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ACP-EU Council of ministers intensifies dialogue on migration issues

Today's ACP-EU Council of ministers addressed questions of migration and discussed progress in the ongoing ACP-EU dialogue on migration. Ministers agreed to reach concrete results to strengthen the operational cooperation in the areas of visa, remittances and readmission over the coming year.

Ministers also decided to use a flexible procedure to adopt a decision on the possible request of South Sudan to accede to the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, once it becomes a sovereign state. South Sudan is expected to declare its independence on 9 July 2011 and could then apply for membership of the agreement. Today's decision paves the way for enabling the new country to swiftly join the ACP-EU Cotonou Agreement and thus benefit from the European development fund.

In addition, the Council held an open exchange of views to assess the state of the ongoing negotiations on economic partnership agreements (EPAs) between ACP states and the EU. EPAs are designed to promote sustainable development and poverty eradication in the ACP states by fostering regional integration and improving access to the EU market, complemented by trade-related assistance. Ministers also discussed other aspects of trade cooperation, addressing certain specific products, including bananas, cotton and sugar.

This was the 36th session of the ACP-EU Council of ministers. It is the main decision-making body of the ACP-EU Partnership Agreement, signed in June 2000 in Cotonou and revised for the second time in 2010. Its main instrument for development aid is the European development fund (EDF), with the 10th EDF providing EUR 22.7bn to African, Caribbean and Pacific states between 2008 and 2013.

P R E S S
