

Brussels, 25 October 2010

The European Commission grants € 9.5 million to support the electoral process in the Central African Republic

On 25 October, the Commission adopted the decision to financially support the 2011 electoral process in the Central African Republic. This will contribute to consolidating the peace building process in the Central African Republic. The presidential and legislative elections will take place on 23 January and 20 March.

Andris Piebalgs, Commissioner for Development, says: "I unreservedly support any initiatives which strengthen democracy, in Africa and elsewhere. The support of the European Union to the electoral process will allow the Central African Republic to honour its commitments to democratic consolidation. Presidential and legislative elections which are well prepared, free and credible constitute an essential condition for the peace building process in the Central African Republic."

The European Commission is pleased that the members of the Independent Electoral Commission have signed an agreement on the timetable and encourages all of the signatories to pursue the preparations in a consensual spirit. These will be the second free and democratic elections in the Central African Republic since constitutional order was restored in 2005.

The support will be financed under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) which is the main EU financial instrument for development aid and under which a € 4 million contribution had originally been allocated. The EU's decision to increase its contributions to a final total of € 9.5 million testifies to the depth of its commitment to reinforcing democracy in the Central African Republic. This will make the European Commission the biggest donor to the electoral process in the country. More than 95% of the EU's funds will be transferred to a basket fund set up by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assist the preparation of elections, whose budget was estimated to be around € 15 million. The specific objectives are:

- contribute to ensuring that the presidential and legislative elections of 2011 run as smoothly as possible in the conditions of security, freedom, inclusion and transparency required by the Constitution and the Electoral Code;
- provide the electoral equipment needed for drawing up electoral rolls, organising polling and processing results;
- inform the whole population about electoral matters and promote civil and political rights in general.

The European Commission also supports other initiatives linked to the elections, such as projects to strengthen the media.

Background

The cooperation between the European Union and the Central African Republic has been indicatively allocated € 137 million under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) for the period 2008 - 2013. Its aim is to support the efforts of the Central African Republic government to reduce poverty, primarily through concentration on the two sectors of:

- Democratic governance and restoring basic security and social services (€72.5 million);
- Infrastructure and improved accessibility (€ 19.5 million).

This allocation is complemented by €34 million of budget support and €11 million of technical assistance and environmental projects. In addition to the EDF, the Central African Republic benefits from other funds from the EU budget, such as those for emergencies.

The Central African Republic is one of the poorest countries in the world and continues to suffer from the consequences of several years of political instability and insecurity, which damaged the country's infrastructure, socio-economic situation and administrative structures. The country is known as an "aid orphan" due to its small number of donors and classified as 179th out of 182 countries in the Human Development Index. The EU is the largest development partner of the CAR.

For more information, please see:

[MEMO/10/517](#)

EU relations with the CAR:

http://ec.europa.eu/development/geographical/regionscountries/countries/country_profile.cfm?cid=cf&type=short&lng=fr

African Peace Facility – support to the Mission for the consolidation of peace in Central African Republic (MICOPAX):

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/regional-cooperation/peace/peace-support-operations/micopax_en.htm

Website of the EU Development Commissioner Andris Piebalgs

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/piebalgs/index_en.htm

Bruxelles, le 25 octobre 2010

La Commission européenne alloue 9,5 millions € au soutien du processus électoral en République centrafricaine

Le 25 octobre, la Commission a adopté la décision de soutenir financièrement le processus électoral 2011 en République centrafricaine qui contribuera à consolider le processus de paix dans le pays. Les élections présidentielles et législatives se dérouleront le 23 janvier et le 20 mars.

M. Andris Piebalgs, commissaire européen chargé du développement, s'est exprimé en ces termes: «J'appuie sans réserve toute initiative visant à renforcer la démocratie, en Afrique et ailleurs. L'aide apportée par l'Union européenne au processus électoral permettra à la République centrafricaine de tenir les engagements qu'elle a pris en faveur de la consolidation de la démocratie. Des élections présidentielles et législatives bien préparées, libres et crédibles sont une condition essentielle au processus de paix dans ce pays.»

La Commission européenne se réjouit de la signature, par la commission électorale indépendante, d'un accord portant sur le calendrier et encourage l'ensemble des signataires à poursuivre les préparatifs dans un esprit consensuel. Il s'agira des deuxièmes élections libres et démocratiques en République centrafricaine depuis le rétablissement de l'ordre constitutionnel en 2005.

L'aide sera financée dans le cadre du 10^e Fonds européen de développement (FED), principal instrument de financement de l'aide au développement dont dispose l'UE, au titre duquel une contribution de 4 millions € avait été initialement allouée. La décision de l'UE de porter ses contributions à 9,5 millions € au total témoigne de la fermeté de son engagement de renforcer la démocratie en République centrafricaine et fera de la Commission européenne le premier bailleur de fonds en faveur du processus électoral dans ce pays. Plus de 95 % des fonds de l'UE seront versés sur un fonds commun (basket fund) institué par le programme des Nations unies pour le développement (PNUD) en vue d'aider aux préparatifs des élections, dont le budget a été estimé à 15 millions € environ. Les objectifs spécifiques sont les suivants:

- contribuer à assurer un déroulement optimal des élections présidentielles et législatives en 2011 dans les conditions de sécurité, de liberté, d'inclusion et de transparence prévues par la Constitution et le code électoral;
- mettre à disposition le matériel électoral nécessaire à l'élaboration des listes électorales, à l'organisation des scrutins et au traitement des résultats;
- informer l'ensemble de la population des questions électorales et promouvoir les droits civils et politiques en général.

La Commission européenne soutient aussi d'autres initiatives en rapport avec les élections, telles que des projets visant à renforcer les médias.

Contexte

Une enveloppe indicative de 137 millions € a été allouée à la coopération entre l'Union européenne et la République centrafricaine dans le cadre du 10^e Fonds européen de développement (FED) pour la période 2008-2013. Cette coopération, qui a pour but d'épauler le gouvernement centrafricain dans les efforts qu'il déploie pour réduire la pauvreté, porte essentiellement sur deux secteurs:

- la gouvernance démocratique et le rétablissement des services de sécurité et sociaux de base (72,5 millions €);
- les infrastructures et l'amélioration de l'accessibilité (19,5 millions €).

Cette enveloppe est complétée par un appui budgétaire de 34 millions €, ainsi que par une assistance technique et des projets environnementaux pour un montant de 11 millions €. La République centrafricaine bénéficie non seulement de fonds FED, mais aussi d'autres fonds prélevés sur le budget de l'UE, tels que les fonds d'urgence.

La République centrafricaine, l'un des pays les plus pauvres du monde, continue de subir les effets de plusieurs années d'instabilité politique et d'insécurité qui ont mis à mal ses infrastructures, sa situation socio-économique et ses structures administratives. Le pays est connu pour être un «oublié de l'aide» en raison du nombre réduit de ses donateurs et arrive en 179^e position sur les 182 pays pris en compte dans l'indicateur de développement humain. L'UE est le principal partenaire de son développement.

Pour plus d'informations, veuillez consulter:

[MEMO/10/517](#)

Relations de l'UE avec la République centrafricaine:

http://ec.europa.eu/development/geographical/regionscountries/countries/country_profile.cfm?cid=cf&type=short&lng=fr

Facilité pour la paix en Afrique – appui à la Mission de consolidation de la paix en République centrafricaine (MICOPAX):

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/regional-cooperation/peace/peace-support-operations/micopax_fr.htm

Site internet d'Andris Piebalgs, commissaire chargé du développement:

http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/piebalgs/index_en.htm

Brussels, 25 October 2010

The European Union support to Central African Republic electoral process

Why does the European Commission support democratic processes in partner countries?

The European Union believes that democracy and human rights are universal values that should be promoted around the world. They are part of effective work on poverty alleviation and conflict prevention and resolution, in addition to being valuable bulwarks against terrorism. There cannot be long term development when laws and rights are not ensured. Having come into force on 1 January 2007, the [European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights \(EIDHR\)](#) is the concrete expression of the EU's intention to integrate the promotion of democracy, human rights and the rule of law worldwide.

Genuine elections are an essential basis for sustainable development and a functioning democracy. The European Union believes that actions supporting the right to participate in genuine elections can make a major contribution to peace, security and conflict prevention. Support takes the form of electoral assistance projects and EU election observation missions.

How does the European Commission support democratic process in partner countries?

The European Commission promotes the democratisation process in partner countries through three main instruments:

- political dialogue: to encourage partner governments to integrate democracy and human rights into their development plans and identify opportunities for EC assistance to contribute to those objectives;
- mainstreaming democratic values in all Commission's development instruments: such principles as political participation, representation, accountability, transparency and equality are integrated in the planning, design, implementation, and monitoring of policies and programmes. Moreover, in the formulation of other policies, any negative effect on democratisation must always be avoided;
- specific financial and technical assistance programmes, focusing on four key areas: promoting fair, free and transparent electoral processes; strengthening the institutional and organisational capacities of parliaments; promoting an independent and professional media; and encouraging pluralistic political systems.

Why does the European Commission support the electoral process in the Central African Republic?

The holding of free and transparent presidential and legislative elections every five years is one of the conditions stipulated in the conclusions of the Inclusive Political Dialogue which took place in Bangui in December 2008, following the comprehensive peace agreement signed in Libreville in June 2008. The Inclusive Political Dialogue confirmed the commitment of the six groups of stakeholders dedicated to consolidating peace and promoting stability in the Central African Republic: the presidential majority in the national assembly, the democratic opposition parties, other political parties, civil society, the civil service and politico-military movements.

Peace-building, security and poverty reduction are central to the cooperation between the European Union and the Central African Republic. The EU, together with EU Member States and the international community, is actively following and supporting this process.

The presidential and legislative elections scheduled to take place on 23 January 2011 (first round) and 20 March 2011 (second round) will be the second free and democratic elections in the Central African Republic since constitutional order was restored in 2005.

How will the support project to the electoral process in the CAR be implemented and monitored?

More than 95% of the EU funds (€9.1 million) will be transferred to a basket fund set up by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to assist the preparation of elections in the Central African Republic, whose budget was estimated to be around €15 million. The remaining amount will go to direct technical assistance to the Independent Electoral Commission (€300 000) and for audit, evaluation and contingencies (€100 000).

The UNDP basket fund approach is appropriate to electoral support as elections in fragile situations require moral, material and financial backing from the international community, as well as coordinated action.

The basket fund aims to contribute to ensuring that the presidential and legislative elections of 2011 run as smoothly as possible in the conditions of security, freedom, inclusion and transparency required by the Constitution and the Electoral Code. This will be done by:

- providing necessary technical and logistical support to the Independent Electoral Commission (IEC), including on electoral security planning;
- providing the electoral equipment needed for drawing up electoral rolls, organising polling and processing results;
- informing the whole population – and women in particular - about electoral matters and promoting civil and political rights in general;
- ensuring the durability of the lessons learned for future electoral cycles and for democratic consolidation.

The project is not only aimed at supporting the 2011 elections, but is part of a wider approach of electoral cycles and sustainable democratic consolidation. The activities involved are those of strengthening national capacities and national appropriation. In this sense, the preparatory activities and post-electoral follow up are as important as the elections themselves.

What is EU assistance to the Central African Republic?

EU allocated €137 million to Central African Republic under the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) for the period 2008 - 2013. The aim of the EU's cooperation with Central African Republic is to support the efforts of the CAR government to reduce poverty, primarily through concentration on the two sectors of:

- Democratic governance and restoring basic security and social services (€72.5 million);
- Infrastructure and improved accessibility (€19.5 million).

This allocation is complemented by €34 million of budget support and €11 million of technical assistance and environmental projects.

In addition to the EDF, the Central African Republic benefits from other funds from the EU budget which complement the EDF country strategy, such as those for emergencies. In this particular case, the Non-State Actors and Local Authorities in Development programme under the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) supports initiatives of civil society to strengthen the media in the pre-electoral period.

The Central African Republic is one of the poorest countries in the world and continues to suffer from the consequences of several years of political instability and insecurity, which damaged the country's infrastructure, socio-economic situation and administrative structures. The Central African Republic is known as an "aid orphan" due to its small number of donors and is classified as 179th out of 182 countries in the Human Development Index. The EU is the largest development partner of the Central African Republic.

Other examples of EU financed projects on capacity building for democracy:

Empowering the electoral participation of women in Bangladesh

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/case-studies/bangladesh_election-support_women_en.pdf

Supporting freedom of speech in Sudan: restoring hope and building democracy for lasting peace

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/case-studies/sudan_human-rights-democracy_en.pdf

Strengthening Dialogue between Non-State Actors, Administration and the International Community in Somalia

http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/documents/case-studies/somalia_saferworld_en.pdf