7th EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika Meeting
Communiqué
Luxembourg, 18 May 2005

The seventh ministerial troika meeting between the European Union (EU) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held in Luxembourg (Luxembourg), on 18 May 2005 under the Co-Chairs of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Luxembourg, current chairman of the EU, the Honourable Jean Asselborn and the Minister for Foreign Affairs Cooperation and African Integration of Niger, current chairman of ECOWAS, the Honourable Mrs Aïchatou Mindaoudou.

The EU delegation was further composed of the Minister for Africa of the United Kingdom, the Honourable Lord Triesman of Tottenham, the Presidency's Special Representative, State Secretary Mr Hans Dahlgren, the European Commission Director General for Development, Mr Stefano Manservisi and the Head of the Africa Task Force at the Council General Secretariat of the EU, Mr Koen Vervaete. The ECOWAS troika was further composed of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Ghana, the Honourable Nana Akufo-Addo M.P., and the Deputy Executive Secretary of Political Affairs, Defence and Security, ECOWAS, General C.O. Diarra. The United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA) was represented by Mr Andrew Gilmour.
Both sides agreed on the following:

1. **Peace and Security**

The EU and ECOWAS sides had an exchange of views on the situation in the **Mano River Basin**. They expressed the need to support the implementation of the Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement in **Liberia** and emphasised the importance of the international community's involvement in election preparations, reintegration and the return of refugees and internally displaced people. Both sides expressed concern about the corruption levels in Liberia, which threatened to hamper the transition process. In this regard, the EU commended ECOWAS' efforts to investigate the reported fraud cases and called on the National Transitional Government of Liberia (NTGL) to take proper action in cases of abuse and financial malpractices and to improve public sector management. Both sides agreed on the need to act on the findings of the EU and ECOWAS audits. In this regard, they referred to the communiqué of the meeting of the International Partners in Copenhagen on the 11 May 2005, resolving to develop an urgent economic development action plan for implementation by the NTGL and consideration by the UN Security Council. Both sides recalled the statement of the International Contact Group for the Mano River Basin, which met in Stockholm on 21 March 2005, underlining that Charles Taylor’s departure was a critical step in bringing about the current peace in Liberia and welcomed Nigeria’s contribution in this regard. Charles Taylor’s return would threaten Liberia’s stability. Both sides expressed their support for efforts made to tackle the culture of impunity within the region. The EU reiterated its position on the need to bring Charles Taylor under the jurisdiction of the Special Court of Sierra Leone.

The EU briefed ECOWAS about the conclusion of Art. 96 consultations of the Cotonou agreement with **Guinea**. In this regard, they underlined the importance of the implementation of the engagements undertaken by the government of Guinea in the framework of Art. 96 consultations and particularly, the resumption of national dialogue in Guinea and welcomed the commitment expressed by the government to this end. Both sides also agreed on the danger of instability in one country affecting its neighbours and on the need for international partners to work together to prevent this.

Both sides noted the forthcoming meeting of the Consultative Group on **Sierra Leone**, which will be held in Paris on 6-7 June 2005. They agreed on the need to keep engaged in the country to ensure a successful transition. They also emphasised the need to follow up closely the drawdown of UNAMSIL in Sierra Leone and to encourage the government to tackle the root causes of conflict.
The EU commended the mediation efforts of the African Union and ECOWAS in Côte d'Ivoire. They applauded in particular President Mbeki’s recent efforts leading to the signature of the Pretoria agreement. They agreed that it is critical that international partners encourage Ivorian parties to implement their obligations under the Pretoria Agreement. They welcomed the decision by President Gbagbo accepting that all the signatories to the Linas-Marcoussis agreement could present their candidacy for the presidential elections if they so wish. They stressed that the conditions for free, fair and transparent presidential elections in October should be met. In this respect, the EU and ECOWAS expressed their readiness to support the election process in Côte d’Ivoire. Both sides also affirmed that the implementation of the DDR process should be a priority, and welcomed the launching of the disarmament process by the 27 June 2005, which should include the demobilisation of all the militia and paramilitary forces in the country. They underlined the importance of all parties to the peace process promptly take the necessary steps in this regard. Both sides agreed that United Nations Operation in Côte d’Ivoire (UNOCI) should be reinforced and its mandate enlarged to cover election preparations and disarmament.

The EU and ECOWAS also had an exchange of views on the situation in Guinea-Bissau. While both parties welcomed the progress in the transition process, they also reaffirmed the need to ensure that the process be monitored closely. They launched an appeal to all the parties to ensure that the forthcoming presidential elections in June will be free and transparent. They also reiterated their concern for the political situation in Guinea Bissau, particularly, for recent statements that may produce undesirable consequences for the restoration of constitutional order. At the same time, they reaffirmed their support for the country’s national authorities and for the efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General and his Special Envoy, former President Chissano, in order to assist all political actors to reach a peaceful conclusion of the transition process in that country. They called on political candidates to exert their leadership with diligence and restraint, and to refrain from generating any tensions in the electoral process and strongly condemned any such attempt.

The EU informed ECOWAS on the results of the Art. 96 mid-term review mission, which noted an improvement in the economic and political situation while expressing concerns about delays in implementing the security and armed forces census. Both sides agreed that the international community needs to be engaged in the economic development of Guinea-Bissau. Both sides also affirmed that the independence of the judiciary and the re-establishment of civilian control over the armed forces are key elements for success in the return to constitutional legitimacy. They agreed that security sector reform is a vital challenge facing some countries in West Africa and affirmed the desirability of international cooperation to develop feasible programmes for security sector reform in
Guinea-Bissau. These programmes should include the establishment of civilian control over the armed forces, their re-structuring and downsizing, improving living conditions in barracks, training and developing alternative occupations.

2. **Governance**

ECOWAS briefed the EU about the efforts carried out in Togo by the African Union and ECOWAS after the death of former President Eyadema. The EU commended the efforts leading to the resignation of Faure Gnassinbé and the calling for the restoration of constitutional legality in Togo. The EU and ECOWAS then analysed the elections that took place on 24 April 2005 and their aftermath. ECOWAS recalled the terms of the joint communiqué published by the observers, following the ballot of 24 April, recognising the credibility of these elections. ECOWAS reiterated its commitment to work towards the consolidation of a dialogue among all political forces in Togo in order to create the conditions enabling national reconciliation, political reforms and the prompt resumption of full cooperation with the EU. In this regard, the two parties welcomed the holding of a meeting of some African Heads of States and Government in Abuja on 19 May 2005 and expressed the hope that the positive outcome of that summit will contribute favourably to the reconciliation and peace in Togo. They paid tribute to the people of Togo, who took part in the ballot despite difficult conditions. Both sides strongly condemned the violence that took place after the election and launched an appeal to all parties concerned to restore calm and refrain from any statement inciting to the use of violence. They also called upon the competent authorities in Togo to exercise their duty to maintain law and order in the strict respect for the human rights of their people, in order to avoid any further suffering of the population. Both the EU and ECOWAS agreed on the need to support the process of democratisation in Togo. The EU stated its readiness to support the legislative elections and local elections provided that the conditions for free and fair elections were met.

ECOWAS also briefed the EU about the ongoing mediation efforts carried out by African leaders to promote dialogue and national reconciliation and reiterated its commitment to pursue those initiatives. The EU expressed appreciation for these efforts and reiterated its support for ECOWAS and AU efforts to find a solution to the Togolese crisis that will bring peace, stability and democratic governance. Both sides encouraged the leaders of all the political forces and civil and military institutions to prove their total commitment to the process of national reconciliation and to achieve a successful and inclusive transition. Both sides will be following closely compliance by the government of Togo of the twenty-two engagements undertaken in the framework of Art. 96 consultations of the Cotonou Agreement in 2004.
ECOWAS thanked the EU for its support in the **fight against the proliferation of small arms** in the region. ECOWAS welcomed in particular the Financing Agreement implementing EU Joint Action 2002/589/CFSP and Council Decision 2004/833/CFSP to help transform the Moratorium on Small Arms and Light Weapons into a Convention, and the inclusion in the forthcoming 9th EDF “Conflict Prevention Programme”, of a component to support *inter alia* the ECOWAS National Small Arms Commissions. Both sides agreed on the importance of member states taking firm measures to implement the Moratorium and expressed their support for the strengthening of national capacities. They welcomed the forthcoming preparatory meeting on the ECOWAS Small Arms Programme (ECOSAP), which will be held in Abuja on 10 June, in order to organise a subsequent pledging conference.

The EU and ECOWAS had an exchange of views on **economic good governance**. They recognised the impact of economic factors in West African conflicts as well as the negative effects of conflicts on economic performance. In this regard, they agreed on the need to address economic governance problems more systematically at regional level, through the promotion of sound policies and the eradication of bad practices like corruption. ECOWAS informed the EU about the implementation of the Multilateral Economic Surveillance Mechanism, which involves the ECOWAS Secretariat, the UEMOA Commission, and the West Africa Monetary Institute. ECOWAS informed that the criteria underlining this mechanism are in compliance with NEPAD’s instruments and principles. ECOWAS also recalled that the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) put in place within the NEPAD initiative, as well as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSPs) and the setting up of MDGs provide additional opportunities for promoting economic good governance. As regards the fight against bad practices, ECOWAS informed the EU about the ratification situation of the ECOWAS Protocol on the Fight against Corruption. ECOWAS briefed the EU about its efforts to fight corruption through legislation and dialogue with the concerned actors. Finally, both parties underlined the importance of transparency and accountability in achieving good governance and sustainable economic development.

### 3. Economic Integration and Trade

ECOWAS briefed the EU on recent developments in its economic integration process. More specifically, ECOWAS informed the meeting of the progress achieved for the functioning of the Free Trade Area (FTA), while underlining the need for its consolidation. Information was also provided on preparations for the adoption of the ECOWAS Common External Tariff (CET), which involves the beginning of negotiations among all ECOWAS Member States. The objective was to start the implementation of the CET in January 2006 and to complete it by the end of 2007.
ECOWAS also informed the meeting on its sectoral programmes, particularly, the adoption of ECOWAS Agricultural Policy (ECOWAP), the Plan of Action for its implementation and the development of ECOWAS infrastructure projects, with the decision to put in place a Project Development Implementation Unit (PDIU). The two sides recognise the need to ensure coherence between the different policies, notably, between the ECOWAP and the adoption of the CET.

Both sides reiterated the importance of regional economic integration for fighting poverty, furthering sustainable development and longer term conflict prevention. The two parties furthermore indicated their commitment to the successful negotiation of the Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), which should be completed by the end of 2007. Both sides highlighted the progress achieved so far and recalled the objective of adopting priorities for consolidation of the integration process by October 2005 and taking into account the development dimension of the EPA. Both sides stressed that EPA was an important development tool and highlighted the need for increased information and communication campaigns in the region.

4. Institutional Aspects

ECOWAS informed the EU on the results of the last donors’ meeting held in November 2004 in Abuja. ECOWAS mentioned the action undertaken since this date, particularly within the framework of the Short-Term Action Plan. Many activities are going on with regard to the need to reinforce the administrative and financial capacity of the ECOWAS Secretariat. The European Union congratulated ECOWAS for the progress achieved in the field of reinforcement of its operational capacities for crisis prevention and management and particularly, to the reinforcement of the Planning and Mission Implementation Cell, which should allow ECOWAS to improve the daily management of short-term crises and to better define and implement its projects in the medium and longer term. The EU also expressed satisfaction about the finalisation by ECOWAS of its Stand-by-Force concept.

The EU expressed its satisfaction at the coordination meeting among the African Union and Sub-Regional Organisations that took place in Addis Ababa on 22 and 23 April. Both sides agreed that the roadmap produced in that meeting is both positive and realistic and will allow to better define each organisation's needs and to distribute the available resources. The EU and ECOWAS also noted with satisfaction the progress achieved on donor co-ordination following the ECOWAS Donors' Conference held last November while acknowledging the need to do further work in this respect.
UNOWA briefed the meeting about its views on priorities for action in the field of peace and security in West Africa and on cooperation possibilities among the EU, ECOWAS and UNOWA. Both sides endorsed the List of Recommendations for a Trilateral Framework of Action for Peace and Security, which was prepared by a working group following the mandate of the last Ministerial Troika Meeting held in Accra (Ghana) on 8 November 2004 and recommended its approval by the ECOWAS member states and the subsequent development of an action plan with a timeframe to ensure its implementation.

5. Political Dialogue: Format, Content and Future

Both sides underlined the importance of an enhanced political dialogue between the EU and ECOWAS and expressed their satisfaction at the improvement and intensification of this dialogue. Both parties expressed their commitment to continue political dialogue in the same spirit of close co-operation and decided that the next ECOWAS-EU ministerial troika meeting will be held in a venue to be determined at a later stage in December 2005.