



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Brussels, 13 May 2006
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**II. EU - CARIFORUM SUMMIT
Vienna, Austria, 13 May 2006**

Joint Communiqué

1. The Heads of State and of Government of the European Union represented by the Troika and the Caribbean ACP States (CARIFORUM), met in Vienna, Austria on 13 May 2006, on the occasion of the IV Summit of Heads of State and of Government of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean. They discussed issues including EU-CARIFORUM relations, regional integration, the process for establishing the regional Economic Partnership Agreement, economic and environmental vulnerabilities, combating poverty, cooperation in a multilateral framework and political dialogue.

P R E S S

2. The Parties reaffirmed their commitment to the principles enshrined in the UN Charter. They further committed to a strengthened partnership based on political dialogue, development cooperation, and economic and trade relations as affirmed in the Cotonou Partnership Agreement. They also agreed that participatory democracy, good governance, rule of law, and human rights, social justice, equity and solidarity, as well as sound economic policies are essential for sustainable development. The Heads of State and Government further reaffirmed their commitment to combat poverty and global threats to peace, security and stability, and expressed a determination to enhance their political dialogue including in the multilateral framework, in these and other areas of common concern.
3. The Parties exchanged views on the Council Conclusions on the EU-Caribbean Partnership adopted by the Council of the European Union on 11 April 2006 on the basis of the European Commission's Communication on "An EU-Caribbean partnership for growth, stability and development".

The CARIFORUM Heads of State and Government welcomed, the EU's reaffirmed commitment to work together with the Caribbean States to tackle challenges they face. The Parties agreed to review progress in attaining the partnership's objectives at their future meetings.

4. The EU and CARIFORUM Heads of State and Government recognised the value of the relationship between the European Union and CARIFORUM, in the context of the Cotonou Agreement, based on partnership and mutual respect. They committed themselves to deepening cooperation in support of regional integration, social cohesion, development of human resources, addressing impacts of migration, terrorist threats, drug-trafficking, organised crime, HIV/AIDS and economic and environmental challenges.
5. The EU welcomed the launch of the Single Market in January 2006 which is the first component of the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (CSME). CARICOM Heads expressed appreciation for the willingness of the EU to consider supporting the establishment of the regional Development Fund which is critical to the restructuring and adjustment resulting from the establishment of the CSME. The Parties emphasized that priority areas for cooperation would be: support for the CARICOM Single Market (CSM) and the CARICOM Single Economy (CSE) to be established by 2008; and the successful conclusion of a development-oriented Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA), with resources within the 10th EDF and other measures for its effective implementation. They agreed that these areas are crucial to fostering sustainable economic development and facilitating the smooth and gradual integration of the region in the global economy. They reaffirmed their commitment to work towards a timely conclusion of the EPA negotiations to allow entry into force of the agreement by 1st January 2008.

6. The Parties exchanged views on regional and CARIFORUM integration experiences. They agreed that the primary responsibility for development in the region lies with the governments of the regions. They considered specific EU strategies which could be adapted to Caribbean needs and realities in order to effectively accelerate the region's growth and development. They agreed that support for the small, vulnerable economies of CARIFORUM States, the majority of which are among the world's most indebted states, is essential for enhancing their competitiveness and economic diversification. The EU Leaders took note of the continuing concern expressed by the CARIFORUM Heads at the adverse impact on their economies by the EU's reforms in its markets for principal Caribbean commodities. The Parties took note of the specific assistance provided by the EU to the sugar, banana, rice and rum sectors of the region.
7. The Heads of State and Government recognised the high degree of vulnerability of the wider Caribbean Basin to natural disasters as well as the increased occurrence and severity of these phenomena. The Parties will cooperate in strengthening disaster preparedness and prevention through the exchange of experience and the rapid dissemination of emerging good practices, particularly in the area of monitoring and early warning, local capacity-building and response. They agreed that this should strengthen action for an integrated natural disaster management approach for disaster risk reduction in the wider Caribbean Basin, including a Catastrophic Risk Insurance Scheme, in the context of sustainable development. The Parties welcomed the commitment of the EU and the ACP to set up the ACP/EU Natural Disaster Facility under the 10th EDF and to ensure its prompt implementation building on the experience gained on the matter under the 9th EDF.
8. The Heads of State and of Government commended the Haitian people on the successful completion of presidential and parliamentary elections and expressed their readiness to work with the newly elected authorities in order to address the long-term challenges facing Haiti. They welcomed CARICOM's decision to re-establish comprehensive cooperation with Haiti. They reaffirmed their full support for the work of the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH), and the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General. Both parties committed themselves to assisting the Haitian Government in the process of national reconciliation and in particular the restoration of political stability, the improvement of the security and human rights situation and the relaunching of economic recovery in Haiti.

9. The Parties welcomed the launching of the programming exercise for the 10th EDF at the Regional Seminar in Santo Domingo, April 6-7, 2006. They also noted the proposed orientations of the 10th EDF programming, aiming at reducing poverty, and supporting regional integration and cooperation, including support to the EPA-process; addressing the region's vulnerabilities, and integrating good governance in the programming. The Heads of State and Government welcomed the efforts towards coherence and complementarity between National and Regional Programming. They agreed that it is necessary to maintain the momentum so that the programming of the 10th EDF is completed in time to avoid a gap with the end of the 9th EDF. They looked forward to the EU's continued contribution to the region's growth and development throughout the 10th EDF, bearing in mind the EU's overall commitment to increase the quantity, quality and effectiveness of its development assistance and the shared commitment of the EU and the CARIFORUM countries to work towards the enhancement of the impact of the assistance to the region.

10. The Heads of State and of Government underlined the benefit of a regular dialogue between the two regions and agreed to hold their next meeting on the occasion of the V Summit of Heads of State and of Government of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean in Peru in 2008.