



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on the Great Lakes Region

*2879th EXTERNAL RELATIONS Council meeting
Luxembourg, 16 and 17 June 2008*

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. The Council welcomes the progress made in the African Great Lakes Region, where the EU is actively engaged, including in the framework of the implementation structures of the different Peace Processes, together with international and African partners, in particular the UN and the AU. The Council underlines the importance of a regional approach in order to provide a comprehensive response to the interlinked problems of the region. The Council also stresses the importance of implementing commitments to normalise diplomatic relations made by the governments of DRC, Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda at their regional meeting in September 2007.
2. The Council launches an appeal to reinforce relations between the countries of the region through existing structures and to create a stronger regional cooperation, including on economic aspects and with a focus on reducing the wide-spread cross-border criminal activities. The Council calls upon countries in the region to cooperate fully with the Committee established pursuant to UNSCR 1533 in carrying out its mandate.
3. The Council reiterates the EU's commitment to support efforts by the DRC to provide peace, security, reconstruction and development for its citizens, in full respect of human rights, good governance and the rule of law, in line with the principles enshrined in the Cotonou Agreement and in the EU-Africa Strategy.

P R E S S

As regards the situation in Eastern DRC, the Council welcomes the approach taken by the government of DRC and Rwanda and all the groups involved in concluding the important recent accords on peace in eastern DRC. The Council underlines that the Nairobi Communiqué of 9 November 2007 and the results of the Goma Conference (Kivus Conference for Peace, Security and Development) of 23 January 2008 provide an opportunity for a political solution of the crisis in the Kivus. It is now essential that all parties equally and fully implement the commitments, ensuring substantial progress on both tracks, preventing the peace processes underway in the region becoming stalled. The Council stresses the need to refrain from providing support to armed movements in the DRC or the region. The EU underlines the importance of the implementation structures and programmes, in particular the Amani programme and the Technical Joint Committee for Peace and Security.

4. The Council condemns the recent attack by FDLR at the Kinyandoni camp against internally displaced people. The Council stresses the need to accelerate the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation/resettlement and reintegration (DDR/RR) process and the need for all armed groups to constructively engage in the process launched in Nairobi and Goma. The Council takes note of the conference on FDLR disarmament, demobilisation, repatriation and relocation that took place in Kisangani on May 26. The EU welcomes this initiative as a step to make further progress in the Nairobi peace process. In this context, the EU calls on all signatories of the Nairobi communiqué to take their responsibilities in making sure all conditions are in place to allow for this process to advance.
5. The Council welcomes UNSCR 1804 and 1807. In accordance with their provisions, EU Member States will take all appropriate measures to prevent the provision by their nationals or from their territories of any support for the FDLR or ex-FAR/Interahamwe and other armed groups in the DRC. The Council stresses the need to bring an immediate end to the suffering of the population, in particular women and children and to put an end to all forms of sexual violence. The Council condemns the ongoing violations of human rights and international humanitarian and criminal law, in particular in the Eastern DRC and calls on the Government of DRC to ensure that those committing these violations are held responsible. The EU will continue its support for the reform of the justice sector and the fight against impunity. The Council reiterates its full support for the International Criminal Court's (ICC) activities in the region.
6. The EU continues to contribute to the process of Security Sector reform, including through its two ESDP missions in the DRC (EUSEC RD Congo and EUPOL RD Congo) and the Commission's activities. A sustainable reform of the entire Security Sector, with due emphasis on the rule of law, accountability and respect for human rights, coordinated with civil society and other relevant stakeholders and with support from the international community, will greatly help to end the climate of impunity and provide the security that DRC citizens deserve. The Council welcomes the organisation of the SSR meeting in Kinshasa on 25-26 February 2008 and encourages the government of the DRC and international partners to further enhance their commitment to this process.
7. The EU deplores the decision by the DRC government to close two Belgian consulates in Bukavu and Lubumbashi, as they provided an important and useful EU diplomatic and consular presence in the East of the country.

8. Regarding the peace process in Burundi, the Council congratulates the Government of Burundi, the Regional Initiative and the South African facilitation for the progress achieved. The Council welcomes the return of the PALIPEHUTU-FNL leadership to the country. The EU will remain committed to supporting the peace process, in particular through the participation of the EU in the Political Directorate. The Council encourages the parties to remain actively committed to the peace process and calls upon the PALIPEHUTU-FNL and the Government of Burundi to refrain from the use of armed force, to implement the cease-fire agreement and to work towards a comprehensive peace agreement. The EU strongly encourages the institutions in Burundi to resume their work and engage in a constructive way, in order to improve the living conditions of the Burundian population.
9. Regarding the peace process in Uganda, the EU welcomes the facilitation efforts of the Special Envoy of the UN Secretary-General for LRA-affected areas, Joaquim Chissano, and of the vice-President of South Sudan, Riek Machar, and encourages them to continue. The Council strongly deplores the fact that the LRA has not honoured its previously declared commitment to sign the Final Peace Agreement. The EU condemns the recent abductions and demands that these and other serious breaches of international humanitarian and criminal law by the LRA come to an end. All abducted persons should immediately and unconditionally be released. The EU compliments the Government of Uganda on having constructively carried out the peace negotiations in Juba with the LRA. The Council encourages the Government of Uganda to honour the implementation of all applicable provisions of the agreements, in particular the Comprehensive Solutions and Accountability and Reconciliation, in order to stabilize the situation, ensure durable peace, respect international law and achieve full respect for human rights in Northern Uganda. The Council welcomes the new High Court division to deal with serious war crimes, on the understanding, however, that its functioning will be in line with the provisions of the Rome Statute, establishing the ICC. The Council reiterates that the EU will remain committed to supporting the peace process and fully upholding international law in full compliance with the mandate of the ICC.
10. As regards Rwanda, the Council has noted the preparations made for the parliamentary elections to be held next September. The Council emphasises the importance of these elections for the country and states the EU's readiness to support them, inter alia, by sending an EU electoral observation mission to Rwanda. The EU reiterates its full support for the activities of the International Criminal Tribunal on Rwanda (ICTR).
11. The Council has noted MONUC's special report on the Bas Congo events of February and March 2008. It regrets that the police used force in an excessive and/or unwarranted manner, including arbitrary executions. It requests the Congolese government to take urgent action to implement the recommendations of the report."