ACP-EU JOINT PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY

Press release by the Mission of the ACP-EU JPA in Bamako, 7 March 2013

Following the invitation extended to the Co-presidents of the Joint Parliamentary Assembly (JPA) by the Speaker of the National Assembly of Mali, the Bureau of the JPA decided to send a fact-finding mission to Bamako. The purpose of the mission was to gather information at first hand to complete the reflections of the JPA on the political and security situation which prevail in Mali and on how it can support the current political process in order to return to a normal constitutional existence and the re-establishment of sovereignty of the Malian State over its entire territory.

The Mission was led jointly by Mr Louis MICHEL, Member of the European Parliament, Co-president of the ACP-EU JPA and Mr Mohamed Abdallahi OULD GUELAYE, Mauritanian MP, Co-Vice-President. It also comprised the following members, Ms Michele RIVASI, Member of the European Parliament, Co-Vice-President of the JPA and Ms Françoise CASTEX, Member of the European Parliament and the JPA. From 5 to 7 March 2013, the Mission met different parties, in particular the President of the Republic, H.E. Dioncounda Traoré, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Mr Younoussi Touré, the Prime Minister, Mr Diango Cissoko, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Tiéman Hubert Coulibaly, the Minister of Territorial Administration, M. Moussa Sinko Coulibaly, political groupings, civil society organisations, economic and social partners as well as regional and international organisations and diplomatic representations accredited to Bamako.

During the various meetings held, the Mission was able to hear clearly expressed points of view regarding different important subjects such as the political and security situation, the establishment of a framework for dialogue and reconciliation, the preparation and organisation of credible elections, the return of the Administration and the re-establishment of basic infrastructures and social services in the northern regions, the restructuring of the army, the possible transfer of the MISMA to UN control and the involvement of neighbouring states in the consolidation of peace in Mali.

The Mission firmly condemns the actions of destabilisation perpetrated in the North by Jihadists and other armed groups which have threatened the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Mali. The Mission is convinced that the secessionist elements in no way represent the population of northern Mali. In this regard the Mission unreservedly supports the efforts undertaken by the French Government in the repression of terrorist groups. It welcomes the firm commitment of the international community under the aegis of the United Nations, the AU and ECOWAS, as well as the full cooperation of neighbouring countries to consolidate the progress already achieved and in order to guarantee full and sustainable security and peace in the region.
The Mission welcomes and supports the efforts of the interim government to launch the inclusive process of national dialogue and reconciliation and the organisation of credible elections in July 2013.

While supporting the launching of the roadmap for a return to democracy, the Mission recognises the need for a coherent framework and timetable for national dialogue which must also set out the process of implementation by the new Government.

The Mission considers it equally important to work out the technical and administrative modalities for the elections in order to provide for the highest possible turnout by the population, including refugees and displaced persons. It considers that the national dialogue and the electoral processes are vital for the restoration of constitutional order, the legitimisation of the authority of government, and the consolidation of democracy and national unity beyond the elections.

The Mission is grateful to the National Assembly of Mali and the Delegation for their generous hospitality and the excellent conditions provided for the smooth functioning of the mission.

The Mission will report to the ACP-EU JPA which will decide on suitable accompanying measures to support the political process in Mali.

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