



EUROPEAN UNION



Brussels, 10 July 2012
12422/1/12 REV 1
PRESSE 333

Declaration by the High Representative, Catherine Ashton, on behalf of the European Union on the situation in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo

The EU is deeply worried by the rapidly deteriorating situation in the eastern DRC following the breakaway of the rebel M23 movement. It deplores the death of a UN peacekeeper, expresses support for the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO) and calls for an immediate end to all violence perpetrated by armed groups.

Recalling the Council Conclusions of 25 June 2012 the EU reiterates its strong concern at the findings, now in the public domain, of the report of the Group of Experts of the United Nations Security Council Sanctions Committee indicating that a number of high-ranking Rwandan officials are involved in support to Congolese rebel groups, including the M23 mutiny.

The EU welcomes Rwanda's invitation to the UN group of experts to conduct a detailed review of the information contained in the UN report. The EU calls on Rwanda to halt any support to armed groups in the eastern DRC and to investigate fully and respond constructively to the issues raised in the UNSC Sanctions Committee report and annexes.

The EU supports the ongoing dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda to end the M23 mutiny and to continue the fight against the Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR). The Union encourages confidence building measures, such as joint verification mechanisms, between the DRC and Rwanda. A regional approach is also important, accordingly, the EU welcomes the ministerial-level meeting of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) in Addis Ababa on 11 July.

P R E S S

Lasting stability in the eastern DRC cannot be based on military action alone. Therefore the EU urges Kinshasa and Kigali to contribute to a political solution and to address the regional and the local roots of instability. While the EU supports Congolese sovereignty over its territory, it also calls on the DRC to assume increased responsibility by fully establishing state authority in the Kivu provinces. In this regard security sector reform, in particular of the Congolese Army, should not be further delayed.

The ongoing developments are not in the benefit of either country or their populations. It is the responsibility of the DRC and Rwanda to ensure sustainable peace in the region.

The Acceding Country Croatia*, the Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland⁺ and Serbia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA countries Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

⁺ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area