks forward to the III Conference on Colombia on co-operation, human rights and peace, to be held on 29-30 of November 2007 in Bogotá. The Council also welcomes the continuing engagement of the Organisation of American States (OAS) in accompanying the demobilisation / reintegration of paramilitary groups in Colombia, to the funding of which EU members states are contributing.
8. The Council takes note with satisfaction of the steps that are being taken, including by the Colombian Supreme Court and the "Fiscalía", to independently investigate, expose and punish politicians and public servants with links to the paramilitary groups and to those involved in the illegal drugs business.
9. The Council confirms the readiness of the European Union to work with the Colombian Government in the fight against drugs and illegal narco trafficking, which remains a significant driver of the conflict, and exacerbates the difficult human rights situation in Colombia.
10. The Council strongly condemns the violations of International Humanitarian Law that continue to be committed by the illegal armed groups. In this context it demands that they stop kidnapping and all other acts of terrorism or violence against the civilian population

forthwith. The Council reaffirms the EU's solidarity with the Colombian government, the Colombian people and all victims of those acts. It also reiterates its firm demand that the illegal armed groups stop kidnappings and release all detained hostages immediately and unconditionally, and cease all hostilities.

11. The Council encourages the Colombian government's determination to improve the armed forces' respect for human rights and welcomes the progress which has been made in this respect. However, it notes with real concern the persisting problem of human rights violations by some members of the security forces, including extra-judicial killings.
12. The Council is concerned by the emergence of new paramilitary and other armed criminal groups. It takes note of the efforts already taken by the authorities to fight these emerging groups and calls on the Colombian government to increase its ongoing efforts and step up the measures it is taking to fight these groups.
13. Whilst welcoming the government's efforts to alleviate the plight of Colombia's large number of internally displaced persons, the Council calls on the Colombian authorities to reinforce these efforts, i.a. through the speedy implementation of relevant recommendations by the Constitutional Court.
14. The Council hopes that progress will be made in taking forward negotiations between the Colombian government and illegal armed groups, in order to reach a humanitarian agreement, and secure the release of all hostages, to overcome the armed conflict and bring lasting peace to Colombia. In the same spirit, the European Union welcomes all initiatives taken with the Colombian government's support with the objective of promoting a successful peace process. The EU follows with interest the efforts undertaken by the Colombian Government, namely with the collaboration of the President of Venezuela and supports the work of all those committed to the application of international humanitarian law in Colombia.
15. The Council strongly welcomes the fact that the 28 October local and regional elections further strengthened democracy in Colombia. It agrees with the OAS Observer Mission's opinion that most of these elections were held in an essentially free, democratic and transparent environment. The Council condemns all those who tried to disrupt the proper electoral process through murder, kidnapping, threats and vote buying, and urges that those responsible be brought to justice. The Council calls on all those elected to use their offices to further strengthen Colombia's democratic path, as part of wider efforts to deliver enduring peace and prosperity to the Colombian people. "