



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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ACP 57**

**OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS**

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Subject : Great Lakes  
– Council conclusions

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At its meeting on 25 April 2005 the General Affairs and External Relations Council adopted the attached conclusions on the Great Lakes.

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### **Council conclusions on the Great Lakes**

The transition process in the Democratic Republic of the Congo has reached a decisive phase. Although considerable progress has been made since 2003, there are also considerable challenges still to be met. The Council calls on the Presidential milieu, the transition institutions and their representatives to remain steadfast in their commitment to implementing the transition agenda and to strengthening good governance. The Council reaffirms its determination to support the transition. The Council invites the political opposition to play a constructive role in the implementation of the transition in a climate of social calm.

A reliable electoral process, and free and transparent elections in accordance with the provisions of the 2002 peace agreements, are the main objective of the transition. The National Assembly should quickly adopt the new Constitution which will ensure institutional stability after the elections and which meets international standards. The various legislative, organisational, security and communications aspects of the electoral process and the elections are the responsibility of the Congolese authorities and call for sustained action on their part. The Council is ready to offer continued support for this process.

The demobilisation of the combatants and reform of the security sector are crucial to the success of the transition and to the post-crisis strategy in the DRC. The Council is concerned at the delays in these areas. In this context, the Council declares its full support for MONUC, in particular in its efforts to support these processes. In order to bring about stability and security, the Council calls on the Government of the DRC to take the measures necessary to ensure the regular payment of soldiers' wages. Furthermore, it calls on the Congolese government and the MDRP (Multi country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme) partners to do everything in their power to expedite the demobilisation process. The European Union also asks the Congolese Government to give equal priority to the implementation of the strategic election security plan. The EUPOL police mission, and shortly the EUSEC security sector reform advisory mission, boost the efforts already being made by the Commission and the Member States in the area of security sector reform. The European Union and its Member States are ready to consider support on a more practical level for the integration of the Congolese army, particularly on the basis of feedback from the EUSEC mission.

The Council is concerned about the negative trend in macro-economic indicators, which risk damaging political and economic stability, and invites the Congolese Government to take the corrective measures necessary to ensure good governance and transparency without delay.

The Council takes note of the current state of funding for elements of the transition, as presented by the Commission, and asks Member States and the Commission to examine the possibilities for further support, as well as the terms on which such support might be provided.

The Council welcomes the declaration made by the FDLR (Forces for the Democratic Liberation of Rwanda) in Rome and encourages their leadership in Europe and on the spot to carry through those commitments without delay. The EU calls on the DRC and Rwandan Governments to work together and cooperate closely with MONUC to ensure that the FDLR forces are disarmed, repatriated and reintegrated in line with the proposed timetable, which would constitute an important step in the Great Lakes Region peace process. The Council encourages the Congolese and Rwandan Governments to make the most of this opportunity and to cooperate closely to successfully complete the peace process. The Council is pleased at MONUC's robust action against armed groups in the East of Congolese territory and fully supports the continuation of the mission throughout the territory and its readiness to assist the voluntary return of the FDLR.

The Council notes the progress achieved in Burundi and expresses its satisfaction with the outcome of the Summit of the Regional Initiative in Entebbe, held on 22 April 2005. It reiterates the importance it attaches to the current electoral process, in the context of which the establishment and publication of an electoral timetable during the Summit of the Regional Initiative constitute an important step. This must ensure the swift holding of properly organised elections. The Council is ready to provide continued financial support for this process. It is pleased at the progress made with the DDR process and with security sector reform, which it will continue to support. It notes with satisfaction the recent declaration by the FNL rebel group and calls on it to join the peace process. It expresses its satisfaction with the decisions taken in this regard by the Regional Initiative and congratulates the regional mediators, especially Tanzania, for their efforts in this area. It would urge all the parties in Burundi to do everything possible to ensure a positive outcome to the negotiations between the Government and the FNL.