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FACT SHEET

Central African Republic

The European Union (EU) is a key partner of the Central African Republic (CAR) and the country's main donor. Relations are bound by the Cotonou Agreement.

Even before the current crisis, CAR faced a daunting mix of governance, economic, social, and humanitarian as well as security challenges. In response, the EU has been committed in many critical areas to support longer-term socio-economic recovery, in the framework of a comprehensive state- and peacebuilding agenda, and to help build a more stable country.

The EU has been concerned about the continuously deteriorating security, political and humanitarian situation in CAR, especially since 2012.

The staggered implementation of previous peace agreements, combined with chronic underdevelopment and the country's long experience of political instability, led to the outbreak of a new conflict in December 2012. Despite the signature on 11 January 2013 in Libreville of a political agreement initiating a transition period, tensions culminated in the violent seizure of power and the unconstitutional change of government by SELEKA rebel groups in March 2013. On 5 December 2013, the worst spate of violence since the outbreak of the crisis erupted in the capital and other parts of the country, triggered by an attack by anti-Balaka and other armed groups against Muslims in Bangui. This, and the acts of retaliation that followed, left more than 1,000 people dead and led to a sudden and considerable increase of internal displacement.

The current crisis is affecting the majority of the population (4.6 million, half of them children). More than 50% of the Central Africans are in dire need of aid. As of 31 January, there were more than 825,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in CAR. More than 245,000 Central Africans have sought refuge in neighbouring countries in the course of last year.

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Humanitarian access has been restricted by insecurity. Lack of access makes it difficult to monitor the overall humanitarian situation and deliver the urgently required assistance to those suffering the consequences of violence. The EU has taken the lead in advocacy and funding on CAR among relief donors, and has had a permanent humanitarian presence in Bangui since long before the latest events.

The situation in the CAR has a potentially destabilizing impact which could spread to the region. The lack of official security forces further increases the risk of the country becoming a safe haven for criminal and armed groups from the neighbouring countries.

The country, which previously has already been characterized as an archetype of a “fragile state”, is now confronted with a total breakdown of law and order and the collapse of state institutions.

The Libreville Agreements and the N’Djamena declaration of 18 April, both brokered by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), provide the basis for political resolution of the crisis in the Central African Republic. According to the framework developed by ECCAS, the 18-month transition process should culminate in the organization of general elections by the beginning of 2015 and the re-establishment of constitutional order. After the resignation of the Head of State of the transition and the Prime Minister of the Central African Republic on 10 January 2014, the legislative body (National Transition Council) elected Catherine Samba-Panza as interim President on 20 January.

The restoration of security and public order remains the immediate priorities to stabilize the country in support of the political process. Improving humanitarian coverage and re-launching development assistance are directly linked to positive developments in the security situation. An essential medium- to long-term objective is the rebuilding of state institutions.

EU response to the crisis – a summary

Since the outbreak of new violence late 2012, the EU has intensified its outreach to partners. It is actively engaged in international and regional efforts to stabilize the situation in the CAR and to restore a more stable government in the country. On 19-20 December 2013, the European Council confirmed the EU’s willingness to use relevant instruments to contribute towards the efforts under way to stabilise the country, including under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), based on a proposal by High Representative Catherine Ashton.

Following the Foreign Affairs Council's political agreement on 20 January, the Council on 10 February established the EU military operation to contribute to a secure environment in the CAR based on the UN Security Council resolution 2134 (2014). This is the legal basis for the EUFOR RCA operation and another step towards its rapid deployment.

The European Union - Commission and Member States - is the largest provider of relief assistance to the Central African Republic, with support worth more than €76 million in 2013.

In June 2013, the EU dispatched an inter-service mission (EEAS, Commission) to the CAR to review the situation on the ground and EU’s options. As part of the recommended comprehensive set of urgent actions that could be taken by the EU to further support stabilisation and the fragile political process, the European Commission adopted mid-August a €10 million stabilization program in response to the post-coup crisis under the Instrument of

Stability (IfS). The program has been designed to ensure complementarity with on-going projects funded under the 10th EDF (European Development Fund).

In line with the findings of the inter-service mission, a re-adjustment exercise has been launched by EU Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs, to better fit the existing EU development assistance to the new needs and an increase of €23 million for on-going projects has been decided (see development section below).

The EU remains strongly committed to support the transition process in the CAR.

EU military operation EUFOR RCA

EUFOR RCA, which was established by the Council on 10 February 2014, is to provide temporary support in achieving a safe and secure environment in the Bangui area, with a view to handing over to African partners. The force will thereby contribute to international efforts to protect the populations most at risk, creating the conditions for providing humanitarian aid. The operation headquarters will be in Larissa, Greece, while the force headquarters and the troops will be located in Bangui, Central African Republic. The Council also appointed Major-General Philippe Pontières from France as EU Operation Commander. Besides, it estimated the common costs of the operation at € 25.9 million for a period of up to nine months comprising a three months preparatory phase and a mandate of up to six months starting from the point of reaching full operational capability.

Preparations for the deployment are currently under way, following accelerated procedures. The launch of operations will require a separate legal act.

EU Humanitarian Aid

The European Union is currently the largest humanitarian donor to the victims of the crisis in the Central African Republic. For 2014, the Commission has pledged €45 million in humanitarian aid. These funds are being used to support protection, access to health care, food and nutrition assistance, drinking-water distribution, sanitation services, logistics and humanitarian coordination.

In addition, a reinforced team of EU humanitarian experts in the field is closely monitoring the humanitarian situation, assessing the needs and overseeing the use of European funds.

The European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response Kristalina Georgieva has visited CAR twice in 2013 and co-chaired a ministerial meeting on the humanitarian crisis at the 2013 UN General Assembly with France and the UN. In late January, she organised, together with the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos, a ministerial meeting on CAR's humanitarian situation in Brussels. A total of €366 million was mobilised: €150 million for life-saving aid and €216 million for stabilisation and short to medium-term assistance.

Since the surge of the current wave of violence, the EU has organised repeated airlifts of life-saving items and aid personnel into CAR to help the victims. The European Commission deployed its humanitarian air service ECHO Flight to provide a vital line of support and ferry humanitarian workers and supplies to Bangui.

The EU has been supporting life-saving activities in CAR since 2001 and has been leading efforts to raise the profile of a humanitarian crisis that has been 'forgotten' for many years.

EU Development Assistance

The EU has also provided over the years development assistance to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable people. Between 2008 and 2013, around €225 million have been allocated for the whole country through the different financial instruments (€160 million through the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) and €65 million through the EU budget).

On top of this, since the immediate needs are so huge, the EU decided to mobilise an extra €10 million from the European Development Fund for humanitarian support to CAR. The objective is to provide immediate support and relief to the people who are suffering from a crisis which has affected the country's entire population.

The EU has also announced support to the electoral process in the CAR with around €20 million. This new support will go towards putting in place voter registration, electoral operations (such as printing ballot papers, providing training, equipment and staff, as well as voter education) and involving civil society groups as domestic observers.

Although it has slowed down considerably due to the security and institutional situation, the development cooperation of the European Union has never been suspended in the Central African Republic (CAR). Creating jobs through road maintenance projects, the management of public finances and the restoration of an operational policy that protects the population are among the ongoing priorities of EU cooperation with the country.

To this end, projects worth €23 million are already being mobilised using funds from the 10th European Development Fund, while implementation is underway for a €10 million stabilisation package under the EU's Instrument for Stability. The immediate priority, once security is restored, will be to support the process of transition towards the restoration of democratic institutions and the provision of basic social services to the population.

EU Support for the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) through the EU African Peace Facility (APF)

In the past, CAR hosted several regional peace-support operations. The MICOPAX operation, deployed since July 2008, falls under the responsibility of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). MICOPAX was expected to be phased out until the new crisis erupted at the end of 2012. It played an important stabilization role, but given its limited troop numbers, it was however unable to stop SELEKA rebels from entering the Capital, Bangui.

As a result of the new crisis, the ECCAS Heads of States decided to reconfigure MICOPAX with a higher number of troops (from 700 to 2,000 military troops) and a new mandate to restore stability, protect civilians, support the restructuration of the CAR security forces and the organization of elections.

The EU has supported MICOPAX and its predecessor (FOMUC) with an amount of €90 million through the African Peace Facility (APF – which is part of the European Development Fund or EDF). The APF is the main EU instrument to support African-led Peace operations the European Development Fund (EDF). Following the crisis, APF's support was extended until July 2013.

On 18 July 2013, the African Union Peace and Security Council approved the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA or

AFISM-CAR). On 13 December, it authorized an additional troop increase up to a total strength of 6,000 personnel. MISCA operates under a Chapter VII mandate provided by UN Security Council Resolution 21217(2013). It has been tasked to contribute to: (i) the protection of civilians and the restoration of security and public order; (ii) the stabilization of the country and the restoration of the authority of the central Government; (iii) the reform and restructuring of the defence and security sector; and (iv) the creation of conditions conducive for the provision of humanitarian assistance to population in need.

The transfer of authority between ECCAS/MICOPAX and the AU/MISCA took place on 19 December 2013.

On 5 December 2013, the EU Political and Security Committee agreed on the political appropriateness of providing EUR 50 million through the African Peace Facility to MISCA. This new support to the MISCA announced by EU Commissioner for Development for Development Andris Piebalgs aims to contribute to the stabilization of the country and the protection of local populations, creating conditions conducive to the provision of humanitarian assistance and the reform of the security and defence sector.

This support should cover the costs of allowances, accommodation and feeding the troops deployed in the field. The salaries of civilian MISCA personnel and various operational costs such as transport, communication or medical services should also be supported by the Facility. This support will be essential for the proper functioning of the mission.

For further information:

[Foreign Affairs Council conclusions – 20 January 2014](#)

[Foreign Affairs Council conclusions – 16 December 2013](#)

[EU and Central African Republic](#)

[EU development cooperation](#)

[EU humanitarian aid](#)