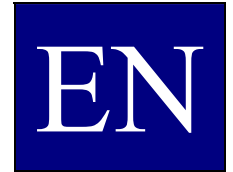




**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 1 December 2005
15249/05 (Presse 339)
(OR. fr)

**Opening of consultations with the ACP side
on the Islamic Republic of Mauritania
under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement
(Brussels, 30 November 2005)**

- Conclusions of the European Union -

The European Union attributes the utmost importance to political dialogue with its ACP partners and to the provisions of Article 9 of the ACP-EC Cotonou Agreement. Our relations are underpinned by respect for democratic institutions, human rights and the rule of law as essential elements of the Partnership Agreement and good governance as a fundamental element of it.

The European Union considers that the coup d'état that occurred in Mauritania on 3 August 2005 is a violation of the essential elements contained in Article 9 of the Cotonou Agreement. It has engaged in a political dialogue with the transitional Government of Mauritania which has led to the opening of consultations under Article 96 of the Agreement in order to carry out an in-depth analysis of the situation with the Mauritanian authorities on the basis of their public commitment to transition towards a democratic State.

P R E S S

At the meeting inaugurating these consultations which was held in Brussels on 30 November 2005, the European Union noted with satisfaction that the Mauritanian side confirmed certain commitments already given and supplied some positive information in order to put them into practice, particularly with regard to respect for democratic principles, fundamental rights and freedoms, the rule of law and good governance in public affairs.

The European Union also notes that the Memorandum submitted by Mauritania on 24 November 2005 in preparation for these consultations contains a number of commitments.

The Mauritanian authorities undertake to provide a report with a scoreboard by mid-January 2006, informing the European Union of progress in the various areas and of attainment of the commitments given.

In the spirit of partnership underpinning the Cotonou Agreement, the European Union has stated its readiness to provide its support in implementing those commitments.

The European Union will continue and consolidate the dialogue to ensure as swift a transition as possible to democracy and the rule of law in Mauritania, this being a pre-condition for the full return to normal of its cooperation relations with the country. This dialogue will be conducted in the hope of contributing to the establishment of a lasting constitutional order to provide Mauritania with the stability it needs for its sustainable development.

On the basis of the report that the Mauritanian side undertakes to provide on the implementation of the aforesaid commitments, the European Union will follow developments in the situation very closely. It will monitor compliance with the commitments, and particularly the adoption of measures to ensure transparency and a democratic foundation for the legislative and presidential elections scheduled for November 2006 and March 2007 respectively.

The scope and degree of attainment of the commitments given by the Mauritanian authorities will critically determine the nature and extent of the appropriate measures to be decided upon at the close of the consultations.

During the consultation period, the cooperation activities under way in the framework of the European Development Fund will be continued provided that the specific conditions of the financing agreements being executed are complied with, and in particular projects to provide institutional support for the transition process will be launched during that period.

The European Union welcomes the full cooperation of the Mauritanian authorities, which is of capital importance in enabling the Union to continue to assist that country in its development efforts.