



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



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**9th ECOWAS-EU Ministerial Troika Meeting  
Vienna, 22 May 2006**

**Final Communiqué**

1. The ninth ministerial Troika meeting between the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the European Union (EU) was held in Vienna (Austria) on 22nd May 2006 under the Co-Chairs of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and African Integration of Niger, current Chairperson of the ECOWAS Council of Ministers, H.E. Mrs. Aïchatou Mindaoudou and H.E. Mrs. Ursula Plassnik, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Austria, representing the current President of the EU.

**P R E S S**

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2. The ECOWAS Troika further included the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, Honourable Nana Akufo-Addo, M.P and the Executive Secretary of ECOWAS, H.E. Dr. Mohamed Ibn Chambas. The EU Troika was further composed of H.E. Pertti Torstila, Secretary of State of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, the European Commission Director General for Development, Mr. Stefano Manservigi, and the Head of the Africa Unit in the Council Secretariat of the EU, Mr. Koen Vervaeke. The UN Secretary General's Special representative for West Africa, H.E. Ambassador Ahmedou Ould-Abdallah and the EU Presidency Special Representative for the Mano River Union countries (SRP) Mr. Hans Dahlgren also attended the meeting.

#### **A. Opening Remarks/ Overview of major developments in the EU and ECOWAS**

3. The EU informed ECOWAS on the adoption of the EU Strategy for Africa by the December 2005 European Council, and on the process of implementation, which were dealt with by the sixth EU-Africa Ministerial Troika Meeting in Vienna on 8 May 2006.
4. Both sides agreed that regional African organisations were important actors in the implementation of the strategy and that therefore a regular review of implementation activities was warranted. They noted that a joint implementation matrix had been adopted by the EU Africa Troika Meeting and would regularly be updated. This could constitute a reference for work between the EU Commission and the ECOWAS Secretariat. They also agreed that ECOWAS and its members would fully participate in the elaboration of a proposal for an outline of a Joint EU Africa strategy.

#### **B. Peace and Security/Political Situation**

5. Both sides noted that considerable progress has been made in peace and security in West Africa. EU and ECOWAS noted with appreciation the significant progress that has been made by the AU and the relevant sub-regional organisations in developing the African Peace and Security Architecture. They underlined the importance of capacity building and noted the vital contribution the African Peace Facility has made in this regard. The ECOWAS side welcomed the EU's decision to continue the African Peace Facility under the 10<sup>th</sup> EDF, starting with 300 million € from 2008 to 2010.

#### **Côte d'Ivoire**

6. ECOWAS and the EU discussed developments towards the restoration of peace in Côte d'Ivoire and the new spirit of confidence created through the work of the government of PM Konan Banny.

7. ECOWAS and the EU noted that concrete steps towards the identification and DDR processes are ongoing through initiatives of the PM in consultation with the head of state. Both sides welcomed the commencement of public hearings in Abidjan, south and north of the country. Similarly, both sides welcomed arrangements by the Chief of Staff of the Defence and Security Forces of Côte d'Ivoire and the Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Forces Nouvelles to start the pre-cantonment.
8. Both sides however expressed their growing concern about the serious delays the peace process was now facing and urged all parties to remain fully committed to the peace process, particularly the holding of elections in that country before 31 October 2006. In particular ECOWAS and the EU reaffirmed the importance placed on the concomitant process of identification and disarmament in preparing for the elections and the restructuring of the security forces and stressed the urgency for all parties to rapidly achieve effective progress on these issues
9. ECOWAS and the EU welcomed the inauguration of the Independent Electoral Commission (CEI). They urged all members of the CEI to ensure that all preconditions are met for elections to take place in accordance with the Roadmap. Both sides noted that the national authorities should accelerate the start of the electoral process by extending the activities of the Independent Electoral Commission and the National Commission for the Supervision of Identification. They agreed on the need for strong international electoral observation.
10. Both sides firmly condemned the various acts of violence and intimidation against citizenry and international community and specifically against the impartial forces and UN personnel, and the national authorities are enjoined to take measures to enhance security and stability.

## **Liberia**

11. The EU and ECOWAS welcomed the holding of free and fair elections in Liberia and are now looking forward to work with President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf as Liberia's and Africa's first woman President. The meeting noted that there is progress in the country and to show support for the democratic process in the country, the ECOWAS Council of Foreign Ministers held a meeting in Monrovia on 15 May 2006.

12. They welcomed the arrest of former Liberian President Charles Taylor. ECOWAS and EU support the actions of the new Liberian Government in this regard. They noted that this process would assist in ending impunity, promote the principles of responsible leadership and contribute to reconciliation and stability in the sub-region. ECOWAS and EU will continue to support the Government of President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf as it seeks truth, justice and national reconciliation after years of pain, trauma and senseless violence.
13. ECOWAS and the EU agreed to assist the economic recovery of Liberia. The EU took note of ECOWAS calling for the lifting of sanctions on Liberia.
14. The EU briefed ECOWAS on the progress in its consultations with Liberia which are heading towards resumption of full cooperation. ECOWAS noted that the EU's intention is to replace the existing appropriate measures by a reinforced political dialogue under Article 8 of the Cotonou Agreement.

### **Guinea-Bissau**

15. ECOWAS and the EU expressed concern about the fragile political and socio-economic situation in Guinea-Bissau, as well as with respect to the question of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the north of the country. Both EU and ECOWAS urged the Government to address these issues. Regarding the IDPs, EU and ECOWAS expressed the view that they should be allowed to return to their homes as soon as possible. ECOWAS recently sent a fact finding and humanitarian mission to Guinea Bissau. Regarding the socio-economic situation, both sides encouraged the Government to engage in a regular dialogue with the opposition ensuring the political stability of the country and the reform of the security sector.
16. Both sides noted that the problem of payment of March salaries of government workers is creating tension in the country. The EU commended ECOWAS in its effort to launch a special appeal on behalf of Guinea Bissau. However, the meeting recalled that on a long-term basis, the challenge is to reach sustainable funding for Guinea Bissau. The financial situation of the country will be discussed at the Donors' conference in November 2006 but there is the need to address the issue of salaries and funding for the government on a long-term and sustainable basis, particularly the issue of the funding gap in the 2006 budget.
17. The EU and ECOWAS commended the Guinea Bissau authorities' intention to produce a comprehensive Security Sector Reform Strategy in view of the Donor's Conference.

18. Both sides agreed that it was necessary to step up attention to the situation in the country. In that respect the EU took note of the proposal by ECOWAS to set up an International Working Group on Guinea-Bissau.

### **Guinea**

19. Both sides noted the results of the 18 December 2005 local elections and welcomed Government's initiative in respect of the electronic media sector. They encouraged the Government to build upon these improvements to create, in agreement with the opposition and civil society, the operational conditions for holding the legislative elections foreseen in June 2007 and reiterated their support for the progress made in order to improve democratic participation. These developments are important in view of the Guinea-EU ongoing consultations under Art. 96 of the Cotonou Agreement.
20. The EU expressed concern at the internal situation in Guinea.
21. As a contribution towards the preparation for a peaceful future for Guinea ECOWAS and EU encouraged all parties to engage in a dialogue that will ensure the continued stability of the country through democratic reform.

### **Togo**

22. Both sides welcomed that the Inter-Togolese Dialogue involving all Political forces and civil society has commenced and hoped that it would facilitate national reconciliation, peace and stability in the country. Both sides agreed that the dialogue should pave the way for strengthening the rule of law, respect for human rights and the democratisation process, in the line with the 22 commitments taken towards EU, and allow the holding of free, fair and transparent legislative elections in the near future. They called on all political forces to join in this process and support it.

### **Nigeria**

23. EU and ECOWAS expressed their concern at the situation in the Niger Delta and its impact on the stability of Nigeria, which is a major pillar in the drive to promote democracy, peace, security and regional integration in West Africa.

24. Both sides therefore urged peaceful negotiations in seeking solutions to genuine grievances. The recent scaled up development efforts in the Niger Delta are a first step in the right direction, as they create an important opening for addressing the underlying causes of conflict in that part of the country. Guided by experiences elsewhere in the sub-region, EU and ECOWAS reiterated that recourse to violence will only complicate, not solve, the problems of the region, and exhorted the Niger Delta communities and their leadership to take advantage of the space created for dialogue.

### **Other Matters**

25. The EU and ECOWAS exchanged views on the ECOWAS Standby Force and agreed on the importance of this arrangement. ECOWAS sought the support of the EU in moving forward the process of the establishment of the Standby Force. In particular the EU noted that the setting up of the ECOWAS Stand-by Force should allow ECOWAS to actively respond and deploy adequately as required. ECOWAS thanked the EU for its leading role as a partner of the Workshop on Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in preparation of the African Standby Force hosted by ECOWAS from 26 to 29 April 2006. The EU also welcomed the co-operation between ECOWAS, the African Union and other sub-regional organisations in developing the African Stand-by Force and expressed satisfaction at the finalisation of the ECOWAS Stand-by-Force concept.
26. EU and ECOWAS should reinforce consultations when both organisations are involved in observation of electoral processes.
27. SRSG-UNOWA Ambassador Ould-Abdallah briefed the meeting on the development of cooperation between the EU, ECOWAS and the UN within the “Trilateral Framework of Action for Peace and Security” and also on the interest of the UN in working with ECOWAS on issues of peace and security, good governance and youth unemployment.

## **C. Good Governance**

### **Human rights**

28. The EU and ECOWAS emphasized their deep commitment to democracy, human rights and the rule of law as basic conditions for peace, security and development and welcomed an improvement of the human rights situation in the region. The protection of children in armed conflict, women's rights and rights of internally displaced people (IDPs) were raised as issues of special concern. Both sides recalled that the first regional conference on IDPs in West Africa was held at the ECOWAS Secretariat in April 2006 and also from 9 to 11 April ECOWAS and ECCAS Experts met to harmonise regional frameworks on human trafficking. They took note of the valuable work undertaken by the gender and child rights units of the ECOWAS Secretariat and underlined the need to strengthen them further.
29. The EU and ECOWAS took note of the various activities of African Human Rights bodies, in particular on the areas of special concern.
30. The EU and ECOWAS discussed a number of country situations.
31. Both sides welcomed the decision taken by the recent EU Africa Troika meeting to hold regular contacts between EU and African human rights experts. Both sides noted that member states from both ECOWAS and EU were elected to the recently established UN Human Rights Council. Both sides look forward to fruitful cooperation in this Council as an additional possibility to further contribute also to good governance.
32. Both sides welcomed important steps to end impunity which will foster the rule of law, good governance, stability and reconciliation in the region concerned and recognized the decisive role the ICC is playing in this regard. The EU further encouraged all states in the region not yet party to the Rome Statute, to ratify or accede to the founding instrument of the ICC and States Parties to implement the obligations set forth there under.

### **Role of the Armed Forces in a democratic state**

33. Both sides noted that ECOWAS is developing a Code of Conduct for armed and security forces in West Africa as directed by its Defence and Security Commission in April 2005. The Code of Conduct would further guide the role of armed forces in a democratic state.
34. They took note of ongoing international initiatives on Security Sector Reform (SSR) in the region. ECOWAS and EU support for these initiatives is welcome.
35. ECOWAS took note of the EU concept for ESDP support to SSR endorsed by the EU Council in December 2005.

### **SALW**

36. Both sides commended the process of transformation of the ECOWAS Moratorium on Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms into a Convention. They also noted the progress in this transformation and looked forward to the culmination in the review and adoption of the Convention by the Authority of Heads of State and Government.
37. The EU and ECOWAS discussed the upcoming UN Conference to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects (UN PoA). The conference should focus on crucial areas where significant obstacles to the full implementation of the 2001 UN PoA persist. In this regard, both sides agreed on the importance of improved transfer controls, marking and tracing, brokering regulations, ammunition and the integration of small arms measures into development assistance. Both sides were of the opinion that these concerns need to be addressed during the Review Conference.

### **D. Economic Integration Process and the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA)**

38. Both sides reiterated the importance of regional economic integration for promoting growth and fighting poverty, furthering long-term conflict prevention and sustainable development and the need to look at these issues in the framework of the efforts to achieve the MDGs.

39. ECOWAS briefed the EU on the ECOWAS Ministerial Meeting in Monrovia on May 15 on coordination of efforts for the achievement of the MDGs.
40. ECOWAS briefed the EU on recent developments in its economic integration process. The meeting took note of the progress achieved by ECOWAS in the implementation of the Free Trade Area and the establishment of the Customs Union by the end of 2007. It has appealed to all ECOWAS Member States to honour the calendar of the road-map on the Common External Tariff (CET).
41. The two sides recognised the important role of the harmonization of macro-economic policies in the regional integration process. To this end, they placed special emphasis on multilateral surveillance of financial and economic policies of ECOWAS Member-States based on the convergence criteria adopted by the Heads of State and Government.
42. Both sides also took note of the progress made by ECOWAS in the harmonisation of sectoral development policies, in particular in the areas of production and infrastructure development. It appealed to the EU to support ECOWAS in the implementation of these important programmes, particularly the agriculture and infrastructure sectors.
43. The two sides exchanged views on the status of the EPA negotiations. The EU expressed concern at the slow pace of the negotiations. They reiterated their strong commitment to make the EPA a real instrument of development and conclude the negotiations by end 2007. Towards this end, they resolved to work together to examine the real issues and overcome obstacles in the implementation of the road-map.

#### **E. Institutional Matters**

44. ECOWAS informed EU of the latest development in the restructuring of its Executive Secretariat into a Commission.
45. The EU took note of the progress made by ECOWAS in reinforcing/strengthening its operational capacity which would enable ECOWAS to address issues of economic development, regional integration and crisis prevention and management.

46. ECOWAS and the EU also expressed satisfaction with the progress achieved in internal ECOWAS institutional capacity building, noting in particular the implementation of some of the Experts recommendations, progress on strategy and budgeting, as well as improvement in donor co-ordination following the ECOWAS Donors Conference held in November 2005.
47. The EU informed ECOWAS about its intention to adopt a Concept for strengthening of the Africa capabilities in the field of conflict prevention, management and resolution which aims to provide the basis and the framework for a comprehensive and consistent response to African needs defined by the African side.

## **F. Migration**

48. Both sides stressed the importance of migration in the relations between both parties and emphasised the need for close cooperation on national, regional, continental and international levels. They stressed the urgent need for a comprehensive and balanced approach leading to the creation of policies enhancing the benefits and advantages that migration can offer to both EU and Africa in a structured and legal framework addressing the urgent issues of migration in all its dimensions.
49. The EU aims to achieve the development of a partnership with Africa aiming at making migration a positive factor for development, through the promotion of concrete measures and the reinforcement of the efforts for poverty reduction and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.
50. In this regard the EU and ECOWAS agreed that urgent action was necessary and therefore decided to step up the cooperation between EU and ECOWAS in this area, and in particular to create a joint ad-hoc working group to examine possible course of action and to report to the next troika meeting.
51. The EU and ECOWAS also:
  - welcomed the initiative for the regional Euro-African conference on Migration and Development planned for July 2006 in Rabat.

- welcomed the initiative of the AU to organize a EU-African Ministerial Conference on Migration and Development and took note of the outcome of the AU Experts Meeting which took place in Algiers on 2-4 April and the preparation of the two documents setting up a common African position on Migration and in view to be adopted at the AU conference on Migration and Development in Algiers.
- took note of the EU's willingness to start dialogues under Art. 13 of the Cotonou Agreement with ECOWAS Member States on a regional basis.

## **G. Avian Flu**

52. ECOWAS briefed the EU on preparations for the meeting of Ministers of Livestock, Health and Integration scheduled to take place in Abuja in June 2006 (20-23), which will set up a communication/sensitisation strategy, develop and adopt a regional actions plan and set up a regional coordinating mechanism/intervention fund domiciled at the African Bank for Development (ADB). The meeting will ensure concerted implementation of strategies at national level by making the process sustainable.
53. EU and ECOWAS discussed the possibilities of using existing and future EDF funds to cover urgent national and regional needs.
54. EU briefed ECOWAS on its own situation and activities including disbursement plans of its Beijing pledges in respect to avian influenza and pandemic preparedness planning. The EU supports this initiative and considers it as complementary with its regional response to Avian Influenza in Africa implemented through the ALive mechanism.
55. EU reiterated its invitation to ECOWAS and all its member states - as well as to the African Bank for Development (AfDB) - to attend the global Vienna Senior Officials Meeting on Avian and Human Pandemic Influenza on 6 and 7 June 2006 organized by the EU in order to share recent information on the animal epidemic and on the human pandemic preparedness, as well as to reach a co-ordinated strategy on how to combat this global threat together. It will furthermore strengthen and structure the international partnership on avian and human pandemic influenza.

## **H. Conclusion**

56. In conclusion, the EU and ECOWAS emphasized the need for continued and effective dialogue on peace and security, economic integration and trade as well as governance. To this end, they agreed that the next EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika meeting will be held in Niamey, Niger in October at a date to be agreed, preceded by a Senior Officials meeting.
  
  57. Done in Vienna this 22nd Day of May 2006
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