



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on the Democratic Republic of Congo

(2727th GENERAL AFFAIRS Council meeting - Brussels, 15 May 2006)

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

- "1. As the elections in the DRC draw near, the Council has carried out a comprehensive review of the EU's external action in the DRC. The Council reaffirms its engagement, and the importance it attaches to the proper conduct of the elections. A successful transition in the DRC will have a major impact on peace and development in the Great Lakes Region, and in the whole of Africa.
2. The Council welcomes the work done by the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC) and the support provided by MONUC. It notes the date of 30 July 2006 set by IEC for the parliamentary and presidential elections. The Council urges the Congolese authorities to ensure that the election date is observed. Furthermore, at the earliest opportunity the IEC should set the date for a potential second round of presidential and provincial elections, as well as for the indirect elections to the Senate. Confirmation that municipal and local elections are to take place should also be forthcoming.
3. The Council welcomes the holding of elections, which must fulfil the earnest desire of the Congolese people to elect those who are to represent them at different levels of the democratic institutions and to vote on programmes and social projects which will affect the future of the country: peace, development, security, good governance, and an end to impunity. It urges all political parties and players to conduct a positive election campaign, bringing new hope, and to hold a responsible debate, not attempting to stir up divisions, and showing concern for the maintenance of public order and respect for human rights. In this regard the Council would highlight the importance of the code of conduct for the political parties, drawn up in June 2005, which must be consistently and broadly applied. The Council takes the view that, to create a favourable climate for democratic elections to be held, all possible measures must be taken to ensure respect for freedom of expression,

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including through fair access to the media. At the same time, it is crucial that the media should have a responsible attitude. The EU will contribute to the proper conduct of the elections by sending an observer mission.

4. The Council has always felt that the holding of elections which are as inclusive as possible would be the best guarantee of stability after the elections. Conditions are such that all those who wish to do so will be able to participate. That said, a law on funding for political parties has yet to be passed. The Council calls on all the political parties, even those which have chosen not to take part in the elections, to undertake to respect the verdict of the polls. Everyone should also look to the future in a spirit of reconciliation and national consensus, a future in which all political forces must participate in the reconstruction of the DRC.
5. The Council calls on all countries in the region to use their influence to contribute to the proper conduct of the elections. The success of the transition in the DRC is in the interest of the entire region. In this respect, the Council welcomes the continuing action of the United States of America in its facilitation of Tripartite Plus.
6. The Council would draw attention to the fact that responsibility for security during the elections lies first and foremost with the Transitional National Government, assisted by MONUC. Despite progress in the reform of the security sector, the Council remains concerned by the situation in many areas in the east of the country, notably Ituri, the Kivus and northern Katanga, and by the absence of some groups from the army integration process. The Council urges the Congolese authorities to pursue army integration and to remedy the problems of command, discipline and impunity, as well as those of financial management and social support. Furthermore, it highlights the need for strict enforcement of the arms embargo against armed groups in the DRC, overseen by the United Nations Security Council committee set up under Resolution 1533 (2004). It welcomes the firm action taken by the ICC to combat impunity in the DRC.
7. The Council welcomes the adoption by the United Nations Security Council on 25 April 2006 of Resolution 1671, authorising the deployment of EUFOR RD Congo during the election period in the DRC. It would highlight the fact that its decision to launch this operation came in response to a request from the United Nations. The operation is designed to provide support to MONUC when it does not have the capacity to confront certain situations. It will be directed from the headquarters which Germany has made available to the EU in Potsdam. In addition, the EUPOL Kinshasa mission will be reinforced during the election period to help the Congolese police forces coordinate their units' activities while the elections are taking place. The EU will thus be in a position to make a significant contribution to creating a more stable and secure environment during the election period.

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8. The EUFOR RD Congo operation is part of the EU's ongoing engagement in support of the transition process in the DRC (that is why the EU has provided more than half of the funding required to stage the elections) and in the area of security. The Council would draw attention to the action undertaken and the results achieved by EUSEC DR Congo in relation to reform of the security sector, including the Chain of Payments Project, and by EUPOL Kinshasa in the formation of the Integrated Police Unit in Kinshasa.
9. The Council would emphasise how important it is that the international community remain committed to the DRC beyond the election period, thereby showing continued support for the Congolese people with regard to rebuilding the country and to security. The European Union is determined to maintain its efforts in support of the authorities emerging from the elections. The reform of the security sector must continue with the greatest determination; in particular, options will be examined which enable a comprehensive approach in conducting actions to promote it.
10. The Council thanks the International Committee in Support of the Transition (CIAT) for the decisive role it has played in supporting the transitional authorities. The EU remains ready to be a part of any engagement by the international community in the DRC after the elections.
11. The Council notes that the convening of the second Summit of the Great Lakes Region, and the decisions which it will be called on to take, should give additional impetus to the reconstruction of the DRC and to regional cooperation."

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