

African Union - European Union relations: joint consultative meeting on peace and security

11th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting of the Political and Security Committee of the European Union and of the Peace and Security Council of the African Union

Brussels, Belgium
23 October 2018

On 23 October 2018, the European Union (EU) Political and Security Committee (EU PSC) and the African Union (AU) Peace and Security Council (AU PSC) held their **11th Annual Joint Consultative Meeting** in Brussels, Belgium as part of their regular dialogue within the framework of the AU – EU partnership. The meeting was co-chaired by Ambassador Sofie From-Emmesberger, Permanent Chair of the EU PSC and H.E. Ambassador Lazare Makayat Safouesse (Republic of Congo), Chairperson of the AU PSC for the month of October 2018. The Joint Meeting brought together Ambassadors of EU Member States and AU PSC Member States, as well as Senior Officials from the EU External Action Service and Commission, and from the AU Commission.

The Joint Consultative Meeting was preceded by the **4th Joint Retreat of the EU PSC and the AU PSC**, held on 22 October 2018, which provided the opportunity for an informal exchange of views on enhanced cooperation on aspects discussed in multilateral fora and sustainable financing of AU-led peace operations authorized by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and on cooperation on conflict prevention and mediation, on following up on the outcome of the 5th AU-EU-Summit in Abidjan in November 2017, the implementation of the AU-EU Memorandum of Understanding on Peace, Security and Governance signed in May 2018.

The EU PSC and the AU PSC underlined the **importance of effective multilateralism** and the rules-based international order with the United Nations at its core. They acknowledged the importance of strengthened AU-EU-UN cooperation and invited further reflection on how to follow-up on the high-level meeting of AU-EU-UN principals which took place in September, in the margins of the UN General Assembly.

The EU PSC and the AU PSC acknowledged the importance to translate their political cooperation in the area of **conflict prevention** into concrete initiatives such as joint field visits, joint sessions, developing shared understanding and analysis on crisis situations, as well as investigate avenues for joint early action. They underlined the important role of women and youth as active players in conflict prevention and mediation.

The discussion during **the Joint Consultative Meeting** focused on progress made on resolving conflict/crisis situations and threats to peace and stability in the Mali/Sahel, the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, Somalia and Burundi.

On the situation in **Mali and the Sahel**, the EU PSC and the AU PSC welcomed the peaceful holding of the presidential elections in Mali which took place on 29 July and 12 August 2018 and called upon all Malian stakeholders to work together to promote sustainable and inclusive peace and development in their country. The EU PSC and AU PSC noted the renewed commitment of the Malian signatory parties to accelerate the implementation of the Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in Mali signed in 2015 as demonstrated by the signature of a Pact for Peace between Mali and the United Nations on 15 October 2018. However, they expressed concern over the slow implementation of the Agreement, in particular provisions relating to institutional measures, security arrangement and the development for the northern part of the country. They recalled the importance of the Agreement to achieve lasting peace and reconciliation in Mali. In particular, they stressed the need for concrete and urgent progress in the areas of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) of former combatants in order to restore security to the northern region, facilitate the work of the interim authorities and allow for local development, as well as for the return of refugees and displaced persons. They commended the key role of Algeria in supporting the peace process in Mali as Head of the Mediation efforts and as Chair of the Comité de Suivi (CSA), and called for more inclusivity of women and civil society organizations in its implementation. They urged the Malian authorities to work towards a large political and social consensus with a view to

undertaking the necessary reforms to tackle Mali's main institutional, security and development challenges, in order to improve the livelihoods of all its citizens, and re-affirmed their willingness to support the Malian Government in these efforts.

The EU PSC and the AU PSC expressed deep concern over the continued extension of terrorist attacks in the Sahel region, spilling over from northern Mali to the centre part of the country and into neighboring countries, and expressed particular concern over the deteriorating security situation in Burkina Faso. They strongly condemned the terrorist attacks against the civilian populations, the armed and security forces of Mali, the countries of the region, and the international forces of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Mission for Stabilization in Mali (MINUSMA) and Operation Barkhane. They reiterated their support to MINUSMA and called for further means and capabilities for the Mission so it can deliver its mandate in a safe manner. They also welcomed the role played by the troop contributing countries and paid tribute to those troops who have paid the ultimate sacrifice and those who sustained injuries in the promotion of peace, security, stability and reconciliation in Mali. They also recalled the framework allowing MINUSMA to provide logistic support to the G5 Joint Force and called for the swift disbursement of the funds dedicated to it under the African Peace Facility. They also noted the call by the UN Secretary General in April 2018 for the use of the UN assessed contributions and welcomed the progress made and the commitment to progress rapidly in the implementation of a human rights and international humanitarian law compliance framework for Africa peace support operations. They further welcomed the ongoing efforts by the AU to re-energize the Nouakchott Process in the context of the review process of the AU Strategy for the Sahel region.

The EU PSC and the AU PSC reaffirmed their partnership in support of regional security and development in the Sahel, as well as the cooperation on the ground between the EU Special Representative for the Sahel and the AU High Representative for Mali/Sahel. They saluted the contribution to the stability of the Sahel region made by the EU Training Mission (EUTM) Mali and EU Capacity Building Missions (EUCAP) Sahel Mali and Niger.

They commended efforts by the G5 Sahel and ECOWAS to reinforce regional cooperation to address the threats of terrorism and organized crime. They welcomed the progress made by the G5 Sahel countries towards the full operational capacity of a Joint Force to combat terrorism, transnational organized crime and all trafficking in the region under the mandate of the AU PSC and with strong EU support. They re-affirmed their commitment to support the G5 Sahel priorities, in particular to successfully implement the UN Security Council resolution 2391 that also needs to be sustained in the longer term. In this regard, they stressed the need to further mobilize political support from regional and international actors to follow up on the pledges made during the High Level Conference on the Sahel that was held in Brussels on the 23 February 2018. They further stressed the need for international support for the successful convening of the Conference on the G5 Programme d'Investissements Prioritaires in Nouakchott on 6 December 2018. In this regard, they underlined the need for the Conference to contribute for greater ownership by countries of the region. They stressed the importance of the full operationalization of the fiduciary fund set up by the G5 Sahel.

The EU PSC and the AU PSC noted the progress made in the **Central African Republic (CAR)** in the search of lasting solutions to the crisis in the country. They welcomed and reaffirmed their support to the AU sustained efforts through the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR, with the support of the countries of the region, through the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), Cameroon, Gabon, Republic of Congo, DRC, Sudan and Chad. They urged all stakeholders in the Initiative to participate actively in the implementation of the Roadmap adopted in Libreville, on 17 July 2017. In this regard, they took note with appreciation of the work done by the Facilitation Panel, which, on 31 August 2018, handed over to the President of the CAR, Faustin-Archange Touadera, the list of grievances and demands expressed by the 14 armed groups of the CAR following extensive consultations with these groups in recent months. They acknowledged the African Initiative as the only viable framework for the promotion of lasting peace, security and stability in the CAR. They called on all CAR stakeholders, the UN, notably through CAR country specific configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission (PCB), chaired by the Kingdom of Morocco, the EU and other partners to assist the country in full coordination. They reiterated the need for an inclusive engagement of all CAR institutions and civil society actors, including women's groups, to allow for sustainable national healing and reconciliation in the country. They welcomed the inauguration of the Special Criminal Court (CPS) as an important step towards combating impunity and fostering peace, justice and reconciliation in CAR.

They re-affirmed their support to President Touadera and his Government in their ongoing efforts towards a comprehensive political solution, including justice and reconciliation, essential to allow for stability, peace and development in the country. They called on the CAR leadership to prioritize joint work on the strengthening of democratic State institutions and of the Rule of law, on the reform of the security sector and on transitional justice, on good governance, as well as on the delivery of social services to the population, including security. They condemned the prevailing structural violence by armed groups against people from all walks of life, including women and children, humanitarian actors and security forces. In this regard, they urged the CAR Government to continue to provide protection, particularly to vulnerable groups and facilitate the work of humanitarian aid agencies.

They strongly condemned the destabilizing activities of the armed groups, as well as targeted attacks against civilians and the troops of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Mission for Stabilization in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and reiterated

their support to MINUSCA and to reinforcing the mission. They called upon all armed groups in the CAR to cease hostilities and to commit themselves resolutely to the DDR programmes and the pacification process of the country. They commended the EU and AU for their assistance to efforts being deployed by the CAR authorities to restore peace and rebuild their country, notably through the EU military training mission (EUTM RCA), and underlined that all actors engaged in this context need to closely coordinate their respective activities in full transparency. They acknowledged the support provided by the EU to the Government of the CAR in supporting the security sector reforms, including the provision of strategic advice to the Internal Security Forces through EUTM RCA following the request by CAR for additional assistance to the Internal Security Forces.

They expressed deep concern over the prevailing security and humanitarian situation in the CAR and called upon the international community to extend financial and other necessary forms of support to alleviate the humanitarian situation, as well as with and to fulfil the pledges made in May 2016 donors' conference held in Brussels, Belgium. They stressed the need for close coordination of efforts by members of the international community.

On **South Sudan**, the EU PSC and the AU PSC commended the progress made in the search for a lasting solution to the conflict in the Republic South Sudan and welcomed the signing, on 12 September 2018, in Addis Ababa, of the "Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution to the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan" (R-ARCSS) as a step forward towards the pursuit of an effective peace process. They commended the efforts deployed by the South Sudanese parties and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and its member states to reach this result. They stressed that the successful implementation of the R-ARCSS would require the commitment of all parties and, in this regard, they urged them to do their part in building confidence with each other and with the international community. The EU PSC and the AU PSC called for an immediate cessation of hostilities and disengagement of forces throughout the country. They encouraged the IGAD to remain actively engaged and to work closely with the AU to ensure that the parties to the Revitalized Agreement honour their commitments and that spoilers are held accountable for their actions.

The EU PSC and the AU PSC expressed deep concern over the prevailing humanitarian crisis in the country and commended the countries of the region which continue to host large number of South Sudanese refugees, as well as the humanitarian actors who have continued to provide assistance in the most difficult conditions. In this respect, they called on the South Sudanese parties to ensure unimpeded humanitarian access throughout the country. Furthermore, they reiterated the need for the establishment of the Hybrid Court of South Sudan, the Commission for Truth, Reconciliation and Healing, and the Compensation and Reparations Authority, as provided for by the R-ARCSS. They called for the international community to stand ready to support the implementation of the Revitalized Agreement.

The AU PSC and EU PSC welcomed the commitment of the South Sudanese parties to give due consideration to national diversity, gender and regional representation in selecting their nominees to the various mechanisms outlined in the Revitalized Agreement. Therefore, they encouraged the Transitional Government of National Unity of South Sudan to ensure that the provisions of the Transitional Constitution of the Republic of South Sudan and the R-ARCSS on the 35% participation of the women in the Executive are adhered to.

The EU PSC and AU PSC welcomed the rapprochement between **Ethiopia and Eritrea**, including the Joint Declaration of Peace and Friendship of 9 July 2018 and the commitment to comprehensive cooperation made between **Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Djibouti**. This provides new openings for regional cooperation on peace and security and economic integration.

On **Somalia**, in particular, the EU PSC and the AU PSC noted the recent positive regional developments in the Horn of Africa that will potentially have a positive impact on Somalia and the region as a whole. They welcomed the recent Somalia Partnership Forum, convened in Brussels on 16-17 July 2018 and, noting the progress, encouraged the country to positively move forward on political, security and economic reform efforts. They underlined the importance of the Federal Government of Somalia and the Federal Member States working closely together in order to make continued progress in the country's peace- and state building process. They stressed that the domestic situation in Somalia still remains fragile as evidenced by the continued security threats being posed by Al Shaabab. In this regard, they stressed the importance of sustained international support to the Government of Somalia and the AMISOM. They commended the AMISOM and the troop and police contributing countries for their contribution towards peace and stability in Somalia, which is critical for the progress in Somali state formation. The EU PSC and the AU PSC congratulated the Federal Government of Somalia (FGS) for the adoption of the Somali Transition Plan, which is internationally recognized and reiterated in UNSCR 2431 [2018]. They stressed the need to ensure that any security transition is in line with the Transition Plan, and emphasised the need for a reconfigured AMISOM to move towards the gradual handover of security responsibility to the country's security institutions who progressively will need to take over responsibility for Somalia's own security, bearing in mind the need to avoid any security vacuum that may undermine the gains made so far. The EU and AU PSC called on the FGS, together with the Federal Member States, to pursue the reform of the security sector, with particular emphasis on the integration of forces and to increase transparency through greater engagement with partners of security, notably through the establishment of an improved coordination mechanism ("Fusion Cell"). The EU PSC and the AU PSC further emphasized the need for timely, predictable and sustainable financial support to deliver a phased and conditions based transition, including from UN assessed contributions to AMISOM and support to Somali security institutions during the transition phase. The AU PSC

commended the longstanding and continued support provided by the EU to AMISOM and emphasized the importance of international burden-sharing in a joint and transparent effort. They saluted the contribution to the stability in Somalia made by the AMISOM and the EU Training Mission (EUTM) Somalia, the EU Capacity Building Missions (EUCAP) Somalia, as well as through the EU Naval Force (EUNAVFOR) Somalia, Operation Atalanta. They also emphasized on the need for enhanced support to the Somali National Army, with a view to preparing the SNA to gradually take over the security responsibilities from AMISOM.

The EU PSC and AU PSC affirmed their commitment to continue to follow the evolution of the situation in **Burundi**. They welcomed the announcement by President Pierre Nkurunziza, in May 2018, that he will not stand as a presidential candidate in the upcoming elections. The AU PSC and EU PSC further looked forward to the resumption of the inter-Burundian Dialogue which is scheduled to take place soon in Arusha, and urged all stakeholders to extend their full cooperation to the Mediator and the Facilitation team. They stressed that the only viable way forward for Burundi is finding a political solution through an inclusive inter-Burundian dialogue. They encouraged all actors to engage in the process in good faith and to make progress, especially in view of the 2020 elections and of the socio-economic situation in the country. They underlined that the support of the region for the inter-Burundian dialogue remains crucial and they expressed appreciation for the mediation and facilitation undertaken by the East African Community. They urged Burundians to respect the letter and spirit of the 2000 Arusha Agreement which is credited for promoting peace in the country and the region. The EU PSC and AU PSC took note of the adoption, on 28 September 2018, of a resolution which extends the mandate of the UN Commission of Inquiry for another year. They encouraged Burundi to cooperate with international human rights mechanisms and especially to sign a memorandum of understanding in view of the mission of the African Union Human Rights Observers and Military experts Mission in Burundi. They urged Burundi to ensure that all stakeholders providing support for the Burundi population can continue their work.

The AU PSC reiterated its appeal to the EU to lift the suspension of aid through the government imposed on Burundi, although recognising the continued important direct EU support to the population, with a view to facilitating socio-economic recovery in the country.

On the situation in the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)**, the EU PSC and the AU PSC reaffirmed their commitment to lasting peace, security and stability in the DRC and the Great Lakes region as a whole.

They welcomed the decision of President Kabila to comply with the Constitution of the country, by not standing as a presidential candidate in the upcoming elections, and paving the way for a democratic and peaceful transition in the DRC. In this context, they stressed the importance for the DRC authorities to ensure that the elections are held on 23 December 2018 consistent with the 31 December 2016 Political Agreement, in order to achieve inclusive, transparent, credible and peaceful elections. Furthermore, the EU PSC and the AU PSC welcomed the visit of the UN Security Council in October 2018 and expressed support for the role of the United Nations in facilitating the successful organization of the electoral process, at the request of the Government of the DRC, in line with the relevant provisions of UNSC Resolution 2409.

Bearing in mind the renewed security threats that may exacerbate the risks of the Ebola outbreak in the Eastern provinces of the DRC, the EU PSC and the AU PSC appealed the World Health Organisation to further strengthen and intensify its efforts towards the prevention of further Ebola outbreak and its outspreading. They further appealed for necessary financial and logistical support from the larger international community to the efforts being deployed by the DRC authorities, including for much wider humanitarian needs which remain severely underfunded. They further called for close collaboration between United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) in the fight against armed groups and negative forces, in particular the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), for which a strong regional response and coordination is necessary through renewed commitment to the Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the Region, signed on 24 February 2013, in Addis Ababa.

The meeting was also briefed by the EU side on cooperation with the **Western Balkans**.

The EU PSC and the AU PSC agreed to meet again in 2019 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and further agreed to explore the possibility of undertaking a new joint field visit.

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